

Date: 31.10.2012

**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION  
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

Exhibit number: 104

**Statement of Witness**

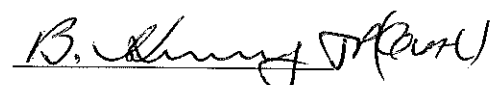
I, **ROBERT RYAN**, of c/- State Director, Key Assets Fostering Queensland, Building 7, Freeway Office Park, 2728 Logan Road, Eight Mile Plains in the State of Queensland, solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare:

1. I commenced in my current position in August 2012 as State Director, Key Assets Fostering Queensland (Key Assets). Prior to this I was the Assistant Regional Director and Placement Services Unit Director for the South East Region, in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. I was in these roles between May 2009 and August 2012.
2. From September 2008 to May 2009 I was the Acting Manager of the Practice Development Unit, Child Safety Services Division.
3. For the periods of December 2006 to February 2007, April to May 2007 and March to May 2008 I was the Director, Training and Specialist Support Branch, Department of Child Safety.
4. From September 2004 to September 2008 I was the Principal Training and Staff Support Officer, Department of Child Safety (Substantive position)
5. From August 2002 to September 2004 I was the Learning Facilitator, Department of Communities (Southern Zone – Based in Brisbane)
6. I have worked for the relevant Queensland Government departments responsible for child protection for a period of 19 years in of the following positions:
  - 6.1 Acting Director, Training and Specialist Support Branch (TSSB);
  - 6.2 Principal Training and Staff Support Officer, TSSB;
  - 6.3 Acting Manager of a number of Child Safety Service Centres located at Caloundra, Maroochydore, Fortitude Valley and Redcliffe;
  - 6.4 Principal Policy Officer and Senior Policy Officer;
  - 6.5 Crisis Care Worker and Acting Senior Crisis Care Worker (Crisis Care – now After Hours Child Safety Service Centre);
  - 6.6 Team Leader (various positions and locations);
  - 6.7 Family Services Officer.
7. I hold a Bachelor of Social Work, Graduate Certificate (Family Therapy), Graduate Certificate (Human Resources and Industrial Relations), Master of Professional Education and Training and I am also a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) (Queensland).
8. In a volunteer role, I was formerly the President of the Queensland council of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) and I am currently a Committee member on the NAPCAN Queensland Council.

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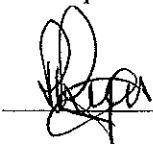


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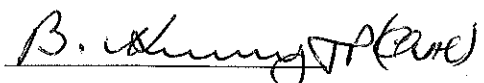


9. In addition I have been an enlisted soldier with the Australian Army Reserve since 1989 (currently inactive) and I have worked in the Psychology Corp posted to the 2nd Health Support Battalion and the Psychology Support Team at Enoggera. I also worked in the recruitment area of Defence Tri-Service.
10. I am a member of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Advisory Council and was appointed to this position in December 2011.
11. I have a particular interest, as part of my former role in the Training Branch, in workforce development in the area of child protection.
12. In 2006, I completed research with Dr Leah Bromfield on a national comparison of statutory child protection entry level training. The research was published as Bromfield, L. M. and Ryan, R., 'A national comparison of statutory child protection training in Australia', *Children, Communities and Families Australia* (2007), vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 59-72 as is annexed to this statement as **Attachment 1**. This work was completed as part of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development (ASCPL&DG) group in partnership with the National Child Protection Clearinghouse. The aim of the project was to provide a national audit of statutory child protection learning and development units and the training provided by such units at a point in time (October 2005 – March 2006). The ASCPL&DG comprises of learning and development representatives from statutory bodies across all states and territories in Australia and New Zealand. The group was established to assist statutory child protection educators in preparing incumbents for the role of statutory child protection professional.
13. This work provided the following information:
  - 13.1 a map of statutory learning and development models and programs in all states and territories of Australia;
  - 13.2 a national review of Entry-level qualifications;
  - 13.3 a national review of recognition of prior learning;
  - 13.4 a national review of Entry-level program structure and content of the training programs;
  - 13.5 a comparison of when programs commence;
  - 13.6 a national review of how participants are assessed and how programs are evaluated.
14. In 2009, I was successful in obtaining a Churchill Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Fund to study child protection training across the United Kingdom, USA and Canada. During a three month period I travelled to a range of Child Protection Services across the world to explore various training offered and programs to support the development of people who work and/or volunteer in the area of child protection.
15. Annexed to my statement as **Attachment 2** is my paper that summarises key learning's from the fellowship. In relation to workforce, this information included 21 recommendations. In particular, I would like to expand in the hearing on:
  - 15.1 induction of child protection workers;
  - 15.2 ongoing skills development;
  - 15.3 models of case review to support the development of a learning culture.
16. I am aware that the subject of child protection workers' qualifications has been discussed during hearings before this Inquiry. I believe that prior to deciding what qualification should be required for child protection officers, consideration needs to be given to:

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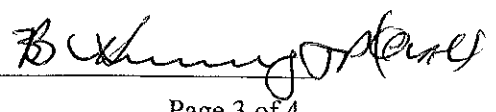


- 16.1 the role we are expecting child protection officers to perform;
  - 16.2 what do we want the child protection system to look like?;
  - 16.3 how is the work conducted making positive and lasting differences to children and young people?
17. These questions are fundamental to deciding what the learning model should look like for the child protection sector. The nature of child protection has changed significantly over the last 20 years. When I commenced as a Family Services Officer in 1993 I carried a caseload of 44 cases. This was a generic caseload of young people and children, I was responsible for youth justice and child protection matters and I was also required to manage a case from a child's entry into care until the child exited at the age of 18 years. At that stage there was no IT system for the management of cases. The Child Protection Information System (CPIS) which pre-dated ICMS was not implemented until 1996. Prior to this time all records were paper based and carbon copied. The implementation of CPIS and then ICMS has had a significant impact on the time child protection staff spent in front of a computer. When I commenced in child protection, approximately 70 per cent of my time was spent working with families, children and young people. The Court processes were simpler and legislatively we had only two types of child protection orders — Care and Protection orders and Protective Supervision orders. The *Children's Service Act 1965* stayed in force until March 2000. So essentially we have only had contemporary legislation in Queensland for a period of twelve years.
18. With the new legislation there are now numerous child protection orders in both the assessment and ongoing intervention phases of child protection. The litigious nature of work in child protection requires staff who are skilled in:
- 18.1 engaging with the legal system;
  - 18.2 good writing skills;
  - 18.3 effective understanding of legislation and delegations;
  - 18.4 managing competing demands;
  - 18.5 working with conflict;
  - 18.6 understanding of IT;
  - 18.7 ability to type via author-keyed documentation.
19. Child protection staff also need to have a good understanding of domestic and family violence, mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, Family Court interface, cultural awareness, child development, working with involuntary clients, investigation and assessment, medical assessment and risk management. This list could extend over many pages and examples of modules and topics covered in entry-level training programs is covered in **Attachment 2**.
20. A further compounding factor is staff tenure in child protection. It is well evidenced that retaining staff in statutory child protection (both Government and non-Government) and carers is challenging and that to improve outcomes for children and young people we need to stabilise frontline service delivery. A 2007 tenure profile identified that subsequent to the CMC's 2004 Inquiry, 73 per cent of the workforce had less than three year's experience and 42 per cent had less than one year's experience. I am not aware of current data regarding tenure but I am aware the over last five years significant work has been conducted to retain staff and build a skills and knowledge base in the organisation through mechanisms such as the PO2/3 progression and a learning and development framework with career pathways.

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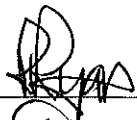
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21. Another significant change is the increasing role played by the non-government sector and the expectations of carers. The paradigm of foster care in Queensland was built around a model of volunteering and whilst many aspects of the out-of-home care system have improved the expectation of foster and kinship carers through legislative, regulatory and procedural changes has not matched the support, training and remuneration required to assist some of the most complex and challenging young people in the care of the State.
22. Further to the issue of relevant degrees, the issue of skills development is a crucial issue. Ensuring staff in government child protection and non-government sector roles and carers have the right skills, training, supervision and support is critical to building effective outcomes for children, young people and their families.
23. In my current role I am responsible for the management of the Intensive Foster Care program for Key Assets. Key Assets is an international fostering agency (Core Assets) that is located in seventeen countries worldwide and has over 3400 children placed in specialist foster care models world-wide. In terms of carer development and support the model used by Key Assets is called Team Parenting™. A copy of Key Asset's paper, *Team Parenting and the Treatment of Complex Trauma and Attachment Disorder*, outlines the Team Parenting approach. This paper is annexed to my statement as **Attachment 3**.
24. The Team Parenting approach is designed to stabilise, attend to emotional distress, model proper emotional responses and promote healthy psychosocial development for children and adolescents in care. Team Parenting constitutes a systemic approach to foster placements and the framework centres on the needs of the child by ensuring that resilience-based strategies and methods are undertaken in conjunction with educational and/or vocational interventions. The results of carer and professional's input into the placement are measured through a Key Developmental Assets (KDA) tool, which focuses on 20 aspects of positive child and adolescent development. These 20 aspects are monitored, reported on and tracked over time with children who are placed in a Team Parenting model. The impact of a Team Parenting approach is that learning occurs for everyone in the care team from professional staff, to the carer, and the child/young person.

I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believe the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

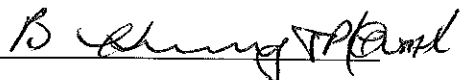
Signed:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Robert RYAN

IPSWICH MAGISTRATES COURT  
 43 ELLENBOROUGH STREET  
 IPSWICH QLD 4305

Taken and declared before me at \_\_\_\_\_ this 31<sup>ST</sup> day of October 2012

Signed:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Solicitor/Barrister/Justice of the Peace/  
 Commissioner for Declarations

Signature of witness  
 to Inquiry:

  
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Signature of person  
 witnessing statement:

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# A national comparison of statutory child protection training in Australia

*Dr Leah Bromfield and Robert Ryan*



Dr Leah Bromfield



Mr Robert Ryan

## **Acknowledgements:**

The authors are members of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group. They wish to thank their colleagues in the Group who contributed to this project, in particular the other members of the Mapping Project working party: Ms Pauline Cole (Children Youth and Family Services, South Australia), and Dr Lynette Arnold (Australian Centre for Child Protection).

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this project was to provide a national audit of statutory child protection learning and development units and the training provided by such units at a point in time (October 2005 – March 2006). There was very little difference in the broader purpose of learning and development units, or the specific aims of entry-level training. All training was mapped to some extent to the national competencies, thus the content of entry-level training programs was very similar across jurisdictions. Although the content was similar, the structure in entry-level training varied significantly across jurisdictions in terms of when training began, the total duration of the training period, length of training blocks, and the role and length of workplace learning in the training process. The greatest area of variation was the size of training units, with the number of dedicated child protection trainers ranging from two to 29. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.

## **A NATIONAL COMPARISON OF STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA**

As a federation of states and territories, Australia does not have a unified approach to child welfare, but rather eight different systems. Research shows that the child welfare systems in Australian states and territories are more similar than different (Bromfield & Higgins, 2005). Given the apparent similarity, there may be some benefit in the sharing information and experience across jurisdictions to avoid duplication of effort and to gain maximum benefit from resources expended in this area.

There is a need for specialist vocational training to prepare incumbents for the role of statutory child protection professionals. The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group was established to assist statutory child protection educators in preparing incumbents for the role of statutory child protection professional. The Group comprises representatives with learning and development responsibilities in every Australian state and territory, and New Zealand<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there are representatives from the Australian Centre for Child Protection (at the University of South Australia) and the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (at the Australian Institute of Family Studies) (Bromfield, 2006).

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand did not participate in the project described in this paper.

This project was undertaken primarily to enhance the goals of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group, which are to:

- facilitate the sharing of training resources;
- discuss approaches to training in each jurisdiction;
- discuss what works and what doesn't work;
- share initiatives and innovation;
- avoid duplication of effort;
- identify commonalities and differences between approaches in different jurisdictions;
- articulate the link between training, and recruitment and retention;
- discuss approaches and strategies for responding to shared problems; and
- support research to facilitate the above goals (Bromfield, 2006).

This information is also likely to be of interest to policy makers to assist them in making decisions that balance the dual imperatives of cost efficiency and quality service provision. In addition, cost savings may also be identified in the training area: for example it may be more cost effective to purchase places in specialised training in another jurisdiction than to develop and provide the training.

The information collated for this project may also prove useful to researchers in assisting them to determine: the generalisability of research from one jurisdiction to another, priorities for future research, and the feasibility of multi-site projects crossing jurisdictional borders. Practitioners may also find this information informs them about the training culture in child protection organisations, the requirements that they would need to fulfil were they to undertake a career in child protection, and to inform applications they might make for recognition of prior learning.

The purpose of this paper is to describe statutory child protection training in Australia. The relative merits of the different training programs will not be compared as there is a lack of evaluative materials to undertake such a task. However, comparisons of the similarities and differences in training provided in the different jurisdictions are presented. Specifically,

in this paper the findings from a national audit of statutory child protection training programs are presented. Findings include, a comparison and discussion of the size of statutory child protection learning and development units in Australia, a discussion of the issues associated with existing knowledge and skills of workers entering the child protection sector, and the comparability of entry-level training for statutory child protection workers in Australia. In addition, the authors discuss the different means of determining whether or not the aims of entry-level training have been achieved.

## MAPPING PROJECT

In August 2005, the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group determined to undertake a mapping exercise. The aim of this exercise was to provide a national audit of statutory child protection learning and development units and the training provided by such units in Australia. The wider Group which comprised representatives from each jurisdiction present agreed to support the project by providing the information required within set timelines. The Australian Institute of Family Studies agreed to support this project and for staff from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse to undertake the work as part of its National Comparisons research program<sup>2</sup>.

## METHOD

The working party met to establish the type of information that would need to be collected, this information was compiled into a draft self-report data pro forma with a series of open-ended questions (for example, "What are the minimum entry level qualifications required for the appointment of Child Protection staff?"). The draft data pro forma were circulated to the working party several times for revision. The final version was then piloted in two states (Queensland and South Australia) and underwent a final revision process before being circulated to the remaining jurisdictions for

<sup>2</sup> The National Comparisons research program aims to compile and describe legislation, policy and practice information for Australia's eight states and territories in the fields of child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care.

completion. Once the surveys were completed and returned, the authors examined the data to determine broadly the similarities and differences in the provision of statutory child protection services in Australia. This description was then discussed by the wider Group at the March 2006 meeting. Revisions were made to provide additional clarification prior to the information and accompanying descriptions being made publicly available.

Because statutory child protection services are subject to frequent change this process was undertaken within a tight timeline to ensure that the information provided had not become dated by the time it was made publicly available. This paper presents findings from the mapping project in relation to minimum entry-level training. The information presented was accurate when provided by jurisdictions during the period October 2005 – March 2006.

### STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN AUSTRALIA

The departments that are responsible for operating the child protection system within each jurisdiction, and the name of the learning development unit that provides statutory child protection training are

described in Table 1. One of the most basic points of comparison and an area of primary interest to policy makers and funding bodies is the size of statutory child protection learning and development units.

The number of trainers varied significantly between jurisdictions (see Table 2). There are many reasons for variations in the size of training units across Australian jurisdictions. Population, geography and demand combine to influence the number of child protection workers in direct service delivery, and in turn influence the number of training staff required to service the workforce. The scope of the training unit's responsibilities also impacted on the size of the units (i.e. does the unit only train child protection workers or are they responsible for training more widely to professionals within and outside the Department).

There were significant differences in the number of child protection workers involved in direct service delivery across states and territories. The number of child protection staff involved in direct service delivery within the organisation ranged from 115 in the ACT to 1479 in New South Wales. A large proportion of the variation in staffing levels for direct service delivery is attributable to differences in population size (see Table 2).

Table 1. Responsibility for statutory child protection training

	Name of Department	Acronym	Name of the training branch or unit
ACT	Office for Children Youth and Family Support, which is part of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services	OCYFS	The Training and Community Education Unit
NSW	Department of Community Services	DoCS	Learning and Development Branch
NT	Family and Children's Services	FACS	Service System Improvement Unit (SSIU)
QLD	Department of Child Safety	DChS	The Training & Specialist Support Branch (TSSB)
SA	Families SA which is part of the Department for Families and Communities (DFC)	Families SA	Learning and Development Centre
TAS	Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child and Family Services	DHHS	The Child Protection Services Support Unit
VIC	Office for Children which is part of the Department of Human Services	DHS	Child Protection and Juvenile Justice Professional Development Unit (CP&JJPDU)
WA	Department for Community Development	DCD	The Learning Development Unit based at Community Skills Training Centre

Note: "Acronym" refers to the acronym most commonly used to refer to the program by its staff and within the community. In some jurisdictions the acronym originates from the Departmental name (e.g., Tasmania), in others the acronym is derived from the program name (e.g., South Australia).

**Table 2. Child protection and training staff relative to the population size**

	Population	Notifications	Child Protection Staff	All Trainers	Child Protection Trainers
New South Wales	6,774,200	133,636	1479	63	29
Victoria	5,022,300	37,523	937	unknown	9
Queensland	3,964,000	40,829	1432	24	24
Western Australia	2,010,100	3,206	1198	unknown	3
South Australia	1,542,000	17,473	600	19.6	5.2
Tasmania	485,300	10,788	220	4	3
ACT	325,200	7,275	115	8	2.6
Northern Territory	202,800	2,101	120	2	2

**NOTE:**

Population data were sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005)

Notification data were sourced from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2006)

Tasmania and WA use Senior Practitioners, Team Leaders etc. to assist in the delivery of training, thus reducing the number of dedicated child protection 'trainers'.

However, population size alone does not explain differences in workforce size: Victoria has the second highest population but is ranked fourth in terms of workforce size, and the Northern Territory which has the smallest population is ranked sixth in direct service delivery workforce size. Some of these differences may be attributable to geographic differences. It is possible that jurisdictions with a population spread over a wide geographic area, which includes remote regions (e.g., Northern Territory, and Western Australia) require more staff to service the population than jurisdictions with a highly concentrated population (e.g. Victoria and the ACT).

Demand on the service system (e.g. notifications) also varies significantly across jurisdictions (see Table 2). Service demand appears to have a closer association with direct service delivery staffing levels than either geography or population size. Reasons for variation in service demand have been discussed elsewhere (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1999; Bromfield & Higgins, 2004).

The scope of the training unit's responsibility also impacts upon staffing levels within training units (i.e. whether the unit was responsible for child protection training or training all department staff, and the amount of external professional groups for which the unit has training responsibilities). For example, in South Australia the training unit that delivers

statutory child protection training also provides training to youth workers and financial counsellors among others. Training units in Queensland, and Victoria had a child protection focus, however, Victoria's child protection training unit sat within the broader training unit for Juvenile Justice, Adoption and Permanent Care. Training units in New South Wales, South Australia, the ACT and Western Australia had a broad responsibility for training within the Department. All jurisdictions stated that they trained groups that were not employees of the Department. External groups typically included Police, staff in specific non-government community service organisations and mandated notifiers.

These factors alone are unlikely to explain why training units range in size from two in the Northern Territory to 29 in New South Wales. On the basis of this data it would appear that there are also significant differences in the level of resources invested in training across jurisdictions. In addition to the issues discussed, decisions about the resourcing of training units are likely to be informed by resources available across the departments, historical decisions in relation to training, the organisational commitment to a learning culture, planned changes, retention programs and recruitment numbers.



*The size of training units and the number of staff involved in direct service delivery is not directly comparable across jurisdictions as a variety of factors combine to explain such differences.*

## TRAINEES' EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The very existence of statutory child protection learning and development units in every state and territory reflect the need for specialist vocational training to prepare incumbents for the role of statutory child protection professionals. However, in the TAFE and University sector some courses may require students to demonstrate that they already possess a minimum level of knowledge to undertake the course (most usually reflected as 'pre-requisites'). Statutory child protection organisations undertake the same basic process by setting minimum entry-level qualifications and then prescribing mandatory training to ensure incumbents are 'job ready'. Essentially statutory child protection organisations employ those people who they assess as being most ready to be trained as a statutory child protection worker. Alternately, at the other end of the continuum new staff may be employed who already have extensive skills and experience in the child welfare area (e.g., they may have experience as a statutory child protection worker in another jurisdiction) such that the need for them to participate in training at all is minimal. In this section we compare minimum entry-level qualifications across jurisdictions and procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning.

## ENTRY-LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

The core entry-level qualification requirement for caseworkers is essentially the same in all jurisdictions. In most cases this is a Bachelor degree in fields such as Social Work, Psychology or the Social and Behavioural Sciences. However in some jurisdictions a Diploma level qualification is also considered in the recruitment process. For example, Victoria accepts Bachelor of Social Work and Diploma of Welfare Studies, but other degrees or diplomas with a unit

in case management and a supervised casework placement are also considered. Western Australia was the only jurisdiction where a qualification was not mandatory as part of the entry-level requirements. Entry-level qualification requirements were lowered in some circumstances (for example, there are no essential entry requirements for Aboriginal staff in New South Wales).

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Some people will have some or all of the required outcomes or competencies for components in formal training programs. Prior learning principles recognise learning regardless of how it occurred. It doesn't matter how the skill or information was learnt, the importance is placed on the skill and the fact that you can demonstrate that skill (Tovey & Lawlor, 2004). Recognition of prior learning (RPL) or recognition of current competence (RCC) is a component of many accredited training programs in both the VET and University sectors.

The benefits of RPL are two-fold: RPL values the skills of experienced practitioners and provides them with the opportunity to gain accreditation for the skills they have developed 'on the job'. RPL is also resource efficient as it enables training units to avoid providing unnecessary training. RPL may aid in both recruitment and retention as it provides experienced practitioners with the opportunity to earn an additional qualification. Arguments against RPL for statutory child protection training are that the legislation and policy environment varies in each state and territory making RPL impractical, and that in addition to skill development training provides an opportunity to engender a particular organisational culture in trainees.

Procedures to recognise prior learning might include providing documentation on previous qualifications such as a certificate of graduation or academic transcript, sitting a written test to assess knowledge or undertaking a competency-based assessment such as a role play to demonstrate skills gained through prior experience. Perhaps reflecting the advantages and disadvantages of RPL, there is no consistent approach to the issue of RPL in Australia. The ACT, New South Wales and Tasmania have RPL processes

in place for in-house training, and Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia are currently developing RPL processes. The Northern Territory and Victoria do not offer RPL.

## STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING

### GOALS OF TRAINING

There are a set of national competencies for statutory child protection workers recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework. The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group were involved in the development of these standards (Bromfield, 2006). Competency-based training is an approach to training that is structured around outcomes for the learner that are linked to actual job performance rather than knowledge acquisition, that is, what can the person do at the end of their training and does the training make them job ready?. Queensland, South Australia and Victoria were the only jurisdictions that identified their training as competency-based. However, all other jurisdictions reported that their core training was mapped to some extent against all of the national competencies. This is perhaps the best evidence available to suggest that training in Australian jurisdictions is more similar than different, and indeed that the role of statutory child protection practitioner does not vary greatly across jurisdictions. Consequently the training needs of practitioners in these jurisdictions are also likely to overlap significantly.

Consistent with the finding that child protection services in Australia are more similar than different, all child welfare learning and development units provide training programs for essentially the same purpose: quality service provision. This was demonstrated in each jurisdiction's response to the question, "What is the purpose, vision or mission of the training branch?" For example:

*"Our mission is to lead and develop professional practice in our staff. This will directly contribute to better outcomes for the children and young people whom we serve" (VIC).*

*"The Learning and Development Centre*

*was established to provide training across all classifications in the organisation in order to ensure that all staff are suitably equipped to provide excellent service" (SA).*

*"We develop staff by running courses that build their capacity to respond effectively to children, young people and their families" (ACT).*

*"To improve our workforce capability and performance by better supporting our staff in the work they do" (NSW).*

The finding that all Australian learning and development units responsible for training statutory child protection workers share the same goals was reinforced when we looked specifically at the aims and objectives of entry-level training. The core focus for most programs was around the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for child protection work. All States and Territories (except Western Australia) currently have formal entry-level training programs.

### STRUCTURE OF ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING

The way in which training is designed, the skills of the facilitator and the model of the program has a critical impact on the capacity of the training to achieve results both for the learner and for the organisation. There was a great deal of variation in the structure of entry-level training, particularly with regard to when training commences, the duration of training (see Table 3), and the role of workplace supervisors in the support and assessment of trainees.

### CONTENT OF ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING

A comparison of the modules covered in each jurisdiction can be found in Table 4. There is a significant degree of overlap between Australian jurisdictions in entry-level training, with the same set of core issues being included in most training programs. Core areas of training included: the child protection system, assessment, interviewing children, court matters, key child welfare legislation, case management and cultural diversity. Other training areas present in most jurisdictions were dynamics of child abuse and neglect, child development, collaborative practice, out-of-home

**Table 3. Structure of entry-level training**

	Start	Period over which training is completed
ACT	Within 1-month	6 months
NSW	Within 1-month	22-weeks (eight 1-week training blocks that are followed by 2-weeks workplace learning)
NT	ASAP	5-day induction, plus an additional 2-day case management and statutory client engagement module
QLD	Within 6-months	9-weeks (3-weeks delivered centrally. Weeks 4&5 field phase of the training where they are inducted into the office using a self paced learning booklet. In the final four weeks of training they complete two blocks of training at the central training unit and a one-week placement with a non-government organisation)
SA	ASAP	Essential within 6-months, required within 2-years
TAS	ASAP	2-week (10 day) induction program with a subsequent 3-day follow-up
VIC	Day 1	7-weeks (three 4-day practice clinics that are followed by 11-days of workplace learning)
WA	Not yet determined	Western Australia does not have a mandatory entry-level training program at present, but are in the process of developing an induction program. The proposed induction program will include 4-weeks full-time face-to-face contact interspersed with 4-weeks workplace learning

NOTE: Western Australia's induction training is being developed at present. The recorded duration of training is based on the initial proposal for the induction program.

care, responding to hostility, resistance, and denial among involuntary clients, as well as worker safety, values and professionalism. It was difficult to make an assessment of the entry-level course content from the module names alone, however from the information available it appeared that Victoria and Western Australian had a stronger emphasis on practice theories and models (e.g., reflective practice, strength-based practice) and on specific theories relevant to child protection work (e.g., trauma and attachment). The Victorian training program appears to be targeting higher-level constructs (e.g., departmental values, key skills and attributes) that underlie practice skills. Training programs in every state and territory made specific reference to working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, general cultural diversity programs were only provided in New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia. In all states and territories, the cultural awareness program regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture was mandatory for all staff across all job titles. Modules on common risk factors such as domestic violence, substance use and mental illness were common characteristics of training programs. It is clear when comparing jurisdictions that significant duplication in relation to the development of programs has occurred (and continues to do so). Such duplication demonstrates the need for national comparisons such as this one

and the benefits of information sharing forums such as the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development group.

### ASSESSING WHETHER THE AIMS OF ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED

Statutory child protection learning and development units reported that the aim of entry-level training is to develop in new staff the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for child protection work; but, how do the learning and development units determine whether or not they have achieved this goal? There are two elements to determining the success of entry-level training programs in achieving their goals. First, if the skills and knowledge taught in training are those that are requisite to the successful performance of the role of statutory child protection worker, then trainees need to be assessed to determine whether they have acquired the minimum level skills and knowledge to perform their role. Second, the training program itself needs to be evaluated to determine whether or not it is an effective program and achieves its aim of developing in new staff the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for child protection work.

**Table 4. Comparison of modules included in entry-level training programs**

ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland
1. Orientation	1. Introduction to the	1. Introduction to Statutory	1. Information Systems
2. Mandatory Reporting/ Identifying physical injury and physical effects of neglect	Caseworker Development Course	Welfare Work	2. Interacting with Children
3. Risk Assessment	2. Child Protection Dynamics	2. Dynamics of Child	3. Understanding Young People
4. Collaborative Practice	3. Case Management	Maltreatment	4. Intake and Risk Assessment
5. Overview of the Children and Young People Act	4. Legal Responsibilities	Child Abuse and Neglect in the	5. Investigation and Assessment
6. Other Laws relevant to children and Young People in the ACT	5. Legal Issues	NT Context	6. Child Safety
7. Annual reviews	6. Assessing Risk of Harm	3. Aboriginal Cultural Awareness	7. Case Management
8. Emergency Action	7. Alcohol and Other Drugs	Program	8. Managing the Care of
9. Writing Affidavits and Giving Evidence	8. Mental Health and Child Protection	4. Intake	Children and Young People in Placement
10. Interviewing children and young people	9. Dual Diagnosis	5. Planning the Investigation	9. Managing Complex Client Needs
11. Administrative Law	10. Domestic Violence	6. Danger Assessment	10. Apply Knowledge of Government Processes
12. Record Keeping	11. Building Effective Relationships With Children, Young People and Carers	7. Risk Assessment	11. Overview of Child Protection - Care for Babies
13. CHYPS (data system)	12. Affidavit Writing and Recording Evidence	8. Medical Assessment	12. Child Safety Officer Role and Responsibilities
14. Domestic Violence	13. Interviewing Children and Gathering Evidence	9. Legislation - The Community Welfare Act 1983	13. Workplace Health and Safety
15. Effective Practice with Involuntary Clients	14. Out-of-Home Care	10. Court Matters overview	14. Non-violent Crisis Intervention Training
16. Dealing with Aggressive Clients	15. Cultural Awareness Day	11. Role and Support of Foster Carers	15. Communication Skills
17. Indigenous Cross Cultural Training	16. Working with Aboriginal Children and Families	12. Young People in Care and Participation	16. Working with Families
18. Working with Children in Out of Home Care	17. Participation in Case Planning	13. Protocols with Police	17. Cultural Awareness
19. Looking After Children (LAC)		14. Interviewing Children overview	18. Court Work
		15. Sexual Assault Referral Centre presentation	19. Work with Other Services
		16. Managing Client Aggression	20. Work in a Legal and Ethical Context
		17. Training and Supervision.	

**South Australia**

1. The following topics are available for all new social workers to book into with the expectation that this could occur over a period of about 2 years:
2. Induction (not competency based nor assessed)
3. Receive and Record a Child Protection Notification
4. Orientation to Child Protection and Out of Home Care
5. Child Protection Investigation & Assessment
6. Case Management & Service Delivery including data management
7. Specialist Communication & Teamwork skills
8. Operate in a Legal Context
9. Work Safely (still being developed but looking at workplace violence and vicarious trauma)
10. Drug & Alcohol Awareness
11. Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity & Respect
12. Multicultural Diversity
13. Family Care Meetings
14. Provide Support to children affected by Domestic Violence
15. Orientation to disability work
16. Mental Health Awareness
17. Behaviour Management of young people
18. Youth Justice
19. Work in a legal and ethical environment
20. Support the progress and development of young people
21. Working with children - child development

**Tasmania**

1. Vision and Values
2. Induction Package
3. Code of Conduct
4. Translating Principles into Practice
5. Supervision Guidelines for Professional Staff
6. Working in Partnership
7. Working with Children and Young People
8. Working in a Statutory Organisation
9. Working with Involuntary Clients
10. FOI Guidelines
11. Privacy and Confidentiality Guidelines
12. Client Assessment and Service Document (CASD)
13. Placing Children away from Home
14. Initial Contact and Subsequent Pathways
15. Legal Practice
16. Assessment and Short Term Intervention
17. Tasmanian Risk Framework
18. Electronic Information Tool for Recording Notifications
19. Case Management Framework
20. Decision Making
21. Looking after Children
22. Placement of Children

**Victoria**

1. Each of the three Practice Clinics has a different theme. Practice Clinic One: Organisational Context and the Professional Practitioner, which includes: Introduction to the Learning Materials (Learning Guide, e learning program)
2. Adult Learning principles
3. Developing reflective practice
4. Personal values and attitudes
5. Departmental values
6. Key skills and attributes for the Child Protection role
7. The Victorian Risk Framework
8. Information systems and management
9. Working with indigenous children and families
10. Using supervision
11. Management of self and workplace health and safety
12. and Looking After Children. Practice Clinic Two: Child Protection Practice and Process, which includes: Attachment and Trauma theory
13. SIDS and safe sleeping
14. Child Development
15. Frameworks for interviewing children
16. Initial Investigations
17. Working in Partnership with families
18. Working with client complexity
19. Working with involuntary clients
20. Change, resistance and motivation
21. and Case Planning. Practice Clinic Three: Orientation to Court Legal Practice, which includes: Orientation to Children's Court and Court Advisory Unit processes
22. Court information management
23. Court report writing
24. Preparing children and families for Court
25. Preparing professionals for Court
26. Giving evidence in the Children's Court.

**Western Australia**

1. Organisation and its Philosophy
2. Strengths Based Philosophy
3. What guides Your Practice and Ethical Decision Making from a Strengths Based Perspective
4. Legislative Framework
5. Cultural Diversity
6. Working with Aboriginal Families
7. Overview of Protection of Children
8. Early Brain Development
9. Attachment and Bonding
10. Identifying Child Abuse
11. Intake, Classification and Response
12. Undertaking an Investigation
13. Finalising an Investigation
14. Child Safety Assessment Framework
15. Interviewing Children
16. Workplace Health and Safety Worker Safety
17. Court Proceedings
18. Information systems
19. Overview of Children in Care
20. Voice of the Child
21. Relative Carer Assessment Framework
22. Resourcing Children in Care
23. Voice of the Foster Carer/ Voice of the Caseworker/ Voice of Placement Agencies
24. Abuse in Care.

## ASSESSING COMPETENCE OF ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINEES

Assessment is conducted to determine if an individual can perform the skills or tasks required to do a job. The key aim of assessment is to predict future performance. Assessment processes and the consequences for failing assessment vary across jurisdictions. Trainees participate in a combination of classroom/competency assessments, role plays, written assessments and examinations. Assessment is not linked to employment status in any jurisdiction, except Queensland (see Table 5).

## ROLE OF SUPERVISORS IN SUPPORTING AND ASSESSING ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINEES

In all jurisdictions, supervisors are involved in supporting new staff in the workplace. New staff may also seek support from experienced staff in two main ways. In many jurisdictions there are designated Senior Practitioners whom practitioners are encouraged to consult. In other jurisdictions workers are 'buddied' with a more experienced worker. In New South Wales and Victoria supervisors are provided with a kit or guide to assist them in the support and supervision of new workers.

**Table 5. Assessing competence of entry-level trainees**

	How are training participants assessed?	What are the consequences of failing assessment?
ACT	There is no workplace assessment of the Core Training.	n/a
NSW	A combination of classroom assessment where assessors complete agreed criteria, role plays and examinations.	Re-sit assessment and/or develop plan for future focus of development.
NT	There is no formal assessment process for core FACS training. All commencing staff are placed on a three month probationary period.	n/a
QLD	A combination of practical competency based assessment (such as visits to a house that is used as part of the Training Branch to practice investigation and assessment) and exams.	Participants are able to re-sit the first assessment on two occasions and then once for all other pieces of assessment. A failure to be deemed competent after this results in termination of probationary period.
SA	A mixture of assessed activities in training, assignments to be completed after training which could be workplace projects or production of particular reports etc and observed workplace activity. Assessment is not compulsory, individuals make this choice.	Assessment is not linked to employment status. Trainees who do not meet assessment standards are encouraged to try again.
TAS	Child Protection Services is developing an assessment process for people who participate in training.	Probation periods apply to all new permanent employees and fixed-term employees where the appointment is for a period of six months or more. The purpose of a probationary period is to ascertain whether the work performance and conduct of a new employee meets the standards expected in the State Service. It is therefore important that all new employees participate in an induction and orientation program and receive relevant training and feedback on their performance. If there is concern about any aspect of the probationer's work performance, remedial action such as counselling, closer supervision or further training is provided. In situations where serious performance problems arise, employment may be terminated.
VIC	Three assessments are conducted in the Beginning practice program: writing a safety statement (risk assessment); engaging a parent on a first visit; and giving evidence in court. These are assessed by the submission of written material by participants, or the observation of skill demonstrated in a training room environment. Training consultants assess by providing written feedback to the participant with a copy provided to the workplace-based supervisor.	Feedback is provided to the region for regional management to manage on-going performance and learning and development needs. This is specific feedback in relation to core capabilities, however does not seek to assess as competent or not yet competent. Where practice concerns are identified in the course of the Beginning Practice program, the training consultant will engage in an open and transparent process, providing specific feedback to the new recruit and to their workplace-based supervisor.
WA	Western Australia do not assess whether learners are considered to be competent or not. However, sessions, days and courses are evaluated through participant observation, survey forms, case scenarios, role plays and group assessments.	n/a

In New South Wales and Queensland, supervisors are directly involved with the assessment of new staff. In New South Wales, supervisors have to complete the 'Caseworker Assessment Report' within six weeks of completing entry-level training. These reports are submitted to the learning and development branch. If there are any identified skills gaps at this point a development plan may be made with the worker, supervisor and the learning and development branch to address the identified skills gaps. In Queensland, on completion of entry-level training Child Safety Officers must complete a Workplace Assessment workbook that has seventeen core competencies. Some of these competencies are mandatory and some of the competencies are role or job specific. These competencies need to be completed over a 12-month period. The Workplace Assessment workbook must be signed-off by workplace supervisors and the centre Manager.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING PROGRAMS

Assessment processes for trainees provides a means to determine how effective an individual has been in acquiring the knowledge and skills that training is designed to impart upon them. However evaluation is needed to determine how effective the training program is in conveying these knowledge and skills. For example, if an entire cohort fails to meet an assessment standard is this most likely due to individual failure or the quality of the training? For a discussion on evaluation see (For a discussion on evaluation see Holzer, J. Higgins, Bromfield, Richardson & D. Higgins, 2006). In Australia, only Queensland and Victoria have had their entry-level training programs formally evaluated to determine their effectiveness. While the results of these evaluations were reportedly positive, the evaluations are not readily available to the public. However, all other jurisdictions with training programs in place incorporate multiple forms of internal evaluation including, participant feedback, training advisory groups, trainer and supervisor feedback and analysis of assessment results.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to provide a national snapshot of the way in which training in child protection is being provided at a point in time (October 2005 – March 2006). Although a detailed critique was not provided, there are several broad issues that arise from this description of training in statutory child protection services in Australia.

In a study comparing Australian statutory child protection services, Bromfield and Higgins (2005) concluded that while there were differences in the procedures and legislation guiding the provision of services, there was a large degree of similarity in the core activities being undertaken by child protection practitioners (e.g. information gathering, assessment, case planning and case management). This finding was supported by the findings of this audit of Australia statutory child protection training.

There was very little difference in the broader purpose of learning and development units, or the specific aims of entry-level training across jurisdictions. All training was mapped to some extent to all of the national competencies, thus it is not surprising that the content of training programs (in terms of the topic areas included) were very similar across jurisdictions. There was also very little difference in the entry-level qualification requirements for statutory child protection workers across Australia.

Although the aims and content of entry-level training were very similar, the structure in entry-level training varied significantly across jurisdictions in terms of when training began, the total duration of the training period, length of training blocks, and the role and length of workplace learning in the training process. The greatest area of variation was the size of training units. The number of dedicated child protection trainers ranged from two to 29. A variety of factors combined to explain differences in the size of training units such that the conclusion drawn was that size of training units was not directly comparable across jurisdictions. The size of training units and the resources available in terms of staffing are likely to have also impacted the structure of entry-level training.

Processes in place for recognition of prior learning, and even the position adopted in relation to the favourability of recognition of prior learning, varied between jurisdictions. Only half of the Australian jurisdictions had formal assessment processes in place to determine whether trainees had actually acquired the requisite skills to successfully undertake the position of statutory child protection worker at the completion of training. Where formal assessment processes were in place, assessment was only linked to employment status in one jurisdiction. Only two jurisdictions had formally evaluated their training programs to determine whether they were effective in achieving their goals. The apparent lack of attention to assessment and evaluation are consistent with other areas in child welfare. In an audit of Australian child abuse prevention programs, Tomison and Poole (2000) reported that the majority of Australian programs had not been subjected to anything beyond process and input evaluation – that is, they had not been evaluated to determine whether or not they worked. There is a need for training programs to be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of these programs in preparing individuals for the role of child protection practitioner.

In the opinion of the authors, evaluation and assessment of staff training are important steps to ensuring children and families receive quality service provision. However, even with adequate evaluation and assessment to ensure quality training is in place, training alone cannot guarantee that service standards will be reached or prevent all potential errors in decision-making. Training is important, but it is not the solution to everything. With the increasing levels of accountability and public scrutiny in the area of child abuse intervention the importance of targeted and effective training has never been more critical. In all states and territories, reviews of the deaths of children known to child protection agencies and reports from various inquiries have “identified...the need for reform in the areas of induction, training and ongoing professional development of staff” (Forster, 2004). Despite such recommendations, there is still evidence to indicate that traditional training methodologies do not always work and that the best models include a combination of targeted recruitment and selection, timely induction

and entry level training and ongoing support and supervision in the field (Gibbs, 2001; Office of Public Service Merit and Equity (OPSME), 2005; Ogilvie-Whyte, 2006).

The limitation of this paper is that it provides a description only of statutory child protection training programs in Australia. We have not engaged in any discussion in relation to what constitutes ‘good’ training. In addition, this is not a study of training participants’ or trainers’ actual experience of training, rather it describes the policy and procedure framework that guides the way in which training is designed to be provided. Australian research that examines child protection workers sense of preparedness for their roles, and how this links to the training that they receive may be of benefit.

The findings from this paper have significant implications for policy makers and trainers. The paper provides trainers with sufficient information to enable them to identify other jurisdictions they may approach in relation to the development of new training materials in a specific area. The high degree of similarity between jurisdictions also supports the assumption of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group that trainers can benefit from sharing resources and learning from the experiences of trainers in other jurisdictions.

Arrangements have been made in the past for workers in one jurisdiction to sit in on training provided by another jurisdiction. This is particularly the case with smaller jurisdictions sending their staff to training programs run by jurisdictions with larger training programs. In the past, this has happened on an ad hoc basis. However, the purchasing of training places from another jurisdiction may be able to be developed as a planned response – and in some cases may be more economical than developing and running the programs in-house.

The findings from this paper also support the notion that there is a base set of skills that are consistent across jurisdictions, and which new staff are trained in by state and territory statutory child protection learning and development units. Therefore it is also likely that skills and knowledge gained in



one jurisdiction may be transportable to other jurisdictions.

One of the possible future functions of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development group could be to identify skills clusters that are recognisable across state and territory borders. Such an initiative would make transportability of skills, recognition of prior learning and current competencies easier across Australia. In turn, this would have flow-on benefits in terms of financial savings and a reduction in duplication of training. The identification of skills clusters recognised across jurisdictions would be a significant means of progressing a national approach to child protection in Australia. National approaches in the child protection field is an apparent priority for Commonwealth, states and territories demonstrated by the establishment of the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council National Approach for Child Protection Working Group. While the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group may be able to identify common skills clusters, recognition of such clusters across borders would need to be coordinated across training and policy divisions within state and territory departments. One of the issues preventing such recognition at the moment is lack of formal assessment procedures across Australian jurisdictions. Assessment processes that were recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (as is the case in South Australia) would assist to overcome this difficulty.

The findings from this paper may also be of interest to practitioners, community-based child welfare organisations, and academics (in relation to both research and course content). In particular, practitioners may be interested to know about training processes in other jurisdictions, and at a more practical level may use the findings from this paper to make informed decisions about career development that involves moving across jurisdictional borders or to inform applications for recognition of prior learning. Like smaller jurisdictions, community-based child welfare organisations may not have the resources to develop their own training programs and may find it more economical to negotiate purchasing training places in specific statutory

child protection training modules. This paper also increases the awareness among all readers of the knowledge and skills expected of statutory child protection workers.

## CONCLUSION

Although there were differences in the procedures and frameworks for the provision of training, the aims and content of statutory child protection training across Australian jurisdictions was more similar than different. The findings from this study suggest that there are great opportunities for the sharing of information across jurisdictions, and that training programs are sufficiently comparable for resources to be incorporated from other states and territories with only minor modifications to account for local issues. Issues in relation to assessment and evaluation are priority areas for future research.

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### AUTHORS:

Leah Bromfield PhD  
Research Fellow and Assistant Manager  
National Child Protection Clearinghouse  
Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Mr Robert Ryan  
Principal Training and  
Staff Support Officer  
Queensland Department of Child Safety.

### DISCLAIMER:

The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institutions at which they work.

### ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Dr Leah Bromfield  
National Child Protection Clearinghouse  
Australian Institute of Family Studies  
300 Queen Street Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Phone: +61 3 9214 7888  
Fax: +61 3 9214 7839  
Email: leah.bromfield@aifs.gov.au

**Attachment Marking**

The preceding 14 pages is the annexure mentioned and referred to as **ATTACHMENT 1** in the statement of Robert Ryan taken on 31/10/2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Robert RYAN

*B. King*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person witnessing statement



Signature of witness  
to Inquiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person  
witnessing statement: \_\_\_\_\_

# “Whoever you are”

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

“Little one,  
whoever you are,  
wherever you are,  
there are little ones just like you  
all over the world.”

**Mem Fox**



**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia  
Report by Robert RYAN  
2009 Churchill Fellow**

**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia**  
**Report by Robert RYAN**  
**2009 Churchill Fellow**

**To investigate training models for professional staff in statutory  
child protection**

*“People make organisations work and they determine the quality of the output. The effectiveness of services provided is largely dependent on the way in which the organisation supports and leads those people employed to do the work (Social Services Inspectorate, 2000, p.3).*

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

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I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which into the final report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed..... Dated.....

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## **Acknowledgements and introduction**

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Finally and most importantly I would like to thank my wife, Rachel and son Liam who accompanied me on my travels and put up with the many hours at night over the last eighteen months pottering away on the internet and phone in the development of the itinerary and kept me company during the trip listening to the ramblings of a person

intoxicated on the ideas and initiatives I was fortunate enough to experience across the world.

During our travels one of the books we brought for our son was called "*Whoever You are*" by Mem Fox (2001).

The introduction to the book is as follows:

*"Every day all over the world, children are laughing and crying, playing and learning, eating and sleeping. They may not look the same. They may not speak the same language. Their lives may be quite different. But inside they are just like you"*

This simple book acknowledges the commonality of humanity. In the course of my Churchill Fellowship I discovered that across 45, 000 kilometres of travel in the area of child protection we have a lot in common and in many cases we are all working on similar strategies to enhance learning programs for staff in child protection. If we can build on these similarities and connections there is the potential to improve training programs in child protection across jurisdictions and ultimately this will help to improve the lives of the children, young people and families we support.

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## Executive Summary

Robert (Rob) Ryan  
 Assistant Regional Director  
 South East Region (Child Safety, Youth and Families)  
 Department of Communities, Queensland  
 PO Box 7086, Holland Park East, Queensland Australia 4121  
 Mobile: 0407 626 625

## Project Description

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

## Highlights

Over the course of three months I had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of experts in the field of child protection and to share in their approaches to training, learning and development in this complex area. Perhaps the most striking observation for me was that across the world we have more in common than different in the area of learning and development. In most jurisdictions we are struggling with the same challenges and creating systems and models that are very similar, the variance is usually legislation and local policy and procedure. However the fundamentals and principles that underpin what we do are consistent.

One of the highlights was the opportunity to have a behind the scenes tour of the Churchill War Rooms. The opportunity to walk around the map room and to feel the spirit of Winston Churchill in this amazing place was a great beginning to my travels – at times I felt as if Churchill himself was standing alongside me and it set the scene for what was to be an incredible three months. It is almost impossible to have only a few highlights as I learnt something in every visit I conducted. However the key experiences that have had a strong bearing on my findings and recommendations include:

- Visiting the Tavistock and Portman
- Meeting with Professor Eileen Munro at the London School of Economics
- Attending Child Stat in New York City
- Observing the work of the staff at Corner House in Minneapolis
- Attending the Symposium on Fairness and Equity in Child Protection Training at Berkley, California.
- Touring the mock court rooms and house at the National Child Protection Training Centre in Winona, USA.
- Meeting with staff at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and hearing about the variety of programs and services offered by the agency.
- Visiting the Andrus Children's Centre in New York and spending time with staff in the houses and at the school.
- Meeting with Cindy Blackstock and her team at the First Nations Children's Society in Ottawa, Canada and hearing about the "Be a witness" campaign.
- Conducting a lecture for students and professionals at the University of Bangor in Northern Wales.
- Learning about the many on-line programs that provide support to staff across the world such as the Multi Agency Resource Service, Scottish Child Care and Protection Network, Centre for UK wide learning in child protection, National Child welfare workforce institution, Children's workforce development council and the Social care institute for excellence.

The recommendations below reflect the key points I identified during my travels that would make the biggest difference for Queensland and Australia in terms of enhancing child protection learning and development programs.

- 1) A consistent theme across all places I visited was the need to include advanced child development within the child protection field both at a statutory and community service level.
- 2) The model of ChildStat used in New York was an excellent example of proactive learning and quality assurance and this should be trialled in Australia.
- 3) The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum (ASCPL&D) should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.
- 4) There is a need to improve the multi-disciplinary learning models across all people working in the child protection field. Any model needs to be integrated across Government and non-Government
- 5) National competencies and learning modules for child protection should be identified and linked to the ASCPL&D forum and qualifications framework.
- 6) There needs to be a focus on a suite of primary preventions learning and development tools for communities in child protection.
- 7) All jurisdictions involved in training staff to work in the field of child protection should consider the implementation and use of mock Court rooms and a mock house.
- 8) Further international work needs to occur between Indigenous communities and advocacy agencies to learn from each other and to ensure the implementation of cultural competencies is prioritised in the child protection area.
- 9) Partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions are critical to extend learning (particularly practitioner/academic research).
- 10) Ongoing funding for agencies such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for Child Protection to ensure research continues to be conducted on best practice in child protection.
- 11) There is a need in Queensland to implement and trial child advocacy centres.
- 12) There is a need to build and enhance international learning highways in the area of child protection to maximise the existing resources across the world and avoid duplication.
- 13) Across the world every jurisdiction has had at least one major review by Government. The findings of these reviews are consistent and share similar themes. Prior to the implementation of any future reviews a first step should be to conduct international research and learning to identify the recommendations that have been made in previous enquiries.

I have already commenced a range of strategies to share my learning's and I will utilise these forums to further extend my findings and build a network of colleagues who are interested in working on ways to implement as many of the recommendations as possible.

I will be disseminating the learning's in the follow way:

- Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Forum with colleagues from Australia & New Zealand (in early 2011)
- Presentation of my findings to the Board and key staff of NAPCAN Australia
- Presentation of my findings to staff in the Department of Communities (across a range of different forums)
- Presentation of my findings to community partners, vocational institutions and academics.
- Sharing my report with all the people I met across the world during my research

## **PROGRAM / ITINEARY**

### **LONDON, APRIL 2010**

1. Tavistock Centre, Belsize Lane, LONDON Contact – Professor David Lawlor and Professor Andrew Cooper
2. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) LONDON Contact – Tracy King and Chris Cloke
3. Children’s Workforce Development Council, LEEDS – Sue Brook
4. Social Care Institute for Excellence – Patricia Kearney
5. London School of Economics – Professor Eileen Munro
6. London Metropolitan University – Liz Davies, Senior Lecturer
7. Phil Reed – Director, Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms

### **WALES, APRIL 2010**

8. University of Bangor, Senior Lecturer - Fiona Macdonald
9. Action for Children, Group Manager - Mark Roberts
10. Childrens Team Ewynedd, Team Manager - Mel Panther
11. Barnardos, Family Support Service - Caban Bach
12. NSPCC, David Chambelayne, Denbighshire, Wales

### **EDINBURGH, MAY 2010**

13. MARS – Multi Agency Resource Service, Beth Smith, Director & Jane Scott
14. University of Stirling, Dr Brigid Daniel
15. Scottish Child Care and Protection Network, Fiona Mitchell
16. University of Stirling, Duncan Helm, Senior Teaching Fellow
17. Centre for UK wide learning in Child protection (CLiP)– Catherine Burns and Dr Sharon Vincent

### **NEW YORK, MAY 2010**

18. Andrus Children’s Centre, Kamilah Francis, Tyrone Hodge, Residential Program Manager
19. Siobhan Masterson, Director of Sanctuary and Treatment Services, Yonkers and Michael Thomas, Sanctuary Consultant
20. Andrus Children’s Centre, Sandra Vilar, Clinical Social Worker

21. Social Work Education Consortium and National Child Welfare Workforce Institute -School of Social Welfare University of Albany, Dr Mary McCarthy
22. New York City (NYC) James Satterwhite Training Academy, NYC Administration for Children's Services - Ervine Kimberley Executive Director
23. NYC Childstat – NYC Administration for Children's Services, Andrea Reid Assistant Commissioner
24. NYC Reference Group – Christina, Helena, Diane, Celina Higgins, Cynthia, Andrea Reid (In service training, Foster care team, Emergency Children's Services, Quality Assurance team, Training designer, Professional development team)

#### **OTTAWA, CANADA, MAY 2010**

25. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, Dr Cindy Blackstock
26. Andrea Auger, Caring across the boundaries co-ordinator

#### **TORONTO, CANADA, MAY 2010**

27. University of Toronto, Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare- Dr. Ivan Brown
28. Ontario Children's Aid Societies – Education Services (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services) Hannah McIntyre, Co-ordinator Learning Resources Development

#### **WINONA, MINNESOTA, USA, JUNE 2010**

29. National Child Protection Training Centre – Amy Russell

#### **MINNEAPOLIS, USA, JUNE 2010**

30. Corner House, Child Advocacy Centre - Miriam Maples

#### **VANCOUVER ISLAND, CANADA, JUNE 2010**

31. Learning Education and Development, Ministry for Children and Family Development, Annemarie Travers
32. University of Victoria – Maxine Gibson, Field Education Consultant, Department of Social Work
33. University of Victoria – Dr.Daniel Scott, School of Child and Youth Care

**VANCOUVER, CANADA, JUNE 2010**

34. Regional Child and Family Development Consultant, Vancouver Coastal Region, Office of the Director of Integrated Practice – Kim Dooling

**OAKLAND/BERKLEY/SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 2010**

35. Statewide Training and Education Committee– Barrett Johnson – Child Welfare in Service Training Project
36. Children and Family Services Division – State of California, Christine Mattos, Manager.
37. Symposium - Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training and Education – Dr.Carl Bell (Risk factors are not predictive factors due to protective factors); Barbara Needell, Juvenile Court Assistance Team (Bench card – reflective questions for Judges) Tribal STAR – Tom Lidot, Parents Anonymous, Dr Lisa Plon-Berlin
38. Bay Area Academy – Enhancing Professional Development - Dr Rodger Lum, Director; Jamie Evans, Mary Garrison – Garrison and Associates OD Consultants
39. Academy for Professional Excellence – Program Coordinator – Liz Quinnett
40. Elizabeth Gilman, Curriculum Specialist, California Social Work Education Centre

**“Learning goes on in context and usually the context involves interaction with the broader environment” (Lawrence, 1993).**

Child abuse investigation and intervention is a high-risk area in the public service. Dowlen (1995) identifies the issue of managing risk as a growing concern for managers who are faced with legislative change, financial constraint and more scrutiny. Work on the area of identifying critical factors for successfully functioning child protection services has been high on the agenda of countries across the world for many years. Much of this research identifies that the key to successful delivery of services to children is that organisational policies no matter how well written cannot ensure positive outcomes for children alone. Factors that are critical include a positive culture where learning is identified as a constant part of everything that is done. It is also important to have staff with experience sharing knowledge and practice wisdom to assist in on the job learning. Barton & Welbourne (2005).

In terms of the transfer of learning authors such as Joyce and Showers (1980; 1981) and Royer (1979) have identified the importance of locating learning as close as possible to the workplace to ensure “near” transfer. Billett (2000; 2001) also focuses on the importance of goal directed workplace activities as a mechanism for enhancing learning.

International and Australian literature describes the significance of severe recruitment difficulties and very high attrition rates in child protection (Rycraft, 1990, 1994; Barraclough 2000; Gibbs 2001a; 2001b). Whilst much has been written about the problems, and it is clear that the consequences are significant for staff and the community, it appears hard to find solutions. The inherently stressful nature of child protection and the importance of systems of learning and support for staff are critical in strategies to address this problem (Gibbs 2005).

The identification of the importance of training and education for professionals involved in child protection work continues to be central to the recommendations of the numerous inquiries into instances of fatal or serious child abuse and the accumulated findings of research on child abuse and the child protection system. The highlighting of serious system and practice failures (Gibbs 2005) has been strongly linked to the recognition that child protection workers require training and guidance beyond that offered in generic qualifying programs in order to identify and respond effectively to cases of child abuse and neglect. In particular, recognising children in need, related processes in risk assessment and a greater understanding and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and professionals have been benchmarked as areas where perceived deficits in knowledge and

skills require redress through learning and development strategies (Gibbs 2001/2005; Munro 2002).

### **History of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group**

“The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group comprises of representatives with learning and development responsibilities in every Australian state and territory, and New Zealand. In addition, there are representatives from the Australian Centre for Child Protection (at the University of South Australia) and the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (at the Australian Institute of Family Studies). The Group meets twice a year to:

- facilitate the sharing of training resources;
- discuss approaches to training in each jurisdiction;
- discuss what works and what doesn't work
- share initiatives and innovation;
- avoid duplication of effort;
- identify commonalities and differences between approaches in different jurisdictions;
- articulate the link between training, and recruitment and retention;
- discuss approaches and strategies for responding to shared problems; and
- support research to facilitate the above goals.

Each meeting is hosted by a different jurisdiction across Australia/New Zealand. Historically, the Group arose because representatives from two of the larger jurisdictions (Victoria and New South Wales) saw the need for such a forum. These individuals were the drivers behind the initial meeting. The Group was originally a meeting of state and territory learning and development organisations and was held in conjunction with the Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.” (Bromfield 2006)

In 2007 Dr. Leah Bromfield of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and Robert Ryan, Department of Child Safety, published a national comparison of statutory child protection training in Australia in conjunction with the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group. The aim of the project was to provide a national audit of statutory child protection learning and development units and the programs provided by such units at a point in time (October 2005 – March 2006). (Bromfield and Ryan 2007)

The ASCPL&D forum has saved countless hours in the development and implementation of learning programs over the years. The connections and relationships forged with members of this group have been sustained across distance, changing work roles and increasingly tight fiscal constraints. As I travelled across the world it was refreshing and uplifting to meet with many like minded professionals who also shared a passion for quality learning and

development programs for staff in child protection. In every location I visited this energy and drive was connected to a fundamental belief that if we support and train staff to be the best they can be, we can influence and change the practice of our child protection systems. Given the Productivity Commission's (2008) Report on Government Services that found approximately \$1.7 billion was spent across Australia on child protection and supported placement services in 2006-07 it is imperative that our child protection systems are working as effectively as possible and the development of organisational human capital is a critical element in that process.

The findings of my Churchill Fellowship will be shared with members of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Forum as an opportunity to continue the collaborative partnerships across Australia and New Zealand. In turn hopefully the agencies highlighted in this report can continue to build connections across the world to reduce duplication and build on the many great learning initiatives that already exist and collaborate on the innovations of the future.



The Tavistock Clinic was established in 1920 in Tavistock Square in London by Dr. Hugh Crichton-Miller. The aim of programs at the Tavistock is to provide “the best possible training for good mental health practice at all levels from primary care to specialist services”. A significant proportion of the training that is conducted is multidisciplinary and based on expertise derived from the clinical practice of more than 290 clinical trainers including child, adult and systemic psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, nurses, psychoanalysts, social workers and psychiatrists. The programs support the concept of a skills escalator allowing students “to step off and on with the educational process, according to their circumstances from foundation through to advanced programs. The training is designed in such a way as to provide “space in which individuals learn to think, to experiment and to develop a greater capacity for observation and reflection”. Training usually takes place in small groups (rarely larger than 15) and the groups capacity for reflection can be the primary tools for the learning that takes place.

The courses are accredited through partnerships with universities and close links with professional bodies. The aim is to develop knowledge, skills, capacities and competence through core professional training.

In discussions with Professor Andrew Cooper and Professor David Lawlor the key gaps identified in the training of staff in the child protection area are as follows:

- 1) Staff lacking the skills to engage effectively and directly with traumatised children.
- 2) Staff not having practical strategies in terms of managing conflict and working with conflicted families.
- 3) A limited knowledge of child development and a need for a sophisticated understanding of who you have in front of you (including training to realise what is extreme and what is normal).

Some of the key deficits identified in child protection training in the United Kingdom included:

- 1) High levels of bureaucracy
- 2) Very high levels of defensive practice
- 3) Very procedurally driven
- 4) Difficult space to work
- 5) Low trust and eroding from practice
- 6) Politicians anxious and reactive

Some of the strategies to address the gaps in learning models for child protection staff included:

- 1) Promoting the introduction of space for practice reflection for staff
- 2) Create mediating opportunities to manage conflict (internal)
- 3) Reflecting team models of practice so that no one person has to manage a case on their own – multiple frames of reference.
- 4) Asking key questions such as “How do you create space for alternative perspectives”
- 5) Understanding complexity theory
- 6) A spread of work for frontline staff– even caseloads to work with some voluntary families so no one worker has all complex/extreme or dysfunctional families.
- 7) An emphasis on experiential learning for all staff (and carers).
- 8) Including a component of child observation as part of early training programs (infant/young child for 1 year) for all staff working with children. Students write observations and reflect on the total experience including developmental milestones and their emotional experience as an observer.
- 9) A significant training focus to build skilled carers and residential staff to manage and intervene effectively with young people suffering complex and extreme trauma.
- 10) Ensuring multidisciplinary team work and learning so that staff can have a range of different paradigms when considering intervention with families.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) There is a need to ensure adequate attention is given to sophisticated child development learning opportunities for staff and carers working in the child protection field in Queensland.
- 2) Consideration should be given to including periods of child observation in learning/training programs to ensure practical skills development and self awareness for staff.
- 3) Opportunities for multidisciplinary team learning should be included in curriculum development to ensure shared access to different frameworks.
- 4) Models of learning and workplaces need to have a significant component of practical skills development – with time for reflection, understanding complexity and space for alternative perspectives.
- 5) Training programs need to provide up skilling for staff in the management of conflict and how to intervene effectively with families in crisis.

**Source:** <http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>



### **The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

The London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was established on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1884. By 1889 the London Society had 32 branches throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Each branch raised funds to support an inspector, who investigated reports of child abuse and neglect. At the 1889 annual general meeting the Society changed its name to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The first Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act was passed in 1889. This was largely the result of five years' vigorous lobbying. Since its establishment in London in the 1880s, the NSPCC has helped more than 10 million children in the UK.

The NSPCC has a vision that they can make a difference for all children. The aim of the NSPCC is to end cruelty to children in the UK, even if it takes many generations to realise this goal. All services, advice, support, campaigning and education activities of the NSPCC are driven by four principles:

- Focus on areas in which the NSPCC can make the biggest difference
- Prioritise the children who are most at risk
- Learn what works best for them
- Create leverage for change.

The NSPCC's local services focus on seven key issues and groups of children most at risk:

1. Those who experience neglect
2. Physical abuse in high-risk families
3. Those who experience sexual abuse
4. Children under the age of one
5. Disabled children
6. Children from certain black and minority ethnic (BME) communities
7. Looked after children.

The work of the NSPCC includes:

**ChildLine** - the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. Trained volunteers provide advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Children can also receive advice by text.

**Services for children and families.** Projects in local communities that offer a range of services for children who have experienced or are at risk of abuse.

**Advice for adults and professionals.** Services include the NSPCC help lines, general enquiries and specialist advice and information for adults and professionals in order to help them protect children.

**Strategy and development.** Research examining the issues around abuse, in order to develop services, campaigns and other new ways to end cruelty to children.

**Consultancy services.** Work with organisations and professional networks to help them do everything they can to protect children.

**Campaigning.** Work at a national, regional and local level, influencing, mobilising and educating so child protection is at the forefront of people's minds

The NSPCC offers a range of courses designed to meet the needs of children, families and professionals. They are grounded in up-to-date research, theory and practice to support staff in all aspects of safeguarding children.

Training programs include the following topics:

- Basic child protection training
- NSPCC EduCare child protection awareness programmes
- Creating safer organisations
- Designated safeguarding children officer training
- Designated senior person for safeguarding children training (schools)
- Safer interviewing skills
- Safer recruitment: risk assessments and Criminal Records checks
- Analysis and professional judgement
- Conducting Section 47 Enquiries
- Designated safeguarding children officer training
- Child development
- Child neglect
- Communicating with children
- Diversity modules for early years settings
- Domestic abuse and its impact on children
- Practical approaches to valuing diversity and safeguarding children
- Safeguarding disabled children
- Achieving best evidence
- Child protection supervision skills
- Postgraduate certificate in therapeutic work with children
- Value Based Interviewing (VBI)

The NSPCC has also developed a range of distance learning programs designed to teach everybody about their role in protecting children. These programs include:

- Child protection awareness
- Child protection: staying aware
- Child protection awareness in education
- Child protection awareness in health
- Children's rights
- Creating a culture of safety
- Keeping children safe
- Keeping children safe in sport
- Preventing bullying behaviour
- Safer recruitment and selection

The NSPCC also provide a range of training packs, DVD's and guides including:

1. What if...? An electronic board game on CD for practitioners engaged in therapeutic work with children and young people from seven to 12 years
2. Safeguarding children: a shared responsibility – a training pack that supports current government guidance and is designed for anyone working with children and families.
3. Seeing and hearing the child: rising to the challenge of parental substance misuse and Children's voices: living with parental substance misuse
4. A child development resource pack for practitioners working with children and families, their managers and trainers.
5. Make a difference: tools for developing and assuring quality in inter-agency relationships and training
6. A user friendly CD comprising two tools to support the complex process of evaluating inter-agency training and understanding the core dimensions of effective inter-agency relationships.
7. CORE-INFO leaflets. A series of information leaflets on aspects of physical child abuse.
8. The ABCD Pack. A training and resource pack for trainers in child protection and disability.
9. Children and the net. A basic awareness training programme on the safeguarding implications of information and communication technology (ICT) for practitioners working with children or adult offenders.
10. Safety in learning: essentials in safeguarding training for the education community
11. A resource pack for the designated person / child protection coordinator delivering training in safeguarding children to staff working in schools or colleges.
12. Learning to protect: a child protection resource pack for teacher training
13. Learning to protect is designed for tutors of primary and secondary initial teacher training courses who have responsibility for providing basic child protection awareness training for student teachers.
14. Safeguarding children: everybody's business
15. A comprehensive programme of basic child protection awareness training.
16. Fragile: handle with care - protecting babies from harm
17. The child's world: assessing children in need
18. Two way street. This DVD pack aims to improve skills in communicating and consulting with disabled children and young people.
19. The social baby: understanding babies' communication from birth. This innovative DVD looks at the development of infant communication and helps parents to understand their babies from birth.
20. Keeping children safe: a toolkit for child protection. A complete package for people working in child protection across the world. The toolkit aims to support agencies

putting the Keeping Children Safe standards into place at international, national and local levels.

#### 21. Safeguarding through audit: a guide to auditing case review recommendations

In 2000 the NSPCC launched the “Full Stop Campaign”. This campaign was supported by a major fund raising initiative with the goal of raising two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This milestone was reached after a period of eight years. The aim of the campaign was to end cruelty to children within a generation. Ninety percent of the services delivered by the NSPCC are funded by the NSPCC and ten percent of funds are obtained through Government sources. The NSPCC currently has 180 teams operating throughout networks across the UK. The organisation has approximately 3000 staff.

In my discussions with staff of the NSPCC the top strategies to improve child protection systems include:

1. More effective and targeted resources to focus on primary prevention and focused advertising/media to build the communities understanding of ways to protect children.
2. Improved remuneration for staff who undertake the most complex work with chaotic and vulnerable families.
3. Better skills development in the area of listening to children and understanding child development milestones for trauma.
4. Improved skills development in communicating with children.
5. Increasing the range of therapeutic treatment services available to provide a suite of service delivery options.
6. A move away from live-in residential services to a focus on therapeutic centres or communities of support with day programs.
7. A focus on child protection being everyone’s responsibility.

#### **Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Exploration of opportunities to align existing services across Queensland and Australia under one agency banner (e.g. the model of NSPCC and Child Line working together).
2. Identification of strategies to create learning programs for the whole community (professionals, other Government agencies and the wider public), with consideration of Federal and State funding for either Community Based organisations or Government programs to service this training.
3. Consideration is given to accessing pre-existing tools through the NSPCC and using these resources in an Australian context (rather than re-inventing the wheel).

4. Consideration of a program of fund raising similar to the “Full Stop Campaign” in Australia.
5. Exploration of best practice/evidence of what works and trials of these programs in Australia.
6. Ongoing attention and funding for primary prevention models and programs to divert children and young people away from the statutory system (including the use of advertising campaigns and multi-media to make child protection everyone’s business).

**Source:** [www.nspcc.org.uk/training](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/training)



The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) was established in 2005. The role of the CWDC is two-fold, a Sector Skills Body supporting around 500,000 people and a workforce reform body supporting change across the children and young people’s workforce. The CWDC works with local authority Directors of Children’s Services, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), and other partners in the Children’s Workforce Network (CWN) to address common issues across the wider children and young people’s workforce.

The CWDC has a newly qualified social worker programme which is a 12 month support package to ensure that newly qualified social workers have access to the best possible opportunities, enabling them to broaden the skills and knowledge they have gained through initial training. The program clarifies expectations of newly qualified social workers by the end of their first year of employment, defines the requirements of staff who work with and support new social workers, establishes a more consistent baseline of experiences, expertise and abilities for those working in children’s settings. The program builds on The Children’s Plan: Building brighter futures (DCSF, 2007) which is a vision that hold children and young people at the centre of all thinking, where they are valued and this is translated into activities that help them achieve their potential. This program is open to all organisations both statutory and voluntary that support children and young people, their parents and families in England.

The Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) ensures that the qualifications developed for the children and young people's workforce reflect an integrated working culture. Various partners are working together to make sure that new and revised qualifications support shared values, and that the common core is reflected effectively in all IQF qualifications. The IQF will also support progression and mobility across the children's workforce, as qualifications are developed with improved links between them. By the end of 2010 the development stage of the IQF will be complete, and qualifications will gradually be added to the framework as they are developed.

The common core describes the skills and knowledge that everyone who works with children and young people (including volunteers) is expected to have. The six areas of expertise in the common core offer a single framework to underpin multi-agency and integrated working, professional standards, training and qualifications across the children and young people's workforce. The common core is used locally in developing job descriptions, induction, and training and development provisions. It is also used in workforce development strategies. The common core includes the following six areas:

- Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families
- Child and young person development
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child or young person
- Supporting transitions
- Multi-agency and integrated working
- Information sharing

The CWDC web site hosts "Share Street" a community for sharing resources and discussing best practice in the workplace, for building networks and communicating with colleagues. The site has movies, documents, forums, case studies and children's views.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Consideration of the implementation of an integrated qualifications framework for child protection learning and development programs across Australia to ensure consistency in models and jurisdictional staff mobility.
- 2) Consideration of the implementation of a common core in the development of job descriptions, induction, and training and development programs across Australia for staff and carers.



- 3) Consideration of the implementation of a common core/framework to underpin multi-agency and integrated working, professional standards, training and qualifications across the children and young people's workforce in Queensland and Australia.

**Source:**

<http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/>

<https://sharestreet.cwdcouncil.org.uk/>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/commoncore/commoncoreofskillsandknowledge/>

**Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)**

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is an independent charity, funded by Government through the Department of Health in England and the devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland. The SCIE mission is to identify and spread knowledge about good practice to the social care workforce to support better outcomes for people using services, personalised social care services. The aim of the SCIE is to reach and influence practitioners, managers and the sector leadership who have responsibility for service delivery in adults' and children's services.

SCIE aims to:

- Capture and co-produce knowledge about good practice, commission research reviews and work with other leading organisations to produce information and practical guidance about what works in social care
- Communicate knowledge, evidence and innovation. Share knowledge about what works in partnership with the sector including improvement agencies, networks of providers, groups of people who use services, including children, young people, their families and carers, regulators and government departments.

SCIE provides free, up-to-date and thoroughly-researched guidance and practical tools on issues in social care.

- Social Care online - Online practice guides for frontline practitioners and managers that include detailed guidance on how to deliver and manage good care services. They also include examples of existing practice and related legislation
- People Management website - People management resources to establish or improve existing policies and practices
- Research Register for Social Care - Guides and research reviews to help set priorities and assess whether staff/contractors are acting in accordance with good practice
- Education and research resources, such as Social Care Online, to develop education and training programmes
- Good Practice Framework - a web based self-audit tool to encourage the identification and dissemination of evidenced practice

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Explore opportunities to link existing research portals in Australia to other sites across the world to ensure maximum access to learning, sharing of resources and best practice.
- 2) Development of a compendium of web-sites of interest that can support international linkages and connections in the child protection area.
- 3) Consideration of options for shared people management resources for leadership positions across Australia.

**Source:** <http://www.scie.org.uk/>



## **Centre for Excellence and outcomes in child and young people's services**

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services provides a range of support to drive positive change in the delivery of children's services, and ultimately outcomes for children, young people and their families.

C4EO draws on a consortium of core partners: National Children's Bureau (NCB); National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER); Research in Practice (RIP) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). Excellence in local practice is combined with research and data about 'what works' creating a single comprehensive centre of evidence. C4EO supports and constructively challenges the sector by sharing high quality, up-to-date evidence and effective practice, making it easily accessible to those who need to work in a 'low cost-high impact' environment.

"Our aim is to gather and share evidence about what makes the most significant difference to outcomes for vulnerable groups of children, young people and their families, supporting the sector to narrow the gap in society." Christine Davies, Director C4EO.

### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Exploration of strategies to link excellence in practice across Australia through existing services such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Framework.
- 2) Explore opportunities to link existing research portals in Australia to other sites across the world to ensure maximum access to learning, sharing of resources and best practice.
- 3) Development of a compendium of web-sites of interest that can support international linkages and connections in the child protection area.

**Source:** <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/default.aspx>

# Munro Review of child protection

Better front-line services to protect children



Eileen Munro is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. Professor Munro qualified and then practised as a social worker for several years and has since gone on to gain a wide range of research experience in child protection and mental health risk assessment, as well as building professional expertise in child abuse. She is well published in the area of child protection and completed her PhD in *The role of scientific methods in social work* and undertook a study of child abuse inquiries. This work was taken up by many child protection services in several countries. She has also written and published extensively on child protection, including *Learning Together to Safeguard Children*, *Learning to reduce risk in child protection* and a co-authored report: *Children's Databases: Safety and Privacy*. When asked the question, "what critical skills are required for the perfect child protection worker?" Professor Munro responded by stating that we should not consider the critical skills of an individual worker in child protection but rather the cumulative skills of a multi-disciplinary team.

Professor Munro argues that a systems approach to learning is critical to improve performance and that some of the key elements of the ideal system include:

1. Acceptance of the complexity of the work
2. Enhancing the role of professional judgement
3. The need for feedback loops in the system where entry-level workers are not afraid to share their experiences, both positive and negative and senior staff consider their feedback as a valuable source of learning.

Professor Munro discussed a unique model of work being trialled in Hackney, UK called the "Unit of Five". This model involves the use of a practice team of five staff in the management of all cases. As such no one person is responsible for cases which reduces the risk and improves decision making. The unit of five consists of a consultant social worker, social worker, therapist, child development worker and an administrator all of whom are

closely involved in the case. To date the outcomes of the unit of five include a reduction by one third in the number of children taken into care. The unit has a rotating role as “devil’s advocate” to ask alternative questions and consider different frames of reference in the case. When asked about what key things could be done to improve child protection systems Professor Munro presented the following suggestions:

1. Senior Management need to operate in a non-punitive atmosphere so people can learn (encouragement rather than discouragement).
2. Relationships and multidisciplinary approaches to work are fundamental.
3. Role plays and practical learning for frontline staff in how to challenge families and how to have difficult conversations.
4. Implementation of a signs of safety approach (consideration of dangers and strengths).
5. Recognition that working in the field of child protection is something that requires continual development and that time for reflection is critical to avoid rigid ways of working.
6. Senior management should periodically spend time on the front line so they can reality test the situation at the service end of the work.
7. The most imaginative software designers should be brought into child protection to develop systems that assist in making better judgements and aid practice rather than creating administrative burdens. (Governments need to avoid badly designed systems).
8. Senior Politicians need to support professionals in child protection practice as their first response to issues that present in the media.
9. Ongoing work in relation to differential responses is required to explore what works.

On 10 June 2010, the Secretary of State announced the launch of a review of children’s social work, headed by Professor Eileen Munro. The review is to be wide-ranging and will:

- Build on the work of Lord Laming’s Progress Report (March 2009) and the Social Work Task Force, drawing on the evidence submitted to these reviews and the extensive analysis undertaken.
- Pursue new lines of inquiry in order to identify innovative examples of good practice, with the aim of understanding how they were made possible and what obstacles had to be overcome.

Professor Munro is travelling across jurisdictions gathering evidence during August and September 2010 and is due to submit an initial report in September 2010 and the final report in April 2011.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. The findings of Professor Munro's review should be considered across jurisdictions in Australia so we can learn from the volume of evidence that will be gathered in this process.
2. Considerations should be given to the trial of a "Unit of Five" model in Queensland to see the impact of such an approach in an Australian context.
3. Consideration should be given to providing opportunities for staff to role play and practice having difficult and challenging conversations in safe environments prior to working with families in the child protection system.
4. Consideration should be given to all senior management and central office staff periodically rotating through frontline practice to keep grounded in the reality of challenges to direct service delivery.
5. Ongoing funding needs to be provided to the area of systems and technology development to ensure the best resources to support practice and decision making are utilised.
6. Acknowledgement that child protection work requires ongoing learning and that regular processes should be maintained to up skill all staff in frontline practice. This includes the need to encourage professional judgement, consideration of risks and strengths in families and how to manage complexity.
7. Ongoing support for multidisciplinary ways of working and learning.

**Liz Davies, Senior Lecturer, London Metropolitan University**



Liz Davies is a registered social worker who, following a career in frontline child protection social work, has worked since 2002 at London Metropolitan University as Senior Lecturer in Children and Families Social Work. She teaches on the BSc and MSc Social Work and is module leader for 'Effective Communication in Social Work', 'Planning Care' and 'Safeguarding Children'. She also teaches a post qualifying course entitled 'Critical themes and perspectives in child protection'. Liz has also designed on-line child protection training

courses and offers a range of post qualifying short courses both through the University and in her own business.

Her specialism is the investigation of child abuse and investigative interviewing of children particularly in the context of organised and network abuse of children. She has recently completed a PhD by prior output entitled 'Protecting Children: a critical contribution to policy and practice development'. Liz has written widely on the subject of protecting children and is a consultant to television, radio and print media. She also conducts serious case reviews and acts as an expert witness for social workers in high profile child protection cases.

When asked the question "what are the key skills required of child protection staff?" Liz identified the following:

1. An ability to think, challenge and question.
2. To go beyond the obvious (you can get all the basics from books - facts are easy to find but an in depth analysis is harder).
3. Scenario based learning (role play interviewing children and questioning).
4. Skills in making effective judgements is critical – gathering information is the easy part of the work, making the judgement is the much more challenging skill set and in the complexity of the work it is critical to learn this skill.
5. Need to draw out staff and carers own experiences of abuse/harm – if we don't workers will either over react or under-react. The focus needs to be balanced between a family focus and child protection and how a worker reacts to families can be significantly shaped by their own family of origin.
6. Implementation of child protection conferences with professionals and parents to ensure parents can be provided with clear advice about what is not acceptable.

When asked about what key things could be done to improve the child protection systems Liz identified the following:

- There is a need to sit around the table with multidisciplinary teams for regular strategy meetings. These meetings would include a variety of specialists who can share learning's and accept that it is alright to be different but there is a need for collective wisdom to get the best outcomes for children and families.
- Child protection registers should be available to all professionals.
- Exploration of models such as the Scandinavian model of child protection with children's houses that combine medical, therapeutic and residential services

(placements). All facilities and professionals for children are located in one spot which is a child centred protective model.

- Increasing joint training between child protection professionals and the Police to build better relationships between agencies and break down barriers.

### **Key considerations for Australia:**

1. It is important to ensure space is provided for strategy meetings/discussions within the child protection system to build collective learning for professionals and to get the best outcome for children.
2. Ongoing consideration should be given to the trial of a child advocacy/children's centre that provides a "one stop shop" with all aspects of medical, therapeutic and residential services. This also creates a joint learning space for multi-disciplinary teams.
3. Training and development for staff in child protection needs to extend beyond base level data gathering to an in depth ability to analyse and go beyond the basics and ask the tough questions. This includes practicing the skills required to have difficult conversations prior to working on the frontline. Supervisory relationships should also offer space to explore family of origin impact on decision making and how this can influence and bias practice for staff.

### **Source:**

<http://www.lizdavies.net/index.html>

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/depts/dass/staff/lizdavies/>



### **Bangor University, Wales**

The Welsh Assembly Government has adopted seven core aims to ensure that all children and young people:

- Have a flying start in life,
- Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;



- Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and
- Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

These aims are also embodied in the five key outcomes for improving the wellbeing of children from conception to adulthood that are set out in section 25(2) of the Children Act 2004. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 reflect recent changes in legislation. The new procedures combine the shared knowledge and experiences of Wales' 22 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and reflect the changes required as a result of high-profile child protection reports like the Laming Report. They address a wide range of safeguarding issues, including new mediums in which abuse can occur, such as the internet, and incorporate learning from research and practice from other parts of the world.

The Bangor University – School of Social work has introduced a new unit called “supporting families and safe guarding children”. This module is being introduced in response to the findings of the Care Council for Wales’ audit of the teaching of children and families social work in the degree across Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has also introduced the requirement that the common core of skills, knowledge and understanding for the Children and Young People’s Workforce be embedded in the education and training of social workers to ensure that there are consistent standards across children’s services in Wales. Children’s rights are a significant feature of the common core, following the Welsh Assembly requirement that all developments in relation to children be underpinned by children’s rights. Feedback from Local Authority Partners, graduates and current students had also suggested that there was insufficient teaching of children and families work in the previous version of the degree.

The new module offers a broad foundation in the key aspects of work with children and families, and addresses some aspects of practice in more depth. It builds on learning about child poverty, child development and use of research to inform practice. It is also complemented by the Development of the Personal Social Services unit which runs

concurrently in the second year. Other aspects of services to children are addressed in the third year module called Looked after Children and Leaving Care.

My time with the Bangor University included an opportunity to present two lectures to students and professionals. My notes were converted to Welsh and I was impressed with the bi-lingual approach to learning and documents at the University. During my time at the Bangor University I was able to meet with a variety of professionals from agencies across Wales who attend regular professional development sessions at the University. In meeting with staff from the University, Action for Children, the Children's teams, Barnardo's and NSPCC the following key skills were identified as critical in the development of learning for staff in the child protection field:

1. The critical importance of child protection strategy meetings with all professionals at the frontline prior to interviewing children and young people.
2. Ensuring caseloads are manageable for staff (the average staff caseload is 14 per worker). New staff have protected caseloads under 10 for the first year.
3. Ensuring staff are trained across all areas of practice and have a good working knowledge of the full system rather than just expertise in one part.
4. Enhancing multi-lingual capabilities across the workforce.
5. Mentoring/supervision of new staff (staff can choose their mentor)
6. Advanced training on communicating with children (using interactive practice based models and tools).
7. Understanding assessment and how to interpret information
8. Integrated service delivery and joint training across partnerships (Community agencies, Government Departments including Health, Education, Social Services and carers)
9. Ongoing focus is required on training and learning programs to ensure the approach is getting the desired outcomes in terms of practice improvement.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Exploration of caseload sizes and the implementation of capped caseloads should be considered in the context of optimal environments for reflection and learning.
2. Protected caseload sizes for staff in their first year of practice should be considered as a strategy to ensure appropriate learning space.

3. Training programs across Australia should be regularly evaluated to ensure the programs are having the impact in terms of skills development in line with current evidence of best practice.
4. Ongoing attention is required to integrate learning opportunities across Government and community based services.

**Source:**

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/>

[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/who\\_we\\_are/in\\_your\\_region/wales/wales\\_projects.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/who_we_are/in_your_region/wales/wales_projects.htm)

<http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/40031--d.htm#25](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/40031--d.htm#25)



The Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) in Wales has a web site with a link to the notable practice database. This database has almost 250 case studies and examples of good practice ranging across all service areas. This site also includes notable practice compendiums that can be downloaded. There is also an SSIA Learning library where the SSIA produce a learning product for each piece of work it creates.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access websites such as the notable practice database so learning can be shared across the world.

**Source:**

<http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=298>

<http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4049>

<http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3135>



## Centre for Learning in Child Protection

The University of Edinburgh/NSPCC Centre for UK-wide learning in child protection (CLiCP) was created to conduct research, and to provide analysis and commentary on child protection policy and developments across the UK.

The Centre for Learning in Child Protection was set up to address the lack of systematic examination of developments in child protection at a UK level.

- The unit monitors and analyses the content and direction of child protection systems, across the UK and in each of the UK jurisdictions.
- Conducts primary research addressing gaps in existing child protection knowledge
- Dissemination of findings and contribute knowledge to inform the policy process.
- Conducts comparative analysis of specific developments in child protection policy, across the UK and in each of the UK jurisdictions.

Recent projects conducted by the unit include:

- Overview of policy in child protection (1968 – 2002)
- Overview of policy in child protection (2002 – 2007)
- New directions in child protection
- A review of child death and significant abuse in Scotland (1975 – 2007)
- The support needs of children and young people who leave home because of domestic violence.
- Mapping therapeutic services for sexually abused children and young people: Services in Scotland.

When asked about what key things could be done to improve the child protection systems the following areas were identified:

- More longitudinal research in aspects of child protection
- More outcome based research
- More focus on what is being done well across the world
- Implementation of space for blue sky work considering what would the ultimate child protection future look like.

When asked about examples of good practice in Scotland the Children's Hearing System in Scotland was identified as a positive model.

Scotland's Children's Hearings system represents one of the radical changes initiated by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, now incorporated in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

There was a concern in the late 1950s and early 1960s that change was needed in the way society dealt with children and young people in trouble or at risk. A Committee was set up in 1960 under Lord Kilbrandon to investigate possible solutions.



The Committee found that children and young people appearing before courts, whether they had committed offences or were in need of care and protection, had common needs. The Committee considered that the existing courts were not suitable for dealing with these problems because they had to combine the characteristics of a criminal court with an agency making decisions on welfare. Separation of these functions was therefore recommended. The establishment of facts (where they were disputed) was to remain with the courts, but decisions on what action was needed in the welfare interests of the child were to be the responsibility of a new and unique hearing.

On 15 April 1971 children's hearings took over most of the responsibility for dealing with children and young people under 16, and in some cases under 18, who commit offences or who are in need of care and protection.



### **The Children's Panel**

The children's panel is a group of people from the community who come from a wide range of backgrounds. Panel members are unpaid and give their services voluntarily, but are carefully selected and highly trained. They must be at least 18 years old but there is no upper age limit. There are approximately 2500 children's panel members across Scotland. Panels vary in size, ranging from the smallest in Shetland with 15 members to the largest in Glasgow with around 540 members

Every local authority has a children's panel, and panel members sit on hearings on a rotating basis. A children's hearing has three panel members, of which there must be a mixture of men and women. The hearing must decide whether compulsory measures of supervision are needed for the child and, if so, what they should be.

Members of a children's panel are appointed by Scottish Ministers. Every local authority has a Children's Panel Advisory Committee (CPAC), which is responsible for recommending individuals for appointment as panel members. For new panel members this normally involves attending information sessions, completing application forms and attending interviews and group discussions. References are also followed up, and an enhanced police check is carried out. The initial period of appointment is three years and is renewable on further recommendation from the CPAC, following monitoring of performance.

Panel members attend a programme of training to prepare them for the role. The organisation and delivery of core panel member training is the responsibility of the Children's Hearings Training Units (CHTUs), housed within four Scottish universities. CHTUs are funded by the Scottish Government, but staff employed in the units are university employees and most have been panel members.

Panel member training is an intensive learning process and covers topics such as:

- leadership
- teamwork
- effective communication
- analytical thinking
- decision making
- influencing/negotiating.

### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) As previously identified Staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access websites such as the Centre for Learning in Child Protection so learning can be shared across the world.
- 2) Further exploration of the Children's Panel model should be explored and considered in an Australian context.
- 3) Ongoing funding and resources should be provided to ensure further longitudinal and outcome based research is conducted in Australia and that this research examines what is working well and why.
- 4) Opportunities to bring together experts in child protection should be considered as a strategy to design the "blue sky" model of child protection for the future.

**Source:** <http://www.chscotland.gov.uk/index.asp>

### **Multi Agency Resource Service**



*'Lessons from inquiries all point to the fact that only a strong and confident workforce can make the right decisions, and provide the right support for vulnerable children' (Laming 2009).*

The Multi-Agency Resource Service or MARS is the first child protection hub in the UK. Initially funded by Scottish Government, it aims to facilitate access to child care and protection expertise to help agencies deal with issues of neglect and abuse. Agencies, councils or organisations can approach the MARS for help with specific cases or situations

where a child death has occurred or there is concern about possible or substantiated injury or abuse. Staff can also contact MARS if they need to source research, or need support implementing findings and recommendations from evaluations or inspections.

The MARS was set up in response to the report *An Inspection into the Care and Protection of Children in Eilean Siar* (2005). The MARS aim is to build communities of expertise across Scotland. The MARS identifies that whilst many communities of expertise already exist not everyone can be an expert in everything. As such there are times when frontline practitioners, middle or senior managers, and local policymakers will identify a lack of expertise when addressing a particular issue. Sharing the expertise of others through MARS is designed to help to address these gaps. The MARS aims to build and improve communities of expertise across Scotland. The external expertise is being drawn from agencies working in child protection, including the statutory, voluntary, academic and private sectors.

#### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the MARS so learning can be shared across the world.
- 2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as MARS to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared

**Source:** <http://www.mars.stir.ac.uk/index.php>

## **Scottish Child Care and Protection Network**

The Scottish Child Care and Protection Network was first proposed in 2006. Its initial development was fostered through a series of meetings where interested and proactive individuals came together and formed a network. It gained some momentum in 2007 when pooled funds presented the opportunity to undertake a number of small scale projects, including an audit of Scottish child care and protection research. Both the SCCPN coordinator and the MARS team are hosted at the University of Stirling. The Scottish Child Care and Protection Network fosters connections, collaboration and the coordination of activities that will promote access to and use of evidence in practice.



The SCCPN is currently working on the following projects in partnership with MARS:

- A study that will explore the impact of interventions on outcomes for children and young people
- A quarterly joint newsletter
- A web site research link/index
- National Conference 2010
- Connections (a web site to bring together information about organisations and initiatives)
- Events links

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the SCCPN so learning can be shared across the world.
- 2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as the SCCPN to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared (similar to the approach used in connections on the SCCPN site).

**Source:** <http://www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk/index.php>



**University of Stirling**

There is unprecedented policy development in Scotland aimed at addressing the needs of children whose development and well-being may be compromised by social, family and individual circumstances. The professionals from all disciplines working in this challenging and complex field require access to high quality training and education.

In response to this need for specialised professional development the University of Stirling has invested in a new suite of programmes in the field of Child Welfare and Protection. The latest development in this field is a new MSc award. There are also modules in “Working with Families Affected by Substance Misuse”, “Leadership and Management”, and “Adult Protection”.

Course Content includes:

- Current Issues and debates in Child Welfare and Protection
- Developing Practitioner and Organisational Capacity
- Risk and Decision Making
- Collaborative Practice
- Research Design and Process.

The ***Certificate in Child Welfare and Protection*** is aimed at professionals working in the field of child welfare and protection. It is designed to be accessible and relevant to workers from Health, Social Work, Education, Police and associated disciplines. The programme is delivered over one year of part-time study, with a mixture of direct teaching and guided study through the use of course materials and web-based learning opportunities.

High quality supervisory practice has been identified as being vital to support the provision of good quality practice and better outcomes for children and adults, along with continuous professional development through mentoring and a range of other activities.

This supervising, managing or mentoring module is relevant for supervisors from different areas of social services and utilises student’s diverse experiences to enhance the learning. It explores generic and core skills, as well as differences and boundaries between roles. The module includes:

- theories, research and literature relevant to supervising, managing and mentoring;
- the relevance of adult learning;
- the emotional impact of practice and the role of supervision;

- relevant attachment and resilience theories;
- the outcomes of supervision.

All of these have a strong focus on working with practice experience and applying a knowledge base to advance skills. The module will support students to critically analyse specific issues that apply to their specialist area.

When asked the question “what are the key skills required of child protection staff? The following skills were identified:

- 1) Staff must have a critical understanding of child development (not practice wisdom or experience alone).
- 2) Staff need opportunities to understand the impact of adversity and a theoretical framework and skills to manage conflict and complexity.
- 3) Staff need an advanced understanding of attachment
- 4) Improving the quality of assessment and analysis (incorporating history and the impact of the past and providing tools to assist with analysis).
- 5) Reinforcing and building confidence in making decisions
- 6) Improving professional authority, judgement and decision making
- 7) Encouraging staff tenacity and creativity and allowing flexibility with rules to ensure best outcomes rather than procedures and policies driving bureaucratic practice.
- 8) Advanced training in therapeutic relationships and the capacity to make connections with complex families.
- 9) Time for critical reflection in the supervisory context and the importance of regular supervision for staff that goes beyond task.
- 10) Ensure that programs of learning have opportunities for direct observation of practice.
- 11) Ensuring that multi-disciplinary work does not result in a “watered down” response to outcomes for children and families and that no one agency should have their view take priority.
- 12) Building in systems to practice to ensure a “critical friend/devil’s advocate” to challenge decisions and consider other perspectives.

When asked about what key things could be done to improve child protection systems the following were identified:

- 1) Creating a collaborative approach to learning across Scotland/UK and having a strong commitment on maintaining a best practice approach.
- 2) Building on the Multi Agency Resource Service
- 3) Moving beyond the unrealistic expectation by Governments and communities that we can and will manage all risk and an acceptance that risk is a reality of working with complex and vulnerable families.
- 4) A clearer understanding of risk from the child's perspective and further research to review what it is we are trying to avoid in terms of loss for the child.
- 5) Ongoing attention across all agencies to ensure the child is the focus of all service interactions.
- 6) An ability to focus on care and planning focused around developmental outcomes and time scales for children and young people to ensure we have a clear map to know where we want them to get to (to avoid the drift in the system that occurs now)
- 7) Creating opportunities for sharing of best practice particularly the everyday examples where workers make a significant difference and using this as the basis for learning and policy development.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Building more effective partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions across Australia is critical to enhancing the interface between academia/research and practice.
- 2) Ongoing attention needs to be focused on skilling up staff in the management and assessment of risk and that learning programs have an observation component with practical skills development.
- 3) Ongoing attention needs to focus on staff developing critical skills in understanding child development, attachment and trauma.

**Source:** <http://www.socialwork.stir.ac.uk/category/courses/cpd/>



## **ChildStat**

Initiated in July 2006, ChildStat has been one of the most effective staff accountability initiatives implemented in New York City. These three hour, weekly sessions are modelled after the New York Police Department's CompSTAT. Child protective leaders from each of the City's twenty geographic zones meet with the Commissioner and other Administration for Children's Services (ACS) leaders from every division of the agency. Wide-ranging zone performance data is analysed, and an open child protective case is reviewed in-depth. The case reviews are framed by quality child protective investigatory practice – such as reviewing prior investigations, interviewing all household members and other relevant parties, and ensuring supervisory oversight. The discussion encompasses what did and did not happen, as well as what should happen.

One specific example of change resulting from ChildStat is the increased access to preventive services from child protective referrals. The Division of Family Support Services worked with providers to increase preventive service availability in targeted neighbourhoods by closing out longstanding cases which no longer needed services. In response to issues raised in ChildStat, ACS revises practice policies to guide investigative work and discusses issues in managerial/supervisory sessions within each borough. Children Services also releases Child Safety Alerts via email as a method of instant communication to both remind and update staff about specific practice issues.

## **James Satterwhite Academy for Child Welfare Training**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1984 the New York City Board mandated the establishment of a child protective services training academy. The academy opened in 1987 and has provided ongoing training to more than 6000 Children's Services staff and to staff who work for a number of provider agencies. In 1997 a scholarship program was created for caseworkers and supervisors with experience in child welfare. This program provides those who qualify the opportunity to earn their Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree. The focus on continuing education, research and best practice allows them to bring advanced expertise to direct

service delivery. One hundred full MSW scholarships are awarded annually to ACS staff, with a total of 200 staff in the scholarship program at any one time. Almost 100 partial scholarships are awarded to staff in the agencies that ACS contracts with, and 375 non-matriculated agency and ACS staff have the opportunity to take graduate credit courses via distance learning classrooms.

The Academy has a number of Departments including – Assessment and Evaluation, Community Education, Provider Agency Training, Curriculum Development, In-Service Training, Legal Training unit, Professional Development program, Registration and the Training Department.

Training programs conducted by the Academy include:

- Core Phase I – Common Core Training Program (CCTP)
- Core Phase II – Training Program for New Child Protection Specialists
- In-Service Training – Working with Gay and Lesbian youth in child welfare, Immigration issues; Child Evaluation specialist specialty training; Family Preservation program speciality
- Supervisory Core; Core Essentials for experienced supervisors and managers;.
- Professional Development

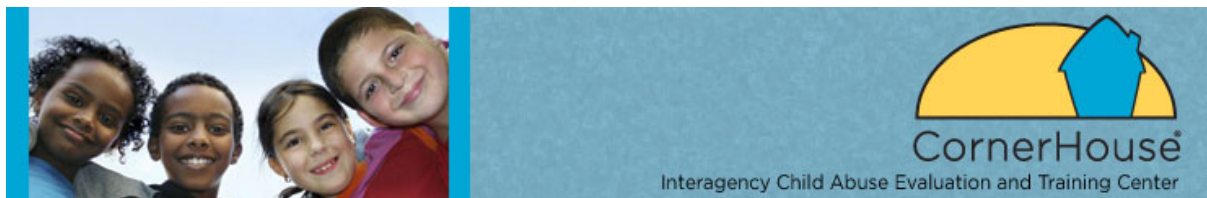
New child protection staff go straight to the Academy and then move backwards and forwards between their field office and the Academy. Following this period of training new staff spend three months slowly taking on cases in a training unit environment where specialist training facilitators mentor and build the skills of the staff. After this period they then move into regular units and commence a series of second level courses. The ACS has also implemented a series of competency tools that are used in the recruitment stage to determine if an applicant has the qualities and suitability to work in the area of child protection.

#### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) After observing the ChildStat process in action a trial of this model in Queensland and other jurisdictions in Australia should be considered given the benefit in terms of learning, quality improvement and the integrated nature of service improvement

- 2) As discussed in previous sections consideration should be given to the development of a set of common core competencies for staff working in child protection across Australia with a consistent curriculum.
- 3) Consideration should be given to the introduction of Masters level scholarships and part scholarships to build professional skills across Queensland and Australia.
- 4) Consideration should be given to the model of staff who first commence in child protection following basic training with a period of practice with experienced training professionals in a training environment for three months prior to moving to a regular child protection centre.

**Source:** <http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/home/home.shtml>



CornerHouse was founded in 1989 as a private, non-profit organization in public-private partnership. CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center is committed to improving the assessment and investigation of child abuse, specifically in those cases involving sexual abuse. CornerHouse is an integral component in facilitating the coordination of an interagency multidisciplinary team consisting of County professionals from law enforcement, child protection, and the county attorney's office. The collaboration that takes place among professionals provides an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise pertaining to issues of investigation and the needs of children.

Forensic interviews are conducted in a child friendly environment by professionals trained in a wide spectrum of areas related to childhood development, sexual abuse dynamics, and other issues pertaining to questioning children regarding allegations of abuse. CornerHouse has adopted the "Child First Philosophy" which states that the needs of a child are given the first priority during the forensic interview process.

### **Forensic Interview Services**

CornerHouse attempts to conduct forensic interviews in a manner that is considerate of a child's culture and ethnicity. In cases where English is not the child's primary language, CornerHouse will arrange for a court-certified interpreter to be involved in the interview. The

anatomical drawings and dolls utilized by CornerHouse in the forensic interview are age and culturally appropriate to the child. The forensic interview is based on the semi-structured RATAAC® protocol that has been designed through clinical experience and the review of empirical research to maximize the child's ability to communicate his or her experience. The Forensic Interviewer conducts the interview in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for a child's cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.

Members of the multidisciplinary team observe the forensic interview through closed-circuit television. CornerHouse videorecords every forensic interview and provides a copy to the primary investigator. Following the forensic interview, the multidisciplinary team members participate in a post-interview meeting for the purpose of coordinating the roles that each professional will assume in the investigation and protection of the child. The responsibility of the CornerHouse Forensic Interviewer is one of maintaining his or her objectivity as a neutral fact finder about a child's experience. The CornerHouse Forensic Interviewer will provide a written synopsis regarding the finding of the interview, child's affect and ability, and the multidisciplinary team's recommendations. CornerHouse's vision is that "Children grow up free from abuse."



## Training

Since 1990, CornerHouse has been providing child sexual abuse forensic interview training to investigative professionals throughout Minnesota and across the USA. To date CornerHouse has trained over 23,000 professionals from a number of countries around the world. Although there is no such thing as a perfect interview, a competent interview takes place when a child is interviewed in a child-friendly environment, with developmentally and linguistically appropriate language and by someone who is adequately trained.

CornerHouse's training curriculum is designed to produce competent forensic interviewers who can defend their interviews in court and effective mandated reporters who can provide



investigating professionals with essential information. Corner House also produces DVD's such as "Healing Young Lives" and "Give them a voice" – Forensic interviews of child victims and witnesses.

When asked the question "what are the key skills required of child protection staff? The following skills were identified:

1. Understanding and embracing a multidisciplinary approach to work
2. All teams must have the same basic training and understanding of child protection work in the context of their own professional disciplines.
3. Comprehensive training is needed specific to interviewing children of different ages.
4. Comprehensive training in child development, linguistics and suggestibility
5. Capacity for regular peer review (observation of work practices and feedback). This should be done on a structured basis at least once per month.
6. Ongoing training and development to maintain core skills.
7. Ability to keep children as the focus and provide consistent supportive adult relationships for children and young people.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) After observing the forensic interview process at CornerHouse I believe strong consideration should be given to the implementation of a trial of a similar model in Queensland. The benefits of a one stop service are clearly evident in terms of the improved outcomes and impact on children. Furthermore the approach to collaboration with multi-disciplinary work clearly demonstrates the benefits of all stakeholders working together from the start of an investigation and having dedicated child friendly locations for the assessment and interview of children.
- 2) Consideration should be given to the establishment of specialist forensic interviewing services that operate independently from the Department.
- 3) Consideration should be given to opportunities to provide joint training and development for professionals across service streams.

**Source:** <http://www.cornerhousemn.org/>



In 2003, the American Prosecutor's Research Institute and Winona State University collaborated to create the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) on the Winona State University (WSU) campus in Winona, Minnesota, USA. In January 2004, the NCPTC assisted by WSU faculty members from nursing, social work and criminal justice began to develop three undergraduate courses that would represent a concentration in child maltreatment and that would confer a certificate in Child Advocacy Studies. An extensive review of the literature provided the faculty with an initial content outline. The first step in the process was an evidenced-based practice review of recent research using the concepts of child maltreatment, child welfare, child abuse, child neglect, child protection, child advocacy, child interviewing, child abuse prevention, child abuse effects, child mental health, mandated reporting, history of child abuse, and investigative and legal terminology related to child abuse and neglect.

The National Child Protection Training Centre now assists universities in developing model undergraduate and graduate curriculums to better prepare tomorrow's child protection professionals. In 2010 twenty universities will participate in a program to replicate the minor in their institutions across the USA.

The National Child Protection Training Centre strives to significantly reduce and seek an end to child abuse, neglect and all other forms of child maltreatment in three generations through education, training, awareness, prevention, advocacy and the pursuit of justice. The Centre promotes reformation of current training practices by providing an educational curriculum to current and future front-line child protection professionals around the USA so that they will be prepared to recognize and report the abuse of a child.

Since its inception, NCPTC staff have trained more than 40,000 child protection professionals in all 50 states of the USA and 17 countries. The NCPTC is located in a state of the art training complex on the campus of Winona State University. The complex includes five mock court rooms, four forensic interview training rooms, and a "mock house" in which to conduct simulated child abuse investigations.

The *Child Protection Training Act* established in 2010 granted \$20 million over 4 years to the NCPTC to establish regional training centres to provide child protection professions with quality training and technical assistance.



Control Room



Mock Court Room/lectures



Interview rooms (video linked)



Mock house – front door



Mock house (bedroom 1)



Mock house (lounge room)



Mock house (kitchen)



Mock house toilet/bathroom

The NCPTC also provides a range of programs that include:

- National Training Conferences
- Speakers Bureau
- Child Advocacy Studies (Minor at University)
- Publications/DVD's
- Webinars

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) After observing the mock house and Court rooms at the NCPTC jurisdictions in Australia should strongly consider the establishment of similar models to enhance the practical learning opportunities for staff in entry level and advanced training. The ability to use video technology to observe and record practical sessions clearly enhances the skills development capacity of workers.
- 2) Consideration should be given to opportunities for joint training across professional service streams (legal, police, welfare, education, health and community services).
- 3) Consideration should be given to the implementation of learning webinars for staff to manage the large distances in Australia.
- 4) Staff should be encouraged to access webinars in other Countries and jurisdictions such as those at the NCPTC to build cross State and Country learning opportunities.

**Source:** <http://www.ncptc.org/index.asp?Type=NONE&SEC={D2B324A2-07CB-404F-8927-5891D28A8AF8}>



## **The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada**

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada was developed at the Squamish First Nation in 1998 at a national meeting of First Nations child and family service agencies. Meeting delegates agreed that a national non profit organization was required to provide research, policy, professional development and networking support to the First Nations child and family service agencies in Canada.

In 2001, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, established the first research site devoted to the affirmation and support of First Nations child welfare research. The research site disseminates research information to First Nations child and family service agencies, provides professional development programs on research, and oversees national First Nations child and family service related research projects.

Building on the existing infrastructure, the Caring Society with the support of the voluntary sector established a head office in Ottawa in 2002. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society believes Aboriginal communities are in the best position to design and implement their own child safety solutions and that as a national organization the best role the society can play is to provide quality resources for communities to draw upon. The key functions of the First Nations Caring Society include:

### **Research**

- Caring Across Boundaries Conference
- First Peoples Child and Family Review journals
- Collaboration

### **Policy**

- Jordan's Principle campaign
- Human Rights Case on First Nations Child Welfare Funding
- 7 ways to make a difference campaign

## Education

- Quarterly newsletter
- Resource rich website with 1.8 million hits per year
- Over 60 presentations reaching 12,000 people in 3 countries
- Caring Across Boundaries photography exhibit

## Training

- Touchstones of Hope learning symposium
- Train the Trainers sessions for Caring Across the Boundaries

## Be a Witness Campaign

On February 27, 2007, the Assembly of First Nations [AFN], a political organization representing all First Nations in Canada, and the First Nations Caring Society of Canada took a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission for its treatment of First Nations children. The complaint alleges that the Government of Canada had a longstanding pattern of providing less government funding for child welfare services to First Nations children on reserves than is provided to non-Aboriginal children.

In October of 2008, the Canadian Human Rights Commission ordered a tribunal to determine whether or not discrimination had occurred pursuant to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The AFN and the First Nations Caring Society will present the case supporting the allegation that the Canadian Government is discriminating against First Nations children and then the federal government will respond. The Tribunal will then decide if discrimination happened or not.

## Touchstones of Hope

The Touchstones of Hope program is being piloted in six communities in Northern British Columbia. In October 2005, Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders in child welfare gathered in Niagara Falls at a historic event, *Reconciliation: Looking Back, Reaching Forward – Indigenous Peoples and Child Welfare*.

The result of this gathering was the creation of the document called “Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth and Families”. This document draws on the conversations from individuals in Niagara Falls and outlines the concept of reconciliation that is comprised of four phases. Reconciliation engages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in a process of:

- Truth telling
- Acknowledging

- Restoring
- Relating

Participants identified key values to guide these four phases of reconciliation in child welfare. These values are seen as essential to the success of a renewed child welfare system, and to set in play a basis for a respectful and meaningful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples working in child welfare.

#### **Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Staff should be encouraged to sign up to be a witness to the historic human rights case in Canada at <http://www.fnwitness.ca/>
2. Links should be made between Australia and Canada in terms of work with Indigenous peoples and the interface in the child protection/welfare arena. There are significant similarities between the two countries and we should learn from each other.
3. Further exploration should occur in terms of learning strategies such as the Touchstones of Hope, Caring across Boundaries and the First Peoples Child and Family Review journals and how these models could be trialled in Queensland and Australia.

**Source:** <http://www.fncfcs.com/home.html>



#### **Andrus Children's Centre**

In 1928, philanthropist John E. Andrus created an orphanage on a property overlooking the Hudson River, in memory of his wife, Julia. The Andrus Children's Centre is located on 110 acres of property.

## **Sanctuary – Andrus Philosophy**

Andrus works with some of the most vulnerable children including those who struggle with the effects of psychiatric illness, learning disabilities or who have experienced trauma from loss and abuse.

The programs at the campus are grounded in an understanding of the effects of such challenges and of the treatment interventions most likely to bring about positive change. Staff engage with children and their families using innovative strategies to promote recovery and resilience. The Sanctuary Model provides the trauma informed treatment philosophy for the campus. Sanctuary has been effective with both children and adults across a range of human service organizations, including residential treatment centres and public and private schools.

## **Residential Treatment Program**

On average between 70 and 80 five to sixteen year-old children live in Andrus' cottages under the full-time support of trained staff. The main goal of the Residential Treatment Program is to help children and their families set and meet treatment goals that will enable them to live together upon completion of the program. Nearly 90% of children rejoining their family at the end of the program.



**Cottage View**

## **Day Treatment Program**

Andrus' Day Treatment Program provides a resource for families trying to avoid their children coming into residential care. Children and their families take part in educational, social and psychological services that help them to address the issues and behaviours that are disrupting their lives while continuing to live at home. Approximately 80 children and young people are enrolled in this program.



## **The Orchard School**

Every child enrolled in Andrus' treatment programs attends the Orchard School. Students at the Orchard School receive highly specialized instructional services. The staff-to-student ratio at the Orchard School is a maximum of 1:4 assuring each child is afforded tailored attention. Using the Sanctuary model of treatment, the Orchard School provides children with a safe place to address affective issues and acquire academic skills. The emphasis of the program is hands-on projects that encourage children to see themselves as capable and creative; and individualized computer-managed reading, writing and math instruction, permitting students to work at their own pace, without feelings of stigma.

The school also integrates neurodevelopment psychology with classroom instruction and related service provision based on current research in relation to brain development. Furthermore a multidisciplinary instructional team allows for continuous assessment of student functioning.

The Andrus Children's Centre and The Orchard School have responded to the growing need for appropriate educational planning and placement for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The "E-Building" caters to middle school and high school students on the Autism Spectrum. This service has evolved into a specialized program designed to meet the needs of children who may have primary or co morbid diagnoses of Asperger's Disorder, Autism, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder. Children's behaviour is managed using a functional behavioural assessment model and an operant system of reinforcement is used during the day. All programming follows the guidelines of the Sanctuary Model while heavily incorporating empirically based behavioural interventions. In addition, individual student learning challenges are met using direct instruction curriculum programs, curriculum modifications, and hands-on interactive delivery of academic material.

The program at the campus also includes opportunities for artistic and athletic exploration including an adventure-based counselling program, chorus, dance and the National Youth Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM).

## Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation



The Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation operates as a hub of information facilitating ideas between organisational and individual practitioners, funders, policy makers, researchers, and children/families. The Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation aim is not only to improve the care of children at the Andrus Centre, but also to share the knowledge.

The mission of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation is to provide professional leadership on issues, practices and policies affecting vulnerable children and families. The goals of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation are:

- To share the knowledge Andrus has acquired after 75 years of service to vulnerable children and families
- To provide a forum where information relating to vulnerable children and families can be collated and share
- To contribute to the knowledge base by conducting and supporting research on vulnerable children and families

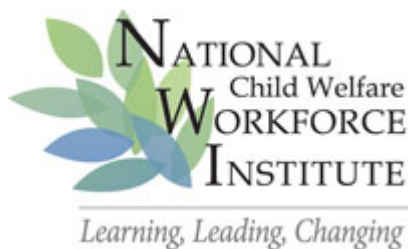
The five core function of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation are:

1. Professional training – the centre provides practice-based courses on areas of expertise cultivated among Andrus staff e.g. Implementing the Sanctuary model
2. Program evaluation and consultation
3. Research and publication – interdisciplinary research projects
4. Symposia – hosting a national symposium at least every two years to share best practice
5. Information sharing – a virtual resource centre for information, research, services and programs related to vulnerable children and families by providing links to data sources, directories, publications, working papers, professional news and advocacy sites.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Further exploration of integrated models of education, therapeutic intervention and residential placements need to be considered in the context of the pressure currently on the placement system in Queensland and Australia.
2. Ongoing links with the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation should be considered to learn from models that are currently operating successfully in other jurisdictions in terms of working with families, learning and practice wisdom.

**Source:** <http://www.andruschildren.org/index.htm>

**National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI)**

The purpose of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute is to build the capacity of the child welfare workforce in the USA and to improve outcomes for children and families through activities that support the development of skilled child welfare leaders in public and tribal child welfare systems, and in private agencies that are contracted by the State to provide case management services that are traditionally provided by the public child welfare system. The goal of the organisation is to identify promising practices in workforce development, deliver child welfare leadership training for middle managers and supervisors, facilitate BSW and MSW traineeships, engage national peer networks, support strategic dissemination of effective and promising leadership and workforce practices, and advance knowledge through collaboration and evaluation.

The NCWWI Leadership Academy has two components:

- A Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) that provides online leadership training to child welfare supervisors who provide direct supervision to front line workers.
- A Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM) that provides residential and web-based leadership training to child welfare managers who oversee programs and manage teams that implement programs.

### **The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers**

The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers goal is to enhance the ability of middle managers to apply leadership skills for implementation of sustainable systems and change to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The LAMM is coordinated by the Centre for Improvement of Child and Family Services at Portland State University School of Social Work.

The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers conducts a five-day residential training program followed by online support and teleconference peer networking offered to mid-level managers over a period of five years. In Year 5, a modified 3-day version of the training will be offered to managers in state and county training positions, so that LAMM training can be incorporated into ongoing child welfare training infrastructures, to build the capacity of the states to continue leadership training after the project ends.

The Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) provides online training that draws on adult learning and leadership principles tailored to the role of the supervisor and also preparing supervisors for advancement as part of succession planning. The training framework includes four major components: A core certification curriculum addressing all competency areas; stand-alone training modules on specific topics of related interest; facilitated peer networking; and a catalogued inventory of resources. The content is delivered through self-paced, web-based modules with embedded learning activities.

### **Social Work Education Consortium**

The mission of the New York State Social Work Education Consortium is to improve the quality, professional status, and stability of the public sector child welfare workforce, including better ways to recruit and retain qualified workers.

The primary goal of the consortium is the identification and implementation of programs and activities, which promote a forward-looking approach to training and education, emphasising workforce stabilization and professionalization.

### Key considerations for Australia:

1. The model of a National Leadership Academy should be explored in the context of Australia as a strategy to share resources, reduced duplication and build cross State collegial networks in the child welfare workforce.
2. Ongoing links need to be made with existing services such as the NCWWI to share resources and to reduce duplication.

### Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal)



The Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (CECW) fosters research and disseminates knowledge about the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The CECW supports research, gathers and analyses child welfare information and support the development of research capacity through training and consultation. The centres website disseminates information sheets, research reports and conference documents. All products can be downloaded free of charge. The CECW is one of four centres in the Centres of Excellence for Children's well-being program an initiative of the Public Health Agency of Canada and had been running for ten years. Unfortunately at the time of my visit the funding for this program had ended.

The website originally developed by the CECW is now hosted by the *Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal* (CWRP). The website provides access to up-to-date research on Canadian child welfare programs and policies. The Portal is a partnership supported by the McGill Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF), the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at University of Toronto and the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research.

The Portal also maintains links with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC), the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Groupe de recherche et d'action sur la victimisation des enfants (GRAVE-ARDEC), and other groups and organizations that collaborated with the CECW.

The Portal is designed to provide child welfare professionals, researchers, and the general public with a single point of access to Canadian child welfare research, i.e. research on abused and neglected children and on the programs and policies developed to support and

protect these children and to support their families. The Portal includes a searchable data base of Canadian research publications, a data base of Canadian researchers, and information and statistics about provincial, territorial, aboriginal and national child welfare policies, legislation and programs.

### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the CWRP so learning can be shared across the world.
- 2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as CWRP to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared

**Source:** <http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/>



### **Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) – Education Services**

In the OACAS curricula, the emphasis is on the application of child focused, family centred, strengths based practices that protect children and respect families. OACAS courses are designed to generate practical and action-oriented knowledge about child welfare in Ontario. Critical themes and relevant issues pertaining to the daily practice of child welfare are examined.

The curricula promotes current promising practices related to child safety, diversity and anti-oppression, parent collaboration, resiliency, community development, and permanency planning. Supplementary research materials are provided to learners after the course has been completed. A core philosophy of the OACAS is that education in child welfare is not a one-time event but rather a life-long learning process. OACAS believes that the transfer of learning from the classroom to the work environment is vital to the professional development of participants. The following courses are offered through the OACAS:

## **Foundations of Child Welfare Practice**

### **Child Welfare Professional Series**

- Collaborations in Child Welfare - Past, Present and Future
- Protecting Children and Strengthening Families, Part 1
- Protecting Children and Strengthening Families, Part 2
- Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs
- Engaging Families (3 days)
- Permanency Planning and Continuity of Care
- Legal and Court Processes
- Wellness and Self-Care
- Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC)
- Understanding PRIDE
- Advanced Child Welfare Practice

These courses are to be taken after the participant has completed the Foundations of Child Welfare Practice training course. The advanced courses are designed to enhance the participants' capacity to address complex clinical issues in child welfare and provide the opportunity to engage in more detailed study about issues of child mortality, use of authority, critical decision making, child safety and family capacity building.

- Forensic Interviewing
- Critical Decision Making in Child Protection
- Advanced Service Planning
- Assessing Parenting Capacity
- Protection Investigations within Custody and Access Disputes
- Working with High Risk Infants and Their Families
- Working with Adolescents

### **Management and Leadership**

These courses are designed to provide the essential knowledge and the practical opportunity for participants to develop effective leadership skills in a child welfare setting.

- Management, Leadership and Administration within Child Welfare
- Managing Work Through Other People: Performance Management
- Transfer of Learning: The Supervisor's Role as an Adult Educator
- Supervising and Managing Group Performance: Developing Productive Work Teams

- Clinical Supervision in Child Welfare
- Supervising Investigative Forensic Interviews
- Project Management

### **Specialised Child Welfare Practice Training Courses**

These courses are designed to meet the needs of child welfare professionals whose primary role is to assess families and their capacity to provide children with quality out-of-home care, support children/youth in care and to support children and families through the adoption process. Understanding and supporting the permanency continuum of care is a specialized field of practice in child welfare and is the primary focus of the courses in this category.

- Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE)
- Adoption Practice: Facilitating Lifetime Connections
- Children's Services Worker: Facilitating Permanent Connections for Children and Youth

### **Resource Families**

Resource Families courses are design to strengthen the quality of resource care by providing a standardized, structured framework for recruiting, preparing and selecting foster, kin, customary care and adoptive parents. It also provides resource families with in-service training and ongoing professional development.

- Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE)
- Connecting with PRIDE Teamwork towards Permanence
- Meeting Developmental Needs
- Meeting Developmental Needs – Loss
- Strengthening Family Relationships
- Meeting Developmental Needs – Discipline
- Continuing Family Relationships - Planning for Change
- Making an Informed Decision
- Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE)
- The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk
- Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs
- Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality
- Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse
- Supporting Relationships Between Children and their Families



- Participating as a Member of a Professional Team
- Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity
- Promoting Permanency Outcomes
- Managing the Fostering Experience

### Key considerations for Australia:

- 1) Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.

Source: <http://www.oacas.org/>



### California Social Work Education Centre (CalSWEC)

The California Social Work Education Centre is the USA's largest state coalition of social work educators and practitioners. It is a consortium of California's twenty accredited social work graduate schools, its 58 county departments of social services and mental health, the California Department of Social Services, and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) was created in 1990. The state's then-ten graduate schools of social work, the county departments of social services and mental health, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) formed this consortium to:

- Promote the preparation of social workers for employment in public child welfare systems;
- Upgrade the professional background of some already-employed public welfare workers interested in gaining additional skills and knowledge in child welfare;
- Increase numbers of minorities in professional social welfare positions to reflect the populations served; *and*
- Open the doors to innovation by integrating university research with county services and graduate social work curriculum development.

CalSWEC initiated the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project in 1997 through a contract with the California Department of Social Services. The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is a state-wide collaborative vehicle for in-service training and continuing professional education of public child welfare agency staff. Six co-ordinating partners provide a continuum of training and professional education to county staff across the state. This coordinated delivery model reduces duplication of training, increases consistency, promotes professionalism and competency, and supports child welfare staff retention in California's 58 counties.

### **Curriculum Development**

The Curriculum and In-Service Training Committee of the CalSWEC Board of Directors was established to implement and oversee the curriculum evaluation process to ensure that classroom and field work are integrated. The committee approves curriculum development projects:

- To create curricula that will take existing knowledge about a topic and put it into a form that can be used to teach public child welfare, and
- To cover specific competency gaps in the graduate social work programs identified through the annual curriculum evaluations.

The Common Core Curricula is the result of a multi-year state-wide collaborative effort to develop standardized curricula for California's newly hired child welfare workers. Development and implementation of the Common Core Curricula was mandated by California's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) as part of the 2003 federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Although in-service core training had historically been provided by the Regional Training Academies (RTAs) and county staff development departments, the PIP stipulated that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) *"develop a common core curriculum for all new child welfare workers and supervisors that is delivered by all training entities state-wide."*

The California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers is funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and administered by CalSWEC, using federal funds. Its central purpose is to provide the state-wide, standardized training for new child welfare workers and new child welfare supervisors as mandated by state regulation. California's

counties, Regional Training Academies and the Inter-University Consortium in Los Angeles deliver the training, and are also instrumental in its development and revision.

### **California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers**

The California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers is the culmination of a collaborative development process among California's child welfare training institutions.

The current topics for the California core curricula are as follows:

- Framework for Child Welfare Practice in California
- Child and Youth Development in a Child Welfare context
- Child Maltreatment identification (Part 1: Neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse)
- Child Maltreatment identification (Part 2: Sexual abuse and exploitation)
- Critical thinking in Child Welfare assessment: Safety, risk and protective capacity
- Family Engagement in Case planning and case management
- Placement and permanency
- Structured decision making and critical thinking in child welfare assessment

Standardised competencies and learning objectives:

- Basic interviewing
- Caregiver substance abuse and child welfare practice
- Child welfare practice in a multicultural environment
- Court procedures
- Child Welfare system - Documentation for use in the legal system
- Domestic violence
- Health care needs of children and youth in the child welfare system
- Mental Health and Mental disorders
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Multiethnic placement act /Interethnic adoptions provisions
- Self care for new child welfare workers (Time management, stress management and worker safety in child welfare practice)
- State-wide automated case management system
- Supporting educational rights and achievements
- Values and ethics

### **State-wide Training and Education Committee (STEC)**

The State-wide Training and Education Committee (STEC) developed the initial series of Common Core Curricula in 2004/05, marking the first implementation of new worker training that was *standardized* for the state of California. The purpose of state-wide standardization is to achieve consistency and equity in the application of best and evidence-based practice in all 58 California counties. Each of the content areas of the Common Core has a set of measurable learning objectives for knowledge, skills and values essential to the provision of excellent service to families and children who participate in California's county child welfare programs.

STEC mission is to develop and/or recommend standards for state-wide public child welfare training and coordinate their implementation. STEC used the following underlying values in developing recommendations for common core training:

- Common core training is grounded in social work values and ethics.
- Common core training builds upon, but is not limited to, new worker training currently underway in California, and utilizes existing training structures.
- Standards encourage flexibility in the way counties meet identified training needs.
- Standards encourage the application of best practices aimed at improving outcomes for children and families, by training strategies that progress from knowledge acquisition to building and demonstrating skills.
- Standards endorse training delivery methods for common core training that yield measurable learning objectives and that provide the basis for evaluation of knowledge, skills, and attitude acquisition in order to promote positive outcomes for children and families.
- Standards are consistent with those endorsed by California's Title IV-E university programs for the bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.
- Common core training encourages inclusion of community partners, whenever possible, in order to share responsibility for child safety, permanency, and well-being.

### **Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.

- 2) There is a need to up skill statutory staff, staff of residential agencies and foster carers beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and entry level training programs but should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.
- 3) A symposium should be conducted for staff in the field of training, learning and development across Australia & New Zealand to further enhance the work of the ASCPL&D forum and build connections with other disciplines.
- 4) Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.
- 5) The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.



### **Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training – Eighth annual symposium – Rebuilding the village**

The annual Symposium on Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training brings together training professionals from around California to strategise about this issue. The keynote address in 2010 was by Carl C. Bell, M.D., *Director*, Institute for Juvenile Research, Director of Public and Community Psychiatry, and Professor of Psychiatry and Public Health, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago. The topic called “Risk Factors Are Not Predictive Factors Due to Protective Factors” presented findings on the relationship between multiple, adverse childhood experiences and negative adult outcomes, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and other debilitating health conditions. Using examples from the child welfare system, he outlined how a paradigm shift towards prevention science and implementation research can put knowledge into practice through comprehensive neighbourhood and community interventions, promoting a society in which young people can lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

The symposium program also included the following presentations:

#### **A Quick and Dirty Take on NIS-4**

Barbara Needell, M.S.W., Ph.D., Principal Investigator/Research Specialist, and Erin Clark, Graduate Student Researcher, both of the Center for Social Services Research, University of California, Berkeley After 3 waves of the National Incidence Study of Abuse and Neglect (NIS-1,2,3) that found no differences in the rate of child maltreatment

#### **California Statewide Overview**

Phyllis Jeroslow, Training & Curriculum Specialist, California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), University of California, Berkeley. In spring 2010, members of the Symposium's Steering Committee and other regional academy partners conducted a voluntary statewide telephone survey of county administrators to gather descriptive information about the promotion of fairness and equity in child welfare training and practice.

#### **Heller Patio**

##### **California Department of Social Services: California Disproportionality Project Breakthrough Series Collaborative**

Joyce Dowell, Chief, Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau, Children and Family Services Division, California Department of Social Services

The California Disproportionality Project Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) was initiated in fall 2008 with 15 teams representing 12 counties and the State Interagency Team workgroup representing 9 state agencies. Over the past 18 months, the county teams have developed and tested a variety of efforts to reduce disproportionality. Through the use of the project extranet, methods and outcomes have been shared among the teams and four "Learning Sessions" have been held to bring all participants together.

##### **Administrative Office of the Courts, Centre for Families, Children & the Courts: The Roles of the Juvenile Court Assistance Team (JCAT) Liaison**

Marymichael Miatovich, J.D., CWLS, Attorney, Centre for Families, Children & the Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts/Judicial Council of California

Ms. Miatovich will discuss the roles of the Juvenile Court Assistance Team (JCAT) liaison in each of the counties. The discussion will include her agency's duties in organizing and developing curriculum for trainings, conducting file reviews, and providing assistance to the local collaborative teams in each county to implement recommendations of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care and the legislatively mandated California Child Welfare Council.

#### **California Leadership Panel**

##### **Youth Engagement: No Decision about US, without US!**

Janay R. Swain, M.S.W., Youth Advocate Social Worker, Sacramento Child Advocates

It is important that foster youth are engaged in all decisions made regarding their lives. "Make no decisions about us without us," declares Ms. Swain, a former foster youth. Foster youth deserve their experiences and viewpoints to be valued and acknowledged by all systems that serve them. Youth and families involved in the foster care system confront stigmas and mistrust. It is time to rebuild trusting relationships based on respect, dignity, and the expertise that youth and families have about themselves.

##### **Achieving Shared Leadership©: Meaningful Strategies for Impacting Fairness & Equity in Child Welfare Practice**

Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D., President and CEO, and Leah Davis,

California State Parent Team, both of Parents Anonymous© Inc. Shared Leadership© is the driving force behind the work of Parents Anonymous©. This workshop presents the basic tenets of the Shared Leadership © approach in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Workshop participants will examine the benefits and challenges of how to work in Shared Leadership© with parent leaders to improve fairness and equity in child welfare practice.

### **ICWA Today: Internal Strengths and External Influences**

Rose-Margaret Orrantia, M.S, and Tom Lidot, Curriculum Coordinator, both of Tribal STAR  
How do tribal programs respond to the need of Indian children in the system? A brief overview of changes in ICWA and how they are affecting California counties will be addressed during the presentation: how counties are responding and how our Indian children benefit.

#### **Source:**

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/FESymposium.html>

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/calswec/STEC.html>

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/>



The Ministry of Children and Family Development operates under a “Five Pillars” integrated framework for children and youth. The key components of this framework are:

- **Prevention** – The BC Government will place a primary focus on preventing vulnerability in children and youth by providing strong supports for individuals, families and communities
- **Early Intervention** – The BC Government will provide early intervention services to vulnerable children and youth within their families and communities
- **Intervention and support** – The BC Government will provide intervention services and supports based on assessment of individual needs
- **The Aboriginal approach** – Aboriginal people will be supported to exercise jurisdiction in delivering child and family services
- **Quality Assurance** – Child, youth and family development services will be based on evidence gathered through strong quality assurance systems.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has a focus on providing services that effectively meet the basic and developmental needs of children and youth whilst focusing particularly on the needs of vulnerable children and youth.

The Child Welfare Practitioner Training program offered by the Ministry of Children and Family development has recently undergone a redesign process. The new model has seen the same courses maintained but a decrease in the number of classroom days (formerly 51

days) to 34 days with a current field placement component of learning over a period of 90 days. The total program is offered over three blocks.

The courses covered in the program include:

- Introduction to Ministry for Children and Family Development Culture and Diversity
- Working with Aboriginal Children and Families
- Child Welfare legislation and standards
- MIS
- Understanding abuse, neglect and family violence
- Understanding trauma and attachment
- Communicating for collaborative practice
- Approach to practice
- Assessing safety strengths, needs and risks
- Investigations and investigative interviewing
- Role of the guardian
- Reunification of children in care
- Overview of Adoption planning
- Gender and identity issues
- Youth as parents
- Preparing youth for independence
- Integrated case presentation
- Legal skills and procedures
- Fundamentals of substance misuse
- Understanding FASD
- Fundamentals of mental health
- Understanding suicidal ideation

The Justice Institute of BC delivers child welfare training for employees of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The program is administered through a partnership between the Social Work Education and Child and Youth Care Education Consortia, the Justice Institute of BC and MCFD. The Justice Institute site also hosts the competencies for child welfare workers in British Columbia. A summary of the competencies are outlined below:

## **Foundational Competencies for Child Welfare Workers**

### **Culture and Diversity**

1. Culture Awareness
2. Diversity



### 3. Cultural Responsiveness and Culturally Competent Services

#### **Aboriginal Children and Families**

1. Collaborative Relationships with Aboriginal Communities
2. Preserving and Promoting a Child's Aboriginal Heritage

#### **Organizational Framework**

1. Organizational Awareness
2. Organizational Role and Mandate

#### **Approach to Practice**

1. Child and Youth Development
2. Working with Families

#### **Professionalism**

1. Professional Behaviour and Ethics
2. Professional Development
3. Professional Judgment
4. Problem Solving
5. Advocacy
6. Awareness of Personal Values
7. Occupational Safety

#### **Relationships and Collaboration**

1. Relationship Development
2. Teamwork
3. Collaboration
4. Cooperative Planning
5. Interdisciplinary Practice

#### **Communication**

1. Written and Verbal Communication
2. Interpersonal Communication
3. Technology

#### **Self-Care**

1. Self-Care
2. Adaptability

The Child, Family and Community Services Act (2002) also provides a legislative mandate for what work students and staff working in child protection can undertake. Students and new staff are initially provided with information only in terms of delegations and gradually increase delegations to partial and then full child protection delegations. A delegation exam is conducted at the completion of the child welfare practitioner training program and staff must pass this exam to be able to undertake full delegations and casework responsibility.

#### **Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Consideration should be given to the implementation of integrated learning modules through University or Vocational programs and aligned with Departmental programs. In turn the option of incremental delegations should be explored in conjunction with

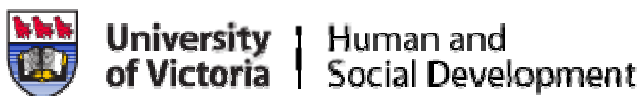
exams or other strategies to ensure staff are fully aware of the legal responsibilities when they undertake a full child protection caseload.

2. Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.
3. There is a need to up skill statutory staff and staff of residential agencies beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.
4. Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.

**Source:**

<http://www.jibc.ca/cccs/MCFD/CWcert.html>

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/>



In 1998 the Ministry of Children and Family Development initiated an extensive curriculum review of several human service degree programs. This evaluation led to the degree in Child and Youth Care and Bachelor of Social work being designated as two of three degrees meeting the entry-level requirements for employment with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The Child Welfare Specialisation is a concentration of course work and a Child Welfare practicum within certain University programs that provides students with the opportunity to follow a pre-selected pattern of studies for entry into practice in the child welfare (and specifically child protection) field.

The Child Welfare Specialisation was introduced in response to recommendations of the Gove Inquiry that looked into Schools of Social work to give more attention to child welfare. The recognition by the schools was that the practice gap between the generic curriculum and child welfare practice was often wider than many students could effectively bridge. The designated Child Welfare Specialisation courses cover areas of study such as social services and the law, legal skills, investigation, evidence and advocacy, child welfare and

child protection practice, child welfare policy, child development, disability and substance use.

When asked the question “what are the key elements required for effective child protection?” The following skills were identified:

- 1) Critical thinking
- 2) Anti oppressive practice
- 3) Strengths based and transparent practice
- 4) History – understanding why child protection exists
- 5) The need to pay attention to the issue of poverty in the context of child abuse
- 6) The need for child protection staff to be respected by Senior Executives and Ministers
- 7) The need to ensure any new initiatives are given time to work prior to implementing a new program or model
- 8) The importance of multi-disciplinary work and interdisciplinary practice
- 9) Understanding addictions and mental health
- 10) Ongoing attention to supervision and developing effective supervisory process plus skills development for supervisors.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

- 1) Ongoing partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions to identify gaps in curriculum and practice and learning strategies to address these areas.

**Source:** <http://www.hsd.uvic.ca/programs/index.php>

## CONCLUSIONS

I have worked in the area of statutory child protection now for over seventeen years. As I reflect on my career I realise that one of the most important aspects of my development has been the access to opportunities to learn. This learning has taken many forms from face to face programs of formal training, to mentoring and coaching, university and vocational study. I certainly do not believe that I would have had the capacity to undertake this Fellowship if it was not for these opportunities.

Across the world in the area of child welfare we are all focused on a common goal to protect children and support families and our strategies to train staff to do this have many similarities. So in the area of learning and development in child protection it makes logical sense to learn from each other and build on what we already know.

If we consider the capital outlaid in the development and implementation of child protection learning programs across the world the cost would be staggering. In many cases on my travels I saw examples where agencies who were almost side by side in terms of geography were both working on strikingly similar products – and yet neither knew the other was on a similar path. I took the opportunity where possible to connect people and I hope that in sharing this report with those I met that further links can be made. However there is a real potential with modern technology to learn from each other and share resources to reduce duplication and get the best bang for the resources in the area of learning and development in child protection.

I certainly don't envisage such a task will be easy as often good will from staff does not necessarily mirror at a political level and barriers such as intellectual property can be a challenge. However I take heart from the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development forum and the shared learning that this group has modelled across Australia and New Zealand. This group has demonstrated that it can be done. States such as New York and California also have great models that build connections and programs such as the Multi Agency Resource Service, Centre for UK wide learning in Child Protection and the Canadian Child Research Portal demonstrate the great initiatives already being delivered across the world. In many respects if we all join the dots between us the picture will become so much clearer and our ability to enhance our products and services will be significantly improved.

At a national level Australia and New Zealand certainly has some great beginnings in terms of learning and development in child protection. Yet we are in our infancy when we compare on an international stage and our ability to continuously improve the models we develop should be built around learning from our colleagues across the world. The recommendations below reflect the key points I identified during my travels that would make the biggest difference for Queensland and Australia in terms of the training and development of staff in statutory child protection.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A consistent theme across all places I visited was the need to include advanced child development in all programs within the child protection field both at a statutory and community level. There is a need to up skill statutory staff, staff of residential agencies and foster carers beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and entry level training programs but should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.
2. The model of Child Stat used in New York was an excellent example of proactive learning and quality assurance. The option to trial this approach to learning about case practice in Queensland and Australia should be considered to ensure case practice is reviewed in a systemic and structured way. A key success of this model was the very high level of Senior Executive Support and attendance at Child Stat to demonstrate and model the commitment to this initiative.
3. The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum (ASCPL&D) is unique in the countries I visited. The closest similar examples are in New York and California where State based models of shared learning operates. The ASCPL&D provides cross Australian and New Zealand learning in child protection development. This forum was acknowledged by many of the people I interviewed as a unique opportunity to share learning and avoid duplication. This group should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.
4. There is a need to improve the multi-disciplinary learning models across all people working in the child protection field. Any model needs to be integrated across Government and non-Government and provide opportunities to build relationships and shared practice wisdom. Serious consideration should be given to a National

Academy of Child Protection learning and development as a federally funded initiative.

5. A symposium should be conducted for staff in the field of training, learning and development across Australia & New Zealand to further enhance the work of the ASCPL&D forum and build connections with other disciplines.
6. Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.
7. There needs to be a focus on a suite of primary preventions tools for communities in child protection – learning tools to support every member of the community to understand how to keep children safe and strategies to assist families who need help. These tools should be built using modern technology and include access to some of the contemporary social media sites. Many of these tools already exist both in Australia and across the world but there is a need to co-ordinate the resources and implement an Australian wide model to ensure child protection becomes a part of everyone's business.
8. All jurisdictions involved in training staff to work in the field of child protection should consider the implementation and use of mock Court rooms and mock house for training. This training in simulated environments should also be available to a range of professionals working in the child protection field and these professionals should be trained in partnership.
9. A dedicated focus on the implementation of supervision models for staff working in the area of child protection is critical to the improvement of the child protection system.
10. Further international work needs to occur between Indigenous communities and advocacy agencies to learn from each other and to ensure the implementation of cultural competencies is prioritised in the child protection area.
11. Further investigation needs to be conducted in relation to the team of five model used in London and whether such a model could be trialled in Australia.
12. Partnerships with Universities and vocational institutions are critical to extend learning & research/practitioner based research.
13. Ongoing funding for agencies such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for Child Protection to ensure research continues to be conducted on best practice in child protection. This funding needs to include support for State and Territory site visits to share learning and support practitioner based

research. The funding should also ensure the ongoing provision of secretariat support to the ASCPL&D forum.

14. There is a need for Queensland to implement and trial a number of child advocacy centres.
15. There is a need to explore nationally the alternative placement models across the world and significantly invest in wrap around models that integrate therapy, placement, education and support of families similar to the program offered by Andrus.
16. A series of webinars should be conducted across Australia and New Zealand to build learning opportunities across States and Territories. These webinars could also link and be shared with other existing agencies who conduct similar programs across the world to avoid duplication.
17. Across the world the number of resources including information sheets, books, DVD's, CD's, research papers in the child protection area is significant. However the connection across jurisdictions and countries is poor. This results in duplication of work and poor use of public monies. There is a real need to build and enhance international learning highways in the area of child protection to maximise the resources used in this area and ensure learning can move beyond the basics to more advanced realms. An international approach to sharing of resources would also allow jurisdictions that are not as well funded to improve their systems for the protection of children.
18. There is a need to ensure that where possible future research links to practitioners and assists practitioners to connect with academics so that the learning's are based in practice wisdom and academic rigour.
19. Across the world every jurisdiction has had at least one major review by Government. The findings of these reviews are consistent and share similar themes. Prior to the implementation of any future reviews a first step should be to conduct international research and learning of existing reviews to identify the recommendations that have been made in previous enquiries. In many cases it appears that reviews are conducted but the implementation of these reviews are not carried out or they are only partially completed.
20. All programs in the area of learning and development in child protection need to have an investment of funds for external academic evaluation to review and research what works and what doesn't in this area. The results of these reviews should be made public so that other jurisdictions can enhance practice and learn from each other.

21. The findings of Catherine Moynihan's Churchill Fellowship report (2009) into the study of advocacy and legal representation for children and young people in care should also be considered in conjunction with this report. Particular attention should focus on:

- Implementation of a clearly articulated complaints process for children and young people,
- Further funding for the Create Foundation in terms of advocacy and individual support of children and young people,
- A mechanism of review of transition from care planning and
- Professional development opportunities for lawyers practicing in child protection law in partnership with the Department of Communities.

Thank you once again to the Churchill Memorial Trust Australia for this wonderful opportunity.

Rob Ryan  
Assistant Regional Director, (Child Safety, Youth and Families)  
South East Region  
Department of Communities  
Mobile: 0407 626 625  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2010



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**Attachment Marking**

The preceding 78 pages is the annexure mentioned and referred to as **ATTACHMENT 2** in the statement of Robert Ryan taken on 31/10/2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Robert RYAN

*B. Blumey*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person witnessing statement



Signature of witness  
to Inquiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person  
witnessing statement: \_\_\_\_\_

# Team Parenting™

and the Treatment of  
Complex Trauma and  
Attachment Disorder

Authors: Jim Cockburn, Joy Kelleher and Dave Vicary

Editor: Marc Mannes



 **keyassets**  
fostering

# An Introduction

This document presents information on the Team Parenting™ approach, the conditions and circumstances it is designed to respond to, and its relevance and application to meeting the needs of children in care. It briefly summarizes basic knowledge and theory underpinning Team Parenting™. The document also shares insights derived from practice data which have emerged from the Core Assets Group of Companies employing the approach in Europe over the past decade. More recently, the general transferability and

effective utility of the approach across cultures and nations beyond Europe has also been established. Team Parenting™ is the subject of on-going research by the International Center for Research and Innovation in Fostering. (ICRIF).

This document has been authored by Jim Cockburn, Founder and Chairman – Core Assets; Dr Dave Vicary, Group Director – Key Assets; Joy Kelleher, Development Manager – ICRIF and edited by Marc Mannes, CEO – ICRIF.

## Providing Background on Team Parenting™



Team Parenting™ represents the unique fusion of empirical research findings and practice wisdom. It is responsive to the unique requirements of children and young people at risk of entering, or who have entered, the out of home care system – particularly foster care. It recognizes that a large number of children and young people entering care have significant histories of complex interpersonal trauma, and may also experience serious attachment difficulties and disorders which can complicate and compromise their placements.

Team Parenting™ constitutes a systemic approach to stabilizing foster placements. In addition to contributing to the establishment of a secure and stable placement, the framework centers on the needs of the child by ensuring that appropriate resilience-based strategies and methods are undertaken in conjunction with educational and/or vocational interventions to support the positive and healthy development of young people in care.

Team Parenting™ has demonstrated its effectiveness in positively impacting both trauma and attachment related disturbances and the challenges associated with children in foster care placements. Initial evidence establishing the value and merit of Team Parenting™ stems from its initial application to foster care (see Foster Care Associates; [www.thefca.co.uk](http://www.thefca.co.uk)) in the United Kingdom, and its subsequent successful application in a number of other nations around the world.

# Understanding Exposure to Complex Trauma and its Effect on Young People



Exposure to complex trauma and the impact of complex trauma on young people are devastating. Moreover, there are a number of limitations to the typical diagnoses of traumatized children and adolescents. This helps clarify the *general context of life circumstances* and challenges Team Parenting™ is designed to be responsive to.

- \* Complex trauma can develop from children's exposure to traumatic events such as; sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, chronic neglect and family and domestic violence that began early in childhood.

- \* The three defining characteristics of a traumatic event (or situation) are that it was; 1) unexpected, 2) the victim was unprepared for it and 3) there was nothing the victim could do to prevent it.

- \* Exposure to trauma can impact upon children's lives in the short, medium and long term.

- \* Frequent exposure to traumatic events early in life can result in a range of symptoms and disorders which manifest themselves later on in life and may include:

- 1) failure to self-regulate;
- 2) attachment, anxiety and affective difficulties (in childhood);

- 3) addictions;

- 4) aggression;

- 5) eating, metabolic, somatoform, physical health (e.g. cardiovascular) and sexual problems.

- \* Other common diagnoses for traumatized children and young people can include: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), conduct disorder, depression, self-harm, anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and reactive attachment disorder (RAD).

- \* Some young people with histories of complex trauma remain prone to being re-victimized.

- \* Psychiatric diagnoses may not incorporate all of the issues experienced by young people's exposure to traumatic events. Generally, these diagnoses do not take into account or incorporate a holistic overview of the child or young person's experience. Instead, these diagnoses tend to focus on the presenting behavior or issue – often neglecting the causal effect(s). As a consequence, interventions may focus on a particular behavior rather than the core issues underlying the presentation of complexly traumatized children and young people.

# Clarifying the Implications of Complex Trauma and Attachment Disorders for Young People in Care

*Significant trauma exposure and attachment disorders may be found among young people in care. The proper diagnosis of their needs and concerns requires focused and sustained attention. This helps clarify the more **targeted set of issues** Team Parenting™ is designed to address and the **target audience** it is designed to serve.*

- \* Attachment disorder refers to disorders of mood, behavior and social relationships arising from a failure to form normal attachments to primary caregiver(s) in early childhood.
- \* Attachment disorder may result from early childhood experiences of neglect, abuse, abrupt separation from caregivers, frequent change of caregivers, excessive numbers of caregivers, or lack of caregiver responsiveness to the child's communicative efforts.
- \* The term attachment disorder refers to the absence or distortion of age-appropriate social behaviors and interpersonal relationships with adults and peers.
- \* Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV-TR (2000) defines Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) as requiring etiologic factors, such as gross deprivation of care or successive multiple caregivers, for diagnosis. Two distinct types of RAD are delineated:
  - a. In **inhibited RAD**, the child does not initiate and respond to social interactions in a developmentally appropriate manner. It is a disorder of nonattachment and is related to the loss of the primary attachment figure and the lack of opportunity for the infant to establish a new attachment with a primary caregiver.
  - b. In **disinhibited RAD**, the child participates in diffuse attachments, indiscriminate sociability and excessive familiarity with strangers. The child has repeatedly lost attachment figures or has had multiple caregivers and has never had the chance to develop a continuous and consistent attachment to at least one caregiver. Disruption of one attachment relationship after another causes the infant to renounce attachments. The usual anxiety and concern with strangers is not present, and the infant or child too easily accepts anyone as a caregiver (as though people were interchangeable) and acts as if the relationship had been intimate and life-long.
- \* Children and young people placed in foster care have often experienced complex trauma and difficulties with attachment. They are often taken into care with significant emotional disturbances, mental health issues, physical health issues and educational concerns.
- \* Most of the children and young people placed in foster care lack the fundamental experience of positive relationships and secure early attachments, which are essential for their proper development and mental health, manifestation of resilience, and ability to self-regulate and develop positive interpersonal relationships.
- \* Without placement security, some of these children and young people are exposed to additional trauma and disrupted attachments through placement breakdowns. Others are placed in nonfamily environments (e.g. residential care) where they confront significant barriers and fail to develop the secure relationships required to support their long term successful treatment, health and well-being.



# Describing the Team Parenting™ Approach

*The components and sequencing of the Team Parenting™ approach are designed to stabilize, attend to emotional distress, model proper emotional responses and promote healthy psychosocial development for children and adolescents in care. The Complex Trauma and Attachment literature illustrates that often a phased approach to treatment is one of the most efficacious ways of producing positive change. Team Parenting™ is designed to implement a phased approach.*

**Phase One** - Stabilizing the placement within the agency (this might be with one or more carers over time).

One of the fundamental premises for effectively serving young people who have experienced complex trauma and are having problems with attachment is the establishment of a safe, consistent, and secure caring environment. For children and young people who can no longer live at home, a stable and consistent foster care placement often becomes the primary setting for addressing both of these challenging issues.

- Team Parenting™ has been designed with placement stability and sustainability being of central importance, and has consistently demonstrated success in both areas over the last decade.

**Phase Two** - Providing appropriate responses to the young person's affect.

Once stability and security have been established, the caregiver or significant adult is able to address a child's emotional distress, as opposed to their behavior. This affords the attention needed, as appropriate to the child's or adolescent's affect. Trauma-informed care takes into account the physiological impact trauma can have upon the developing brain, as well as the best way to manage emotional distress or difficult behaviors.

- Training in the Team Parenting™ approach teaches and prepares carers and professionals to respond in a coordinated way to a child's or an adolescent's emotional affect rather than with responses that potentially re-traumatize the young person.





**Phase Three** - Modelling appropriate emotional responses allows the foster carer and the broader support team to demonstrate appropriate responses to emotional distress through a process of re-labelling, support and building emotional resilience.

- Through training and ongoing assistance Team Parenting™ helps carers learn how to more effectively engage and interact with a young person they are serving in ways that show the children and adolescents how they can more effectively and successfully manage how they process, interpret and respond to situations and circumstances in their lives.

**Phase Four** - Building resilience ensures that all carers and professionals are able to teach and support a young person in developing positive, healthy and functional methods of avoiding and/or overcoming maladaptive behaviors (e.g. sexualized behavior and assault) and/or re-victimization.

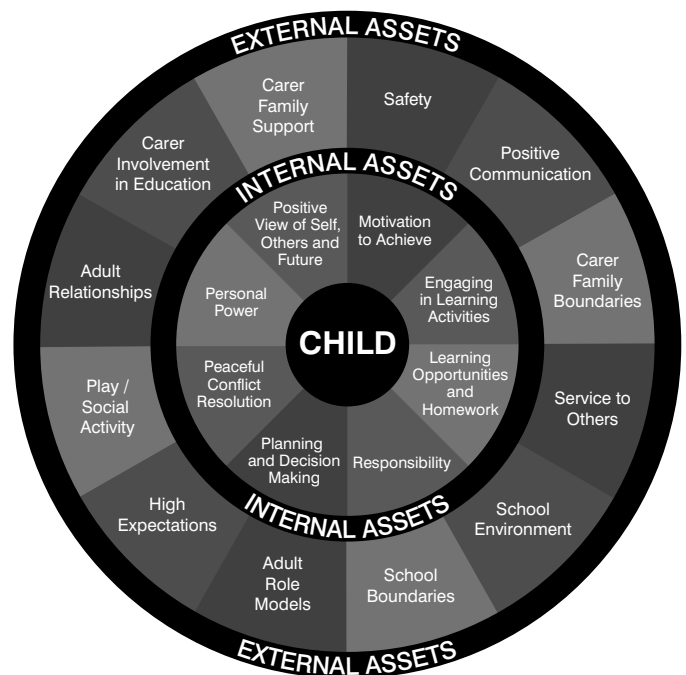
- By concentrating on the young person's development and developmental outcomes, Team Parenting™ builds a young person's capacities and capabilities to become a resilient and functional adult after they leave care and over the course of their lives (See Key Developmental Assets).

Team Parenting™ is fully responsive to complex trauma and attachment issues, and provides a foundation for developing and maintaining longer term healthy relationships among the young people it serves. The four phases of the Team Parenting™ approach introduce a comprehensive set of research based practices which combine to provide placement stability, generate greater emotional control and promote the expression of more appropriate emotional responses to life among young people in care. Team Parenting™ helps young people in care build resilience and become better equipped to make positive choices in response to future opportunities.

# Highlighting Unique Features of Team Parenting™ Meetings

- \* Team Parenting™ allows for a holistic assessment to be undertaken of both the child's and the placement's needs.
- \* Where these needs are discussed at regular Team Parenting™ meetings which are convened and facilitated by trained staff.
- \* The needs of the placement and/or child are responded to by stakeholders at the Team Parenting™ meeting with the relevant jurisdictional authority and expertise. For example, if educational issues were identified through the assessment, the relevant authority (the education department) will work with the Foster Care Associates Supervising Social Worker to deliver a programme that meets the identified requirements. This may induce additional in-school support, extension programmes, behavioral management etc.
- \* The Team Parenting™ meeting serves to identify additional supports required by the placement to ensure sustainability; they may include children and youth support workers, regular supervision for the carers, support groups, or involvement in agency wide activities.
- \* When therapeutic interventions are determined to be needed, the Team Parenting™ approach ensures they are delivered by specialists with the appropriate expertise who would work closely with the foster carer and supervising social worker.
- \* Often supports of a more practical nature (respite care) are identified at a Team Parenting™ meeting. This is essential for the carers so that they can continue to support the placement. This is particularly important when the carers have a family crisis or unexpected event and may include assistance with babysitting, travel, holidays and counselling.
- \* Outcomes and a strategy are mutually agreed by stakeholders at the Team Parenting™ meeting. Each individual and/or agency assumes responsibility to deliver on the pre-determined goals. Their responsibilities are reviewed at the next Team Parenting™ meeting to ensure progress and accountability.
- \* Results of carer and the larger team's efforts are measured through a Key Developmental Assets (KDA) tool, which focuses on twenty aspects of positive child and adolescent development. These twenty aspects are monitored, reported on, and maintained in a web-based tracking system which can be accessed over time for children who have been placed through the Team Parenting™ framework. Detailed information on KDA can be found at [www.keydevelopmentalassets.com](http://www.keydevelopmentalassets.com).

## KDA Framework for Success



# Team Parenting™

- A Schematic Representation



## Specifying Major Advantages and Benefits of Team Parenting™

- Team Parenting™ recognizes the carer as the primary agent of therapeutic change. This does not diminish the work of educators, therapists and other professionals but recognizes the central importance of the carer to be the major "agent of change" for the child or youth, consolidating and managing the changes being put in place (or recommended) by other members of the team. This acknowledges the fact that a professional may only spend an hour per week with a young person, while the carer has full time 24 hour responsibility for delivering quality care for the young person and ensuring plans to maximize positive outcomes are acted upon.
- Team Parenting™ develops the resiliency of carers so they are able to build the resiliency of the young people in their care.
- Team Parenting™ leads to greater placement stability. It allows carers to be supported as they work effectively with the children they care for to maximize opportunity for change. Our experience over the past ten years with implementing the approach has shown that some children and young people may attach to the agency rather than an individual as it is less threatening. The process of attaching to the agency often prepares them to attach to key individuals working within the organization (support staff, therapists etc.) and forming a significant relationship of this type can assist with future attachments. To maximize the placement stability of children and young people, Key Assets foster carers are provided with considerable guidance including active support and advice from a cohesive, multi-disciplinary team.



- \* The Team Parenting™ approach clearly articulates goals for every child placed in all Core Assets Group agencies based upon the child or young person's care plan. These developmental and educational goals are targeted, measurable through the Key Developmental Assets tool, and are subject to regular review to ensure accountability and a commitment to positive outcomes.
- \* Team Parenting™'s multi-disciplinary meetings attended by the carer, all professionals involved with the child or adolescent, and when appropriate the young person and their birth parent are conducted to address the young person's complex and challenging needs.
- \* Team Parenting™ has learned that achieving change with young people, however small, requires consistency in the coordination and the deployment of the skills of qualified and trained social workers, support workers, educationalists, therapists and psychologists. They must be helped in working together as part of a cohesive team, and not operate as a group of disconnected professionals. They are all viewed as integral members of the team working with foster carers. They become involved as soon as a placement is confirmed, and Team Parenting™ makes sure they work closely with colleagues from the very outset to identify placement needs and assist in addressing them.
- \* The Team Parenting™ approach expects carers, social workers, psychologists, therapists, educationalists, support workers, management and cultural consultants to systematically and critically review their own work, and its effectiveness. Team members are expected to reflect upon their practice as an integral part of their supervision as well as at Team Parenting™ meetings.

# Summary

The Team Parenting™ approach provides an effective model of intervention for children and adolescents who have experienced complex trauma related disturbances and have attachment disorders. Developed in the United Kingdom, Team Parenting™ is now used internationally. It has demonstrated its relevancy and responsiveness to diverse cultural settings – particularly with indigenous young people (see [www.keyassets.com.au](http://www.keyassets.com.au) and [www.keyassets.co.nz](http://www.keyassets.co.nz)).

## Team Parenting™:

- \* provides a mechanism to stabilize and sustain foster placements for difficult to place young people in a family environment and secure long term therapeutic benefits for them
- \* creates a stable family environment and a team of highly skilled professionals dedicated to addressing therapeutic issues related to trauma and attachment issues
- \* facilitates opportunities for children and young people with attachment issues to develop strong consistent and appropriate connections to, and relationships with an adult caregiver, their support network, their peers, and the larger community in which they live
- \* builds intergenerational resilience for both young people and their carers
- \* increases accountability and collaboration among the group of professionals that are working to achieve mutually agreed outcomes through Team Parenting™ meetings
- \* provides case management procedures facilitating reflective practice which in turn advances knowledge and improves skill sets for all involved professionals
- \* concentrates on improving and documenting tangible and measureable positive developmental and educational outcomes for young people in foster care.



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## Australia

### Key Assets WA

72-80 Cantonment Street  
Fremantle WA 6160

Tel: (08) 9431 9300

### Key Assets SA

105/106 Greenhill Road  
Unley  
5061

Tel: (08) 8274 5900

### Key Assets QLD

Brisbane  
QLD 4001

Tel: (07) 3831 9631

[www.keyassets.com.au](http://www.keyassets.com.au)

## Canada

### Key Assets Ontario

34 Village Centre Place  
Suite 100  
Mississauga  
Ontario  
L4Z 1V9

Tel: (905) 2794500

### Key Assets Newfoundland & Labrador

120 LeMarchant Road  
PO Box 2336  
St John's  
NL  
A1C 6E7

Tel: (709) 579 3829

[www.keyassets.ca](http://www.keyassets.ca)

## New Zealand

### Key Assets NZ

5/17 Lambie Drive  
Manukau  
Manukau City 2104  
South Auckland

Tel: (09) 263 5151

[www.keyassets.co.nz](http://www.keyassets.co.nz)

## United States

### Key Assets Kentucky

44 East Main St  
Mt. Sterling  
Kentucky 40353

Tel: 859-499-4144

[www.keyassetskentucky.com](http://www.keyassetskentucky.com)



**Attachment Marking**

The preceding 12 pages is the annexure mentioned and referred to as **ATTACHMENT 3** in the statement of Robert Ryan taken on 31/10/2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Robert RYAN

B. King TP (RM)  
Signature of person witnessing statement



Signature of witness  
to Inquiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person  
witnessing statement: \_\_\_\_\_