

# August 2006



**FCAV  
Committee of Management  
2005 – 2006**

**President  
Sandra Creaner  
North West Region**

**Vice President  
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North West Region**

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South East Region**

**Bev Pumpa  
Grampians Region**

**John Woolcock  
South East Region**

**Peter Van de Burgt  
Gippsland Region**

Carers wishing to contact a  
Committee Member or an  
interim Helpline volunteer,  
please phone the  
FCAV Office on  
**03 948 99770**

**FCAV Staff**

**Executive Officer  
Julien Leith**

**Office Coordinator  
Jenny Clayfield**

## IMPORTANT DATES



**Victorian Resilience Congress  
21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2006  
Sofitel Melbourne  
25 Collins St, Melbourne**

**National Foster Care Conference  
Adelaide 2006  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2006 to  
30<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

**AGM from 7.30pm to 9.30pm  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

**Working with Children  
Foster Carers must submit their  
Working with Children Check (WWC)  
applications by 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2006**

**IFCO - New Zealand  
11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007 to 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007  
16<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

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**Foster Care  
Celebration Day  
Sunday 10/9/06**

**PLEASE NOTE  
CHANGE OF VENUE  
Now at  
Collingwood  
Children's Farm**

*More details on insert*

**Dare to Care - Foster Care  
ABN 30 747 010 099**

Items/articles in this newsletter are not necessarily those expressed by the FCAV Committee of Management.  
Information has been obtained from sources deemed reliable

## FCAV SUB COMMITTEES

Finance Subcommittee	Peter Van de Burgt, Helen Brooks, Dora Kontaratos, Adam McCann & Julien Leith
Policy & Procedures	Sylvia Davey, John Woolcock, Helen Falconer, John Hulskamp, Julien Leith - <b>Offers Invited</b>
Constitution	Rebecca Bolton, Sylvia Davey, Peter Kearney, Peter Van de Burgt, Peter Falconer, Lyle Allen & Don Smith

## WORKING GROUPS – FCAV REPRESENTATIVES

Office of the Child Safety Commissioner	Lyn Bicknell, Helen Falconer, Ian Seal & Julien Leith
AFCA	Bev Pumpa and Ian Seal
Child Protection & Family Services Advisory Group	Sandra Creaner, Ian Seal & Julien Leith
DHS Liaison	Sandra Creaner, Ian Seal & Julien Leith
Face-to-Face	Bev Pumpa
Foster Care Advisory Group	John Woolcock & Joan Graham
North West Region Home Based Committee	Cheryl Brown
Interim Help Line	Helen Falconer, Lyn Bicknell & Committee Members
Kinship Care	Joan Graham
Leaving Care	Ian Seal
Looking after Children	Sylvia Davey
Quality Assurance	Lucie Kearney
National Conference	Sandra Creaner, Joan Graham, Claire Brunner, Peter van de Burgt, Lucie Kearney, Adam McCann & Julien Leith
Child Health & Well Being Group	Claire Brunner
Resilience Congress Planning Group	Sylvia Davey
Email Response Group	Claire Brunner, Sylvia Davey, Helen Falconer & Cheryl Whitehead



## CELEBRATION DAY - 10TH SEPTEMBER 2006

**The Foster Care Celebration Day will now be held at  
COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM  
- not at the Melbourne Zoo.**



FCAV has decided to reintroduce this excellent initiative to publicly value and recognise those heroic families that have continued to foster children for over 20 years. What commitment, dedication and stamina!

Also what a treasure trove of memories. All foster families known to FCAV as having been fostering for 20 + years will be awarded Medals of Service. Please let us know of anyone who meets this criterion!

The Certificates of Recognition announced at the State Foster Care Conference will be presented to foster families also. The State Conference is such a busy day with a focus on speakers and work shops that the FCAV Committee decided that a celebration day would provide the best opportunity to recognise and value the amazing contribution foster families make to children in need.

If you have kept in touch with the young people you have cared for, there is the opportunity to make this a 'reunion' occasion. We have a few enquiries from carers wondering if they can invite birth families along also. This is a great idea and reflects the team approach that is so important in supporting children in need of care. We just need to know the numbers coming for catering purposes.

We do have a limit on numbers so book early to avoid disappointment.

### PRAISE FOR OZ CHILD

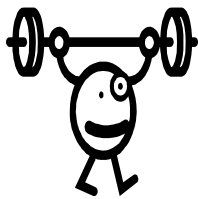
The clear value of a caring, professional and committed support worker to a carer cannot be underestimated, as was evident in an email FCAV received from a carer family in June. Ann and Anthony Beck have been carers for ten years with Oz Child and wrote, singing the praises of Maria and Tania, workers from Oz Child Children's Services On Call Service, describing Maria and Tania as "prompt, caring and without judgement". Ann and Anthony wrote "... of their abilities to make appropriate placements in the middle of the night, whilst we are all sleepy, is ALWAYS conducted with dignity for the children to be placed and respect for the carers who take the children.". The mutually rewarding experience of workers caring for carers to care for others is in full force here. What a great team effort!



Ann and Anthony also praised the OZ Child Buddy system as a great initiative. They are "buddies" and are itching to get their new buds!

Congratulations to OZ Child on your excellent support of carers!

## RESILIENCE CONGRESS “Every Child Every Chance”



Day 1 “Building Resilience through Looking After Children”  
Day 2 “Building Resilience through Education”

Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 August  
at Sofitel, 25 Collins St, Melbourne

### Presenters

#### Raymond Lemay

Executive director, Prescott-Russell Services for Children and Adults, Ontario, Canada

#### Professor Harriet Ward

Director of the Centre for Child & Family Research, University of Loughborough, England

#### Andrew Fuller

Melbourne-based author, Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist.

**NB. DHS is providing money for child care, accommodation and travel to enable carers attend. You will need to contact your agency as soon as possible to make arrangements. Permanent Carers should contact their Regional Office.**

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS



**NB: Foster carers must lodge their Working with Children Check Application by 30 August 2006, unless an you have an exemption.**

The Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice would like to thank all foster carers for their strong support for the WWC Check. This has been evidenced by attendances at Information Sessions, number of WWC Check applications already received from foster carers and their support of the WWC Check as an important initiative in promoting children’s safety.

WWC Check applications can be lodged at your nearest participating Australia Post outlet, together with proof of identity documentation and a passport size photo. As a volunteer, the WWC Check is free.

If a foster carer fails to lodge their WWC Check application by the 30 August 2006, under the legislation it will be an offence to continue to foster children and for the Community Service Organisation to engage that person as a foster carer (unless an exemption applies).

Substantial penalties apply to both organisations engaging the foster carer and the foster carer if a WWC Check is required and an application has not been submitted by the due date. Penalties can include imprisonment and/or a fine.

If you have any queries, please call the WWC Check Information Line on 1300 652 879 or visit the WWC Check website at [www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)

## THE MIRABEL FOUNDATION

The Mirabel Foundation was established in Victoria in 1998 to assist children who have been orphaned or abandoned due to parental illicit drug use. Mirabel provides assistance to kinship carer families throughout Victoria with advocacy and referral, as well as emotional and practical support for the children and their carers. Mirabel follows the philosophy of “every child deserves a childhood”.



Mirabel offers a range of children’s recreational activities in the greater Melbourne area for children up to the age of 17 years. These include camps, day activities and groups. Family days are also organised throughout the year where the families can meet others in similar situations. For those families in regional Victoria, if they are unable to travel to Melbourne, links are made to organizations or activities in their regions.

Support groups for carers are held monthly in three (soon to be four) areas in Melbourne. For those families outside Melbourne, support is offered by telephone contact.

Birthday and Christmas presents are sent to the Mirabel children throughout Victoria.

## COMPETENCY BASED ASSESMENT & TRAINING



The “Step By Step Victoria” assessment package and the “Shared Stories Shared Lives Victoria” pre-service training package are in the final edit and design stages and should be printed by the end of September. Congratulations to all who have contributed.

State-wide training will be provided to the sector on the use of the packages and carers are to play an important role in the delivery of the “Shared Stories Shared Lives Victoria” pre-service training. More news soon!

Joanne Cowell, Senior Policy and Program Advisor, Placement and Support, DHS

## YOU’VE GOT MAIL

We could really use your Help!

As the number of people on our mailing list for this newsletter has greatly increased, so too has the cost of circulation, not to mention our workload! In order to keep costs down, we would like to distribute the newsletter via email wherever possible.



If you are currently on our mailing list and have access to email, we would love to hear from you advising us to change you from the “mailing list” over to the “emailing list”. Please don’t forget to include your name and postal address in your email changeover request. You can contact us via email at [admin@fcav.org](mailto:admin@fcav.org)

Thankyou to those people who have already made the change, we are very grateful for your assistance.

## ORIGINS OF FOSTER CARE IN VICTORIA: Part 1

### An Historical tour



#### Boarding Out:

Boarding Out or Fostering officially began in 1873 under the decentralized supervision of 54 voluntary ladies' committees. It was their responsibility to select foster parents, supervise the children and pay them. They would enjoy the government's recognition of their domestic skills and the opportunity to exercise them in a public service.

The principle of joint philanthropic support for the unfortunate would be maintained because Government and citizens would be working together for the whole community. It was believed that poor, but respectable and preferably country families would provide the service. These families could be well and profitably supported by the State to care for the State's foster children. Clergy supported the proposal, under the proviso that Catholic children be placed with Catholic foster parents and Protestants with Protestants.

Boarding Out was promoted as beneficial for children's moral and physical health. It could meet the colony's continuing demand for boys with agricultural skills and girls fitted for domestic service, as well as teach the children how to be good parents. It would encourage the lower classes to be better parents, because they would soon learn that the penalty for irresponsibility could be complete separation from their children.

Boarding Out would also make use of modern innovations: children and correspondence would travel by rail and the children would attend the new Government schools. By the end of 1873 more than 600 children were placed in foster homes. Amendments to the 1864 Act were brought into Parliament in late 1874 which provide the changes the Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools needed for administrative purposes.

Courts were given the power to commit any immoral or depraved, neglected child who appeared unsuitable for Boarding Out to a reformatory. Within ten years Boarding Out had replaced nearly all the industrial and reformatory schools. Victorians were claiming that they had the world's most advanced and economical system for reclaiming otherwise wasted young lives.

The Education Act 1876 required children to attend school until they reached 14 years of age. What was changing was the concept of childhood which was promoted increasingly as a time for economic dependence, training protection and control.

The early 1880s brought voluntary child rescuers. For the first time, charitable organizations sought children from the slum areas. The child-savers' goal was to give slum children what they believed was every child's right, a sound moral upbringing and the opportunity to enter respectable society. Their work was given legal sanction in The Neglected Children's Act 1887 which also provided the government with comprehensive powers of guardianship.

Voluntary organizations helped care for children during the depression of the 1890s, however the department's resources were strained. In 1889 it had 1,840 children in care, compared to 3,331 ten years later. By 1909 the Department had 6,049 children under its control.

## ORIGINS OF FOSTER CARE IN VICTORIA: continued

### Loss of Favour:

Despite Victoria's pride in Boarding Out as the focus of its child welfare system, by 1910 the program had its critics. Government fostering peaked in 1928 and then began to decline. By world War II in 1939, the number of children Boarded Out had dropped to 1,800. Ten years later fewer than 500 children were in foster homes. Within the voluntary sector during this period, far more children were being placed in charitable institutions.

Issues contributing to the decline of Boarding Out included:

- \* Children attending school until 14 years of age, therefore no longer being of utility value
- \* Rising inflation begins to deplete the value of payments to foster parents
- \* Government didn't have the resources to increase fostering payments after the Depressions
- \* Attempts to create social responsibility were working
- \* Tendency towards smaller families and spending more time and effort on rearing one's own children
- \* Drop in birth rates, and
- \* People believed that the morals of their own children could be contaminated through contact with foster children.

Fostering continued as a trickle during the great period of institutionalization of young people. However, the Government effectively Boarded Out children with the various Charitable organisations of the voluntary sector. In 1954 the State regularized in law a supervisory capacity over voluntary children's homes.

### Rebirth of Foster Care:

Although institutional care dominated as the standard method of caring for children, foster Care remained valued for very young children, especially if it was likely that long term care would be required.

Foster Care began a slow resurgence in early 1960 supported by developmental psychology theories of the importance of the child's emotions during development. During the 1970s rampant inflation pushed up the costs of running large institutions. Staff of charitable organizations became subject to award conditions which meant more staff were required at a higher cost. At the same time, people became interested in forming links with their communities. Through fostering, people could contribute to the welfare of members of their community.

USA sociology literature supported deinstitutionalization as a civil libertarian issue – everyone should have the right to live in their own dwelling rather than live “on mass”. In 1976 the Norgard Inquiry made a series of recommendations which lead to legislation change and a deinstitutionalization program. The child welfare system was about to turn a full circle approximately 100 years after the first move away from mass care for children. This time aspects of both systems were to be kept to care for children. Family Group homes and Cottage Care offer scaled down institutional care and Foster Care provides children with accommodation in a home and family setting.

## “WELFARE TO WORK” AND FOSTER CARE



As you will know, the Welfare to Work changes came into effect on 1 July this year. Under these provisions, all carers on Parenting Payment have been moved to Newstart Allowance once their youngest child turns eight. They should receive a top up payment (called Enhanced Newstart Allowance) so that the money they receive will total the same as they were previously receiving on Parenting Payment.

Foster carers are **automatically exempt** from the provision to look for paid work for up to 12 months at a time. Carers do, however, have to register with an employment service. Foster carers must be **accredited or approved** and **current** carers to receive this exemption. At this stage, all home based carers are covered (general, permanent care and kinship care). The general requirement is that the foster child has been subject to Child Protection involvement, rather than any informal arrangement between friends or family.

You may need to take proof that you are an approved and active carer to give to Centrelink if requested. At this stage this could take the form of a letter from your agency.

There have been **some teething problems** with this change. We are slowly sorting them out so that other carers do not have disruption to their payments. If you are having problems, the relevant guideline to quote to Centrelink is: Guide to Social Security Law made pursuant to section 5B(2) of the *Employment and Workplace Relations Legislations Amendment Welfare to Work and Other measures) Act 2005*.

If you continue to have problems, please contact the FCAV office as soon as possible.

Helen Falconer

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE MELBOURNE 2007

**The 2007 National Conference will be held in Melbourne, organised by the FCAV.** We need your help! If you would like to be part of a working group to ensure that the 2007 National Conference is a great success, please contact the office. We'd love to hear from you.

## INTERNATIONAL FOSTER CARE CONFERENCE

### [IFCO 2007 New Zealand "Fostering our Taonga"](#)

The Biennial International Conference 2007 will be held in Hamilton, New Zealand from 11 – 16 February 2007. This is a wonderful opportunity for carers to extend their knowledge in what is going on in other parts of the world by attending the excellent presentations and workshops offered. Also Victorian carers can make valuable contributions to the workshops. If you are interested please talk with your agency about ways they may be able to assist carers from your agency to attend. For further information about the conference check the website at [www.ifco.info](http://www.ifco.info)



## GREAT SUPPORT IDEAS

### Good Shepherd Annual Caregiver Appreciation Dinner

Since merging in January 2006, Share Care and Good Shepherd's LINC Program have worked hard in bring the program together as one and providing better outcomes for children in out of home care.



The Good Shepherd Annual Caregiver Appreciation Dinner was held recently on 21st July and the large number of caregivers who attended was a testament of the good work the two programs have achieved in such a short time. Julien Leith, Executive Officer of the FCAV and Ian Seale, Vice President of FACV were invited as guest speakers and provided information on the benefits of joining FACV and many of the upcoming events on the FCAV Calendar. Overall, a wonderful opportunity for caregivers to meet with representatives from the Agency, FCAV and delegates from DHS, Agiri Alisandratos, Libby Dyer and Mara Long.

The Dinner was achieved with limited funding. In total Good Shepherd received 80 RSVP's including 50 caregivers, 10 staff, DHS and City of Yarra representatives and Board of Management/Committee members of Good Shepherd. The dinner was held at the Provincial Hotel, who provided outstanding service and excellent quality despite our limited budget. Their support for the evening has been well received. Provided on the evening was a three course meal, drinks, live music, guest speakers and we were fortunate to have the presence of Gregory Nicolau as MC. The Good Shepherd Youth Team assisted in providing activities for young people in care for the evening.

Caregivers commented on the evening, "how wonderful it was to be celebrated for the hard work caregivers provide" and the importance of "ongoing encouragement". Others commented on the "great opportunity to meet other caregivers in the program both new and experienced".

Report provided by Liz Young, Recruitment & Training Coordinator, Good Shepherd Home Base Care.

Comments from Julien Leith: "the mutual respect and teamwork between workers and carers was evident as was the great support shown by Good Shepherd management and workers. Stories told by carers during the evening were inspirational as was their commitment and dedication to caring for children. The potential of carers as the best recruiters of new carers was demonstrated by carers talking of the enormous enjoyment and satisfaction they derive from sharing their lives with vulnerable children, earning their trust and helping them cope with the rough patches in their lives whilst assisting them to develop their potential."

## FCAV COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT



**Oi!** Interested in joining the FCAV Committee Of Management?

There will be an Information Session prior to the Committee Meeting on Friday 22nd of September for anyone interested in Nominating for the committee. **Particular skills and interests needed are in areas of policy, governance, media and education.**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 27th October, 2006.  
For further information contact the office.

## HELP LINE – What we call it? Your Ideas welcome



Whilst everyone agrees on the need for a help line and the need to find a better name for it, we are struggling to find the right name. Tasmania has followed Queensland's lead and call their help line FAST or Foster Care Advocacy and Support Team. As this is such an excellent and well used service it is likely that other states will follow suit. Should we be working towards a nationally recognised service by adopting FAST as our name also? We could become FAST Victoria. What do you think? Have you got an alternative idea?

Comments and suggestions welcome. Either phone the office or email [admin@fcav.org](mailto:admin@fcav.org)

We have a group of 15 people completing their training and hope to launch the program officially later in the year. In the meantime, Helen Falconer and the office try to respond to carers (and often agency staff) seeking information or wishing to discuss an issue.

We have applied to the Dept of Human Services for funding to employ a Help Line Coordinator and additional administrative assistance. This will ensure that we are able to provide a well resourced Help Line with responsible training, accreditation, supervision and support to Help Line volunteers and professional assistance in responding to some of the very complex issues we sometimes need to assist carers with.

The support we plan to provide to carers through the Help Line is a complement, not a substitute for agency support. Already the FCAV is approached by carers and also by agency workers for information. Sometimes carers would like to talk to a carer rather than a worker, in the same way as workers value discussions with colleagues. Help Line volunteers are careful to maintain the value of carer to carer support rather than engaging in a counseling role or in providing services best provided by the agency. Many agencies express appreciation of the FCAV 's role in supporting carers who have had an allegation or quality of care issue raised about them.

**FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC**

**Vision**

*“For all children in care to be cherished, connected and treated with compassion”*

**Mission**

*“To strengthen foster families and enhance the wellbeing of the children in their care”.*

**MEMBERSHIP FORM  
FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION  
OF VICTORIA INC**

The FCAV Committee of Management encourage you to become a FCAV Member. **In order to advocate for optimum care of children in the out of home care system and improved support for carers, we need your support.** By joining the FCAV you strengthen us as a representative body of carers which increases our effectiveness in pursuing our vision and mission. Membership also enables you allow you to vote at the AGM and at any Special Meetings.

As a FCAV Member you will automatically receive the bimonthly newsletter.

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

desire to formally become a Member of the Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc.

I am a (please circle)

FOSTER

PERMANENT

KINSHIP CARER

OTHER (please state interest in joining) \_\_\_\_\_

with (name of agency) \_\_\_\_\_

I have been an accredited Carer since (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc as in force from time to time.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Date / /

Please return to:

**FCAV Inc  
PO Box 729  
Northcote, 3070**

or

by fax to **9489 9119**

The FCAV advises that all the above details will be treated with confidentiality and, as promised in the past, none of the above information will be passed on to a third party.

**Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc.  
RENEWED VISION, MISSION AND PURPOSE**

The FCAV has identified four core values that underpin its existence and operations now and into the future. The four values were enunciated by Adjunct Professor Jan Carter at the FCAV 2003 State Conference and strongly resonated with the organisation and its members. They are “*cherishment*”, “*connectedness*”, “*community*” and “*civility*”. These values articulate a vision for the children in home-based care, the system to which they have entered and in which the FCAV and others operate.

**Vision :** *For all children in care to be cherished, connected and treated with compassion.*

**Mission:** *To strengthen foster families and enhance the wellbeing of the children in their care.*

**Statement of purposes**

*To advance a compassionate and effective foster care system that ensures the nurturing and protection of foster children; supports the needs of foster families and acknowledges the role of the biological family.*

*To promote a foster care system in which foster carers and their families can effectively help, nurture and care for foster children.*

*To promote a foster care system that prevents any on-going abuse to, or by, the children and protects the foster family unit.*

*FCAV seeks to achieve these purposes by, but not limited to*

- (a) providing and facilitating information and support networks, counselling, advice, referrals, and any other means of support and assistance for the foster carers*
- (b) research, collection and dissemination of information on or relating to foster care for carers, agencies, and other interested participants*
- (c) promoting and encouraging foster carers and the recognition of the important role they and their families play in the foster care system*
- (d) assisting all participants in the foster care system to develop policies and guidelines to enhance the nurturing and protection of the foster children and that support the needs of the foster families*
- (e) promoting and facilitating effective training and on-going development for foster carers.*

**FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC  
NEWSLETTER RENEWAL**

**(Please tick appropriate box)**

- |                          |                                 |                          |  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Approved Foster Carer           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Donation of \$10 per annum                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Interested in making a donation | <input type="checkbox"/> | (Nominate amount) \$ _____                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organisation/Agency             |                          | \$55 per annum to receive newsletter (inc GST) |

Name of Foster Care Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Foster Family \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to FCAV Inc and mail to: **FCAV**

**PO Box 729  
Northcote  
VIC 3070**