

June 2007



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Committee of Management
2006 – 2007**

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Carers wishing to contact a
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please phone the
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03 948 9970

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**NATIONAL
FOSTER CARE
CONFERENCE
2007**

5th - 7th October 2007

**Telstra Dome,
Melbourne
Docklands**

Our theme
“Fostering Change”

**DEADLINE
FOR
AUGUST
NEWSLETTER
CLOSE OF
BUSINESS
FRIDAY
13th JULY, 2007**

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**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

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I sit at my computer thinking about what to write for this newsletter, the kids in my care are excited and busy getting ready to go to the footy at the MCG. We have this opportunity thanks to CREATE and the principle sponsors of the Western Bulldogs, Leaseplan. "Carn the Kids" provides disadvantaged young people with a chance to experience one of Australia's quintessential sporting events - AFL football. I don't know if I am really looking forward to the day at the footy as it is very cold, windy and wet. But I will appreciate a break from the meetings, forums and working groups that FCAV Committee members have been very busy attending.

The commencement for the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 in April involved many, many meetings but this new legislation is intended to create greater stability in a child's life. The reform includes new maximum time frames to assess chances for children in out-of-home care to be reunited with their family or recommended to the courts for alternative long-term living arrangements.

Gavin Jennings, Minister for Community Services, stated that "Child protection will now be guided by the best interest principles which says children should continue to be protected from harm and neglect but also live in an environment that meets their development needs". Hoping to meet with you at the 2007 National Foster Care Conference in October.

Yours in caring, Sylvia Davey

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE CONFERENCE

Billeting Possibility



As an option for our interstate friends, FCAV are encouraging billeting as an accommodation option. If you and your family are able to assist other carers attend by providing accommodation, we would love to hear from you.

FCAV will compile a list of people able to provide accommodation, and following request from a delegate, we will pass on contact details. It will then be up to the individuals to make arrangements. Workers, Carers or any other interested party's offers will be accepted. Even if you are unable to attend the conference yourself, you may still have a bed free....

We recognise that attendance is costly and hope that this option will reduce the expenses for those who would otherwise be unable to attend, but we need your help.

NB Billeting arrangements will be private arrangements between parties. FCAV will not take responsibility for arrangements made.

.....
YES! Our family would be pleased to offer billeted accommodation for the 2007 National Foster Care Conference from 5th to 7th October.

Name:	Address:
Phone:	Fax:
Email:	No of beds available:

Are you able to provide transport to and from venue for your guests? Yes/No
 Is public transport easily accessible from your home to Telstra Dome? Yes/No

Once an arrangement has been finalised, I agree to inform FCAV so my details can be deleted from contact list.

Please forward completed form to the FCAV Office by fax/email/post, or phone in details.

INTERIM HELP LINE REPORT

Between July 1st 2006 and mid April 2007, over 1,000 calls from carers have been responded to by the FCAV interim Help Line. This has constituted a huge work load for our volunteers and office staff. Typically carers phone the help line when they have reached an extremely high level of frustration about their situation. Often the opportunity to debrief with a fellow carer who understands their situation is as important as helping the carer to find a way forward - which is also a crucial part of the process.



There are many issues causing concern amongst carers. Carers in the throes of Permanent Care Conversions and Kinship Carers are concerned about the levels of support they are able to access in terms of both services and resources. Carers are often concerned that they are not involved sufficiently in planning and decision making about the children and young people they are caring for and are concerned that decisions are being made at times that are not in the best interests of the children.

Unfortunately some carers are continuing to feel that their views and ideas are not respected by some workers and that they are not valued as integral members of the care team. It is however great to hear through our regional visits of agencies and workers treating carers with great consideration and respect and providing great support.

Inevitably we also hear of carers not receiving sufficient information about children in their care and of access plans being made or changed without sufficient consideration or notice to carers. Whilst carers appreciate that workers can also be stressed and busy, it makes such a difference to carers lives if workers make these issues a priority.

Centrelink queries are always high on the list of issues for carers with Welfare to Work, Family tax Benefit, birth certificates and child care benefit problems continuing to cause the most difficulty and confusion.

Sadly we continue to have carers contacting us in serious distress following notice that an allegation of abuse has been made or a quality of care issue raised in relation to a child or young person they are caring for. Frequently agencies refer carers involved in these traumatic situations to the FCAV as they are aware of the need carers have for independent support as a complement to the support they provide.

The Help Line volunteers and office staff struggle to provide as much assistance and support as possible knowing that carers are usually in desperate need when they make the call to the FCAV seeking assistance. We must acknowledge however that our resources are stretched beyond our limits and ask carers to be patient whilst we do the best we can with our very limited resources.

If you have found support from the FCAV helpful, or if you have been unable to receive the help you need please email, write or phone us to let us know. Your feed back may help us to obtain the resources we need to provide you with better support and service.

QUALITY OF CARE CONCERNS (Allegations for Investigating Allegations of Abuse)




Following many concerns being expressed by Community Service Organizations, The Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare and the FCAV, the Department of Human Services engaged Allen Consulting to draw up new guidelines. FCAV together with representatives from agencies and DHS have been involved in this consultation.

We are pleased to advise that it has been recommended by Allen Consulting that all such matters are referred to Quality of Care Concerns. So, it is anticipated that Quality of Care Concerns will include Allegations of Abuse.

The FCAV has provided the following feed back to Allen Consulting in the hope of ensuring carers are treated fairly and transparently.

- Balance is needed in the preamble to the document, acknowledging the dedication, commitment and loving care that carers provide to children and young people and the vulnerability of carers to allegations being made against them.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that all quality of care concerns relating to children and young people in care must be investigated, the threshold for substantiating an allegation of abuse should be the same for carers as for the rest of the population. It is acknowledged that there are higher standards of care required for children in care than for the general population and these standards are addressed with carers through initial assessment and training.
- Sufficient processes need to be in place at the commencement of a quality of care concern to ensure that the relevant rights and responsibilities are discussed with all parties.
- Natural justice and transparency of process should apply to all quality of care investigations.
- Carers should have access to legal advice and representation at no cost to themselves.
- Carers should have the right to have an independent support person present at all interviews involving quality of care concerns.
- Carers should be informed in writing of their right to independent support and advised that FCAV provides independent support to carers. Carers should also be advised of the type of support that their agency is able to provide.
- Carers should have access to mediation, consultation and counseling services at no cost to themselves.

QUALITY OF CARE CONCERNS (Allegations for Investigating Allegations of Abuse)

- Carers must be advised of the purpose of any interview relating to a quality of care concern. Carers need to be provided with written information stating what the worker has told them in relation to a quality of care concern or allegation, the support that will be provided by the CSO and the support available to them through the FCAV. This written information should be provided at the time they are informed about the concern or allegation. This is necessary as the carer is in a state of high anxiety and often shock and is frequently unable to absorb the information at the time.
- 
- Carers also need to be advised verbally and in writing of the process that will occur including timelines when they are informed about the quality of care concern.
 - Workers conducting investigative interviews with carers need appropriate training and experience.
 - Interviews relating to quality of care concerns, particularly allegations should be taped as written records vary greatly in quality and reliability.
 - Children should not be removed from placements unless there is a real risk of significant harm. If it proves necessary to remove a child from a placement, options for alternative placement both within the child's family and the carer's network need to be explored. Transporting children to unknown placements with no transition is traumatic.
 - Carers, or their representative, must have access to the material on which a preliminary decision is made and the reasons for the decision. Carers must have the opportunity to respond to this material before a final decision is made. If there are case sensitive material or privacy issues, the material should be made available to the carer's representative. This is necessary in order for natural justice to occur.
 - Separation of roles is necessary. DHS is currently investigator, decision maker and has responsibility for implementation of the decision. This system lacks objectivity and is often perceived as being biased. There should be an independent decision making group or panel which includes community representation.
 - Time lines should be adhered to and there need to be processes in place to ensure this.
 - The Education Dept process should be explored to determine their protocols and processes in relation to police and time lines. It appears that the Education Department have had some success in achieving agreed time lines with a reporting process for instances where time lines are not adhered to.

QUALITY OF CARE CONCERNS (Allegations for Investigating Allegations of Abuse)

- Carers should be provided with a written document at the conclusion of quality of care investigations stating the outcome clearly.
- Processes need be put in place for young people when it has been concluded that the allegation of quality of care was unfounded and based on e.g. a reaction to boundary setting or a wish to return home or change placements. It is important that such issues are followed through so that young people have the opportunity for positive rather than negative learning from the experience. It is also important to address such issues so that serial allegations do not follow from the young person as they change placements and learn that manipulative behavior can achieve their purposes. Such an attitude does not help them establish happy relationships.
- Information about the Carer Register needs to be included in the same document.

Implementation Issues:

- Whilst carers should have access to the entire document, a carer friendly pamphlet/ brochure is needed
- Training needs to be developed statewide for carers, DHS and CSO workers with carer involvement in preparation and delivery.
- Legal advice and representation needs to be available to carers e.g. via a professional indemnity type of insurance.
- FCAV needs to be adequately resourced to provide adequate independent support to carers via a properly resourced Help Line. The FCAV receives calls from very distressed carers facing quality of care concerns needing intensive and independent support . This support is needed over lengthy periods of time as the process is often inordinately long. Carers often ring in crises wanting immediate help. The FCAV needs to be adequately resourced in order to be able to respond responsibly and adequately. Timely, reliable, strong independent support from the FCAV Help Line will impact positively on carer retention.

These recommendations are currently under consideration and we are waiting the final document from Allen Consulting and DHS. We'll keep you posted!

Julien Leith
Executive Officer



This Newsletter was kindly packed by our fantastic team of volunteers . Thankyou Jo, Bill, Ron & Graeme our FCAV volunteers and thankyou Hayley from CREATE .

THE CIRCLE PROGRAM

HOW IS THE CIRCLE PROGRAM DIFFERENT TO THE WAY WE PROVIDE FOSTER CARE NOW?

The Circle Program aims to give children in out-of-home care every chance to achieve the things we want for all children. The Program uses everything we have learned about what children need when they are in care and how to provide high quality care. With new and ongoing funding, it builds on regular foster care by giving agencies and carers the resources and supports they need to focus comprehensively on each child.



We know that all children need opportunities to learn and grow, families and friends who support them and the chance to recover from hurtful experiences. The relationships that a child develops and maintains while they are in care are critically important. The child's relationship with their carer is central. This relationship, and the care provided, is often the primary vehicle through which healing can occur. The carer's home is recognised and supported as the central place for healing and building resilience in the child. All the planning and support around the placement emphasises the need for the workers and the system to support the carer to create a nurturing, safe, stable and secure home for a child. In addition, by forming a support network around each child for things like babysitting, outings or tutoring, the Program will broaden the base of support for each child and carer.

The program has sufficient staffing to fully support other important parts of the child's world including their school or child care centre and other places and people with whom they are engaged. Children who have experienced abuse and neglect often need specialist support. The Circle Program provides this support by providing dedicated therapeutic specialists as members of every child's Care Team.

Workers in the Circle program will be more proactive in supporting placements. The needs of children will be understood via a comprehensive assessment process that fully involves carers and birth families. The support provided to carers will meet the needs of the placement to ensure stability and to provide every opportunity for the relationship between the carer and child to develop.

Carers in the Circle program will receive active, planned and regular support from placement workers and the therapeutic specialists. Carers will be central in care teams, informing workers about the child's day-to-day experiences, and drawing on the worker's expertise to better understand and respond to the sometimes complex needs of children they care for. Particular emphasis will be given to the need to ensure carers are always treated with respect and that their opinions and views are valued.

Regular care team meetings will be held at least weekly for the first 3 months of the placement and attendance by everyone in the care team is required. Everyone must be actively involved. There will be more contact with the child's parents, in recognition that in the vast majority of cases when children enter care the plan is that they return to the care of their parents as soon as it is in the child's best interests to do so. Even in circumstances where children may not return to the care of their parents, their parents will always remain incredibly significant people in their lives.

THE CIRCLE PROGRAM

The Circle program seeks to promote positive relationships between carers and the child's family. Wherever possible and in the child's best interests, the Circle program will promote parental involvement in the care team processes. There will also be stronger involvement with the school, kindergarten and with formal therapy if the child requires this. Carers will receive an enhanced level of reimbursement to acknowledge these additional obligations.

Why do we need a new program?

As many carers know, there is strong evidence that children entering care in recent years have higher and more complex needs than in earlier decades. Numerous reports and reviews have identified the need for more significant levels of support to carers and children in care to improve placement stability and outcomes for children. The Circle program provides the level of support each child requires from the point of first entry to care.

Who are the children?

The children and young people who will be placed in the Circle Program will be randomly allocated as referrals for children needing care are received - two thirds of the places will be for children entering care. We want to provide high quality, therapeutic care from the beginning of a placement - not when children are identified later as needing more intensive care. They will range in age from birth to 16 years. One third of places are for children who have been in care for less than two years but need a new placement. Placement matching will still occur.

Is it for me?

Being a carer in the Circle program will suit some people, but we realize it won't be everyone's preference. Carers for the program may be existing carers or new carers. Carers will need the ability and willingness to be an active and equal member of a team, to accept weekly visits from workers and be willing to participate in the child's therapy sessions if required. They also need to be willing to form a relationship with the child's parents and extended family when it is appropriate to do so, and accept the fact that children placed with them may end up being in their care for a short or long term period. It is expected that carers will make a commitment to work as part of the team for a significant period of time. Because of the time and relationship commitment that this program requires of carers, they will be asked to care for only one child at a time so that there can be close attention to the needs of the child. Two siblings may be placed together in this Program.

What is the difference in the training carers receive?

Carer households will be required to undergo Circle program training and assessment. Additional training and support will be ongoing. Some ways of caring for children will be different to usual parenting techniques and strategies, and additional training is provided. This will build on the initial caregiver training and inform carers about how the program will operate and the preferred approaches to caring for children. Training will build on the general (Shared Stories, Shared Lives) training and will cover information about the program, skills development and role clarification; it will enhance carer knowledge of child development, trauma and attachment, building resilience in children, the impact of abuse and neglect, the Looking After Children practice framework and how this approach can enhance parenting. Personal insight and growth are an important part of the training and on-going program.

THE CIRCLE PROGRAM

Who are the service providers?

The Circle program is commencing in 4 regions.

Barwon-South Western	MacKillop Family Services	52 789 211
	Glastonbury Child and Family Services	52 226 911
Hume	Berry Street Victoria (Hume)	58 210 399
	Upper Murray Family Care	02 6022 8000
Eastern Metropolitan	Anglicare (Eastern)	9 735 4188
	(or Central Recruitment)	1300 889 335
Southern Metropolitan	Oz Child	9 791 5423

The Circle program will continue to grow over the next 3 years, and other interested organisations will have the opportunity to join the program. Out of home care agencies will receive information directly from the Office for Children about opportunities to participate in the Program's expansion. If you are a carer with an organisation not mentioned above, your agency may provide this service in the future.

This is a great opportunity to provide foster care the way we would all like – with support, training, therapeutic input and a focus on the critical importance of the carer in making a difference to a child's life. If you think you might be interested in being a Circle carer or if you want more information, please contact your foster care worker.

Jennifer McConachy
Senior Policy Advisor
Department of Human Services Placement & Support

SUPPORT THE FCAV

Your donation of \$15 (individual) or \$60 organisation) assists us to produce this bimonthly newsletter.

If you have not made your donation for 2007 as yet, we would be most grateful to receive it.

Payments can be made payable to the Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc. as a Newsletter Donation.

Donations can be made by completing the form on the back of this newsletter.





Department of Human Services

Incorporating: Health, Children, Community Services, Mental Health
and Housing

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Our Ref: .ADD/
Your Ref:

Ms Sylvia Davey
President
Foster Care Association of Victoria
PO Box 729
NORTHCOTE 3070

Dear Ms Davey

Re: Access to public dental services for children and young people in out of home care.

You recently received information that Regional Department of Human Services Managers and Community Service Organisations had been provided with information to clarify access to public dental services for children and young people in out of home care, and action to be taken if the timelines for dental assessment in the Registration Standards for Community Service Organisations were not being met.

I am writing again to provide additional information about dental services available for Aboriginal children and young people that, despite the limited spread of services, may be of benefit to children and families that carers are involved with.

A free Dental Service is provided by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). VAHS is located at 186, Nicholson St, Fitzroy, phone (03) 9419 3000, and can be accessed by Aboriginal communities throughout the State.

There is also a local dental service at the Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, 20 Rumbalara Road, Mooroopna, phone 5825 1333.

The Department funds the Rumbalara service, and therefore, as the previous advice sent to you indicated, regional Placement and Support Managers should be advised of any problems with access so that they can be referred to the Manager, Dental Health to be resolved. However, as the Commonwealth Government funds the VAHS service the Dental Manager cannot address problems with access to that service.

The attached updated information sheet on accessing public dental services has now been provided to regional Department of Human Services Managers and Community Service Organisations. I would be appreciated if you could update any information that you have already provided to carers on this issue.

Yours sincerely

David Clements
Assistant Director
Placement and Support

ACCESS TO PUBLIC DENTAL SERVICES

For Children and Young People in Out of Home Care



This article was provided by the Department of Human Services.

The following advice is intended to clarify arrangements about access to public dental services for children and young people in all forms of out of home care, including kinship care and permanent care.

Registration standards for community service organisations require that children and young people entering out of home care for the first time (or for the first time during the current period of involvement) undergo a comprehensive health assessment (including medical, dental, mental health needs) as soon as possible or within one month of admission to the placement. There is reported to be a range of barriers to achieving the standard for dental care, one of which is the apparent unavailability of services to provide a dental appointment within the stipulated timeframes.

In Victoria all children have priority access to public dental services:

- All preschool aged children can visit a community dental clinic for priority access to dental care by appointment.
- All primary school aged children are provided with dental care through the School Dental Service (SDS).
- Young people who are healthcare card holders or dependents of a healthcare card holder are eligible for priority public dental care by appointment at community dental clinics through the Youth Dental Program.

Healthcare card holders or dependents of a health care card are exempt from the co-payment of \$27 per course of care per child (up to \$108 per family) for dental care provided to preschool and primary school aged children. There is no co-payment for the Youth Dental Program.

Advice on the access of children and young people in home based care to public dental services

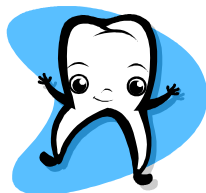
All children and young people in home based care are eligible for a health care card and are therefore eligible for priority access to public dental services and are exempt from co-payment on presentation of a health care card.

Access to dental care for children is a priority, and there are no waiting lists. Therefore all children and young people in home based care should be seen within the time line of the standards.

Children entering care may already be receiving treatment through the SDS. The child's dental care status can be checked by phoning the SDS on 1300 360 054. An appointment may also be made via this number.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC DENTAL SERVICES

For Children and Young People in Out of Home Care



Specific advice on the access of children and young people in residential care to public dental services

Pre-school and primary school aged children in residential care are eligible for priority treatment, but co-payment will be required unless their parent is a healthcare card holder. They should be able to access public dental services within the time line of the standards on payment of the co-payment when necessary.

Young people in residential care are eligible for dental care from a Youth Dental Program if they or their parents have a health care card. They should be able to access public dental services within the time line of the standards. Those who do not have a health care card or a parent who is a healthcare card holder will need to see a private dental provider.

The issue of access to and payment for dental services for children and young people in residential care, who do not have a health care card or a parent with a health care card, is being addressed separately.

Department of Human Services

Other information

Advice on how to access dental services for children and young people can be found at http://www.rch.org.au/dentistry/index.cfm?doc_id=4586.

An updated list of public dental health services can be found at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/dentistry/locations.htm>.

The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) at 186, Nicholson St, Fitzroy, phone (03) 9419 3000, is a free service for children and adults and is accessed by Aboriginal communities throughout the State. There is also a local dental service in the Hume Region at the Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, 20 Rumbalara Road, Mooroopna, Ph 5825 1333.



EXPERIENCING DELAYS IN DENTAL CARE?

If children and young people in out of home care experience delays in obtaining dental care beyond the standards' timelines contact your agency. Out of home care services should provide details to the regional Placement and Support Manager who will refer the matter to the Manager, Dental Health to be resolved. This does not apply to the VAHS service, which is funded by the Commonwealth Government.



Department of Human Services

Incorporating: Health, Children, Community Services, Aged Care and Housing

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Our Ref: ADD/07/9582
Your Ref:

16 April 2007

Ms Sylvia Davey
President
Foster Care Association of Victoria
P O Box 729
Northcote 3070

Dear Ms Davey

Re: Insurance coverage for home based carers

This letter further clarifies and supersedes the advice sent to you on 27 November 2007 regarding the insurance arrangements related to property claims by home based carers for damage caused by children in care.

Who can claim

Foster carers, kinship carers or permanent carers (prior to the making of the Permanent Care Order) may make insurance claims for property and vehicle damage as the legal responsibility for the child's welfare rests with the Secretary for the Department of Human Services (DHS). However, permanent carers cannot make claims where the Children's Court has made a Permanent Care Order, as the guardianship for the child welfare has been transferred from the DHS Secretary to the permanent care family.

Claims for property damage

In situations where a child in care causes damage to a property, the carer should make the claim against their domestic insurance policy. Where excess is paid, the carers should make the payment, then provide evidence of the payment to their Community Service Organisation (CSO), or in the case of some kinship and permanent care arrangements to the DHS, who will then arrange for the amount to be repaid to the carers through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA). The CSO and DHS should provide VMIA with the carer's details so the cheque can be made out to them.

Claims for motor vehicle damage

In cases where a child in care damages a motor vehicle in a non-driving incident, the carer should contact their CSO who will contact VMIA. This will ensure that any claims will not affect the foster carer's excess and future no claims bonus. Please note that vehicle damage resulting from a motor vehicle accident is covered by a motor vehicle policy, not public liability policy and therefore cannot be claimed through VMIA.

Foster carers, kinship carers and permanent carers (prior to the court order being made) are advised to disclose to their domestic insurer that they are caring for vulnerable children in statutory care. Although failure to disclose their special care arrangements may not give an insurer the automatic right to deny a claim or amend the terms of their policy, the insurer's rights are largely dependant upon the materiality of the alleged non-disclosure. In order to avoid any potential disputes with the insurer about domestic insurance claims, we strongly advise that carers disclose their care arrangements to their insurer.

If a domestic insurer rejects a claim for damage to a carer's property caused by a child in care, the claim should then be referred to VMIA.

Where a carer chooses not to take out domestic insurance, their position remains unchanged in that damage to the carer's property caused by the child or young person in care is to be notified via their CSO or DHS to VMIA for direct claim settlement.

If you require further information, please contact Ms Helen Brain, Manager, Out of Home Care by email at helen.brain@dhs.vic.gov.au or by telephone on (03) 9096 7252.

Yours sincerely

David Clements
Assistant Director
Placement and Support

YOU'VE GOT MAIL



We could really use your Help!

As the number of people on our mailing list for this newsletter is always increasing, so too does 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

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



Predjudice



Is this a game to you white child
This calling of a name
You run away fair hair flying
Blue eyes cruel and grey

Yesterday she came home
Sad forlorn puzzled by this sudden scorn
I watched her walk thru the broken gate
And wondered is this destiny or fate?
Or God or man?
Who puts the value and the ban
On certain things like skin and class
For what? Who will pass?
Who is to blame?
All will rot
Black and white decay the same

I could not tell her this
Instead I met her with a Kiss and dried her tears
Knowing that the years
will bring pride and grace
she will not hide
but stand tall with pride
a member of her race

Jack Davis
The First Born

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Some broad policy recommendations

During 2006 VACRO has been conducting a series of consultation forums to generate recommendations addressing the needs of the children of prisoners and those that care for them during parental prison terms. The forums were divided into six main topic areas covering the differing policy requirements for:

Arrest
Bail/Remand
Courts and Sentencing
Prisons/Visits/Programs
Pre & Post-release
Interdepartmental

51 people attended seven forums, with representatives from the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, DHS, the Department of Justice, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, the Courts, Legal Aid, Melbourne City Mission, Windana, Anglicare, Centrelink, Court Network, the Victorian Law Reform Commission, and the Sentencing Advisory Council.

A large number of recommendations were developed, ranging from very specific, practical suggestions through to broad policy recommendations. VACRO has published an Action Paper titled *Children: Unintended victims of legal process* detailing the forum procedures, discussions and recommendations.² In brief, the guiding principles developed for each of the six stages covered by the forums were:

- Guidelines are needed for Police when dealing with the dependant children of offenders
- Where possible primary carers should be identified as such *before* the arrest and the children factored into arrest scenarios
- DHS to develop policy and establish protocols regarding children with parental legal involvement with all other stakeholders i.e. Police, Courts, child-care and foster agencies, prisons etc.
- The *Bail Act* needs to acknowledge unique position of primary carers (Including male carers) in policy and procedures
- The *Sentencing Act* needs to acknowledge unique position of primary carers (Including male carers)
- Continue to enhance and extend all avenues supporting prisoner-family Contact
- Ensure the delivery of consistent, diverse, quality parenting programs in all prisons
- Develop protocols between the Department of Education and prisons
- Extend all services and policies available for primary carers in the Women's Prison Region to primary carers in male prisons

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Some broad policy recommendations

- Children of Correction's clients to be treated as individual clients to assure adequate allocation of pre & post release funds (as in Windana/Odyssey funding models).
- Primary carers and their children's needs to be identified, assessed and acknowledged in all pre and post release planning (inc male prisoners)
- Move the issues from the Discussion Paper and the recommendations from the Action Paper into actions on an interdepartmental level.

Significant steps have been achieved as a result of these forums towards enhancing the well-being of children with parental justice involvement. However a great deal of work is still required to provide a policy safety net for children in such a vulnerable and traumatic situation. The last article in this series will explore the areas that still need to be addressed.

ROBIN CLARK MEMORIAL AWARDS



Robin Clark Memorial Awards 2007

recognising excellence in working with children, youth and families

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Victorian Government invites nominations for the Robin Clark Memorial Awards 2007.

Through the Awards the Government seeks to recognise and encourage work, of the highest standards, which improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families in Victoria.

The Awards are dedicated to the memory of Robin Dennis Clark (1936 –2001), a widely respected, inspirational leader in the field of child, youth and family welfare.

The Awards are aimed at volunteers, and individuals or groups from community, government, and academic organisations. Nominees should have made a significant contribution, either in service provision or practice based research, to the Victorian child and family services sector.

Awards are offered in two categories:

- Inspirational Leadership in the Field
- Making a Difference with Children, Young People and Families.

The Minister for Community Services will announce recipients at an official evening function on Tuesday 4 September 2007.

Nominations open Monday 4 June, and must be received by close of business Friday 13 July 2007.

Download the Awards Information Package and Nomination Form now from <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/robinclarkmemorialawards>

Please refer any questions to Linda Doble at email Linda.Doble@dhs.vic.gov.au

FCAV SUB COMMITTEES

Finance Subcommittee	Peter Van de Burgt, Dora Kontaratos, Adam McCann & Julien Leith
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WORKING GROUPS – FCAV REPRESENTATIVES

Office of the Child Safety Commissioner	Helen Falconer & Julien Leith
AFCA	Lucie Kearney & Bev Pumpa
Child Protection & Family Services Advisory Group	Sylvia Davey & Julien Leith
DHS Liaison	Sylvia Davey , John Woolcock & Julien Leith
Face-to-Face	Claire Brunner
Foster Care Advisory Group	John Woolcock
Foster Care Communication & Recruitment Strategy Reference Group	Sylvia Davey & Julien Leith
North West Region Home Based Committee	Chris Peterson
Interim Help Line	Helen Falconer, Jeanette Hutchins, Maz Sobkowiak, Sylvia Davey, Leanne Lewis, Cas O'Neill & Peter van de Burgt
Kinship Care Advisory Group	Chris Peterson
Kinship Statewide Network	Julien Leith
Leaving Care	Ian Seal
Looking after Children	Sylvia Davey
Carer Reimbursement Group	Sandra Creaner, Julien Leith & John Woolcock
Therapeutic Foster Care Program Development Advisory Group	Claire Brunner & Sylvia Davey
Including Children Advisory Committee in Decision Making	Chris Peterson
Quality of Care Concerns Working Group	Sandra Creaner & Julien Leith
Carer Register	Sandra Creaner & Julien Leith
Overnight Stays	Christine Peterson



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** or by fax to **9489 9119**
PO Box 729
Northcote, 3070

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)

Approved Foster Carer

Donation of \$15 per annum

Interested in making a donation

(Nominate amount) \$ _____

Organisation/Agency \$60 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**