



Child Abuse PREVENTION

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The National Child Protection Clearing House serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives supporting work in the field of child abuse/neglect prevention.

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National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse

On 9 September 1997, during Child Protection Week, the then Minister for Family Services, the Hon. Judi Moylan, announced the establishment of the National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA).

The Council's terms of reference are to:

- provide community perspectives, advice and recommendations on child protection issues to the Commonwealth through the Minister for Family Services, with a focus on preventing child abuse, including neglect;
- report to the states and territories on these matters through the Minister for Family Services (at the Council of Community Services Ministers meetings).

In giving advice to government, the Council will draw on the knowledge, background and expertise of its members, but will also work with relevant community organisations, governments and individuals to ensure that the broadest possible range of views are canvassed.

The new Council replaces the National Child Protection Council and is primarily a non-government community-based advisory council, of which the majority, if not all, of the members are engaged with the primary care of families and children.

Council Membership

The Council has a membership of fourteen, consisting of ten non-government community members, three state/territory government

representatives, and one Commonwealth government representative.

Community members

Professor Kim Oates AM MD, Chief Executive, the New Children's Hospital in Westmead (New South Wales) (Chairman); Sister Phillipa Chapman, Executive Director of Centacare (Tasmania); Dr George Blake, Senior Paediatrician, Flinders Medical Centre (South Australia); Ms Julie Clark, Director of Counselling, Kids Helpline (Queensland); Ms Dale Bagshaw, Member of the Family Services Council and the Family Law Council (South Australia); Ms Gillian Horton-Hegarty, Family Liaison Officer RAAF Base Tindal, Department of Defence (Northern Territory); Ms Wendy Machin, President, Save the Children Fund of NSW (New South Wales); Dr Sue Packer, Paediatrician, Child at Risk Assessment Unit, The Canberra Hospital (Australian Capital Territory); Ms Jan Owen, National Director, Australian Association of Young People In Care (AAYPIC) (Queensland); Ms Muriel Cadd, Chair, Secretariat of the National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care (SNAICC) (Victoria).

State/territory government representatives

Ms Carmel Niland, Director General, Department of Community Services, New South Wales; Mr Yehudi Blacher, Director, Youth and Family Services, Department of Human Services, Victoria; Mr Robert Fisher, Director General, Family and Children's Services, Western Australia.

Commonwealth Government representative

Ms Mary Murnane, Deputy Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, Canberra.

Council Agenda

The Council had its inaugural meeting on the 30 October 1997. It meets approximately every four months with the next meeting due in February 1999.

Initial issues examined by the Council included the recommendations of the NSW Wood Royal Commission Report on Paedophilia including what action would be appropriate in which the Commonwealth could take a lead and the feasibility of establishing an Office for Children to monitor and report on children's issues.

The Council has developed the following value statement:

'All children are valuable members of Australian society and have a right to a safe and loving environment free from abuse and neglect. Adults have a responsibility to ensure children's rights are respected and maintained.'

The National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse will consult widely and work towards improving public awareness of child abuse and neglect.

The Council's proposed workplan for the next twelve to eighteen months includes a national audit of current child abuse prevention activities,

reviewing community education as a form of child abuse prevention, and looking at the effects of resilience in children and young people and its applicability to child abuse prevention. Priority topics for Council's research program includes indicators of good practice in child abuse prevention, research methodology in the evaluation of prevention programs as well as young people, and parents' perceptions of the child protection system.

Research Program

The Council recently selected eight research projects for funding. The projects have a particular focus on the evaluation of intervention programs and the evaluation of preventative programs. Projects include the evaluation of:

- early intervention with children who abuse other children;
- outcomes of intervention through family centres;
- building child friendly preventative health services;
- an intervention program to combat child abuse and neglect and to provide health promotion for children of drug users;
- enhanced behavioural interventions for families notified to authorities for child abuse and neglect;
- child abuse and neglect in the Vietnamese community;

- the development of a model for client feedback; and
- an evaluation of the family meeting model.

The projects are being conducted over the next six to eighteen months across Australia. Further information on Council's research program can be obtained from the Secretariat.

Council Awards

The Council is currently developing its inaugural Prevention of Child Abuse Awards. These will be presented at the next Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Perth in 1999. Further information regarding these awards will be disseminated in early 1999.

Information Package

The Council is currently developing an information package on the Council and its activities, as part of its Communication Strategy, which will be available for distribution by the end of 1998.

Further Information

Further information on the National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse can be obtained from: The Secretariat, National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Services Branch (MDP 69), Department of Health and Family Services, GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601. Phone (02) 6289 7530. Fax (02) 6289 3750.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Focus on Families and Children in Western Australia

To improve services for protecting children from abuse, the Western Australian Government has established a new independent council, which will report directly to the Minister for Family and Children's Services. The WA Child Protection Council's eleven members are drawn from government, non-government and community organisations involved in preventing child abuse and/or caring for children who have been abused.

Rae Waiter, Executive Director of Ngala Family Resource Centre, is Chair of the Council, and believes that it provides a great opportunity to improve coordination and cooper-

ation between relevant government and non-government organisations.

The Council held its inaugural meeting in May and is in the process of defining short- and long-term strategies. It has an annual budget of \$150 000 with an additional \$20 000 for establishment costs in its first year of operation.

The Council's terms of reference are to:

- promote the coordination and exchange of expertise and information between representatives of government and non-government agencies involved in the provision of child protection services;
- provide the State Government through the Minister of Family and

Children's Services with advice on the prevention and treatment of child maltreatment;

- promote and encourage research into the issues surrounding child protection;
- raise the level of awareness in the community of the issues surrounding child protection;
- encourage and promote inter-agency training on all matters relating to child protection.

The above information has been reproduced from material published in the WA Department of Family and Children's Services' Focus on Families and Children, June 1998, p.6.