



**Children in Care
Collective**

ACHIEVEMENTS

We are always better together than we are apart



PURPOSE

The Children in Care Collective is made up of out-of-home care service providers, practitioners, and academics in Australia. The Collective was formed in 2016 to share information and work collaboratively and proactively on a range of issues for children and young people with complex needs living in out-of-home care.

The Collective works towards its vision of success:

An effective and well-resourced service system supports children and young people with complex needs to grow up safely and well in out-of-home care, confident that their rights and wellbeing are protected and prioritised.

Its work is built around four goals and steps towards achieving its vision of success.

Members of the Collective are: Allambi Care; Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT; Anglicare Sydney; CareSouth; Key Assets; Life Without Barriers; Mackillop Family Services; Marist180; Settlement Services International; Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) - Australian Catholic University; Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) - University of South Australia.

OUR GOALS

1

To build our practice capabilities based on academic and expert practitioner evidence

The Collective has hosted 22 guest speakers at its bi-monthly meetings, providing a valuable opportunity for its members to take time out to learn about new approaches to caring for children and young people with complex needs. The broad range of speakers presented on topics including viewing child protection and out-of-home care through a child's rights lens, systems improvements in working with Aboriginal children, families and communities and ACCOs and wrap-around models of care for children with complex needs.

Presentations by Collective representatives have included:

- The challenge of program fidelity
- The importance of adopting a public health approach to child protection to alter the risk profile of the whole population and protect all children by ensuring safe and supportive environments
- An innovative approach to education for young people in residential care, and
- A new, evidence-based approach to strengthening prevention and responses to sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviours and dating violence for young people in residential care.

2

To partner with others to improve outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care

The Collective has held three forums with expert speakers and invited guests. Two of these included expert academic speakers discussing effective responses to and caring for children with harmful sexual behaviours. Speakers included Professor Simon Hackett from Durham University who is an international expert on child maltreatment in its various forms and professional responses designed to safeguard children's welfare; Professor Helen Milroy, previously a Commissioner with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and a pioneer in research, education and training in Aboriginal and child mental health, and recovery from grief and trauma; Professor Rachel Skinner, a teaching and research clinical academic in the Discipline of Child and Adolescent Health at the University of Sydney. The third forum was a roundtable with the CEOs of AbSec and Link-Up (NSW) focused on moving from discussion to practice in returning Aboriginal children to the care of ACCOs.

The Children in Care Collective approached the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to clarify non-taxable expenses incurred by fosters carers supporting more complex children. The aim was to have a system wide level agreement on these expenses, rather than agencies needing to obtain individual advice as was currently occurring. The ATO reviewed a checklist of items developed by the Collective and acknowledged that all would be acceptable non-taxable allowances that may be paid to carers of children with complex needs. This checklist is published on the Collective's website.

3 To advocate to ensure the rights of all children are recognised and respected, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in care with complex needs

The Collective has made 12 submissions on policy and legal issues, participated in consultations on key topics such as on the successor plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, regulating child safe organisations in New South Wales, advocating against the increase in fees for social work degrees and working with the NSW Department of Education to ensure its new Student Behaviour Management Strategy accounts for the particular needs of children in care.

Raising the age of criminal responsibility, extending care to 21 years and improving after care supports are core advocacy work for the Collective.

4 To establish a national network of service providers, practitioners and academics working collaboratively and proactively to improve the care of children with complex needs living in out-of-home care.

Member agencies are both small and large providers of out-of-home care providing care in metropolitan and regional centres in several states and territories. At least two agencies have a national presence. Two academic centres from world renowned universities are also members. The membership of the Collective brings a unique combination of practitioner and academic wisdom and experience and an understanding of the patchwork of child protection legislation and practice across Australia.

The Collective has drawn on this expertise to work with the Commonwealth as well as State and Territory governments on implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and raising issues with practice frameworks and policy settings. Members of the Collective continue to meet with government ministers and senior government officials across the country.



SUBMISSIONS

1. Submission to the Community Support and Services Committee, Queensland Parliament, on raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, 2021
2. Submission on the implementation of the successor plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020, 2021
3. Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill, 2021
4. Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, 2021
5. Submission to the National Office for Child Safety giving feedback on the National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse Final Development Consultation Paper, 2021
6. Submission to the review about the ongoing suitability of the objectives of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act, 2021
7. Submission to NSW OCG Exposure Draft of the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill, 2021
8. Submission to the WA Ombudsman on its proposed reportable conduct scheme, 2021
9. Work with NSW Department of Education on the development of new Student Behaviour Policy, including submission on the draft policy, discussions with senior departmental staff and Collective members providing case studies, 2020
10. Submissions to two reviews of the operation of the National Redress Scheme, 2020
11. Submission to NSW OCG's discussion paper on Regulating Child Safe Organisations, 2019
12. Submission on the Tasmanian discussion paper: A future program for family-based care and out-of-home care foundations program, 2018

FORUMS/ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

August
2018

Roundtable discussion: CEO AbSec and CEO Link-Up (NSW): Moving from discussion to practice in returning Aboriginal children to ACCOs



November
2018

Forum: Effective responses to children with harmful sexual behaviours in care (Prof Helen Milroy, Dale Tolliday OAM, Dr Robyn Miller pictured with Mary McKinnon)

July
2019



Forum: Caring for children with harmful sexual behaviours in out-of-home care (Prof Simon Hackett and Prof Rachel Skinner)

SPEAKERS/GUESTS AT CCC BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

2018

○ **April** Robert Fitzgerald AM, former Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

○ **June** Simone Czech, Executive Director, FACS; two representatives of The Mockingbird Society

○ **August** Dr Jenny Mason; Associate Professor Amy Conley Wright, Institute of Open Adoption Studies, University of Sydney

○ **October** Jeremy Halcrow, CEO, Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT; Jarrod Wheatley, CEO, Professional Individualised Care

○ **December** Gary Groves, Executive Director, Their Futures Matter, FACS

Ben Gales Executive Director, Economic Strategy Division, NSW Treasury **February** ○

Rod Best, Special Counsel, Life Without Barriers and Jude Ekerick, State Director, NSW Services, MacKillop Family Services **April** ○

Larissa Johnson, Director Accreditation and Monitoring and Louise Coe, Director Child Safe Organisations, Office of the NSW Children's Guardian **August** ○

Steve Kinmond OAM, CEO, ACWA Child Rights Team, Australian Human Rights Commission **December** ○

2019

2020

○ **April** Annette Michaux, Director Policy & Practice, Parenting Research Centre

○ **June** Professor Daryl Higgins, Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University

○ **August** Clare Leaney, CEO, In Good Faith Foundation

○ **October** Bronwen Elliott, consultant and independent social worker

○ **December** Diana Harris, General Manager, Projects and Programs, ARACY

Aboriginal Strategy Coordination and Evaluation Unit, DCJ **February** ○

Richard Weston, Deputy Children's Guardian for Aboriginal Children and Young People in NSW
Simone Czech, Deputy Secretary, Child Protection and Permanency, District and Youth Justice Services, DCJ and Lauren Dean, Executive Director, ChildStory - Product Owner and Manager, DCJ **April** ○

Assoc Prof Melissa O'Donnell, Deputy Director Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia and Andy Kazim, Practice Consultant & Project Lead, Home Stretch WA Trial **August** ○

Anne Hollonds, National Children's Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission; Dr Tom McClean and Dom Schuster, Uniting **October** ○

2021



ADVOCACY

Representations to government ministers and submissions in relation to:

- Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility
- Extending care
- Improving after care supports.

Negotiations with the Australian Tax Office which resulted in CCC publishing information about non-taxable allowances for carers, 'Foster Carer Allowances - Advice from the ATO'.



RESEARCH

- 'Health and Well-being - Perspectives of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience in NSW' with the CREATE Foundation, 2020
- 'More Care Required' 2021
- Support for other research



COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT

Meetings with Ministers and senior departmental staff about the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Participation in workshops/forums on improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for children in out-of-home care, responding to children with harmful sexual behaviours, consultations on the successor plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.



Children in Care Collective

For more details about the Children in Care Collective and to contact us, please visit:

www.childrenincarecollective.com.au