**Children, Youth and Community Services Policy and Research Working Group (CYCSPRWG)**

**22 May 2013 – Sydney**

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| **OUTCOMES** |

**Attendees**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Mr Terry Murphy (Chair)  Ms Kay Benham | Western Australia | Department for Child Protection |
| Ms Maree Walk  (Deputy Chair) | New South Wales | Department of Family and Community Services |
| Ms Cate McKenzie  Ms Helen Bedford | Commonwealth | Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs |
| Ms Anne Campbell  Ms Penny Hood | New South Wales | Department of Family and Community Services |
| Ms Beth Allen (proxy for Mary McKinnon | Victoria | Department of Human Services |
| Ms Cathy Taylor | Queensland | Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services |
| Dr Jennifer Harvey  Mr Tony Kemp | South Australia | Department for Communities and Social Inclusion  Department for Education and Child Development |
| Ms Christine Nolan | Australian Capital Territory | Community Services Directorate |
| Ms Susan Diamond (proxy for Des Graham) | Tasmania | Department of Health and Human Services |
| Ms Alana Cole-Munro | Northern Territory | Office of Children and Families |
| Dr Pamela Kinnear | AIHW | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| Dr Mark Collis | Guest, attended via teleconference for agenda item 5.2. | Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators |
| Ms Kate Pope | Guest, attended via teleconference for agenda item 5.1. | Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) |
| Annie Butkus | Commonwealth | CYCSPRWG Secretariat |

**Apologies**: Ms Sue Barr, (SA), Ms Mary McKinnon (Victoria), Mr Desmond Graham (Tasmania), Ms Jenni Collard (NT)

**Meeting Minutes**

**Item 1 Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed new members: Dr Pamela Kinnear from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW); Ms Cathy Taylor from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in Queensland (replacing Brad Swan); Ms Beth Allen, attending on behalf of Mary McKinnon form the Department of Human Services in Victoria; and Ms Alana Cole-Munro, attending on behalf of Ms Jenni Collard, the new member from the Office of Children and Families in the Northern Territory.

Ms Kate Pope (Department of Immigration and Citizenship) joined the meeting via teleconference for item 5.1 – Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors.

Mr Mark Collis (Australian Juvenile Justice Administrators), joined via teleconference for agenda item 5.2.

The Chair noted apologies as listed.

**Item 2 Outcomes and actions arising from February 2013 meeting**

Members noted all actions arising from meeting of 26 February 2013 are completed except for the following:

* Action arising 2: *Chair of AJJA to bring the National Youth Justice Framework to CYCSPRWG* is ongoing.
* Action arising items 9,10 and 14: jurisdictions are currently finalising input.
* Action arising item 11: *Circulate Tasmania’s carers’ continuum* - delete this item.

Members endorsed the minutes from the previous meeting of 26 February 2013.

**Item 3 Commonwealth response to Senate Inquiry regarding Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices**

Cate McKenzie provided an update on the Commonwealth response, noting that the Senate Inquiry nominated a range of actions to be implemented by SCCDS Ministers. The Commonwealth is providing $11.5 million over four years to fund a number of activities, including improving access to specialist services and to support records tracing. A number of recommendations of the Senate Inquiry require the Commonwealth to work with jurisdictions on various actions.

Ms McKenzie noted that at the February 2013 CYCSPRWG meeting, members agreed to have a single adoption sub-committee and suggested that this group examine the recommendations arising from the Inquiry.

Members discussed a number of the recommendations, noting that jurisdictions are already addressing many of the concerns raised in the Inquiry.

CYCSPRWG adoptions sub-committee

Ms Bedford gave a brief update, noting the need to establish this sub-committee and agree its scope (and name – *Adoptions Issues and Directions* was suggested as a possibility). Members discussed briefly the sensitivity regarding the diverse range of issues that could be included in the scope of this group and noted the importance of ensuring representation on the sub-committee is at a senior level.

***Actions arising***

1. *Document the work being done in the forced adoptions space in jurisdictions against each recommendation. Jurisdictions to fill out template as circulated by the Secretariat.*
2. *Inform members on possible deadlines to report back progress on the Senate Inquiry’s recommendations.*
3. *Nominate jurisdictional representation on the new CYCSPRWG adoptions working group. (Working group to meet prior to the next CYCSPRWG meeting –NSW to Chair.)*
4. *Develop draft Terms of Reference and possible names for the new CYCSPRWG adoptions working group.*

**Item 4 Standing items:**

**4.1 CYCSPRWG members’ update**

Members provided an update on activities in their jurisdictions:

**VIC**: Beth Allen noted the Department is responding to the report from the Cummins Inquiry (released February 2012) which contained 98 recommendations. She noted the new Departmental structure and focus on service delivery integration. She advised that 17 Area Directors have been appointed and they are trialling ‘Services Connect’, the new model for integrated services for disadvantaged Victorians.

**ACT**: Christine Nolan noted the development of the Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) strategy as a priority for the ACT with an issues paper due to be released in June/July.

Ms Nolan highlighted the need for more professional foster care and demand for therapeutic services. The recent Auditor-General’s review of Care and Protection Report focused on systems reforms and noted the need for greater oversight of OOHC providers.

**SA**: Tony Kemp advised that SA has launched ‘*Brighter Futures’* – a program to help transform South Australia’s Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) to deliver improved benefits for children, young people and families. As part of this work the Department is being restructured, including the establishment of 5 new Offices, including the Office for Child Protection. He also noted that SA is moving towards specialisation hubs and has adopted a ‘solution based casework’ approach.

**NSW**: Ms Maree Walk informed members of NSW renewed focus on practice and has developed *‘Practice First: a new model for child protection service delivery in NSW’.* A pilot of this approach encouraged more casework with families to change behaviours, rather than remove children. Consultations regarding legislative reform have been completed and there is a greater focus on making decisions regarding permanency planning earlier.

**QLD**: Cathy Taylor noted similar themes to other members – Departmental change and restructure, responding to various Inquiries. The final report from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (the ‘Carmody Inquiry’) is due to be released on 30 June 2013. Similar to other jurisdictions, the focus is moving towards integrating services at the local level, ensuring that appropriate, targeted services are provided to vulnerable families and their children. The Department is also examining how services are provided and purchased.

**NT**: Alana Cole-Munro noted that the Department has undergone significant changes including the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer – Ms Jenni Collard.

The Department has profiled all the children and young people in out-of-home care to establish their needs. The Department is planning to implement the Signs of Safety model, are developing a Practice Framework, and are reinvigorating family support.

**TAS**: Susan Diamond advised the Department is responding to the Select Committee to Child Protection Final Report. There is a cross- government inter-departmental committee (IDC) comprising representatives from justice, the police, health, and community services to ensure agencies work together and share information. Tasmania is also undertaking a pilot incorporating mental health, drug and alcohol and working with younger siblings as an early warning system.

**WA**: Kay Benham advised they have a new Minister, the Hon Helen M Morton MLC, who is the Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection. WA is embedding Signs of Safety. The Centre of Child Protection at University of South Australia is conducting a three year evaluation, linking with what’s happening internationally. The first publication arising from this evaluation on implementation is due for release at the end of the year.

At this point Mr Kemp noted the value in sharing information and solutions to common challenges with information technology, challenges of being in a constant state of change, the need to ‘reclaim’ practice, challenges in providing therapeutic services to high needs clients, accreditation and a range of issues associated with OOHC. Ms Walk suggested jurisdictions could share consultants’ findings (where copyright allows) to enable sharing of ideas and potential solutions. Ms Allen suggested that there could be rotating issues for discussion.

Decision:

Members agreed that a theme could be the focus for discussion at the standing item for members update. It was agreed that OOHC be the theme for the next meeting (this is reflected in action arising 20: topics for next CYCSPRWG meeting agenda – refer to **Attachment A**.) It was suggested that members could share unit costs and findings from recent reviews where relevant.

***Actions arising***

1. *Circulate Victoria’s ‘Services Connect’ brochure.*
2. *Jurisdictions to provide ACT (Christine Nolan and Janet Plater) with a key contact for collaborative work on information technology systems and an accreditation and/or quality assurance system for out-of-home care providers.*
3. *Circulate NSW’s ‘Practice First’ framework.*

**4.2 Service Delivery Innovation – South Australian Reunification Initiative**

Mr Kemp guided members through a powerpoint presentation on the South Australian Reunification Initiative. The Reunification Initiative provides Families SA with an opportunity to develop new and innovative models of engaging and working with families who have children in care, which seeks to reunify the children in a timely and safe manner.

***Actions arising***

1. *Circulate the Power point presentation on the SA Reunification Initiative.*

**Item 5 Standing item: Update from CYCSPRWG sub-committees**

**5.1 Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM)**

Ms Pope joined the meeting via teleconference for this item. She noted at their 3 May 2013 meeting, SCCDS Ministers agreed to:

* bilateral discussions at the Deputy Secretary level in each jurisdiction to discuss the service needs of younger unaccompanied humanitarian minors;
* a mutually agreed broker facilitating an agreement between the Commonwealth and each jurisdiction, consistent with previously agreed national principles; and
* reporting back to Ministers at either the next meeting, or out-of-session if arrangements can be agreed earlier.

Ms Pope advised members of the proposed broker however a number of jurisdictions were concerned about a potential conflict of interest as the person proposed works for an agency likely to bid for the provision of services to UHMs in the future. Ms Pope advised that bilateral discussions will be held during June and July, with Memorandums of Understanding being finalised in October/November.

In relation to the proposed funding model, Ms Pope noted that some jurisdictions were not happy with the proposed funding figure and encouraged members to advise what would be an appropriate funding level. Members noted the importance of being mindful of individual jurisdictions’’ needs and current work in this area, while ensuring as much consistency as possible in line with the previously agreed national principles. It was noted that transitional arrangements may need to be put in place in some jurisdictions.

***Actions arising***

*9. Jurisdictions to email Secretariat (cc: Carly Partridge) with:*

*1. Suggestions for alternative brokers; and*

*2. Contact names for bilateral discussion.*

*10. Jurisdictions to email Carly Partridge with a revised funding figure for the new UHM funding model.*

**5.2 Australian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA)**

Mark Collis joined the meeting via teleconference for this item. Mr Collis advised that they have received the latest iteration of the National Youth Justice Framework (the Framework) from the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC). The Framework currently proposes eleven principles that aim to guide and direct youth justice policy and practice in Australia. Mr Collis has met with the Attorney-General to ensure he is kept up to date with progress. The Framework will also be sent to all justice areas in jurisdictions and will be presented to the next CYCSPRWG meeting once it is endorsed by AJJA.

Mr Collis advised that behind the framework document there will also be a literature review, including both Australian and international sources.

Mr Collis noted that the Australasian Youth Justice Conference is currently underway (20-22 May in Canberra). A common theme highlighted at the Conference has been the link between early trauma and offending behaviour and the criminalisation of “pain-based behaviour.” The conference has been very successful with high quality speakers including Professor Mark Halsey who has undertaken a longitudinal study on young people who are repeat offenders and what assists them to break the cycle of offending.

Mr Collis updated members on progress on other projects including the research paper being developed by AIC on bail and remand for young people in Australia which is currently being peer reviewed prior to public release in mid-2013.

***Actions arising***

*11. Circulate final draft AJJA National Youth Justice Framework to members once endorsed.*

*12. Circulate paper by Professor Mark Halsey to members.*

**Item 6 National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children**

**Item 6 .1 Outcomes from 21 May 2013 National Framework Implementation Working Group (NFIWG) meeting**

Cate McKenzie and Helen Bedford updated members on the NFIWG meeting held the day before, noting the new Children’s Commissioner, Ms Megan Mitchell joined the meeting for the day. There was discussion regarding Ms Mitchell’s role if she joins NFIWG as a member and the importance of clearly defining expectations. It was agreed that Ms McKenzie will discuss this matter further with Ms Mitchell.

***Actions arising***

*13. Discuss NFIWG membership with the National Children’s Commissioner.*

**Item 6.2 Update on Year One priorities**

The updated progress report on all actions under the Second Action Plan was provided to members prior to the meeting. Members discussed the items outlined below:

Professionalisation of carers (Action Item 12.1)

Ms Bedford advised that the Commonwealth has drafted a preliminary paper reviewing different models of foster care. Ms Nolan suggested further work needs to focus on barriers to the professionalisation of carers such as industrial relations issues and taxation. Ms Nolan suggested jurisdictions could all contribute funding to engage a consultant to undertake this work as a matter of priority.

***Actions arising***

*14*. Engage a consultant to investigate the barriers and opportunities for developing models of professional carers***.***

Pilot survey of views of children and young people in care (Action Item 8.3)

Ms McKenzie noted that the interim report from the consultant highlighted that jurisdictions are at differing positions in terms of their readiness to collect data for the 2015 National Report. The report also identified the need to agree a validated set of questions mapped against the eight National Standards. Jurisdictions raised some concerns regarding the consultant, particularly regarding flexibility in negotiating dates to meet. Members are interested in seeing the results from the pilot to inform next steps.

Jurisdictions noted the ACASI viewpoint tool being trialled as part of case management was working well

Workforce development (Action Item 19.1)

NSW, NT and the Commonwealth have had an initial conversation to progress this work.

Mr Kemp noted that workforce development is an issue for South Australia. In regard to the proposed workshop (as agreed by Ministers at their November 2012 meeting), Mr Kemp noted that it is important to clarify the scope of the workshop and what can be achieved.

Ms Taylor noted that workforce development was identified in the Carmody Inquiry and noted that in Queensland the Australian Association of Social Workers have cautioned against de-professionalising the workforce. Ms Nolan noted the need to develop a para-professional workforce in the ACT. Ms Diamond advised that the Department is working with universities to explore if a diploma could be developed for use on top of an existing degree. Ms Cole-Munro noted that the NT are looking at a child protection qualification for remote workers.

***Actions arising***

*15. Circulate the ACU ‘National analysis of workforce trends in statutory child protection’ report.*

*16. Document workforce development work being done in jurisdictions. Jurisdictions to fill out template as circulated by the secretariat.*

The Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) (Action Item 9.1)

Ms McKenzie advised members that an announcement regarding the review of the Transition to Independence Living Allowance (TILA) is likely to occur in the near future. Ms McKenzie outlined the proposed reforms to TILA including the following:

* The Commonwealth has developed an information pack for informal care leavers on services and payments available to them from the Australian Government;
* TILA eligibility will be restricted to formal care leavers only and will only be paid to young people with a leaving care plan;
* The payment of $1,500 will be paid in up to six instalments.
* From 2014 the payment will be administered by the Department of Human Services and the policy responsibility for TILA will transfer from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to FaHCSIA.

All members were happy with the proposed changes.

**Item 6.3 Update on Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)**

Members noted the progress report from the Australian Centre for Child Protection on the outcomes to date with this project.

It was noted that at the NFIWG meeting linkages were drawn between the BCBB work and Child Aware Approaches. It was agreed that the NGO Coalition would liaise with the Australian Centre for Child Protection to consider opportunities to link the BCBB working group with the planned Child Aware Steering Group.

**Item 7 Other business**

**7.1 SCCDSAC endorsement of CYCSPRWG 2013 work plan**

Members noted that the CYCSPRWG work plan has been amended to reflect the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services (SCDDS) 2013/14 work plan.

**7.1.1 Proposed SCCDSAC-HMAC joint strategic agenda**

SCCDS Strategic Agenda priority projects

Ms Foran from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services joined the meeting to provide an update on projects endorsed by SCCDS as part of the SCCDS Strategic Agenda and to propose priorities for the SCCDSAC-HMAC strategic agenda.

The priority projects endorsed by SCCDS are:

* Service integration for young people in transition; and
* Engaging with Medicare locals to improve primary health services for vulnerable children and families.

Ms Foran advised that once planning commences on these projects CYCSPRWG will be consulted regarding their involvement in the projects.

Joint SCCDSAC-HMAC strategic agenda

Ms Foran advised that the development of themes for a joint SCCDSAC-HMAC agenda was based on common priorities across the CYCSPRWG, the Housing and Homelessness Policy and Research Working Group (HHPRWG) and the Disability Policy and Research Working Group (DPRWG) work plans.

Members noted the four possible priorities for SCCDSAC-HHMAC:

* Building a more compelling evidence based to inform investment decisions;
* Promoting results-based investment;
* Transitions to independence packages (initially targeting young people leaving out-of-home care); and
* Market adoption of contemporary case practices.

Members discussed these potential priorities, noting connections to existing actions under the Second Action Plan and how best to take this work forward.

***Actions arising***

*17. Members agreed that a number of NFPAC projects including TILA could be subsumed under the SCCDS Priority Project on Service Integration for Vulnerable Young People in Transition. Other projects for consideration include South Australia’s work on trust funds for young people leaving care.*

**7.2 Update on CYCSPRWG sub-committee governance arrangements**

Members noted the update provided (agenda paper 7.2) on the CYCSPRWG sub-committees.

**7.3 Update on Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

Ms McKenzie provided a brief update on this item, noting that a high level jurisdictional working group has been established in response to the Royal Commission to discuss and monitor policy and service delivery issues arising from the Royal Commission. The working group meets via teleconference, chaired by Victoria, every few weeks.

**7.4 Next meeting**

Members noted the next meeting was scheduled for 4 September 2013 however the Chair suggested postponing the meeting until late September/early October following the election.

***Actions arising***

*18. Circulate possible meeting dates in late September and early October for members’ consideration.*

*19. Jurisdictions to nominate specific topics for sharing under the standing agenda item for members’ update.*

*20. Include on the next CYCSPRWG agenda:*

*• SAP Action Item 10.1 ‘Trial locally based strategies for working with households with complex needs’ (as per agenda item 2).*

*• Out-of-home care (as per agenda item 4.1); and*

*• AJJA update to be back-to-back with agenda item on out-of-home care (as per agenda item 5.1).*

***Include on future CYCSPRWG agendas:***

*• Information technology systems (as per agenda item 4.1); and*

*• Reclaiming practice (as per agenda item 4.1).*

Meeting closed 4pm.

**Attachment A**

**Draft Actions Arising from 22 May 2013 CYCSPRWG meeting**

| **Action** | | **Timeframe** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Agenda item 3.** Document the work being done in the forced adoptions space in jurisdictions against each recommendation.  Jurisdictions to fill out template as circulated by the Secretariat. | 31 May 2013  30 August 2013 | Secretariat (to request)  Jurisdictions (to provide) | **Completed**  Email circulated with template on 22 July 2013  In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 3.** Inform members on possible deadlines to report back progress on the Senate Inquiry’s recommendations. | 22 July 2013 | Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 3.** Nominate jurisdictional representation on the new CYCSPRWG adoptions working group. (Working group to meet prior to the next CYCSPRWG meeting – NSW to Chair) | 22 July 2013 | All  Secretariat to progress request | **Completed**  Email circulated on 9 July |
|  | **Agenda item 3.** Develop draft Terms of Reference and possible names for the new CYCSPRWG adoptions working group. | Prior to next meeting | NSW | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 4.1.** Circulate Victorian ‘Services Connect’ brochure. | As soon as possible | Vic via Secretariat | **Completed**  Circulated with draft Minutes |
|  | **Agenda item 4.1.** Jurisdictions to provide Australian Capital Territory ([Christine Nolan](mailto:christine.nolan@act.gov.au) and [Janet Plater](mailto:janet.plater@act.gov.au)) with a key contact for collaborative work on information technology systems and an accreditation and/or quality assurance system for out-of-home care providers. | 21 June 2013 | All  Secretariat to include on next agenda | **Completed** |
|  | **Agenda item 4.1.** Circulate NSW ‘Practice First’ framework. | As soon as possible | NSW via Secretariat | **Completed**  Circulated with draft Minutes |
|  | **Agenda item 4.2.** Circulate the Powerpoint presentation on the SA Reunification Initiative. | As soon as possible | SA via Secretariat | **Completed**  Circulated with draft Minutes |
|  | **Agenda item 5.1.** Jurisdictions to email Secretariat (cc: [Carly Partridge](mailto:carly.partridge@immi.gov.au)) with:   1. Suggestions for alternative brokers; and 2. Contact names for bilateral discussion. | 31 May 2013 | Jurisdictions | **Completed**  Email sent from Secretariat 27 May 2013 |
|  | **Agenda item 5.1.** Jurisdictions to email [Carly Partridge](mailto:carly.partridge@immi.gov.au) with a revised funding figure for the new UHM funding model. | n/a | Jurisdictions | **Completed**  Email sent from Secretariat 27 May 2013 |
|  | **Agenda item 5.2.** Circulate final draft AJJA National Youth Justice Framework to members. | Circulate final draft once endorsed by AJJA members. | AJJA via Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 5.2.** Circulate paper by Professor Mark Halsey to members. | As soon as possible | ACT via Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 6.1.** Discuss NFIWG membership with the National Children’s Commissioner. | Prior to next meeting | Commonwealth | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 6.2.** SAP Action Item 12.1.  Engage a consultant to investigate the barriers and opportunities for developing models of professional carers. | As soon as possible | Commonwealth (on behalf of CYCSPRWG) | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 6.2.** Circulate the ACU ‘National analysis of workforce trends in statutory child protection’ report. | As soon as possible | Secretariat | **Completed**  Circulated with draft Minutes |
|  | **Agenda item 6.2.** Document workforce development work being done in jurisdictions.  Jurisdictions to fill out template as circulated by the secretariat. | Prior to next meeting  30 August 2013 | Secretariat (to request) Jurisdictions (to provide) | In progress  In progress |
|  | **Agenda item 7.1.1.** Members agreed that a number of NFPAC projects including TILA could be subsumed under the SCCDS Priority Project on Service Integration for Vulnerable Young People in Transition. Other projects for consideration include South Australia’s work on trust funds for young people leaving care. | Prior to next meeting | NSW with Commonwealth, Vic and SA | In Progress |
|  | **Agenda item 7.4.** Circulate possible meeting dates in late September and early October for members’ consideration**.** | As soon as possible | Secretariat | **Completed** |
|  | **Agenda item 7.4.** Jurisdictions to nominate specific topics for sharing under the standing agenda item for members’ update. | Ongoing | Jurisdictions | **Completed** |
|  | Include on the next CYCSPRWG agenda:   * SAP Action Item 10.1 ‘*Trial locally based strategies for working with households with complex needs*’ (**as per agenda item 2).** * Out-of-home care **(as per agenda item 4.1)**; and * AJJA update to be back-to-back with agenda item on out-of-home care (**as per agenda item 5.1)**.   Include on future CYCSPRWG agendas:   * Information technology systems **(as per agenda item 4.1)**; and * Reclaiming practice **(as per agenda item 4.1).** | Secretariat to add to agenda | Secretariat | **Completed** |