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

**25 September 2013 – Melbourne**

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| **OUTCOMES** |

**Attendees**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ms Maree Walk | New South Wales | Chair |
| Ms Helen Bedford | Commonwealth | Department of Social Services (former Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs). |
| Mr Mark Collis proxy for Christine Nolan | Australian Capital Territory | Community Services Directorate |
| Dr Pamela Kinnear Mr Tim Beard | Commonwealth | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) |
| Ms Anne Campbell Ms Lyn Manitta  Ms Michelle Cannane | New South Wales | Department of Family and Community Services |
| Ms Alana Cole-Munro proxy for Jodeen Carney | Northern Territory | Office of Children and Families |
| Mr Matthew Lupi | Queensland | Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services |
| Ms Mary McKinnon | Victoria | Department of Human Services |
| Mr Tony Kemp  Ms Sue Barr | South Australia | Department of Education and Child Development |
| Ms Audrey Lee proxy for Kay Benham | Western Australia | Department of Child Protection |
| Ms Angela Hope  Ms Liza Holroyd | Commonwealth | CYCSPRWG Secretariat |

**Apologies**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mr Terry Murphy | Department of Child Protection and Family Support (WA) |
| Dr Jennifer Harvey | Department for Education and Child Development (SA) |
| Ms Kay Benham | Department of Child Protection (WA) |
| Ms Susan Diamond | Department of Health and Human Services (TAS) |
| Ms Jodeen Carney | Department of Children and Families (NT) |
| Ms Christine Nolan | Community Services Directorate (ACT) |

**Minutes**

Children, Youth and Community Services Policy and Research Working Group

25 September 2013, Melbourne

**Item 1 Welcome and apologies**

Ms Maree Walk (Deputy Chair) welcomed members and noted apologies as listed.

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

Members noted all actions arising from meeting of 22 May 2013 are subject to discussion at today’s meeting.

**Item 2:**

**Outcome -** Members endorsed the minutes and actions arising from the previous meeting of   
22 May 2013.

**Item 3 Standing Item: Targeted Information Sharing**

**3.1 Locally Based strategies for working with household complex needs**

Ms Mary McKinnon from the Department of Human Services (Vic) advised that as a result of $12 million commitment in the last Victorian state budget they are working on ‘Service Connect’ to integrate service delivery across 3 trial sites – Geelong, Dandenong and Warrnambool. Complex families are being targeted with an integrated plan based on a one plan, one worker, self-directed support model, including a new integrated front end. The model is based on the work of Peter Shergold and providers are being paid on outcomes rather than payment up front. The model is being evaluated at present.

Mr Tony Kemp from the Department of Education and Child Development (SA) advised they are trying to do a complete redesign of business for working with complex households. They are generating ‘hubs’ in Adelaide city focusing on protective interventions and solutions based casework. This initiative is facing both structural and cultural challenges because it is fundamentally changing the way people think.

Mr Mark Collis from the Community Services Directorate (ACT) stated they are trialling a lead case manager role with 18 families to be completed by the end of the year. The evaluation of the model will be circulated to members when finalised.

Ms Mary McKinnon from the Department of Human Services (Vic) spoke about the ‘cluster’ data from New Zealand that maps pathways of vulnerable families and how they are looking at different ways to intervene early with these families. Ms Pamela Kinnear (AIHW) added that the child support agency area in DSS is also looking into the data surrounding pathways for vulnerable families.

**Item 3.1:**

**Outcome -** Members noted the updates from members.

**Action 1 -** Ms McKinnon agreed to circulate further information about ‘Service Connect’.

**Action 2** - Mr Collis agreed to circulate the evaluation of the ACT model to members when finalised.

**Action 3** - Members agreed to share any relevant papers, research and evaluations completed.

**3.2 Permanency Planning**

Members provided an update on the progress of permanency planning in their jurisdiction.

Mr Tony Kemp from the Department of Education and Child Development (SA) identified that they use the term ‘guardianship’, with guardianship hubs being established to support children through reunification for a period of 12 to 18 months.

Ms Maree Walk identified that NSW is the only jurisdiction who give 18 year orders (birth to 18 years). NSW have also introduced 2 year orders that will be evaluated to look at where reunification is appropriate.

Ms Mary McKinnon from the Department of Human Services (Vic) advised they have introduced a long-term guardianship order. Victoria has 350 permanent care orders per year where carers become the legal guardian. Financial support still continues but is reduced and light touch support services are provided. Ms McKinnon further added that their permanency and stability research project is nearly finalised, including the collection of data to inform how to change the system.   
A report on the project may be shared with the group.

Mr Matthew Lupi from Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Qld) added that the Carmody Inquiry recommends not making consecutive 2 year orders as a means of addressing permanency drift.

Ms Alana Cole-Munro from the Office of Children and Families (NT) noted that the NT are looking at the risk associated with legislative reform for long-term orders and Mr Mark Collis from the Community Services Directorate (ACT) noted that their 5 year strategy will look at the issue of permanency.

**Item 3.2**

**Outcome -** Members noted the update on the progress of permanency planning in all jurisdictions.

**Item 4 Standing Item: Update from CYCSPRWG sub-committee**

**4.1 Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators**

Mr Mark Collis from the Community Services Directorate (ACT) circulated a paper and gave a presentation to members on the principles of Youth Justice in Australia.

Members discussed if the principles need to go to both Justice Ministers and Child Protection Ministers to be approved. Mr Collis advised he had written to the Attorneys General and Justice Ministers in all departments.

**Item 4.1**

**Outcome -** Members noted the progress of the National Youth Justice Framework and the change of title of the Framework to ‘Principles of Youth Justice in Australia’. In addition members noted the outcomes of the Australian Youth Justice Conference as identified in the agenda paper.

**Action 4 -** The Commonwealth to relook at previous processes agreed to progress Ministerial approval of the principles and advise jurisdictions of the outcome.

**Action 5 -** Secretariat to circulate a copy of the AJJA presentation to members.

**Item 5 National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children**

**5.1 Outcomes from 24 September 2013 National Framework Implementation Working Group (NFIWG) meeting**

Ms Helen Bedford (Commonwealth) provided members with a summary of the outcomes from the NFIWG meeting on 24 September 2013 and that most of what was discussed will be addressed at today’s meeting.

Ms Bedford further added that NFIWG members agreed to have one, half day meeting/workshop with Children’s Commissioners as part of their regular NFIWG meeting schedule sometime through the year.

**Item 5.1**

**Outcome -** Members noted the report from the NFIWG meeting on 24 September 2013.

**5.2 NFPAC and SCCDS Strategic Agenda alignment**

Ms Michelle Cannane from the Department of Family and Community Services (NSW) provided members with an update on the NFPAC and SCCDS Strategic Agenda Alignment. Ms Cannane acknowledged that the table provided with the agenda paper identifies a proposed way of handling the Second Action Plan actions that relate to the SCCDS Strategic Agenda priority projects. Ms Cannane conveyed that there was some overlap with the action areas identified.

Ms Cannane highlighted the areas of overlap and sought members’ agreement to remove these from the agenda.

Members agreed to integrate:

* 9.1 - support for young people leaving care that is tailored to their needs, noting work would continue on the Transition to Independent Living Allowance separately;
* 9.3 - practical mechanisms to ensure there are appropriate housing options and supports for young people leaving care; and
* 17.1 - review options for ensuring ongoing and substantive health assessments and interventions for children and young people in out-of-home care, including mechanisms to track health histories.

Members agreed to keep 9.2 - support and incentives that sustain engagement in school and for young people leaving care to help them overcome barriers and 9.4 - identify and disseminate information on best practice housing models and to examine these actions next time.

**Item 5.2**

**Outcome -** Members agreed to integrate 9.1, 9.3 and 17.1.

**Action 6 -** Members to re-explore the strategic agenda alignment and service integration for actions 9.2 and 9.4.

**5.3 Indigenous**

**5.3.1 Update on ACPP**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) noted that this issue was discussed at the NFIWG meeting on   
24 September 2013.

Members noted:

* the final report *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles Workshop* summary prepared by the Australian Centre for Child Protection; and
* the outcomes of discussion by NFIWG on 24 September 2013, including agreement to establish a small working group to identify priorities.

Members agreed the working group needs to focus on how to improve the application of the principle.

Members endorsed the workshop report to progress to the Ministers for endorsement.

**Item 5.3.1**

**Outcome -** Members noted the final report *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles Workshop* summary prepared by the Australian Centre for Child Protection, and agreed to establish a small working group to discuss priorities.

**5.3.2 National Workshop with Indigenous Community Leaders**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) noted that there was some discussion of this issue at the NFIWG meeting on 24 September 2013.

Members noted:

* the workshop report *Knowledge Circle: Wellbeing and Safety of Children and Young People in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*; and
* the value of the report and how the work already occurring under the National Framework and within jurisdictions addresses the priority areas identified in the report.

Members endorsed the workshop report to progress to Ministers, acknowledging the overlapping work already being undertaken through the National Framework and jurisdictional specific initiatives.

**Item 5.3.2**

**Outcome -** Members noted the workshop report *Knowledge Circle: Wellbeing and Safety of Children and Young People in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* and progress.

**5.3.3 Collaborative Approaches to Child Safety and Wellbeing**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) provided an update of the work being undertaken by NT, WA and SA as part of the cross border project and outlined the suggested action areas for further work.

Members agreed to the priority actions and proposed next steps to be jointly led by WA, SA and the NT including:

* Exploring the development of minimum standards common to the three jurisdictions to enable cross border recognition of carer assessment;
* Continuing to explore ways to coordinate understanding about authority across WA, SA and the NT jurisdictions regarding legal reform for authority to act;
* Progressing a possible memorandum of understanding across the three jurisdictions to support ‘joined up’ approaches to chid protection in the tri border region; and
* Sharing strategies and key learnings with other jurisdictions that may experience similar child protection issues.

Members agreed for the final report to be circulated at SCCDSAC for endorsement of the proposed next steps and for it be highlighted that this was an example of what can be achieved through the National Framework.

**Item 5.3.3**

**Outcome -** Members noted progress and the receipt of the final report on the Central Australia Cross Border Project and acknowledged that this important work is an example of what can be achieved through the National Framework.

**5.4 National Standards for Out-of-Home Care National Report**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) provided an update of work being undertaken to progress towards the 2015 National Report on the National Standards for out-of-home care. This included the AIHW developing a set of validated survey questions and a collection and reporting template.

Members noted the update of the Progress of Work Towards the 2015 National Report on the Views of Children and Young People in out-of-home care. It was identified that the review of the pilot survey in NSW, ACT & VIC is not as detailed as anticipated. However, it does identify gaps that need to be addressed.

**Item 5.4**

**Outcome -** Members noted the update of the Progress of Work Towards the 2015 National Report on the Views of Children and Young People in Out-Of-Home Care.

**5.5 Transition to Independence**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) noted that there was some discussion of this issue at the NFIWG meeting on 24 September 2013.

Members agreed:

* to implement the TILA reforms in line with the policy aims of linking TILA to leaving care plans, with support from case workers; and
* to provide comments on the TILA guidelines by the end of the week so that it could be considered at SCCDSAC.

Members discussed the need for a high level MOU with the Department of Social Services, and the need for a streamlined version of a leaving care plan to be developed for the older 18-25 year cohort.

**Item 5.5**

**Outcome -** Members noted that there was a number of issues the working group have been progressing as outlined in the agenda paper.

**Action 7 -** Members agreed to provide comments on the TILA guidelines to the Commonwealth by the end of the week (27 September 2013).

**5.6 Professionalisation of Carers**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) provided members with an update of the Professionalisation of Carers report circulated with the agenda papers. Ms Hope noted that the draft report:

* reduces the prominence of models that are in development phase;
* compares and contrasts existing domestic and international models of professional foster care;
* deletes the option about piloting the model;
* analyses the barriers and opportunities for implementing professional foster care in Australia;
* includes more detailed feedback on the tax and industrial relations barriers, and feasibility of options; and
* puts forward a range of practical policy options governments could progress to phase elements of professional foster care into existing out-of-home care systems.

Members provided feedback on the report and agreed for the final report and policy options to be progressed to SCCDSAC for consideration at their next meeting on 10 October 2013, pending revisions as outlined.

**Item 5.6**

**Outcome -** Members noted the draft report on the Professionalisation of Carers and the proposed policy options.

**Action 8 -** Members to provide further comments on the Professionalisation of Carers report to the Commonwealth by early next week (30 September 2013).

**5.7 Health Outcomes for children and young people in the child protection system**

Members discussed the options in the final report, ‘Health Assessments and Interventions for Children and Young People in the Child Protection System’.

Members supported the options 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 being presented at the next SCCDSAC meeting.

Members agreed to highlight to Ministers examples of where options proposed have positive outcomes in jurisdictions. For example, SA Rapid Response, an initiative to priorities young people in out-of-home care gaining access to health services.

Members noted Option 8 (sharing information) will be progressed through CYCSPRWG mechanisms.

**Item 5.7**

**Outcome -** Members noted the final report and that this work would not have occurred without the National Framework.

Members agreed to options 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 going to Ministers.

**5.8 Para-professional workforce**

Ms Anne Campbell and Lyn Manitta from the Department of Family and Community Services (NSW) provided members with an update on work to explore a para-professional workforce. Members noted the progress of work being undertaken including mapping work occurring across jurisdictions. Most states have a para-professional in place, with the exception of NSW.

Ms Manitta identified NSW will need to continue to work on options to move forward. SA and ACT were interested in the next stage of work; QLD identified that the biggest challenge for a   
para-professional workforce is case-loads; WA noted the need to look at support needed for Indigenous staff to become qualified.

Members suggested focusing on what it is that case worker can only do, as a way to move forward on this action.

**Item 5.8**

**Outcome -** Members noted the progress of this action and for it not to proceed to SCCDSAC.

**5.9 Mandatory Reporting**

Mr Ben Matthews from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) attended the meeting for this item to provide members with an overview of the Mandatory Reporting research currently being undertaken.

Mr Matthews advised that QUT have been:

* working with the Victorian Government for some time, with funding from FaHCSIA (now the Department of Social Services) on this project; and
* identifying significant differences in reporting frameworks across jurisdictions.

The work will be ground breaking and will be delivered in three stages:

* + Stage 1 - consists of a detailed analysis of legislation in each state over the past 10 years. This is to be completed by mid-October 2013.
  + Stage 2 - involves analysis of data across jurisdictions, by reported group of abuse/neglect over time. This is to be completed in December 2013. Mr Matthews thanked each of the states for their assistance in this stage.
  + Stage 3 - will identify factors (contextual and legal) that influence reporting practices. This is to be completed in March 2014.

Ms Mary McKinnon from the Department of Human Services (Vic) highlighted that this work provides a framework for additional work that may need to be done.

**Item 5.9**

**Outcome -** Members noted the progress on the mandatory reporting being undertaken by QUT.

**5.10 NFPAC Communication Plan**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) provided members with an updated on the work to the Communication Plan for the Second Action Plan. The Communication Plan incorporates the   
two-tiered structure and targeted approach agreed by SCCDSAC earlier this year.

Members agreed:

* to progress the Communication Plan for the Second Action Plan 2012-15 of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009-2020* (National Framework) to SCCDSAC for endorsement; and
* for NFIWG to oversee the implementation and promotion of the Communication Plan.

Members noted that the major communication activities will be highlighted in the National Framework Annual Report to COAG.

**Item 5.10  
Outcome -** Members agreed for the Communications Plan for the Second Action Plan 2012-15 of the *National Framework for Protecting Australian Children 2009-2020* (National Framework) to go to SCCDSAC.

Members noted the major communication activities will be highlighted in the National Framework Annual Report to COAG.

**Action 8 -** Members to provide comments on the Communications Plan to Helen Bedford by   
30 September 2013.

**5.11 NFPAC Evaluation Plan**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) acknowledged that a one page summary of the draft Evaluation Plan was provided to the members at the NFIWG meeting on 24 September 2013. CYCSPRWG members were provided with the full report two days prior to the meeting.

The draft Evaluation Plan includes three components; Process Evaluation; Impact Evaluation; and Outcome Evaluation.

NFWIG suggested that a small working group is established to look at the evaluation plan.   
The working group membership would comprise of, Associate Professor Leah Bromfield from University of South Australia, Mr Brian Babington from Families Australia, and Ms Pamela Kinnear from AIHW. CYCSPRWG members agreed to the establishment of the working group.

Ms Helen Bedford acknowledged that this work is challenging. Members agreed for the Research, Evaluation and Data Working Group (REDWIG) to look at the document out-of-session.

**Item 5.11  
Outcome -** Members agreed to establish a working group to progress the evaluation plan.

**Action 9** - Members agreed for a copy of the NFPAC Evaluation Plan to be sent to REDWIG out-of-session.

**5.12 NFPAC Annual Report 2012-2013**

Ms Angela Hope (Commonwealth) provided an update on progress and time frames for completion of the draft National Framework Annual Report 2012-13. Further, members were asked to consider streamlining the reporting process in the future to increase accessibility and timeliness, and reduce the administrative and cost burdens on jurisdictions.

Members agreed to consider the final report out-of-session prior to the Ministers’ meeting.

**Item 5.12**

**Outcome -** Members noted the progress and agreed to consider the final draft National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children Annual Report 2012-13 out-of-session prior to gaining approval at Ministers.

**Action 10 -** Members to provide comments on the Annual Report to the Commonwealth by 30 September 2013.

**5.13 Update and Review of Second Action Plan**

Members noted the update on progress of the Second Action Plan of the *National Framework for Protecting Australian Children 2009-2020.*

Members discussed the approach for the future implementation of the Second Action Plan, in particular the A3 document that was distributed along with the agenda papers. Members suggested that more consideration be given to some of the headings which categorise the actions.

Members also agreed that the side bar should be removed and that any feedback is to be provided to the Commonwealth by the end of the month.

**Item 5.13**

**Outcome -** Members noted the update on progress of the Second Action Plan.

**Action 11 -** Members to provide feedback on the future implementation of the Second Action Plan working document to the Commonwealth by 30 September 2013.

**6.1 National Child Protection Data Workshop**

Ms Pamela Kinnear from the AIHW advised the next National Child Protection Data Workshop is scheduled to be held the week commencing 28 October 2013 in Melbourne. The workshop will be held in two parts.

The first session will be facilitated by Associate Professor Leah Bromfield (Australian Centre for Child Protection), and will be a broad discussion about the National Framework outcome measures and how to make the most of NGO data.

The Second session will be facilitated by AIHW. This will involve a more technical discussion about the new indicators and existing work underway.

**Item 6.1**

**Outcome -** Members noted the work currently being undertaken in preparation for the National Child Protection Data Workshop.

**6.2 Update on Adoptions**

Members endorsed the establishment of the Adoptions Issues and Directions Working Group.

Members agreed to the terms of reference and membership of the working group, with the addition of a Commonwealth and Victorian representative. It was also noted that the South Australian representative is about to change.

Members agreed to NSW further investigating the feasibility of broadening the scope of the working group to include inter-country adoption issues.

**Item 6.2**

**Outcome -** Members noted the work NSW are currently undertaking as part of establishing the Adoptions Issues and Directions Working Group.

**6.3 Update on Royal Commission**

Members noted the update on the Royal Commission and provided feedback on the service coverage and demand for support services.

**Item 6.3**

**Outcome -** Members agreed to the Commissioners being invited to attend a one half-day NFWIG meeting in 2014.

**6.4 Next Meeting**

Members noted that the date for the next CYCSRWG meeting will be determined after the SCCDSAC and Ministers’ meetings are held in October and November respectively.

**Meeting closed at 3:30pm**

**Draft Actions Arising from 25 September 2013 CYCSPRWG meeting**

| Action | | Timeframe | Responsibility | Status |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Victoria to circulate further information about ‘Service Connect’ to members. | February 2014 | Vic | In Progress |
|  | ACT to provide the evaluation of the ACT model when finalised to members. | February 2014 | ACT | In Progress |
|  | Members to circulate any relevant papers, research and evaluations completed on locally based strategies for working with household complex needs. | Ongoing | All | In Progress |
|  | The Commonwealth to relook at previous processes agreed to progress Ministerial approval of the principles and advise jurisdictions of the outcome. | February 2014 | Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | Secretariat to circulate a copy of the AJJA presentation to members. | February 2014 | Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | Members to re-explore the strategic agenda alignment and service integration for actions 9.2 and 9.4. | February 2014 | All | In Progress |
|  | Members agreed to provide comments on the TILA guidelines to the Commonwealth by the end of the week (27 September 2013). | 27 September 2013 | All Jurisdictions | In Progress |
|  | Members to provide further comments on the Professionalisation of Carers report to the Commonwealth by early next week. | 30 September 2013 | All Jurisdictions | In Progress |
|  | Members agreed for a copy of the NFPAC Evaluation Plan to be sent to REDWIG  out-of-session. | February 2014 | Secretariat | In Progress |
|  | Members to provide comments on the Annual Report to the Commonwealth by 30 September 2013. | 30 September 2013 | All Jurisdictions | In Progress |
|  | Members to provide feedback on the future implementation of the Second Action Plan working document to the Commonwealth by 30 September 2013. | 30 September 2013 | Secretariat | In Progress |