



CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE

NATIONAL PERMANENCY CONFERENCE 2017



NPC HANDBOOK

Conference
Program

Community
Sessions

Sunset
Refreshments

Abstracts

Speakers



Adopt Change are extremely proud to extend a warm welcome to Connections for Life: National Permanency Conference 2017.

We would like to thank our sponsors for their significant support, which has assisted us in designing a two-day program with speakers from across Australia and beyond, who will shine a light on important topics surrounding permanency for children.

Permanency for children and how we support connections with family, culture and self, is a vital conversation. The conference speakers and panelists will provide insights into permanency practices globally, and evidence-based supports for birth families and adoptive families. We will hear from government representatives, one year since the Community Services Ministers national commitment to permanency across the states and territories.

We will also hear from speakers and panelists with lived experience of the care system and adoption. Hearing these perspectives is vital, so that the best interests of children remain at the heart of our work.

Conference delegates attending include government, policy makers, the child welfare NGO sector, researchers, academics, health professionals, advocates and carers. What a great opportunity to collaborate and explore ways to improve the lives of children and facilitate better life outcomes.

Renée Carter

Chief Executive Officer
Adopt Change



#AdoptChange
#aHomeForEveryChild



NATIONAL PERMANENCY CONFERENCE 2017

ADDRESSING THE
IMPORTANCE OF
PERMANENCY FOR
CHILDREN AND THEIR
CONNECTIONS WITH
FAMILY, COMMUNITY,
CULTURE AND SELF.

SPONSORS

We would like to thank our Conference Sponsors and ongoing Major Supporters for their support of this important event.

PLATINUM



SILVER



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS



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MAJOR ADOPT CHANGE SUPPORTERS



PACKER FAMILY
FOUNDATION

NEWMAN'S OWN
FOUNDATION

The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) supports vulnerable people and families to participate in social and economic life and build stronger communities.

FACS works to achieve its goals by following its Strategic Statement which sets out its visions, values and objectives:

- Children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect, and have the best possible lives
- People with disability are supported to realise their potential
- Social housing assistance is used to break disadvantage
- People are assisted to participate in social and economic life
- People experiencing domestic and family violence, or at risk of it, are safer
- Aboriginal people, families and communities have better outcomes

FACS is also the lead cluster for delivering the Premier's and State Priorities.

www.facs.nsw.gov.au





Australian Government
Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the Australian Government's lead agency in the development and delivery of social policy, and is working to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia.

DSS' policies and services respond to need across people's lives — looking after families, children and older people; providing a safety net for people who cannot fully support themselves; enhancing the wellbeing of people with high needs; assisting people who need help with care; and supporting a diverse and harmonious society.

DSS supports people and families in Australia by encouraging independence and participation, and supporting a cohesive society.



CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE



16th (Thur) and 17th (Fri)
November 2017



Location
Rydges Sydney Central

RYDGES SYDNEY CENTRAL

28 Albion Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone: +61 2 9289 0000

Email: reservations_rydgessydneycentral@evt.com

Website: www.rydges.com/accommodation/sydney-nsw/sydney-central/

GETTING THERE

Rydges Sydney Central hotel is a five minute walk from Central Station, and is well serviced by buses.

FROM THE AIRPORT BY TRAIN

The Sydney Airport Train service called Airport Link operates direct services from platform 1 at the airport to Central railway station.

FROM THE AIRPORT BY CAR

To get to Rydges Sydney Central hotel in Surry Hills from Sydney Airport (SYD), follow signs to M5 East. Exit onto General Holmes Drive and follow onto the Eastern Distributor. Take South Dowling Street turn left onto Fitzroy and follow until Foveaux Street turns right onto Elizabeth Street and right onto Albion Street.

Car Parking Rates

1 Hour \$9 | 2 Hours \$18 | 3 Hours \$27 |
4 Hours \$36 | Over 4 hours \$40

Rydges Sydney Central offers self parking at a price of just \$40 per night (departing 12 noon)
Valet parking is \$45 per night (departing 12 noon)



PROGRAM

Day 1 Thursday 16th Nov

8:30am Registration

9:00am Welcome to Country

Aunty Millie Ingram

Introduction

Renée Carter, CEO Adopt Change

9:15am Exploring evidence based programming in the permanency continuum from prevention and reunification through adoption and post-adoptive supports in real world implementations

Dr Sylvia Rowlands, New York Foundling

10:00am Advocating for Change and for Children: Navigating the Policy Making Maze

Facilitator: Kerry Chikarovski

Panel includes: Jeremy Sammut (CIS), Mark Nixon (EY),

Lisa Dibb (Queensland Alliance for Kids), Dr Jennifer Buckingham (CIS)

10:50am Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Permanency: Learning from the Past to improve the Future

Trevor Jordan, Jigsaw Queensland

11:25am Morning tea

11:55am Applying the Placement Principle and Preserving Culture

Adjunct Professor Muriel Bamblett, AM, Chief Executive Officer,
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

12:30pm Search for Origins

Joel De Carteret

1:05pm Lunch

2:00pm Fighting for Permanence for Neglected Children: The English Experience of Boosting Adoption Numbers

Sir Martin Narey

2:50pm Permanency and adoption – the challenges, opportunities and improving outcomes for children

Anne King, Senior Advisor, NSW Government

3:25pm Afternoon tea and meet the speakers / networking

3:50pm Outside the Orphanage – Connections with Families and Culture

Panel: Gianna Mazzone (Lifeworks), Damon Martin (International Social Service), Leigh Mathews, Zufan Emerson (Adopt Change Ambassador)

Alternative Session (Taylor Room):

Research Gaps and Critical Areas of Enquiry in Open Adoption Studies

Amy Conley Wright, Institute of Open Adoption Studies

4:20pm The Power of One. How one decision can transform the life of a child

Eric Bailey, Adoptee, Ex-Pro NBL Player, Activational Speaker and Adopt Change Ambassador

4:55pm Closing words: MC

5:00pm Day 1 concludes

5:30pm Sunset Refreshments networking function *(Limited to Sunset Refreshments ticket holders)*

Includes address from Jack Thompson

PROGRAM

Day 2 Friday 17th Nov

8:30am Registration

8:50am Welcome

8:55am Ministerial address

The Hon Pru Goward MP, NSW Minister for Family and Community Services

9:10am National Commitment to Permanency

Senator The Hon Zed Seselja,
Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs

9:25am Update on the States and Territories Permanency Plans and Progress

Facilitator: Kerry Chikarovski

Panel: Kathryn Mandla, Principle Advisor, Families Group, Department of Social Services, The Hon Pru Goward MP (NSW), Beth Allen (VIC), Jackie Tang (WA), Kathryn Jordan (SA)

10:45am Action Learning: The role of the Adoptions Taskforce in transforming the out-of-home care adoptions process

Mark Galvin, EY and Simone Czech, NSW Family and Community Services

11:25am Morning tea

11:45am Getting an Early Start to Learning and Life

Professor Paul Chandler

Alternative Session (Taylor Room):

Previous life experiences and vulnerabilities of children adopted from care in Australia: Implications for practice

Dr Susan Tregeagle, Barnardos

12:20pm The Impact of Impermanence and finding connections

Panel: Matthew Bambrick, Heather Baird, Brad Murphy, Julie Harcourt, Queensland Family and Child Commission

1:00pm Lunch

1:50pm Child Protection: Dual Perspectives

Karl O'Callaghan

Alternative Workshop (Taylor Room):

Lifelong relationships and a sense of belonging: Guiding principles for best practice in achieving permanency

Kathryn Mandla, Principle Advisor, Families Group, Department of Social Services

2:10pm The French Adoption System: The ins and outs of a dual system

Sandrine Pepit

Alternative Workshop (Taylor Room):

Tough Conversations in Child Protection

Michael Hawton

2:50pm Afternoon tea

3:10pm Permanency Provides Family

Warren Mundine

3:50pm Improving Brain Health by Integrating Trauma Informed Practices with Evidence Based Neuroplasticity Interventions

Professor Selena Bartlett and Sheryl Batchelor

4:35pm Closing words: CEO and MC

4:45pm Conference Concludes

COMMUNITY SESSIONS

Day 1 Thursday 16th Nov

9:45am	Registration and network
9:55am	Introduction Adopt Change
10:10am	Pathways to Permanency in NSW Philippa Welman, NSW Family and Community Services (FaCS) Lisa Ardizzone, NSW Family and Community Services (FaCS)
10:45am	Search for Origins Damon Martin, International Social Service and Joel De Carteret
11:20am	Morning tea
11:45am	Fighting for Permanence for Neglected Children Sir Martin Narey
12:30pm	Overview of Barriers research
12:45pm	Conclusion

Day 2 Friday 17th Nov

9:45am	Registration and network
9:55am	Introduction Adopt Change
10:10am	Workshop: Brains, Neuroplasticity and Parenting Professor Selena Bartlett and Sheryl Batchelor
10:55am	Connecting with your Support Network Kelly Grey, The Adoption and Permanent Care Association of NSW
11:15am	Morning tea
11:40am	Promoting attachment in foster parents Karleen Gribble, School of Nursing and Midwifery at Western Sydney University
12:15pm	Intercountry and Family Support Program Overview Gianna Mazzone, Lifeworks Relationship Counselling and Education Services
12:35pm	Closing words
12:45pm	Conclusion

* While all care has been taken to publish an accurate program including times, speaker and subject list, the program may be subject to change

SUNSET REFRESHMENTS

*Proudly brought to you by
EY and Adopt Change*



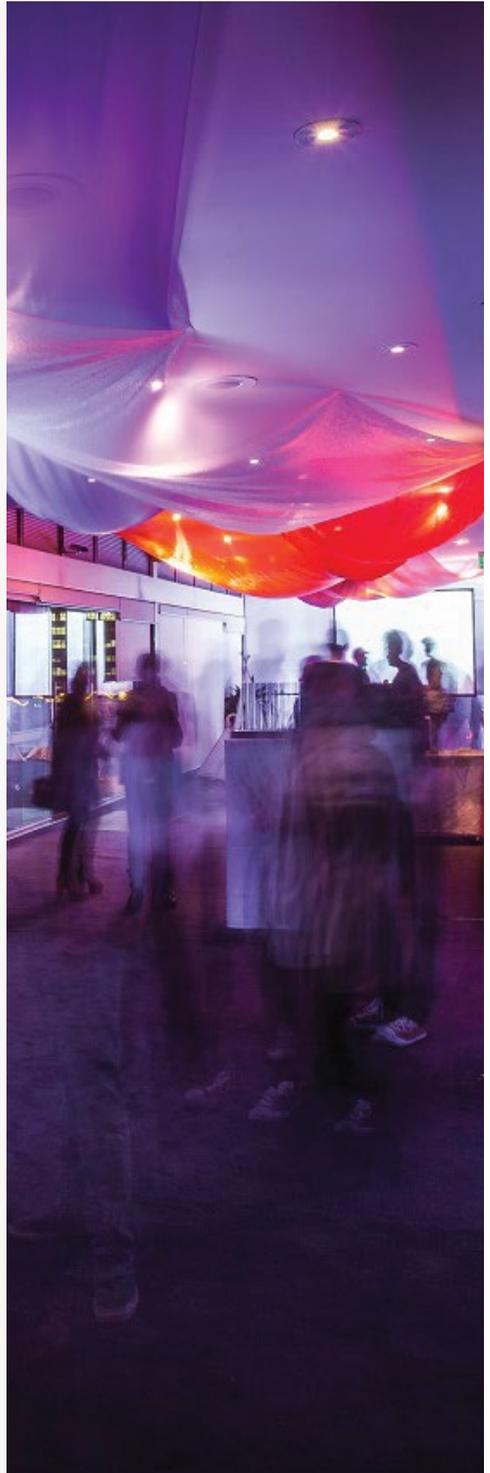
**Building a better
working world**

**Entry limited to ticket-holders with
a Sunset Events entry pass (due to
venue capacity)**

This evening is the primary social event on the conference program, with the opportunity for guests to enjoy an evening of networking, entertainment, canapés and drinks.

When: 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Thursday 16th November 2017

Where: Rydges Hotel | The Surry – Rooftop
28 Albion Street Surry Hills



ABSTRACTS

Exploring evidence based programming in the permanency continuum from prevention and reunification through adoption and post-adoptive supports in real world implementations

Dr Sylvia Rowlands will provide attendees with an opportunity to explore programming in the permanency continuum from prevention and reunification through adoption and post-adoptive supports. Personal, research and worldwide experience have shown that there is a group of carefully crafted interventions, which have proven effective and efficient for improving the permanency outcomes for children.

Learning Objectives: This interactive, clinical presentation will provide attendees with practical information about

- How to organize permanency interventions to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation by matching youth/permanency resources–family to appropriate levels of care,
- The factors involved in integrating effective permanency programming in social welfare systems,
- Clinical recommendations about how to effectively engage and motivate permanency resource/family members into the change process,
- Clinical recommendations about how to effectively change referral problems and associated risk factors using family-based strategies, and
- Information about the effectiveness of family-based strategies in real world implementation.

Advocating for Change and for Children: Navigating the Policy Making Maze

Complex service systems often fail to meet the needs of ‘clients’ as intended. This truism is relevant to the quest to create child-centred child protection systems in Australia.

This session will explore how advocates of reshaping services for children and their families can negotiate the maze of competing interests and perspectives that surround contentious issues including ‘drift’, permanency, and adoption.

Drawing on their diverse experiences as advocates of policy change, the speakers will share their insights into the strategies that can help drive the system-wide improvements to child and family services that are needed to ensure child protection systems truly operate ‘in the best interests of the child’.

Meeting the ethical challenges of permanency: Learning from the past to improve the future

Trevor L Jordan, Phd. President, Jigsaw Queensland Inc.

Confronted with the task of providing permanent care for children, we must learn from the past. To meet the needs of children who cannot be parented in their families of origin, policy and practice must be based on evidence, reason and imagination. This includes ethical imagination. While avoiding the moralism of the past, we will need strong values-based practice. These values must be negotiated not imposed and they are needed to inform decision making at all levels, social, professional, familial and individual.

This requires a fundamental change in the public conversation about child safety practices and family formation. We need to move beyond marketing positions to discussions about values, identities and relationships that can help build

lifelong family commitments. We need to stop fixing breakdowns and reorganise policy & practices to ensure that the lifelong interests of children are met.

Those practices should involve participation of government, professionals and peer support groups. They should be organised around three guiding principles: openness and honesty, commitment to the lifelong interests of children, and the provision of adequate emotional and informational support to all parties. The termination of parental rights ought not to require terminating identities and relationships.

Respectful engagement is paramount, not least because the realities that need to be addressed are complex and multidimensional (not simple) and there are often competing interests and values at work. We will need to be more collaborative than adversarial, building bridges rather than walls between the various stakeholders. Those affected by past policies and practices must not be forgotten and deserve continued support. New practices do not replace existing obligations to right past wrongs.

It is not just what we do, but how we do it that makes the difference; its as much about processes and relationships, as it is about resources. Flexibility will be required. There may not be one best way to do things, but many. We also need to accept that, as in all areas of life, politicians, professionals and parents will be more than adequate, adequate and not adequate in their ability to cope with the challenges that confront them.

Applying the Placement Principle and Preserving Culture

Twenty years on from the release of the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into the Separation of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from the Families – Bringing Them Home – the number of Aboriginal children in out of home care has risen by 600%. In this context, a mechanism that sets the timer for permanency planning of many Aboriginal children is a recipe for this crisis to be institutionalised giving credence to the view that we are knowingly creating another “Stolen Generation”.

SNAICC's Family Matters roadmap spells out an alternative to this current, apparently inevitable pathway for many Aboriginal children into a future that is likely to be one of disconnection and loss of identity and culture.

We want a future for Aboriginal children in which they are connected to their communities and their culture. That is also in accord with the Aboriginal Child Placement which has itself been around for forty years or more. The child protection system must operate in accordance with the best interests of children and that means issues of identity, including the need for cultural stability, should be a central consideration.

Muriel's presentation will argue that permanency and stability is important for Aboriginal children but only if this is being permanently connected with their families, community and culture so that they can grow up to fully functioning Aboriginal people contributing to their communities and the wider society.

Search for Origins

Joel de Carteret was adopted and raised by an Australian family. 31 years later Joel embarked on what seemed like an impossible mission to track down his biological mother. With virtually nothing to go on except knowing the date and location he was found, that his mother was a dress maker and father was a jeepney

driver, Joel undertook a journey that shows how sheer grit, persistence and determination can overcome even the most insurmountable odds.

Joel talks about how his skills as a film maker, director and producer, along with millions of Filipino's, aided him to the reunification of his long lost parents. His story has reached over 22 million people and featured on GMA's Kapuso Mo - Jessica Soho, BBC Outlook, 60 Minutes and Readers Digest.

Fighting for Permanence for Neglected Children: The English Experience of Boosting Adoption Numbers

Sir Martin will describe the media, political and professional prejudice against removing children from neglect that he experienced when leading Barnardo's (the UK's biggest children's charity.) He will discuss his report for the London Times on the need to re-assert the primacy of the interests of the child, removing more, not fewer, into State care and which called for a boosting of adoption numbers. At the time there had been a reduction in adoption numbers in England (from about 25,000 a year in 1975 to fewer than 3,000 in 2011).

The prejudice against adoption and the puncturing of a series of myths which had hastened its demise will be examined, including:

- the spurious belief that adoptions broke down in large proportions;
- attachment theory and the fallacious belief that a baby should never be separated from its birth mother;
- the well intentioned but un-evidenced belief that children must only be adopted by parents of identical ethnic background and the grave consequences for some children in care;
- the well-intentioned belief that siblings had always to be adopted together and the deleterious consequences for many such siblings.

Sir Martin will discuss the English experience in addressing political and media antipathy to adoption; turning around the reduction in adoption numbers; the considerable annual increases since 2011; and more recent falls, as some of the above myths have re-asserted themselves. The likely future of adoption numbers in England will be considered.

Permanency and adoption – the challenges, opportunities and improving outcomes for children

In NSW there are over 18,000 children in care. Over the past 5 years there has been great effort by government to reduce the number of children in care and improve outcomes for them. Driving government reform is never easy. There is an art to communicating the need for change, there are supporters and there are anti-reformers. These influences are constantly at play when trying to change the way you work and communicating a message that everyone can hear and reflect on. In the context of adoption in Australia this messaging becomes even more difficult and reform and the need for change can at times seem almost too difficult to undertake. To the NSW governments credit there has been a significant investment and commitment to lifting the rate of open adoption from out of home care. This is just one way the government has tackled the issue of growing numbers of children in care, constant moves in care and poor outcomes for children. Alongside this it has been important to always consider how we help families change so that adoption is only for those children who really cannot stay home safely. Talking about investment in adoption whilst talking about investment in helping the parents of children at risk change is paramount to achieving reform. There is good reason why people feel afraid of an increased focus on open adoption, that is why we must make a greater effort to tell the story of how we are helping families stay together where possible. The presentation aims to communicate

how NSW has achieved reform, what the challenges are and how we continuously try to keep children at the centre of our thinking.

Research Gaps and Critical Areas of Enquiry in Open Adoption Studies

This session will present an overview of The University of Sydney Institute of Open Adoption Studies research initiatives and the gaps in local research evidence in the areas of permanency planning, post-adoption support, and practices to support contact and communicative openness. This will be followed by interactive small group dialogue around the challenges and opportunities within NSW and Australia to foster research and practice partnerships to address these gaps. The session will conclude with report back from small groups and discussion of future research plans by the Institute, including longitudinal research.

The Power of One. How one decision can transform the life of a child

“Families don’t have to match. You don’t have to look like someone else to love them.” – Leigh Anne Tuohy – (Adoptive mother portrayed in *The Blind Side*)

To be adopted is almost a magical event. But with all the love and support the adoptee receives when adopted the issues of abandonment, grief and mourning are still at play long after the ink has dried on the adoption papers.

Adoption is also about applying oneself in any situation. It’s adapting to new surroundings and situations whether it be a new job or new relationship.

To “adapt” you must “adopt”. Adopting is making a decision and adaption is dealing with that decision and all the emotions that go along with it.

“Don’t forget, a person’s greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.” – Howard Jackson Brown Jr.

We all need acknowledgement and praise on occasion. We all need some form of a “pat on the back” even if it comes from you and you alone. That said, we don’t do for others merely for a praising acknowledgement, we do it or should do it from the good of our heart and what inspires us in a healthy and honest direction to help others.

There is that old saw that what you put out to the universe comes back to you tenfold. It’s the concept of “paying it forward”. That is wonderful but also not a reason for doing something for others. More than not, doing something for someone who cannot give back is the most rewarding. That is the true philanthropist spirit; doing something without expecting something in return.

Action Learning: The role of the Adoptions Taskforce in transforming the out-of-home care adoptions process

Child centred approaches demand a different way of delivering community services. The work of the Adoptions Taskforce and partners is supporting FACS to develop a creative, flexible and successful system focussed strategies that delivered a record number of adoptions in 2017.

As at 1 July 2016, there were some 470 children in the out-of-home care adoptions process, with many matters taking over seven years to finalise. The Minister for Community Services directed the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) to clear accumulated cases and improve the timeliness of the process.

Some of the challenges faced by the Department included how to tackle a process that had become increasingly complex and confusing over time, engage the wide range of stakeholders to the process, introduce change to reduce processing times and lift performance without negatively impacting on the progress of cases already in the system.

As important, was the challenge of ensuring that FACS took away key learnings from the intervention that could translate back into practice and ensure long term sustainability. This involved challenging existing practice and culture, reducing processing times and ensuring an improved experience for children, their carers and birth parents.

An Adoptions Taskforce was established by FACS working alongside FACS and NGO resources. The Taskforce employs the principles of an Action Learning Model, involving a small group empowered and trusted with the necessary resources, taking action, and learning as individuals, as a team, and as an organisation.

A key feature of the action learning model are fast cycles of build, measure and learn which makes it flexible and able to rapidly adapt and evolve in mid-flight. Clarity of purpose and performance was key to designing an evaluation approach that best supported the Taskforce model.

This presentation draws on the recent experience of the Adoptions Taskforce in NSW to share elements of the Action Learning approach and the role it has performed in building the productive capacity of the Department and NGOs in the adoptions process.

Getting an Early Start to Learning and Life

Worldwide research shows that the years from 0 to 8 are the most critical for the healthy development of a child. Nobel prize winning Laureate, James Heckman systematically showed that investment in the very earliest years reaps the best outcomes in terms of education, social cohesion and mental health. The \$44 million Early Start Facility built at the University of Wollongong with 41 Engagement Centres located throughout NSW is based on the work of Heckman. This talk will focus

on how Early Start engages families with foster and/or adopted children in a deep and systematic manner.

Previous life experiences and vulnerabilities of children adopted from care in Australia: Implications for practice

Barnardos Australia moved 210 NSW children from welfare care to adoptive families between 1987-2013. The Australian Outcomes of Open Adoption study, provides practitioners and policy makers with a profile of the traumatic life experience of many of these children prior to entering their new families.

Many of the children placed for adoption from care had already encountered a high rate of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) within their birth families. These include significant abuse and neglect and are known to be associated with poor life outcomes. Furthermore, many had subsequently experienced protracted periods between first notification and entry to care, failed restorations, disrupted kinship care placements, and multiple foster placement breakdowns. Many had been separated from their siblings; some had lost contact with all their relatives. A high proportion had significant emotional or behavioural problems. All of these factors paint an overall picture of extreme vulnerability that may be compounded if planning does not consider their risk of continuing instability and premature discharge from out of home care.

We know that adoptive families can be recruited to take children damaged by abuse, neglect and very poor early life experiences. However, this paper presents us with the practice implications of preparing families for the task of caring for children who have experienced abusive, chaotic and stressful early lives. It hints at the identity challenges that these children may face.

Child Protection: Dual Perspectives

Karl O'Callaghan is the former Police Commissioner of Western Australia and has been vocal on the need for better child protection structures and a more sensible approach by Government. This has included writing a number of opinion pieces for the State newspaper. He was so concerned about the numbers of children in need of care and protection that he and his wife qualified to become foster carers and now care for three boys 8, 10 and 12. He is in the unique position of being able to talk about child protection from the perspective of one of the most senior government employees in Western Australia and as a carer.

Lifelong relationships and a sense of belonging: Guiding principles for best practice in achieving permanency

We know that children in out of home care for extended periods, and who experience instability through multiple placements, are at significant risk of poorer immediate and long term health and wellbeing outcomes. The Commonwealth and state and territory governments are committed to do more to improve permanency outcomes for children involved in child protection systems. But what is permanency and how is it best achieved?

Governments have recently agreed Guiding Principles to support Best Practice in achieving permanency and to a shared definition of permanency through the following Outcomes Statement:

Children and young people, including those in out-of-home care experience

- safe and stable care
- timely decision making on permanency that takes into account the views of the child, and

- lifelong relationships and a sense of belonging, identity and connection to culture and community to achieve better life outcomes and realise their full potential.

This session will explore the elements of the outcome statement and guiding principles, considering

- pathways to permanency
- relationship, placement and legal permanency
- providing children with stable care and connections to develop a sense of belonging
- timeliness of decision making, and
- measuring outcomes – how do we know our efforts are having a positive impact

The French Adoption System: The ins and outs of a dual system

This presentation will give an overview of the French adoption system (national and international). It will highlight the difficulties that France is facing and how to tackle them in the best interest of the child.

It will discuss, in depth, one of the main concerns of the past decade: the situation of children under state protection and the situation of children ward of the state.

Finally, it will be the occasion to compare the two existing types of adoption in France - the full adoption and the simple adoption - from a legal point of view.

Tough Conversations in Child Protection

In this workshop, participants will learn part of a method to:

- Comprehensively gather information for holding a factual conversation with a parent so that as many of the facts (as can be reasonably gathered) are brought to bear in a tough conversation with parents.

- Defuse antagonism in tough conversations while holding a firm line so that an ‘initiator’ of a tough conversations can keep control of the conversation.
- Identify important ‘dashboard’ markers for parents so that everyone is on the ‘same page’ about what’s expected, within a given timespan.

You will learn one important way to assess the main issues in a child protection matter (using a simple worksheet template) and how to respond if you are interrupted.

Permanency provides family

Family is the foundation of all societies. Permanency provides the family that government-controlled care never can.

Improving Brain Health by integrating trauma informed practices with evidence based neuroplasticity interventions

This presentation highlights the critical findings from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study involving more than 17,000 participants in the US and the health risks – both physical and mental - that result from childhood trauma (Felitti and Anda, 1998). Scientists have now documented the neurological processes that govern the brain’s ongoing ‘plasticity’ that have now shown that the damaging changes in the brain attributable to persistent high stress can be reversed via specific forms of training. We will discuss how evidence-based multi-domain computerised and non-computerised cognitive training programs and strategies are being used in schools in Australia and overseas to improve a student’s cognitive and social skills which in turn has led to better life and academic outcomes.

Connecting with your Support Network (Community Session)

With the conference theme ‘Connections for Life’, the Adoption and Permanent Care Association of NSW (APANSW) will present on the value of the support network of families who have been brought together through their experiences of adoption and permanent care in NSW. This talk will highlight ways in which community connections support parents and families before, during and after placements; and the ways we support lifelong connections to children’s origins.

Promoting attachment in foster parents (Community Session)

The ability of foster parents to provide sensitive care and responsive care to their children flows from the attachment that the caregiver has for the child. A caregiver who is strongly attached to their child will seek to promote their wellbeing even at the expense of their own wellbeing. Having an attached foster parent results in better outcomes for children including an increased likelihood of the child developing a positive internal working model of themselves and a decreased risk of placement disruption. It appears that the fear of loss, or actual loss of a child when a placement ends, hampers the ability of foster parents to attach to children. Foster parents need assistance to attach to their foster children, despite anticipating that children may not stay in their care. They also need assistance to healthily grieve when a child leaves. This presentation will summarise existing research and present recommendations on the ways in which foster parents can be aided to attach to their foster children. It will also discuss foster parent grief and loss and provide practical suggestions on supporting foster carers through grief so that they can maintain the ability to continue fostering and to effectively attach to future foster children.

SPEAKERS

Complete speaker profiles available at www.connectionsforlife.com.au

International speakers



Sir Martin Narey

Adviser for The Ministry of Justice about penal issues and the Department for Education about children's social care issues

Sir Martin Narey began his career as a civil servant in the penal system, before becoming CEO of Barnardo's UK for five years. In 2013 he was appointed Adoption Czar for England advising the government on adoption reform.



Sandrine Pepit

Adoption project coordinator and Legal officer
– Agence Francaise de l'Adoption (Paris)

Sandrine is a legal officer and advisor on international and domestic adoption. She has expertise in international law, particularly treaties dealing with child protection matters, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention.



Dr. Sylvia Rowlands

Senior Vice President for Evidence Based Programs of
The New York Foundling

Dr Rowlands is a Senior Administrator with twenty-five years of social service and health care industry leadership, large system transformation expertise, executive change management experience and executive management by data experience.

Government



Beth Allen PSM

Assistant Director of Child Protection within the Children, Youth and Families Policy division with the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

Beth has over 30 years' experience in the management of child protection operations and is responsible for the development of legislation, policies and practice advice. In 2016 Beth led the legislative amendments to strengthen permanency for children in the child protection system.



Simone Czech

Executive Director, Design Innovation Safety and Permanency in the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS)

Simone has extensive experience in child protection and out of home care programs as well as in the development of policy and reform. She is responsible for leading the reform of the Child Protection and OOHC service system in NSW.



Hon Pru Goward MP

NSW Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in 2017

Minister Goward was first elected to the NSW Parliament in 2007. She has also held previous roles as the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Planning, Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Health.



Julie Harcourt

Manager of Family and Child Research at the Queensland Family and Child Commissions

Julie's focus has been for the Queensland Family and Child Commission to conduct research that has the potential for practical application to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people. Research areas include seeking the views of children in out-of-home care, children's participation, bullying, children's rights, ways to give children a say in matters that affect them, and placement stability.



Kathryn Jordan

Executive Director, Strategy and Performance, South Australian Dept. for Child Protection

Kathryn has a lead role in implementing the SA Government's response to the Nyland Royal Commission's recommendations for reform of the child protection system. Kathryn was instrumental in establishing SA's Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, a community-based integrated provision of services, helping to prevent children from entering the child protection system.



Anne King

Senior Advisor, NSW Government

Anne has a 30 years history working in community services in NSW. She has most recently focused on driving policy and legislative change to improve the lives of children and families who come into contact with the child protection system.



Kathryn Mandla

Kathryn Mandla, Principal Advisor at Department of Social Services (DSS)

Kathryn previously managed central policy systems for DSS including international relations, policy planning, performance, evaluation and research. She is also the Chair, and Australian representative, of the OECD Working Party on Social Policy.



Jackie Tang

Assistant Director General, Service Delivery, Child Protection and Family Support at Department of Communities, Western Australia

An experienced corporate executive leader in both the public and private sectors, Jackie spent many years in the WA Department of Corrective Services, was Director General at the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and was involved in the negotiation and implementation of Native Title Agreements across the Pilbara.



Senator the Hon Zed Seselja

Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs

Senator Seselja was first elected to the Senate for the ACT in 2013. He has been active on a number of committees including the Senate Legislative and General Purpose Standing Committee on Community Affairs, which he also chairs, and the Senate Select Committee on Health.

Speakers and Panelists



Eric Bailey

Global Activational Speaker, Author, Adoptee and Adopt Change Ambassador

Eric draws on his successful careers in professional sports, executive management and sales as well as life experiences such as his difficult start growing up in South Central Los Angeles to deliver powerful and inspiring keynotes.



Heather Baird

Founder of A Better Life For Foster Kids Inc.

Heather's advocacy work is inspired by her own childhood growing up in an orphanage and many foster homes. Heather went on to found A Better Life For Foster Kids Inc. with the aim of helping children in similar situations.



Adjunct Professor Muriel Bamblett

Hon DLittSW AM Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Muriel Bamblett is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung woman who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and is active on many boards and committees concerning children, families and the Indigenous community.



Matthew Bambrick

Consultant with Create Foundation, and young member for Ipswich West

Matthew Bambrick is a 21-year-old public servant from Queensland who has extensive lived experience with the child protection system and has travelled around Australia advocating for change within the system.



Professor Selena Bartlett

Group Leader in Neuroscience and Brain Fitness at the Translational Research Institute at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation

Professor Bartlett is an award winning neuroscientist, and Group Leader in Neuroscience and Brain Fitness at the Translational Research Institute at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation. She is a passionate advocate for people who are marginalised and understands some brains just need a little rewiring.



Sheryl Batchelor

Education Professional and Director at Stronger Brains

Sheryl has delivered a suite of evidence-based neuroplasticity programs to help people who are disadvantaged and those that have experienced trauma across the lifespan improve their lives.



Jennifer Buckingham

Senior Research Fellow at The Centre for Independent Studies and director of the FIVE from FIVE reading project

Jennifer writes on education policy, and has published influential papers on school choice, school funding, literacy, international assessments, NAPLAN and My School, religious schools, boys' education, teacher training and employment, class size, and educational disadvantage.



Joel de Carteret

Film maker, CEO and Chief Storyteller at Stories In Motion, and Adopt Change Ambassador

Joel is a sought after keynote speaker. His life-changing story of tracking down his birth family after nearly 31 years has reached over 22 million people around the planet.



Paul Chandler

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Inclusion & Outreach) at University of Wollongong

Professor Chandler was the vision behind the \$44 million Early Start Project at UOW, of which he is now Foundation Chair. He has also received countless research and teaching awards, including the ARC/Thomson Direct Award, as one of 10 most valuable Australian scientists.



Kerry Chikarovski

Adopt Change Board Director

One of Australia's most respected former politicians, Kerry was Leader of the NSW Parliamentary Liberal Party from 1998 to 2002. Today Kerry is a successful businesswoman, and brings her experience and understanding of complex issues to the Board of Adopt Change.



Lisa Dibb

President and co-founder of Queensland Alliance for Kids (QAK)

Lisa is a long-time advocate for vulnerable children both here and overseas. QAK has made a major contribution to the impending legislative amendments in the Queensland foster care system aimed at finding permanent homes for children.



Zufan Emerson

Adoptee, Student and Adopt Change Ambassador

Born in Ethiopia, Zufan was adopted to Australian parents when she 5 months old. She is passionate about changing the adoption system in Australia to become a supportive process that gives children the best possible chance to be part of loving families. Zufan is currently studying at the Actors Centre of Australia in Sydney.



Mark Galvin

Partner in EY's Government and Public Sector Practice

Mark is leading the Adoption Transformation Program for the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and designed and implemented the Action Learning model underpinning the Adoptions Taskforce.



Kelly Gray (Carer Session)

President, The Adoption and Permanent Care Association of NSW

The Adoption and Permanent Care Association of NSW (APANSW) facilitates a support network of families who have been brought together through their experiences of adoption and permanent Care in NSW.



Karleen Gribble BRurSc, PhD (Carer Session)

Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery at Western Sydney University

Karleen's research focuses on parenting adopted and foster children and infant feeding. She is an adoptive parent via Intercountry adoption and adoption from out of home care and from 2010-2013 was the NSW representative on the National Intercountry Advisory Group.



Michael Hawton

Psychologist and teacher

Michael Hawton has spent nearly 30 years working with families and children, many of whom have been involved in the child protection system. Michael has written well over 1,000 child welfare reports in both The NSW Children's Court Clinic and in The Family Court of Australia.



Millie Ingram

Retired CEO of Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care Program

Aunty Millie Ingram has worked in Aboriginal affairs all of her life at a community level and in government. She has served on the NSW Aboriginal Land Council representing the Wiradjuri Region of NSW and was recipient of commonwealth bicentenary award in 2001.



Trevor Jordan

President of Jigsaw Queensland.

Trevor has had over twenty years experience in teaching and researching applied and professional ethics in a wide range of fields, including public sector ethics, human services and social work ethics. He has a special interest in ethics and adoption.



Damon Martin

Manager of International Social Service (ISS) Australia's Intercountry Adoption Service

Damon is a qualified Social Worker and Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner who has worked for ISS Australia for nearly 10 years. Previously he has worked in Government Child Protection teams in Australia, England and New Zealand.



Leigh Mathews

Child Rights and Protection Consultant

An experienced consultant with over 12 years experience across Australia and Asia in child rights and child protection, Leigh is a recognised expert in the issues of institutionalisation, residential care of children, and voluntourism.



Gianna Mazzone

Coordinator, Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service at LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services

Gianna has extensive experience in the delivery of parenting support and therapeutic services. She has also collaborated with agencies that provide services to Aboriginal and CALD communities in developing tailored parenting programs.



Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO

Businessman, political strategist and advocate for empowering the First Nations of Australia

Chairman of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council from 2013 until 2017, Warren has had a long career in the public, business, policy, arts and community sectors. He is a member of the Bundjalung First Nation of Australia and a descendant of the Gumbayngirr and Yuin First Nations of Australia.



Brad Murphy

Adoptee, Ex-Pro AFL Player, and Adopt Change Ambassador

Brad is a former AFL player for the Western Bulldogs, 2002-2006, and now coaches and plays for semi-professional Aussie Rules club, Melton. Brad was born to drug addicted parents and grew up in foster care in Victoria from 16 months. His long-time foster parents adopted Brad at the age of 18.



Mark Nixon

Partner, EY

Mark is a leader in EY's Human Services practice and has been consulting to the sector for over 15 years. He has provided advice to both Commonwealth and State governments on Disability, Foster Care, Aged Care and Social Housing Services.



Karl O'Callaghan

Former Police Commissioner, Western Australia

Karl is a passionate advocate for social change, calling for more sensible Government in regards to crime, substance abuse, domestic violence and children in need of protection. He is a Churchill Fellow and the first police Officer in Western Australia to be awarded a PhD. He and his wife are foster carers, currently looking after three boys.



Jeremy Sammut

Senior Research Fellow, The Centre for Independent Studies

Dr Sammut is the author of a series of ground breaking research reports on the child protection crisis in Australia. His work has influenced child protection reforms in NSW and Victoria, and has led the national debate on adoption.



Jack Thompson

Actor and Adoptee

Jack Thompson has won multiple Australian and international awards for his acting and service to the Australian film industry. When Jack was four years old his mother tragically died from an illness. Jack was eventually adopted, and 42 years later, again met his biological father.



Dr. Susan Tregagle

Senior Manager Research and Advocacy for Barnardos Australia

Dr. Tregagle holds qualifications in social work, social administration and a PhD and is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney. She has published extensively internationally and in Australia on child welfare policy.



Amy Conley Wright

Associate Professor of Social Work and Director of the Institute of Open Adoption Studies at the University of Sydney

Amy is also Honorary Senior Fellow at Early Start Research Institute, UOW. Her teaching, research, and practice experiences are in the areas of child advocacy, child and family policy, family support, and child maltreatment prevention, within Australia and internationally.



**ADOPT CHANGE IS AN
AUSTRALIAN BASED
NOT-FOR PROFIT
ORGANISATION WHICH
EXISTS TO ENSURE EVERY
CHILD CAN BE PART OF A
PERMANENT, LOVING AND
STABLE FAMILY AND HOME.**



ABOUT ADOPT CHANGE

Adopt Change work to raise community awareness, encourage reform and empower Australians to work towards all children having permanency and positive life outcomes. We support capacity building of families to ensure that vulnerable children are able to remain within their birth family where possible. When that is not possible or safe, we advocate for other permanent options, including adoption where appropriate.

Adopt Change also works to educate and support with research, pre- and post-adoptive supports, information and community events, as well as working with governments, departments and the sector to address issues surrounding permanency for children.

For more information visit:

www.adoptchange.org.au

NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS WEEK

The National Permanency Conference is being held during the 10th National Adoption Awareness Week, 12-18 November 2017.

National Adoption Awareness Week (NAAW) exists to raise awareness of adoption and the importance of permanency for children, along with providing education on the support needs of children and families.

Along with the conference there are a number of events being held during the week. The aim is to promote reform of Australia's adoption laws and practices to facilitate a community that looks after our most vulnerable – our children.



#AdoptChange
#aHomeForEveryChild

#A
HOME
FOR
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