



MEDIA RELEASE

New era for peak child protection advocacy in South Australia

For over twenty years, the Child and Family Welfare Association of South Australia has advocated strongly on behalf of vulnerable children, families and the organizations supporting them; systems reform brings new opportunities

The wellbeing of children and families is the core concern of over 40 non-government, non-profit organizations in South Australia. These organizations have for many years been members of the state's peak body for child protection, The Child and Family Welfare Association of South Australia.

With the release of Margaret Nyland's report of the Royal Commission into Child Protection Systems in August 2016 entitled *The Life They Deserve*, the child protection sector in South Australia sat ready for a range of reform measures designed to bring about much needed change to the ways in which vulnerable children and families were supported to keep children safe.

In keeping with its peak-body mandate to support the agencies that work alongside children and families in the child protection system in South Australia, The Child and Family Welfare Association of South Australia was commissioned by the new Department for Child Protection to provide additional sector support by way of developing a whole of sector workforce development strategy. This work heralds agreement between government and the non-government sector that workforce training and development is a critical part of providing timely and appropriate support to families and children who are at risk of coming in to contact with the child protection system.

For children who are already in out-of-home care, being able to work alongside them to ameliorate the impacts of complex trauma and neglect is a critical concern for the front line staff who support them; being able to access continuing professional development and training is necessary to ensure that staff are working sensitively, effectively and in an evidence-based fashion. These needs will be central to a workforce development strategy that is due to be launched towards the end of 2018.

In recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that Aboriginal families often face as well as the severe over-representation of Aboriginal children in child protection in Australia, the Family Matters Campaign was initiated in SA in May 2016 under the auspices of SNAICC and the Child and Family Welfare Association. The campaign has rapidly gained traction with a state based working group committing to an action plan that has as its core objective to keep Aboriginal children safe in culture.

With the changes taking place within the child protection sector and an enhanced role for peak sector advocacy, the Child and Family Welfare Association will on October 27th launch its new name and

brand; Child and Family Focus SA.

The new name reflects a more global focus on the wellbeing of children and families, and the importance of effective prevention and early intervention measures that keep children safe in their homes. It is also resonant with the idea that an effective child protection and family support workforce must have the wellbeing of children at the centre of everything they do; the best interests of children are what we must all focus on.

Child and Family Focus SA is managed by a team of people committed to the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. They are:

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