



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

*Annual Report*

*2015-2016*

*Child and Family Welfare Association of South Australia*

*(CAFWA-SA)*

## *FROM THE CHAIR*

### **Jane Longbottom – Chairperson and State Director, Life Without Barriers**

I am delighted to submit this annual report to the members of CAFWA-SA for the year 2015-2016. This has truly been a year of building close and productive partnerships with our members, the sector at large and with Families SA (now known as the Department for Child Protection).

The gravitas of the Nyland Royal Commission in to Child Protection Systems has been overwhelming; no one has escaped recognition of its significance for the much-needed reform of child protection in this state. Indeed, the Commission has overshadowed much of the policy and advocacy work of CAFWA-SA over the past year, and has required us to play a crucial role in consolidating and refining sector opinion and feedback on what it is going to take to keep children and young people safe.

I have been fortunate for the support of my fellow CAFWA-SA Board Members as I took over the role of Chairperson from Rob Foggo. Rob's dedication and commitment to the CAFWA cause has been outstanding, with over 22 years served in its support. Rob worked very hard to consolidate and crystalize our mission and vision and advocated for the expansion of funding which allowed for paid positions to accelerate the activity and capacity of this peak over more recent years. I thank Rob for his dedication, passion and expertise in his role as Chair, and am incredibly grateful for his continued role as a Board Member.

The opportunity this year to revisit and redevelop the CAFWA-SA Constitution has meant that as a Board we have been able to reflect critically on the value we are able to provide to the sector in South Australia as a peak body. The finalization of our new Constitution signals the refinement of an organization that remains committed to supporting sector collaboration and discussion in relation to the systemic issues that impact on the wellbeing of children and their families.

I am grateful for the tireless work of our Executive Director, Albert Barelds, whom we farewelled in June 2016. Albert was a valuable asset to CAFWA-SA and was pivotal in strengthening the role that we play in sector advocacy, as well as our relationship with the South Australian government. I thank Albert for his work and his dedication; he has left CAFWA-SA in a strong state to take on the challenges associated with implementing the recommendations of the Nyland Royal Commission.

Departures lead to arrivals, and the Board welcomed the appointment of Rob Martin to the role of Executive Director in July. Rob is very passionate about the purpose of CAFWA in supporting the best possible outcomes for children and young people in SA and brings an intellectual rigour as well as useful experience to the position. More details about Rob's background are outlined later in the report.

***Jane Longbottom***

*Chair, CAFWA-SA*

*State Director, Life Without Barriers*

## *FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

**Rob Martin – Executive Director, CAFWA-SA**

I was humbled and delighted to take on the role of Executive Director for CAFWA-SA in June 2016 after the retirement of outgoing ED, Albert Barelds.

Albert left me with some very impressive shoes to fill, as his reputation and commitment to the wellbeing of children and families will leave a long-lasting imprint on the work of CAFWA-SA in the coming months and years. I wish Albert all the very best in his retirement, and gratefully acknowledge the energy and enthusiasm with which he undertook his role with CAFWA-SA, as well as the very fine state in which he left the organization.

Coming in to this role at the end of the year was quite timely, with the August release of the Royal Commission's Report in to South Australia's Child Protection System inciting a great deal of sector activity and cross-sectoral advocacy. It was truly a case of 'hitting the ground running', and I have already been able to re-affirm my own personal passion for this work. The level of goodwill that has come my way from our members and partners has been truly heartening.

I've been absolutely spoiled with the level of support that I have received from the CAFWA-SA Board, and feel truly lucky to be working with such an experienced and passionate group of people. The Board have directed me to explore opportunities for CAFWA-SA to bring more value to its membership over the coming year, and have been generous with their time and expertise in assisting me to do so.

I've gratefully welcomed the assistance and expertise of Rebecca Paddon, who joined us in September 2016 in the capacity as Communications and Membership Relations Consultant. Rebecca has a wealth of experience in training, workshop facilitation, business administration, community capacity building as well as youth development, and has already been able to contribute in a very valuable way to our forward planning for 2017.

It has been a pleasure to get to know the CAFWA-SA members and to be reminded of the extent of the goodwill and support that exists in the sector in South Australia for peak body activities and policy-based advocacy. At a time when the sector, more than ever, needs to speak with one voice on the issues and complexities of supporting vulnerable children and their families, I have been overwhelmed with the quality of the contribution that our members have made to our advocacy efforts in relation to the findings of the Nyland Royal Commission.

I am truly excited and energised at the prospect of the work we have planned for 2017.

***Rob Martin***

***Executive Director, CAFWA-SA***

*FINANCIAL REPORT 2015-2016*

\*Please refer to the list of appendices

## *HIGHLIGHTS 2015 – 2016*

- The 'Keeping Children Safe Together' Symposium in December 2015 was the result of a partnership between Families SA, CAFWA, SACOSS, AFSS and the Australian Centre for Child Protection. The guest international speaker was Dr Helen Buckley, and there were notable presentations also from Professor Fiona Arney and Professor Leonie Seagal. One of the significant themes was the need to shift the paradigm for child protection from a notification – investigative process to a public health approach. It was made evident that the current trajectory is totally unsustainable and isn't delivering the outcomes we all would want to see
  
- A welcomed development has been the establishment of quarterly meetings of the Families SA Executive and the CAFWA CEOs. This has provided the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues at a senior level and to jointly determine the shared priorities. We welcome the recent endorsement of the continuation of these forums for 2017 by the incoming Chief Executive of Child Protection.
  
- A more intensive connection with Families SA (Department for Child Protection) has resulted from fortnightly meetings of CAFWA-SA representatives with members of the Department's Executive Team. This grew from a suggestion of Tony Harrison's at one of the FSA/CAFWA CEO meetings and its purpose was to focus attention at a senior level on crisis points such as the alarming number of young people in commercial care, and to tackle any underlying systemic issues that could speed up finding outcomes for these children in particular
  
- The greatly enhanced relationship with the Department has picked up a level of oversight for other key projects being undertaken including Contract Reform, the Review of Other Person Guardianship and other internal projects. CAFWA also accepted the invitation to represent the NGO sector on the Care Concerns Assessment and Management (CCAMP) panel.
  
- Early this calendar year a forum was organised by CAFWA-SA with input from Lyn Guerin and Leanne Haddad regarding the Unit Pricing component of the contract reform agenda. Other speakers included the CEO's of ACWA and the Victorian Centre for Excellence so that we could learn of the advantages and disadvantages of unit pricing in New South Wales and Victoria. This remains a topic about which the sector is cautious

- CAFWA-SA's submission to the State Royal Commission was in the form of a '10 Point Plan' based on shared perspectives of the member organisations. Albert Barelds also appeared before the Commissioner in person to speak to this report. This plan has been recently refreshed in light of the Nyland Report and presented to the Minister and the incoming CEO for Child Protection after extensive consultation with member organisations
- Another area of engagement for CAFWA-SA has been our commitment to the national Family Matters Campaign. Albert Barelds and Jane Longbottom represented CAFWA-SA at the national forum in Canberra in February 2016 year and we have since established a state based Working Group which is chaired by Leata Clark from Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS). To further support Family Matters in South Australia, member organisations and the Department have jointly funded a Project Officer to take on the bulk of the work, another example of our closer working relationship with government

## ***PROGRESS AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PLAN***

The CAFWA-SA Strategic Plan 2013-2017 forms the basis upon which the Board and the Executive Director have focussed their efforts throughout the course of the year.

The Strategic Plan calls for three key outcomes – CAFWA as an Effective Peak Body, Policy and Practice Development and Sector Development. The following report details work undertaken throughout the year that has been aligned with these outcomes and the concomitant objectives of the organization.

### **CAFWA-SA AS A PEAK BODY**

#### ***Leadership***

The CAFWA-SA Constitution was reformed in 2015, with the Executive Committee now operating as a Board of Directors. The role of Executive Officer was reshaped to that of Executive Director, a position that Albert Barelds held up until June 2016. The incoming Executive Director, Rob Martin, was a former Executive Manager at Common Ground Adelaide, National Manager at the CREATE Foundation, and Director on the Board of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness.

In 2015-2016, Rob Foggo stepped down as Chairperson of the Board and was replaced by Jane Longbottom, State Director of Life Without Barriers. Sue Philips also joined the Board from Junction Australia where she serves as General Manager of Community Services and took up the role of Deputy Chair. Other office bearers are Kerry Court, who has diligently continued as Treasurer. We also farewelled Beth Davidson-Park and Chris Arbon from the Board and in their places have welcomed Leata Clark from AFSS and Nancy Penna from Anglicare.

#### ***Advocacy***

CAFWA-SA continued throughout the year to provide strong leadership and sector input to the South Australian Working Group of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Young People. The South Australian Working Group has met on a semi-regular basis to discuss how best to progress the action plan for the National Framework in the South Australian context.

Albert Barelds continues to be a valued member of the Families SA / DCP 'Care Concerns Assessment and Management Panel' (CCAMP) whereby he provides advice and feedback on how particular care concerns can be addressed to achieve good outcomes for children and young people.

CAFWA-SA provided a number of detailed submissions to the South Australian Royal Commission in to Child Protection Systems, with a particular focus on residential care and good practice models for supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Albert Barelds was able to spend 90 minutes with Commissioner Margaret Nyland as part of her enquiries, highlighting particular issues related to the mandatory notification system as it operates in South Australia. CAFWA-SA was also able to discuss the nature of the relationship between government and the non-government sector, and some of the tensions inherent in this.

### ***Sustainability***

CAFWA-SA was successful in obtaining additional ongoing funding via Families SA (now Department for Child Protection, with the service agreement matching existing funding received from DCSI. This has taken annual CAFWA-SA funding to approximately \$124,000.

At the inaugural 'Family Matters' CEO Forum held in May 2016, \$30,000 was pledged by member agencies to kick-start the campaign in South Australia. This was then generously built on through a further donation of \$50,000 by Families SA, enabling project support to be added to this important work.

Membership fees continued to be a key source of income for CAFWA-SA, with memberships contributing to approximately \$12,000 in revenue for the year.

CAFWA-SA was independently audited in 2015 and in 2016 in order to produce audited financial statements for each of the financial years. Both of these reports were submitted to DCSI as part of financial acquittal processes, and demonstrated strong organizational financial management.

## **POLICY AND PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Representation***

CAFWA-SA has continued to meet fortnightly with the Leadership Group of Families SA / DCP in order to discuss systemic issues including the burgeoning number of children and young people in emergency and commercial care, contract reform measures and unit pricing.

The one-day unit costing workshop on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015 for CAFWA-SA CEO's and Executives was very well attended, and much was learned about similar funding reform processes in NSW and Victoria.

CAFWA-SA has been a continuing member of the Human Services Partnership Forum (HSPF) and contributed to the development and final draft of the 'Stronger Together' statement that was released by DCSI in October 2016.

CAFWA-SA has also been a continuing member of the SACOSS Policy Council, and has been able to provide information and expertise relevant to the provision of child protection and family support services in South Australia. SACOSS has been a valuable friend to CAFWA in 2015-2016, and has assisted with the production and dissemination of a number of key media releases.

Multiple meetings with Minister Susan Close have taken place throughout the course of the year, with sector wide issues being brought directly to her attention including support for foster and kinships carers, the progress of the Royal Commission, input in to the development of the Cabinet Sub-Committee, the drafting of legislation related to the appointment of a Children's Commissioner for South Australia, adoption and other person guardianship, as well as the complexities of working with the sector to keep Aboriginal children and young people safe in culture.

### ***Policy***

CAFWA-SA provided extensive input in to the review of Other Person Guardianship (OPG) policy and practice within Families SA, and was able to articulate a range of considerations that are particularly salient for foster carers.

The '10 Point Plan' for Child Protection in South Australia was completed in mid 2015 and has assisted to guide CAFWA's policy and advocacy work on key issues for child protection. CAFWA-SA was also pleased to release its Board endorsed Policy Statement on best practice in therapeutic residential care.

CAFWA-SA had the opportunity to feed in to the development of the Families SA 'Consents and Decisions' Handbook, and provided extensive feedback on the specific issues related to the role of NGO support providers, the lack of focus on or input from children and young people, and the need for a 'child friendly' version of the resource.

Through the formation of the 'Family Matters' working group in May 2016, CAFWA-SA was able to demonstrate strong policy leadership around the issues facing Aboriginal children, their families and communities, and the need for deeper consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal communities and agencies on the decisions that impact on the life chances of Aboriginal children. Auspiced nationally by SNAICC, CAFWA-SA has worked closely with Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS) to develop a state action plan that feeds in to the implementation of recommendations from the Nyland Royal Commission.

The 'single placement project' that was undertaken by Families SA was of great interest to CAFWA-SA and there were numerous meetings between members and the project manager to discuss ways and means of leveraging on partnerships with the non-government sector to minimize the number of placements that children and young people have when they first come in to care.

### ***Practice Approach***

CAFWA-SA was a strong advocate of the 'Partnerships in Practice' workshops during 2015-2016, with a child development training session facilitated at the Morphettville Racecourse on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2015. Over 360 people from across the sector in South Australia attended, with a particular highlight being the research presented by the Adelaide University.

Over 300 people attended the December symposium entitled 'Keeping them Safe, Together', with outstanding feedback received from those participating. CAFWA-SA was grateful to SACOSS and to Families SA for their support in organizing and promoting the event.

The monthly CAFWA-SA general meetings have continued to be very well attended in 2015-2016 and have provided a great forum for members to discuss the complexities and challenges of providing services to vulnerable children and their families. It is anticipated that a workshop approach will be facilitated in 2017 whereby members will have the benefit of attending 'practice development sessions' and can discuss means to share good practice across the sector.

## **SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Membership***

CAFWA-SA has retained active membership throughout 2015-2016 with over 30 organizational members and a number of associate members supporting the remit of the organization.

### ***Knowledge***

Updates to the CAFWA-SA website in 2015-2016 have allowed the development of a fresh interface between users and the organization's web presence. With the assistance of Cartel Media, CAFWA-SA has been able to design an online portal for members to access resources and information, and comment on CAFWA-SA position papers and policy submissions.

CAFWA-SA worked alongside the Australian Centre for Child Protection in order to produce a review of global best practices in early intervention. CAFWA-SA is working with Professor Fiona Arney to solidify a more formal relationship with the Centre that results in a joint research and knowledge dissemination agenda for South Australia.

CAFWA-SA has continued to provide members with information and resources via email and via the monthly e-bulletin subscription service. Plans are in place to dramatically improve the dissemination of information and resources in 2017, and it is anticipated that the organization's online and social media presence will be enhanced.

### ***Partnership***

CAFWA-SA has continued to collaborate and leverage on strong partnerships with Families SA, DCSI as well as a range of sector stakeholders for the purposes of joined-up and consistent advocacy. SACOSS and the Council for the Care of Children have continued to be valued partners, and have assisted to shape CAFWA-SA messaging and advocacy.

The inauguration of the Family Matters Campaign in South Australia has been testament to the extent of the goodwill that exists amongst CAFWA-SA partners. The significant support that has been received in 2015-2016, both in terms of funding and in-principle support, has been heartening. The working group currently comprises members from CAFWA-SA, Aboriginal Family Support Services, Life Without Barriers, Anglicare SA, Uniting Communities, Aboriginal Legal Service, ac Care and the Department for Child Protection.



## *FUTURE FOCUS*

With the appointment of Rob Martin as the incoming Executive Director and Rebecca Paddon as the Communications and Membership Relations consultant, the CAFWA-SA Board has been delighted to see the amount of output that has been generated from July 2016.

Significant planning is underway for 2017, and we are hopeful at the prospect of an enhanced role for CAFWA-SA in leading and support sector development and systemic advocacy.

Specific ideas for growth in 2017 have included:

- A larger role for CAFWA-SA in coordinating training and development for front-line staff in both government and non-government child protection roles, and a partnership approach with registered training organizations (RTO) and universities in order to facilitate accredited training;
- A closer partnership with the new Department for Child Protection (DCP) and the ongoing meeting of CAFWA-SA representatives and DCP Leadership on a fortnightly basis;
- The establishment of monthly 'practice forums' that will replace the existing monthly general meetings such that members can gather on a regular basis and engage in practical training and development;
- The renewal of a range of memberships to increase the overall membership of CAFWA-SA and its ability represent the opinions and perspectives of the sector;
- The facilitation of a peak youth advisory group which provides young people to come together on a semi-regular basis and provide input and expertise in to child development policy and advocacy;
- The development of a joint research agenda with both the University of South Australia the Flinders University;
- The development of a comprehensive policy and advocacy platform that is underpinned by a series of evidence based position papers on salient issues related to child protection and child development;
- The facilitation of further work associated with the 'Family Matters' campaign in order to raise awareness of the objectives of the national initiative in South Australia, and to provide enhanced opportunities for Aboriginal families and communities to have a say in the decisions that impact on the wellbeing of their children;
- Playing a key role in the provision of feedback and advice to government on the implementation of recommendations association with the final report of the Nyland Royal Commission

## *APPENDICES*

1. Audited Financial Report, 2015-2016
2. CAFWA-SA Values Statement
3. CAFWA-SA Strategic Plan