



Message from Lisa, CEO



Dear PCA Families members,

I hope those of you with school-aged children coped as well as possible with the COVID-19 lockdown, especially with students returning to remote learning. The restrictions being lifted was certainly welcomed news!

I wanted to firstly let members know that I was really pleased to recently be told that the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH, formerly DHHS) have committed to provide ONGOING funding of \$3.2mil (from \$1.1mil) to permanent care families, adoptive families and families with a parenting order from the Family Law Court (provided your family are in receipt of the care allowance). See our [website](#) to find out more about the eligibility criteria.

While it should be a given that support is available to children and families post the granting of a permanent order, this is an incredible step forward as the majority of flexible funding historically available has been a year-by-year proposition ('lapsing funding') and there was no certainty that this funding would be available into the future. So happy to say that now it is!

As you may know from our most recent newsletter, I am due to have a baby in April. I was hoping to work until closer to the birth of the baby, but unfortunately due to medical reasons I need to conclude work early.

I am planning to return to PCA Families in 12 months and I am excited to come back to continue serving the permanent care and adoptive community. In the meantime, I wanted to wish you and your families the very best for 2021 and look forward to re-connecting (or connecting!) with many of you upon my return.

Please find below an important update regarding our upcoming AGM. I'm pleased to say that the AGM will still be going ahead – so if you haven't already, please [register](#) your attendance or fill in a [proxy](#) form to have your say.

Kind regards,

Lisa Milani

Message from Meredith, President

Hello everyone

Well here we are in another new year. I hope it is a good one for you and your family. Are you feeling as excited as I am that the vaccine roll out has started?!

Adieu Lisa

On the Permanent Care and Adoptive Families front we are looking forward to some new beginnings as our CEO's little family is about to expand. It means that after only a year we say adieu though not farewell to Lisa Milani. I am sure twelve months will fly by – meantime we hope the next few weeks are relaxing and restful for Lisa ahead of her new baby's arrival (we know it will be hectic then!).



As I am sure you all agree, our staff team is absolutely dedicated and hard working on behalf of our community. Lisa has been such a wonderful addition to the team. She has made a difference on so many fronts from internal policies to our external strategy and advocacy to government. We are very grateful.

Recruitment

We are in the thick of recruiting an interim replacement for Lisa. Davidson's Recruiting have already received a good selection of applications. This is very reassuring. We hope to be able to advise an interim appointment soon. It is also I think a testament to Lisa's leadership, including initiatives such as Click and Connect, greater emphasis on our social media and effective advocacy with key stakeholders.

Funding

These and other strategies have all contributed to a stronger profile and services for the permanent care and adoption community despite the pandemic. While we await news on the review of the Out of Home Care Helplines Review initiated by DHHS we are thrilled that the Victorian Government has confirmed that recurrent funding of the Flexible Fund has been increased to just over \$3million annually (including operating costs).

Come along to the AGM

Meanwhile this week we look forward to seeing you in person at the 2020 AGM! We have a strong [COVID safe plan](#) allowing for social distancing and a new, updated constitution to pass. Our current constitution does allow use of technology. However as I outlined in the last newsletter the Board received legal advice that we should hold an in-person AGM due to our constitutional requirements.

Requirements for the conduct of a ballot in the event of a contested election effectively prevent us having a virtual or combination AGM. If you just cannot get to the AGM you can vote via a proxy. The [AGM pack](#) includes a simple [proxy form](#) you can return to PCA Families allowing me as the President or another member to vote on your behalf.

We would of course prefer to see you at the AGM in person. The Constitution requires at least 20 people to attend for the AGM to go ahead. More than that the AGM is an important event in the life of the organisation. It is also a great occasion for members to meet each other, pick up your personal copy of the Annual Report and hear more about the work the board has been leading on your behalf.

Please register [here](#) and come along to the Reading Room at the Fitzroy Town Hall and cast your vote in support this Wednesday 24 February at 6pm.

Meredith Carter

Board election

Below is a list of the candidates nominating for office holder positions and for ordinary member positions.

The Board composition proposed by the Board offers strong representation of both community members and people with lived experience of permanent care and adoption as children, as parents, and as members seeking permanent care or adoption orders. It also has regard to the skills needed on the board as identified in the Board's Skills Matrix and complies with the PCA Families' Board Composition Policy. See more in the AGM pack.

We thank all members who have put themselves forward for election. Not everyone can be on the Board however the willingness of members to serve the organisation in this way is much appreciated.

To read more about each candidate, please click on their name.

[Meredith Carter](#), Elected second term October 2018

Nominating for President

[Naomi Colville](#), Member – Elected October 2019, Appointed Vice President October 2020

Nominating for Vice President

[Roslyn Rule](#), Treasurer - Elected October 2018

Nominating for Treasurer

[Chris Lockwood](#), Secretary – Elected fourth term October 2019

Nominating for Secretary

[Leslie Annear](#), Member – Appointed October 2020

Nominating for ordinary member

[Dan Barron](#), Member – Elected fourth term October 2019 -

Nominating for ordinary member

[Julio Gonzalez](#)

Nominating for ordinary member

[Judy Gouldbourn](#), Member – Appointed October 2020

Nominating for ordinary member

[Kris Peach](#), Member - Elected October 2019

Nominating for ordinary member

[Jose Torres](#)

Nominating for ordinary member

[Sarah Witty](#), Member - Elected October 2019

Nominating for ordinary member

The Board recommends as ordinary members those candidates currently serving on the Board. For more detail of the recommendation, see Appendix 2 in the [AGM pack](#).

Flexible Funding support

Members are encouraged to apply for extra flexible funds we have available to support you through the pandemic.

The COVID-19 flexible funding is available to apply for things like:

- Cognitive assessments, specialist appointments & related therapies
- Therapy (counselling, psychology, art, play, equine etc.)
- Health related costs
- Costs associated with birth family contact
- School related costs
- Tutoring if learning gaps arise due to COVID
- Extra-curricular activities (eg. Online classes during Covid-19 lockdown)



[Download an application form](#)

Complete the form and send it to flexifunding@pcafamilies.org.au or alternatively, contact our helpline on 03 9020 1833 Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm to find out more.

Carer Census

We are still running the carer census and whilst we are keen to hear from all kinship, foster and permanent carers, based on current response rates we are particularly encouraging:

- **statutory kinship carers,**
- **Aboriginal carers *and***
- **carers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.**

to complete the carer census please visit https://www2.srnet.com.au/SE/1/31076?&urlimport=1&questlist=SAMP_SOURCE;&SAMP_SOURCE=4.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Flexible Funding for aboriginal children

Are you caring for an Aboriginal child who is on a Permanent Care Order?

Flexible Funding is available to assist with some of the needs of the child and family.

This funding is designed to support Aboriginal children and young people under Permanent Care Orders in many ways including:

- Cultural Identity and Family Connections
- Family and Community gatherings
- Return to Country
- Graduation Costs
- Sporting Carnivals and Participation
- Attending NAIDOC, Survival Day, Dreamtime at the G
- Sorry Business
- Household Items – (not covered by DHHS carer payment)

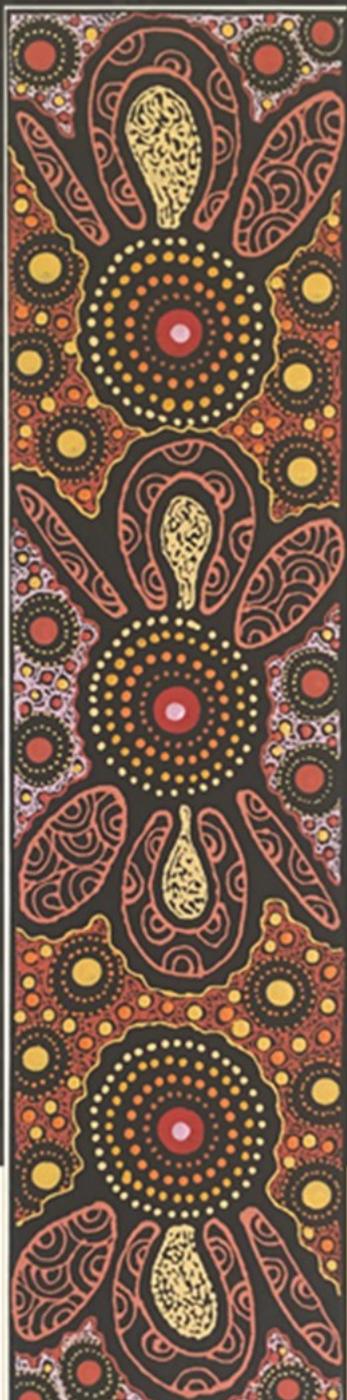
For further information or support please call us for a yarn to see if we can help.

Please contact Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

Ph: 03 9020 1833

Email: flexifunding@pcfamilies.org.au

Web: <http://www.pcfamilies.org.au/>



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PCA Families has zero tolerance of child abuse and we are committed to establishing and maintaining child safe environments.

Thrive is a quarterly newsletter produced by Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (VIC) Inc.
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