

**Post
Placement
Support
Service**



Welcome to the December 2011 edition of the PPSS Newsletter

Annual General Meeting and the Board

We held our AGM on 23 November. Gregory Nicolau presented an excellent address on creating positive rhythms within the home.

We welcome our new Board members who have a wide range of experience and expertise: Amanda Stone, Amanda Everton, Jenny Conrick, Judy Thompson and Dan Barron.

Our continuing Board members are: Cas O'Neill (President), Moira Schulze (Vice President), Chris Lockwood (Secretary), Charlie Salloum (Treasurer), Chris Cook, Emily Cheesman and Anne Farrelly.

New staff member

We welcome Lindy Bok to the staff team. Lindy is a highly experienced professional within the education sector and also an inter-country adoptive parent. Lindy's role is twofold – she is investigating ways in which we can work in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood; and she is developing information and training for parents, carers and teachers.

Planning for 2012 and beyond

The PPSS Board is examining the possibility of providing a therapeutic counselling service for carers, parents and children. We are currently developing a Business Case to look at this, with the assistance of the University of Melbourne's pro bono Graduate Consulting Group.

What's been happening

The *PPSS Family Picnic Day* was held at Collingwood Children's Farm early in November. Sponsored by Carers Australia as part of Carers Week, 130 parents, carers and children gathered for a most enjoyable and relaxing day at the farm. All of the families who are part of PPSS were represented – kinship care, permanent care, adoptive and foster families all enjoyed bringing their children to take part in the range of activities at the farm. We intend to do this again in 2012.

The *Kinship Care Forum* was held on 28 November. The key note and workshop presentations looked at a range of issues faced by kinship carers and professionals alike. The Forum was organised by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner. For more information, see: www.ocsc.vic.gov.au

Resources

The new *PPSS website* will be up and running by the end of the year. Please try out our new site at www.ppss.org.au from January 2012 and feel free to send us feedback and suggestions.

A series of Research Reports on Kinship Care and Family Contact were launched by the Office of Child Safety Commissioner at the Kinship Care Forum on 28 November 2011. Reports and opinion pieces titled 'Breaking the Rules', 'It is the story of all of us', 'Look at it from the parents' view as well', 'There is no choice', and 'Kinship Care and well-being' are well worth a read (even if you're not a kinship carer) and can be found at <http://www.kids.vic.gov.au/publications/research.htm>

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) released the Adoptions Australia (2010-11) Report on 14 December 2011. This report contains information relating to adoptions in Australia, including characteristics of adopted children, adoptive families and birth mothers. During 2010-11, there were 384 finalised adoptions across Australia - the lowest annual number on record. It is interesting to note that the number of Permanent Care Orders granted in Victoria decreased also. The Report can be downloaded at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737420776>.

The AIHW 2010-11 Child Protection Report (with statistics on kinship care and foster care) is likely to be released during January 2012. See: www.aihw.gov.au and search for Child Protection. (The 2009-10 report is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442475448>)

Parenting Grandchildren is a website set up as a reference point for grandparents caring for children full time. Based in WA the site has many helpful resources: <http://parentinggrandchildren.info/>

On-line Resource for Carers is a new resource announced by the Federal Government for carers across Australia www.familyrelationships.gov.au

The *PPSS Lending Library* is fully operational. The library has a range of literature suitable for carers/parents of all types and books for young children as well. For more information please contact Michele at 9020 1833 or info@ppss.org.au

Out of Home Care Education Commitment. A Partnering agreement between Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria was launched in August 2011. It provides guidelines for Victorian schools, DHS Child Protection case managers and community service organisations. The allocation of Learning Mentors for each child living in out of home care, is a significant new initiative to support children with their education. For a copy of the agreement please refer to: http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/A4_partnering.pdf

The Protecting Victoria's Children Inquiry reporting date is now scheduled for 27 January 2012 and will be tabled in Parliament. The Inquiry was launched in early 2011 to look at issues and problems in Victoria's child protection system (including out of home care) and to make recommendations to improve protection and support. PPSS made verbal and written submissions to the Inquiry and, along with numerous other contributors, is looking forward to the recommendations of the report.

Education and Support

The *PPSS/FCAV Carer Information and Support Service (telephone support)* (CISS) provides kinship carers, foster carers, permanent care and adoptive parents with information, referrals and support. If you need assistance relating to kinship care, permanent care or adoption, please call: 9020 1833 Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm. If you need assistance relating to foster care please call: 9489 9770 Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm. After hours queries can be made via email to info@ppss.org.au.

Kinship Care Support Groups. As a result of grants received from the City of Moonee Valley and Melton Shire Council, PPSS will be conducting a range of information and support groups for kinship carers focusing on topics including "Talking with your school about your child's education". For more information about dates and venues please go to the PPSS website or contact us at info@ppss.org.au or 9020 1833.

Journal Club is held at 8pm on the first Thursday of each month at Abbotsford Library, 11 Stanton Street Collingwood. We email out some information as a 'starter' for discussion but we usually go well beyond this. Journal Club will be having a break in January, and resuming on Thursday 2 February at 8.00pm.

Playgroups for Permanent Care Families will resume in February at Northcote, Yarraville and in the inner southern region. If you would like to attend or assist with facilitation of the southern group then please contact Andrew at PPSS info@ppss.org.au or phone 9020 1333

Please contact us at PPSS if you have any issues or ideas for workshops that would help strengthen your capacity to care for the children living with you and we will do our best to accommodate those needs and requests.

Conferences

Planning for the *2012 National Adoption Conference* has commenced. The Conference will be held in Melbourne on 22 and 23 October 2012. Stay tuned for venue confirmation and more about the conference.

The *2012 National Foster and Kinship Care Conference - Strengthening Care 2012: Best Outcomes* will be held in Melbourne on 20 and 21 October at the Sebel Hotel in Albert Park. For anyone interested in presenting a paper or workshop at the conference, please visit www.strengtheningcare2012.com.au and respond to Call for Papers.

PPSS will be closed from 4pm Friday 23rd December to Tuesday 3 January, 2012. We take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and thank you all for your support during 2011.

We look forward to being in contact with you all again early in 2012

Post Placement Support Service Staff and Board