

CHILD WELLBEING SYMPOSIUM

Jacqui Russell and Karen Ritchie were invited to represent AASW at the Symposium which was held in Hobart on Tuesday November 15th.

The symposium which is part of the ongoing implementation of the Strong Families, Safe Kids Child Protection Redesign project (DHHS) brought together representatives from relevant government agencies, and non-government service providers to hear from leading experts on Child wellbeing.

The symposium was an important step toward the development of a common understanding of Child Wellbeing in Tasmania as detailed in the Strong Families Safe Kids Implementation Plan.



The programme was opened by Mathew Healy Director, Strategic projects who highlighted the challenges for parents in raising children, and the issues in responding to children who have experienced trauma.

He was followed by Mark Morrissey, Commissioner for Children, who ensured the voices of children and young people were heard and their stories amplified and validated through young Create Consultants, Nicola and Johnno.

Nicola identified physical, social, emotional and psychological as important for the wellbeing of children and young people.

Johnno spoke of his experiences as a young person in care, having several placements, but after time finding what he called his "sweet spot"; a carer who did not and would not give up on him, and still into Johnno's adulthood remains a significant support.

Information was provided to the symposium on the latest developments, research and approaches to the assessment and promotion of child well-being in Australia, by Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott, OAM. Honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne and University of South Australia, and Ilkin Il, Director of clinical services, Mackillop Family Services.

Both highlighted the importance of collaboration and systems working together, and being focused on trauma informed practice and the principles of well-being.

An overview of the redesign project, and the principles underpinning the redesign was presented by the author of the report, Professor Maria Harries, who also emphasised working together to make a difference in the lives of families and children

Participants were given an opportunity to experience *the Common Approach to assessment*, through an exercise conducted by presenter Stephen Bartos, CEO of ARACY, the agency which developed the tool.

This session, assisted by Deputy CEO, Penny Dakin, provided a positive and constructive experience of this most useful tool.

Mathew Healy advised that training in the use of the tool will commence in the New Year. Well worth participating in!

The participant had a rare opportunity to hear from and address questions to an expert panel from Tasmanian services; Scott Tilyard, Tasmania Police; Dr Fiona Wagg, Psychiatrist CAMHS; Peter Bird, Senior Secondary Colleges Department of Education; Elizabeth Daly, Early Years (and CFC's) Department of Education; Angela McCrossen, Child Safety DHHS; and Kym Goodes, Tascoss. Collaboration again was a central theme, with reference to shared decision making.

Kym Goodes provided a comprehensive and insightful summary of the day, with a hopeful plea for an increase to the meagre *1.5% of health spending which is allocated to preventative programmes!!* Certainly, something for us all to be thinking and talking about!

Karen Ritchie
Jacqui Russell