
Report on the Forum:

Child Protection and Cultural Diversity

-better care into the future

Thursday 29th November 2012

Jasper Hotel, Melbourne

“How reasonable is it to quickly understand the rules regarding gender equality, discipline and the role of younger siblings in families? It appears to new arrivals, as if mainstream Australian society has all the answers when it comes to parenting.” (Quote from Bernie Geary Child Safety Commissioner)

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Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.



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Forum Report and presentations are provided on the VICSEG website www.vicsegnewfutures.org.au

Abbreviations/Definitions

DHS: Victorian government Department of Human Services

CaLD: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

OMAC: Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship

ECCV: Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria

CP: Child Protection

OOHC: Out of Home Care

Definition of Refugee: The United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Australia is a signatory, defines refugees as people who “are outside their country of nationality or their usual country of residence; and are unable or unwilling to return or to seek the protection of that country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”

Foreword

On Thursday, November 29th 2012, the Victorian Cooperative of Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG) partnered with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) to hold a state-wide Child Protection Forum at the Melbourne Multicultural Hub in the CBD. Over 300 people attended, including representatives from government departments, ethnic community leaders, community services agencies and CaLD community workers from a broad cross section of primary, secondary and tertiary service sectors.

- I.
- II. The purpose of the Forum was to:
- III.
- IV. Raise awareness among migrant and refugee communities regarding the recommendations of the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry 2011.
- V.
- VI. Provide diverse perspectives and culturally competent input for incorporation into Victoria's Vulnerable Children Families Strategy, to be launched in 2013.
- VII.
- VIII. Propose measures to ensure that the new Commission for Children and Young People represents and recognises the cultural diversity of Victoria.
- IX.

Support and sponsorship was sought from:

- Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
- Office of Child Safety Commissioner
- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- Care with Me
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- African Communities Foundation Australia

Introduction

In 2011, at the request of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, VICSEG contributed to the outcomes of the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry (PVVCI), through participation on the Inquiry Reference Group. Other ethnic organisations including Care with Me (CWME) also contributed through written and verbal submissions and attendance at public sittings of the Inquiry.

On 28 February 2012, the PVVCI Report (now referred to as the Cummins Report) was tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Community Services, The Hon Mary Woodridge.

The Cummins Report outlines significant systems reform for the Victorian child protection system. This is the first Australian child protection inquiry to include the needs of CALD and refugee families and formally raises the profile of this demographic group with three recommendations and a dedicated chapter (13) on meeting the needs of CALD families in the child protection system.

- **Recommendation 37:** To improve knowledge and data on vulnerable children of CALD backgrounds so that appropriateness of current service provision can be considered (see p317 for more detailed information):
- **Recommendation 38:** The Victorian Government, through the Council of Australian Government, should seek inclusion of the needs of recently arrived children and families of CALD backgrounds in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (see p320 for more detailed information):
- **Recommendation 68:** The Department of Human Services should improve the cultural competence of integrated family services and statutory child protection services, (see p423, in Chapter 16 for more detailed information).

The Cummins Report draws the Government's attention to the need to continue discussions with groups such as the Ethnic Communities of Victoria and CaLD (culturally and linguistically diverse) community workers concerning the need to ensure services that protect children from abuse and neglect meet the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria and are delivered in a culturally competent manner.

A key Victorian Government initiative is the imminent establishment of an independent Commission for Children and Young People via legislation introduced in the 2012 Spring session of Parliament. The Commission will have responsibility for monitoring the Vulnerable Children and Families Strategy; therefore it is vital that those implementing this important strategy are aware of the specific challenges and concerns that feature in the lives of many CALD families. This is the best way to ensure that the Commission is able to deliver optimum outcomes for all Victorian children and their families.

Participation in the Forum

Over three hundred and ten participants attended the Forum with approximately one third were multi-cultural service providers, one third CaLD community representatives and one third broad-based child and family professionals. This report was prepared to advocate for action arising from the Forum.

John Zika Executive Director VICSEG New Futures as Chair of the forum acknowledged special guests attending: Bernie Geary, members of partner organisations, colleagues from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Human Services, Victoria Police, organisations working with families providing support and members of multicultural communities.

John acknowledged and thank authors of the report of the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry: The Honourable Philip Cummins (Chair), Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott OAM, and Mr Bill Scales AO. Within their report a chapter was dedicated to issues facing families and children of CLD background. He affirmed today is about helping make the recommendations of the report happen.

The Keynote speakers at the Forum included:

Jatinder Kaur, Director, JK Diversity Consultants - *Cultural Diversity and Child Protection – a review of the Australian research on the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and refugee children and families. (Presentation 1 attached).*

Mary McKinnon, DHS Child Protection and Family Placement services - an overview of the 2011 Cummins report 'Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children' and update on current work to implement the findings. (Presentation 2 attached)

Executive Summary and Recommendations

(prepared by Marilyn Webster: Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare)

Ethnic Community Council and VICSEG and all the partners have more than accomplished what they set out to do. In summary;

1. We have an obligation to children and young people to maintain culture and community languages as part of identity. Panel members pointed out that the experience of out of home care for many can mean loss of language community and culture.
2. We have a problem with lack of data on *CaLD children and families* in the system and sharing of data across systems. The benefits of localised data, research and information to drive ongoing change for the *CaLD communities* as they interact with broader community and family support services. We can plan services a lot better with this data.
3. We have a need for cross-cultural training across child and family systems and ask who is best placed to offer the training. Related to this was a theme around services reorientation to address the disconnect between *CaLD communities* and the prevention/early intervention services available to them e.g. maternal and child health, preschool and playgroups etc.
4. We see the opportunity and importance of sharing information- bring together research, program and policy settings to ensure momentum and maintenance of effort.
5. Timing of influence- now is the time with the development of the government response to the Cummins Report and to the presentation today by Mary McKinnon. We can make representations to the Chair of the Children's Services Coordination Board about the needs of *CaLD children and families*, so this problem can be placed on the agenda. The Children's Services Coordination Board has a central role in the development of the whole of Government strategy and is comprised of Secretaries of the Departments with an interest or responsibility for children.
6. The new Child Protection operating model has potential for influencing approaches to working with *CaLD children and families*, as the model is bedded down. Contact before Christmas can be made with the newly appointed DHS Area Service Manager for each region to discuss this opportunity and keep them informed about this issue over time.
7. We could ensure that the whole of Government strategy to be released in May addresses issues of inclusion of *CaLD communities* and their children and families in the

universal, secondary and tertiary services sector. In addition, we could develop a score card for the strategy on how well it deals with the issue of cultural competency and inclusion and the needs of *CaLD children and families*.

8. The new Victorian Broadmeadow's Children's Court is now under development and will offer new models of decision-making. It will be important that *CaLD organisations* influence the style of court practices. VICSEG and Ethnic Communities Council could write to the Department of Justice about how the new Court will be taking into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children and families which come before it and seek inclusion in the planning processes for the new Court.
9. Resources are needed. It is important to challenge the discourse around the lack of availability of resources. Many of these recommendations have the capacity to result in reduced referral or reduced work by Child Protection. Many of the proposed actions are related to the rights of children and to human rights standards but they also make good sense; these actions are a strong investment in the future.

I would like to finish by acknowledging the contribution of those speaking from the floor who introduced the following important issues;

- The silent group of children who don't have refugee status- asylum seeking children
- The importance of advocacy and the opportunities to model alternative approaches such as the multicultural foster care program
- The importance of cross disciplinary education and training by location
- The need to recognise that there is two-way traffic in service provision: that those receiving the service can also help shape it.
- The importance of recognising steps already in place, seeing what is there, and building upon it.

I congratulate VICSEG and ECCV on this initiative which has created the connections between services and for work to begin on integrated approaches to ensure inclusion of *CaLD children and families*. The recurring theme of the day has been the importance of language, community and culture in securing the future of children and young people in *CaLD communities*. We heard of many circumstances where children had no connection with their background or where appropriate attention to cultural factors may have prevented a situation from spiralling into child protection processes. On the other hand, we heard instances of good practice.

Given the diversity of Victoria's population, there is a need to recognise this problem in child protection, family support practices and community development programs.

Speaker: Joe Caputo OAM - Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

Joe described his story of emigration to Australia from Brazil in the 50's and to Australia in the 60's. He highlighted the move was not a free choice, but because of harsh circumstances, poverty and a search for a better life for children and family. Now his family can see the light at the end of the tunnel. In the fourth generation of his family, his children finally have free choice, with his 26 yr. old son at Oxford University.

In his role at the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria (ECCV), Joe was aware of the growing concern about removal of children and the indirect connection between ethnic communities and the child protection system. He is delighted to see how many people are here to look further into this issue today.

ECCV provided advice to the Vulnerable Children's report about community engagement strategies and many of these points were in Chapter 13. Joe was concerned that all services need to be culturally relevant and yet we are unsure how well we are responding, as the data is so poor. There is a lot we don't know, but we do know that *CaLD families* are not as likely to access and be beneficiaries of services, with a range of stress factors and potential for marginalisation. Common barriers are; language and literacy, unfamiliar with services, lack of knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities, experience of discrimination and racism, unemployment, homesickness, grief and parenting stress in a new culture.

Yet we know that the most vulnerable in our community are our children. We do not shy away from our differences. We need to look at what is taking place and what needs to take place.

In summary, this is not a story of victims, it is a story of struggles, similar struggles across communities, to be safe and happy and this is what gives us hope. I would like to affirm the energy in the room and the hope that we feel for all children in society.

Speaker: Bernie Geary Child Safety Commissioner

Bernie highlighted that Chapter 13 of the Vulnerable children's report stated that of the 21,000 new settlers in Australia, 25% were children under 18 years, yet no one knows about the contact with the child protection system, or the ethnicity of these children, which has meant some families have been set on a collision course with the system. There are many questions; how can we effect planning, what training can be offered without accurate data, how can referrals be informed if workers don't know the cultural identity of the family.

Bernie suggested the data could be collected in the State of Victorian Children's Report, and referred to the previous edition in 2010.

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/sovc2010>

Bernie questioned how reasonable is it to quickly understand the rules regarding gender equality, discipline and the role of younger siblings in families? It appears to new arrivals as if mainstream Australian society has all the answers when it comes to parenting. We hear the words –it takes a village – but do we understand this means collective responsibility, such as shared discipline, with such a jumble of laws and norms in Australia.

An example would be the recent Victorian festival of the Melbourne Cup- which advertised so keenly to promote alcohol and gambling.

I believe culture is a living thing, there is so much to learn, I am still learning at 67, and we can all reflect on our culture. Most of us are boat people, facing challenges of change. It is also difficult for newly arrived families to understand that in a democratic society, the government plays a large interventionist role in the realm of parenting and families.

There is a great need for state and commonwealth funded programs to work together. Refugees and asylum seekers find it very difficult to navigate the initial commonwealth funded service system which is time-limited, then adapt to the state based services.

Cultural competency is not a training box to be ticked. With community members from 230 countries in Victoria, cultural competency is a living thing that must continue to be learnt.

Mohamed Elmasri: Care with Me (CWMe)

In the South Sudanese community, bringing up children is the responsibility of all; community groups have a role to see that all children are safe. I grew up in an extended family, which many young people coming to Australia have not had. These children have a large gap in their development when they arrive, with limited skills after living in refugee camps for 20 years.

Mohamed described the experience of going into Foster Care for a Muslim child, being placed with an English speaking family. He explained how easily a child can lose their first language and have trouble remembering words once they reconnect with their community. He reminded everyone how important the religious festivals were to him, the value of the engagement in his community celebrations and what it feels like at this time of year if you don't celebrate Christmas. In 2004, between two –four Muslim children every week were going into foster care, with less than 5 Muslim families acting as foster carers. The need is there for a cultural focus to foster care, but not the proper funding.

CWMe began with 70 CaLD community members gathering in a hall to learn about foster care. The next step was to support foster carers to support children appropriately– it doesn't take a lot to support a foster family to help maintain a child's culture. There are so many simple aspects to take into consideration with the placement so identity isn't lost e.g. Halal food. While CWMe was initially established to support the Muslim community, the focus has grown to work across all multi-cultural communities, due to the lack of appropriate foster care places for migrant and refugee families in Victoria.

CWMe is a volunteer organisation, so commitment is beyond traditional funding and is long term. It provides sector training to agencies and foster families to ensure culturally competent services, which is a big area of need. CWMe is recruiting well-immersed CaLD young people who straddle two cultures to provide this training. It is planning a community forum in the northern region in 2013 with six CaLD communities explaining their experiences with the child protection system and will produce a Green Paper to articulate the experience of CaLD communities in child protection. CWMe invites partnerships and contact after this forum.

Community Panel

Cultural groups represented on the panel were young people from, Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan, as arranged by Centre for Multicultural Youth.

Chair: Kathryn Gor, CEO African Communities Foundation of Australia

Question: Tell us about systems for children in need and what is the response in your community in your country of origin?

David Mabior Lual, Yasmin Hassen, Theresa Sengaga Ssali: personal experiences of the Child Protection system

The community response to child protection issues involves the extended family of the child. In South Sudan, there is a collective approach to parenting; a child suffering abuse or neglect would be taken to cattle camp and cared for by other adults. It is truism that it takes a village to raise a child. An informal system exists using the elders of the community/ chief of counsel to settle a dispute. This system is reliant on community participation and responsibility, and yet holds no legal weight in Australia.

David's family was involved with child protection for 8 months, when his daughter was assaulted with David suspected of being the attacker. Child Protection contacted him at 12 midnight to go to the Police station and his daughter was taken to hospital, which was very confusing, as he wasn't sure if his daughter was alive. Later in the Children's court the interpreter failed to come. The fact that he had 5 other children and they seemed OK did not seem to matter. His daughter was in foster care for 6 months over Easter with a Christian family. He felt as though he was fighting for the life of his daughter.

Amanial Arefaine and Sahara Deng: experience of cultural factors in out of home care

Amanial had been in Australia seven years and in out of home care for six years after her brothers and step mother left her father. Some of her difficulties were the language – she couldn't write or speak English when she first arrived and there were lots of misunderstandings. She wanted someone from her cultural background to be a carer so she could take part in the Ethiopian community. Her religious traditions meant she was unable to eat pork and this was difficult as her foster family did not understand.

Sahara loved going to community events and when taken away from home felt abandoned by family and community. While her first foster family was very supportive, she used to isolate herself from them due to the trauma. Eventually, she decided to pick herself up so she could help others. Sahara had to work really hard to get into university and is now studying social work and doing well.

Summary points from the panel

- Major concern that agencies make referrals and then don't have the services to fulfil the referral, so would it be better to focus on prevention?
- Request that DHS get more funding for multi-cultural workers and interpreters to help with prevention.
- How can workers support the networks the community already has in it?
- Need to allow children in foster care to continue to engage in religious and cultural celebrations. This is a problem across all CaLD communities, not just one. Victoria's cultural diversity is yet to be reflected in the carer pool.
- Young people may arrive with one parent/ guardian and have limited experience of family networks compared to the children in country of origin and in Australia.
- Child Protection could improve the contact with interpreters and be less reliant on community members.
- Services need to tailor accordingly in consultation with parents and according to individual needs. These young people do not have the skills which services may expect.

- There is a need to educate newly arrival families and communities in a sensitive way.
- Service providers and child protection need to be aware of community organisations and systems already existing and work with them.
- Request DHS employ Multicultural Liaison Officers based on the Victoria Police model.

Chair: John Zika thanked all for their contribution and wealth of knowledge and experience on the Panel.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Speaker: Jatinder Kaur, Director, JK Diversity Consultants

Jatinder highlighted Victoria's cultural diversity and acknowledged the largest settlement of unaccompanied humanitarian minors is in Victoria and yet the number of asylum seekers who arrived by boat settling in Victoria is unknown. She described the 'hidden' number of CaLD and refugee children and young people in Child Protection or in out of home care identify as refugee or CaLD background. She drew our attention to the three recommendations from the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry pertinent to the day's discussions (Recommendations 36, 37 and 68).

She described a survey undertaken as part of the Care with Me project which found about 250 children of CaLD background in out of home care in the organisations surveyed. She also highlighted bilingual staff, completion of cultural support plans, cultural diversity training and recognition of diverse child rearing practices as important.

Jatinder's interest in issues concerning cultural diversity and child protection was kindled when she was employed as a front line child protection worker by the Queensland Government in 2006. She observed the high number of children from CaLD backgrounds coming to the attention of the child protection system and the struggle staff were having in dealing with complex cross cultural issues. She presented the results, with specific reference to the existing data about the number of children born overseas and lack of knowledge (under or over reporting) of *CALD/refugee families* and contact with child protection. Her presentation was a powerful confirmation of the importance of linking data and to reflect on culturally inclusive policy and practice.

Important in Jatinder's early work was the development and use of the Cross Cultural Child Protection Survey – a tool which provides child protection agencies information on the training and professional development needs of practitioners when working with migrant and refugee families. She analysed interviews on "what we know" about working with migrant and refugee families, for example;

- children from inter-racial backgrounds who were in out of home care displayed cultural identity confusion and self-esteem issues
- CaLD and refugee communities would benefit from early intervention and prevention strategies focusing on 'accepted parenting practices in Australia', specifically targeting physical discipline and neglect along with community education (in community languages) on the role of statutory child protection authorities and on Australian laws relating to domestic and family violence

- the need for training for frontline child protection caseworkers to develop cultural competency when working with both *CaLD and refugee families* in the child protection system
- while risk factors common to all families are prevalent, (e.g. domestic and family violence, substance abuse and mental illness) *CaLD and refugee families* face a number of unique risk factors and challenges which may lead to their involvement with the Australian child protection system.

Developing Cultural Sensitive Practice – Summary (taken from the power point)

CP workers highlighted the need for CP workers to engage, to be respectful and build responsive relationships when working with CALD families.

These Cross-cultural skills include:

- Respectful engagement with CALD families
- Use of Interpreter
- Ascertaining cultural supports within community
- Linking with Cultural Liaison officers
- Referral for appropriate support services
- Kinship or Culturally matched placements, Kaur (2009).

A selection of the Recommendations- Service level (taken from the power point)

Departments to develop 'culturally responsive' service models for children and families from CALD and refugee backgrounds, these strategies to include:

- Recruitment and retention of culturally diverse child protection workforce and bi-cultural staff.
- Development of Interpreter guidelines and training on the use of interpreters for frontline child protection practitioners.
- Recruitment strategies of foster and kinship carers from CaLD and refugee backgrounds.
- Development of practice guidelines for 'working with CaLD and refugee families'.
- Development of cultural support plans for CaLD and refugee children and young people who are placed in OOHC.
- Departments to include provision of 'culturally sensitive' considerations (e.g. diverse child rearing practices, cultural norms and traditions) into assessment frameworks and standard risk assessment tools (e.g. structured decision making tools).

Speaker: Mary McKinnon; member of the Secretariat for the Victorian Government Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry

Current role as Project Director: Cross-government working group on children Mary described the 1,000 page report on the *Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry*—as a result of many public hearings with written and in-person submissions with a focus on systems, not individual cases. She described the DHS restructure, moving from one central structure, to 17 service divisions with a local executive. The new Child Protection Operating model has adopted the same local model, with the Department wishing to resolve issues as locally as possible. The Office of Professional Practice will provide leadership and training and is made up of Child Protection, Disability Services and Youth Justice.

Chapter 13 draws on data from the 2006 census; 44% of Victorians were born overseas or had one parent born overseas, of 21,000 new settlers, 18% were under 18 years. There is no data in child protection of CaLD children. Data collection on ethnicity is currently optional and therefore only recorded in 2% of cases. This significantly impacts on the capacity to plan effectively, undertake relevant professional development, translate material, make culturally appropriate referrals etc.

Data is key to inform good practice. The Inquiry recommended that DHS record and collect data on CaLD children and young people in child protection and that DEECD record data on CaLD children and young people in the school system. The State of Victoria's Children Report includes significant amounts of data and this data could be included there. The Council of Australian Government National Framework for Protecting Children refers to the needs of CaLD children and families.

The Inquiry spoke about the need to improve knowledge and understanding. Migrant and refugee families may have diverse views on parenting and it may be unreasonable to expect CaLD families to understand the rules and expectations of parenting in this country. Mary suggested that we need to reflect more deeply on cultural norms and in particular the assumption that the mainstream has all the answers in parenting.

Mary welcomed input from the forum through the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and highlighted the need for cultural competency training from service providers and communities. She confirmed the Victoria's Vulnerable Children Strategy is to be released by government in 2013.

Questions and Comments from the floor

Concern about Child Protection staff consistency: Mary replied that Child Protection had moved from 30% turnover of staff in the first year to 14%, now there is work ensuring staff are valued, better training (19 days in the first 6 months) offered with a graduate certificate. The child protection system is re-shaping itself to a local area approach, with an understanding of local problems so prevention work can be done. The government is placing enormous effort into reshaping Child Protection. The system is not perfect, but constantly looking to improve. There will be two new DHS positions that participants will know by name, with senior practitioners now in place in their respective regions.

Concerns from the Panel: Cultural Community Liaison officers seem to be needed. Mary replied that this recommendation can go back to government.

Thankyou: John thanked Mary and highlighted the need for the forum organisers to pull the thinking together, to ensure there is a whole system of support for families and children.

AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION

Convenors:

Marilyn Webster – Director of Research and Social Policy, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

John Zika – Executive Director, VICSEG New Futures

Comment from Child First program manager: CaLD community needs a strong voice with the Children's Commissioner and the Children's Services Coordination Board. Managers have concerns about the use of interpreters and the cost to Family services agencies to access interpreters to level they need.

Comment from African Communities Foundation of Australia program manager: Concerns about how children are supported, the depth of community care that is there, the capacity building that needs to occur because of the massive gaps. Concerns about loss of connections with family and disempowerment of parenting confidence leads to further disempowerment. Families witness a lot of misunderstandings and questioning why they came to Australia to be treated like this?

Representative from Refugee Family services: concern about a silent group of children, the 4 children moved to Manus Island this week and what is the sector response. The voice of asylum seeker children needs to be heard, as they need to believe that someone can stop this, and these children are very vulnerable.

Representative of the ECCV: Senior representation for CaLD communities could be involved in the new Commission for Children. Strong CaLD representation is provided within the Children's Services Coordination Board. That the department could consider the resources the family services sector needs to access interpreters.

VICSEG Program manager: the importance of the advocacy role. Service providers need to think outside the box to find strategies. The NSW government has funded a consortium of 11 migrant resource centres to provide multicultural foster care. Janet Elefsiniotis undertook to travel to NSW to meet with contracted providers and providing details to the Victorian government.

Victorian Legal Aid Educator: Ongoing concerns that newly arrived families do not have sufficient basic education on the law upon arrival in Australia e.g. putting together information on basic legal principles as part of a prevention program. Practical examples are; how old does a child need to be before it is left alone?

Program manager from New Hope Foundation: In addition to interpreters and cultural competency, there is a tremendous resource in this room. Recommend that DHS draw on the expertise in the sector and give resources to that expertise.

Grace (South Sudanese community): If steps in place from the beginning of a problem would reduce final outcomes. The community is sick of review, evaluation and studies. The community wants to be part of a better process through capacity building.

Ambrose: It takes a village to raise a child: means that children are the highest priority.

Wendy (SMRC): Working with the South Sudanese community, with the assistance of OMAC, Child Safety Commissioner, African Communities Foundation – we can put recommendations to government.

Final points from Executive Director of VICSEG New Futures

There is a lot of goodwill and capacity at this forum to offer strong advocacy, with a different allocation of resources is needed. There have been many speakers, however all those in the room are stakeholders.

We will make sure this work continues beyond the momentum of today. John thanked all the organisers for their efforts to make the day a success. He encouraged all to be ready to act on the Monday after the forum, with the presentations and report on the VICSEG website www.vicsegnewfutures.org.au.

Attachment 1 Presentation by Jatinder Kaur

Attachment 2 Presentation by Mary McKinnon