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Families Australia, a national, independent, peak organisation promoting the interests of families, publishes *National Family News* on the first week of each month (except January). *NFN* contains information about the latest major developments in national family policy, services and research from across government and the non-government sectors. Back issues can be viewed at: www.familiesaustralia.org.au

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IN THIS ISSUE...

Views & news from Families Australia: Federal Election 2010 proposals; National Families Week.

Top stories: *National Sorry Day; Forgotten Australians now qualify as a 'special needs' group in Aged Care Service Provision.*

VIEWS & NEWS FROM FAMILIES AUSTRALIA...

Families Australia announces 2010 Federal election proposals

Representing around 400 family and community sector organisations across Australia, Families Australia strongly urges the adoption by the next Federal Government of the following general and specific proposals to better assist families and children, especially the most vulnerable and socially excluded.

At the broadest level, Families Australia strongly believes that there should be:

- A substantial increase in resources devoted to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020. We propose that an additional \$120 million be provided over four years especially to support targeted family and child related services.
- Growth in real terms in the Federal Family Support Program over the next four years, ideally by a minimum of 10-15%, and for FSP activities increasingly to focus on early intervention and integrated service delivery initiatives.
- A substantial increase in funding for all Federal Government 'Closing the Gap' programs and urge that programs be designed and delivered in an ongoing and close partnership with Indigenous peoples. We align ourselves with the views being put forward by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care.
- An improvement in the overall remuneration of community sector workers as a result of the Pay Equity Test Case 2010, with the Federal Government fully supporting NGOs in meeting the anticipated wages gap.

Specifically, we propose:

- The establishment of a pilot parenting program for young mothers and fathers with special attention to needs of Indigenous people and those in, or leaving out-of-home care.
- A national grant program for local grandparent and other kinship carer support groups.
- The placement of dedicated grandparent / kinship / foster care liaison officers in at least 20 Centrelink offices around Australia.
- Free TAFE or university training for young out-of-home-care leavers.
- Doubling of the Transition to Independent Living Allowance to \$3,000 per person leaving care.
- The provision of leaving care plans for all young people leaving care.
- Support services (referrals, advice and support, training and drop-in centres) for Forgotten Australians in every State and Territory.
- A national NGO coordination service that links siblings of children or young people who have a disability or chronic illness, and their families, to early intervention and support services, and the development of a national strengths-based service delivery model.
- A pilot child and family support program which identifies the needs of, and provides targeted support for, children and families of offenders.

More information is on the Families Australia website: www.familiesaustralia.org.au

REMINDER National Families Week 15-21 May 2010: 'The best start: supporting happy, healthy childhoods'

Across the country groups will be gathering to celebrate and promote happy, healthy childhoods. Families Australia is encouraged by the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of community organisations and government departments to host a range of events that aim to maximise interest in happy, healthy outcomes for children, young people and their families. Events include picnics, book launches, family fund days, early literacy and reading events, outings and launching new training materials. Thanks for such great preparations for the Week! More details:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm>

OTHER TOP STORIES...

National Sorry Day - 26 May

8 April: The National Sorry Day Committee is inviting people across the country to walk across their local bridge with images of 'Stolen Generations Track Home' feet. To register your local National Sorry Day event and for more information go to:

<http://www.nsd.org.au/home/>

Changes to Aged Care support for Forgotten Australians

4 March: As a result of the national Apology in November 2009, and the Australian Government's commitment to Forgotten Australians, the Department of Health and Ageing announced that 'care leavers' are now included as a 'special needs' group effective from January 2010. The latest Aged Care Approvals Round for residential and community aged care packages (closed 15 March 2010) provided for care leavers for the first time with updated guidelines providing an overview of expectations. More at:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-acessentials-Jan2010.htm and
[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/7602F807EE20A59ACA2576BD00003303/\\$File/2009-10_Essential_Guyide.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/7602F807EE20A59ACA2576BD00003303/$File/2009-10_Essential_Guyide.pdf)

Public Inquiry into Disability Care & Support

14 April: The Productivity Commission has released Terms of Reference and other information to investigate the long-term care and support needs for people with disability, their family and carers. Initial submissions are due at the end of June 2010. To make a submission and stay up to date with the progress of this inquiry go to:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support>

New Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander early childhood project

31 March: SNAICC has been successful in gaining funds to pilot capacity building in community controlled early childhood services. The project will focus on promoting social and emotional wellbeing of children attending the community child care service. For more information go to: http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/view_article.cfm?loadref=8&id=253

Public Inquiry into Aged Care

21 April: The Australian Government announced Terms of Reference for the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Aged Care. The Commission will hold hearings as well as take submissions with a view to providing options for a re-designed aged care system. More at:

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/B200B4688292126ECA25770C001DC8CA/\\$File/je030.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/B200B4688292126ECA25770C001DC8CA/$File/je030.pdf)

Closing the Gap initiatives in Higher Education

The University of Qld, School of Medicine aims to increase Indigenous Medical Workforce participation through the development of career pathways. More information about career pathways and enrolment at:

<http://www2.som.uq.edu.au/som/FutureStudents/MBBS/Admissions/DomesticStudents/Pages/AboriginalandTorresStraitIslanderApplicants.aspx>

Australia represented at UN International experts meeting

7 April: Natalie Hunter was invited by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples to represent Australia at the 'International Expert Group Meeting: Indigenous Children and Youth in Detention, Custody, Foster-Care and Adoption' 4-5 March 2010 in Vancouver, Canada. For more information about the meeting and Natalie's presentation go to: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/EGM_ICYD.html

Wired Community @ Collingwood Project

16 April: The Victorian Government has released a report into the largest digital inclusion project providing free access to public housing estate residents. The results demonstrate social and economic benefits. More at: www.collingwood.vic.au

Transition from Out-of-Home-Care - Housing Pathways

30 April: This report investigates the centrality of access to secure housing for young people in transition to independent living from being in the care of the state. More at: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/30540_fr

Love Bites Program extends

16 April: NAPCAN announces the Queensland launch, 20 May. The program aims to engage 14-18 year olds in relationship violence prevention. More at: <http://www.napcan.org.au/get-involved/napcan-run-events>

National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Trends

21 April: This ABS publication summarises the 2008 survey. Topics include information on a range of demographic, social, environmental and economic indicators: personal and household characteristics; geography; language and cultural activities; social networks and support; health and disability; education; employment; financial stress; income; transport; personal safety; and housing. More at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0?OpenDocument>

OPPORTUNITIES...

FaHCSIA funding rounds

FaHCSIA's Grants and Funding page is at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/grantsfunding/currentfunding/Pages/default.aspx>.

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