

SUPPORTING CHANGE FOR THE BETTER: NATIONAL FAMILIES WEEK 2016

Address by Dr Brian Babington, Chief Executive Officer, Families Australia
At the Department of Social Services, Canberra, 20 May 2016

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and to pay respects to their elders both past and present. I would also like to acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with us today.

Thank you very much for the invitation to say a few words this morning as part of National Families Week. It's always a pleasure to be with so many colleagues from the Department of Social Services.

One of the exciting things happening next Monday—and linked to National Families Week—is Families Australia's 4th Child Aware Approaches Conference in Brisbane. The Commonwealth Government has been a great supporter of the conference—thank you for that.

In a nutshell, the conference brings together over 300 policymakers, practitioners and researchers from around Australia to share insights and learn from one another about how we can better assist families and children, especially those experiencing the greatest vulnerability.

And, that goes to the very heart of our efforts during National Families Week. This week, over 130,000 people are expected to participate in hundreds of community-level events around Australia, all celebrating the vital role that families play in our lives.

One of my favourite events this year is a free workshop in Queensland entitled '*Love me til I'm me again*' to help parents understand their teenagers better and to get through those sometimes difficult teenage years.

This and other events emphasise the importance of families and highlight how National Families Week plays its part in promoting family wellbeing within the broader community.

Here, can I pause to acknowledge in the audience my eldest son, Andrew, who this year joined the Department of Human Services as a graduate. I am proud that he is the third successive generation of my family to take on a public service role.

Colleagues, our collective commitment and work to improve family wellbeing in Australia is challenging and ever-changing. We know that families move in and out of disadvantage, and it is important for us to be vigilant about those changing needs.

I know that it's sometimes difficult to see the tangible and the immediate gains from our work, ***but I firmly think that it does add considerably to the momentum of change for the better.***

I want to thank you all very much for your work to assist and support families and communities. That work is of ***paramount*** importance in making this an even greater country. Thank you.

(Check against delivery)