



*Valuing Children*

INITIATIVE

# THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE

Foundation Paper April 2016

Updated August 2016

THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE (VCI) IS A JOINT PROJECT FUNDED BY CENTRECARE (Inc.) AND PARKERVILLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH CARE (Inc.) THE VCI COMMENCED IN JANUARY 2016.

\* The term “Children” is used throughout this paper to refer to children and young people aged 0 – 17 years.

Additional copies of this paper in electronic or hard copy are available by emailing [info@valuingchildreninitiative.com.au](mailto:info@valuingchildreninitiative.com.au).

All resources can be accessed at [www.valuingchildreninitiative.com.au](http://www.valuingchildreninitiative.com.au)



**INTRODUCTION**

*'A society that is good for children is good for everyone.'*<sup>1</sup>

The impetus for the Valuing Children Initiative is the desire to ensure that all children in Australia experience the caring, safe and supportive childhood they deserve and have the right to expect. The ambition of the Valuing Children Initiative is to inspire Australians to value all children, to understand that a child's wellbeing is the shared responsibility of the entire community and to ensure children are at the forefront of our considerations.

The initiative reflects growing concern that despite the compelling evidence about what a child needs to flourish, this has not always successfully translated into action, resources and better outcomes for children.

A greater societal commitment to all children is necessary to overcome this, and to ensure that children's rights and needs are given the priority they deserve. This requires the commitment, drive and active support of the community, armed with the belief and knowledge that when children flourish, so too does a society.

*'When children flourish, so too does a society.'*

The Director of Centrecare - Mr Tony Pietropiccolo AM has stressed the need for widespread support from not-for-profits, philanthropists, government and all organisations and individuals committed to children to ensure the success of the Valuing Children Initiative. Mr Pietropiccolo said, *'While Centrecare and Parkerville Children and Youth Care Incorporated have established the VCI, we are aware that many others have also identified that there are attitudinal barriers that must be addressed to enable us to better protect and nurture all children.'*

The CEO of Parkerville CYC - Mr Basil Hanna, has said the desired outcome of the Valuing Children Initiative, *'... is a greater societal awareness of children and their needs, as well as the importance of ensuring that all children are loved, safe and able to maximise on their potential and wellbeing.'*

**THIS PAPER WAS WRITTEN BY THE CONVENOR OF THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE LINDA SAVAGE. THE AUTHOR WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ASSISTANCE OF DEPUTY CONVENOR EMMA KING.**

## THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE

The driving force for the Valuing Children Initiative, (VCI) is the desire to ensure that all children in Australia experience the caring, safe and supportive childhood they deserve and have the right to expect. The last 50 years has seen significant strides in reaching that goal, and in improving outcomes for children, but it has also seen calamitous failures.

It is important to recognise the positives and the capacity for progress. The marked improvements in the rate of survival at birth, in infancy and the decrease in cancer related deaths amongst children is notable. There has also been a significant decline in the number of accidents and deaths in childhood. Life expectancy has significantly improved for most children overall. School attendance and tertiary education opportunities have improved for everyone, and notably girls. Australia is ranked in the top third by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) for approximately one quarter of indicators for child and youth, health and wellbeing. It leads the world in low youth smoking rates, some educational and employment outcomes, and environmental conditions at home.<sup>2</sup>

*The last 50 years has seen significant strides in... improving outcomes for children, but it has also seen calamitous failures.*

Despite these achievements however, there remain significant areas of concern for the wellbeing of Australia's children. In 2002, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, (ARACY) was formed comprising researchers, policy makers and practitioners in response to what it described as the rising trend of problems in children and youth, and the seeming inability to develop effective responses for avoiding or managing them. The latest ARACY Report Card, '*The wellbeing of young Australians*', (the Report Card) was published in March 2013. Based on empirical data from a range of organisations, and input from over 37,000 children and young people about their hopes, needs and desires,<sup>3</sup> it reported that:

*'... despite many positive steps being taken, there is evidence to suggest Australian children and youth are not faring as well as they could. In an international context, Australia could best be described as 'middle of the road'.*<sup>4</sup>

Comparative indicators across OECD countries show that while Australia is doing well in some areas, others, such as child poverty and youth participation in education and employment are of concern.<sup>5</sup> The incidence of diabetes,<sup>6</sup> obesity, mental illness,<sup>7</sup> sexualisation of children,<sup>8</sup> and lack of school readiness remains a challenge.<sup>9</sup> One in four Australian children are overweight or obese.<sup>10</sup> For the first time children in affluent countries like Australia are predicted to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents, '...simply because of obesity and the chronic diseases that result from that.'<sup>11</sup> In Australia more than 17% of all children live below the poverty line.<sup>12</sup> Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children continue to bear a far greater burden of the failure to protect children and provide them with a good childhood.<sup>13</sup>

The last two decades have finally begun to reveal the shocking extent of sexual abuse of children in institutions, and in their own homes. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse commenced proceedings in 2013, and is due to report in 2017.<sup>14</sup> The National Children's Commissioner in her 'Children's Rights Report 2015', estimated that 1 in 28 children first experience sexual abuse by a family member before the age of 15 years.<sup>15</sup> Notifications to child protection services in Australia have increased in the last 3 years, as well as the number of substantiated cases. Of the over 40,000 substantiated cases of neglect, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse, over 5000 were sexual abuse.<sup>16</sup> It is likely these figures are, '...an underestimation of the number of children abused and neglected.'<sup>17</sup>

Despite the progress made, there is no room for complacency.

*'Australia is a wealthy nation that ranks well in comparison with other developed countries on many measures of health and wellbeing. However, evidence indicates that many children and young people face a range of issues including behavioural and emotional problems and mental health issues, living in jobless families, witnessing or experiencing violence in their family, starting school poorly equipped to learn and being homeless.'*<sup>18</sup>

## WHAT DOES VALUING CHILDREN MEAN?

A child's social and emotional wellbeing comes from feeling safe, cared for and valued. Surveys have confirmed that being valued and loved is, for children and young people, one of the top three aspects of wellbeing.<sup>19</sup> Few would disagree that all children should be valued, but it is far from clear what we mean when we talk about valuing children. 'Value' can be described as the worth we assign to someone, or something. When we value someone we assume it is reflected in our attitudes and behaviour, and in our sense of responsibility and investment in that person's wellbeing and happiness.

*'Value' can be describes as the worth we assign to someone, or something.'*

One way of thinking about how children are valued is by examining how our attitudes, actions and sense of responsibility for them have evolved over the last two hundred years. Up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century children, like married women, were the property of husbands and fathers, and were not even recognised as a separate legal person. Children were to be seen when summoned, heard only when asked to speak and rarely listened to.

Changing attitudes to women coincided with a growing sense of responsibility by the state for the welfare needs of children, in particular their protection from poverty and exploitation. In 1839 for the first time a divorced mother, if deemed to be 'innocent', was permitted to have custody of her children until the age of 7, and access to her older children.<sup>20</sup> Laws followed that required the court to have 'regard to the welfare of the child.'<sup>21</sup> Protection of children from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and the power of courts to make orders as 'parens patriae', (that is to act as the parent for the child that had no other suitable person to act as guardian), reflected the 'increasingly pervasive protective attitude to children', evident by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup>

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the recognition of children's rights as distinct from parental rights, or the state's role in the protection of children. The League of Nations adopted the *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1924.<sup>23</sup> These rights included a child's right to receive the requirements for normal development, the right for a hungry child to be fed, the right of a sick child to receive health care, the right of orphans to shelter and the right of all children to protection from exploitation. This was followed by the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and in 1959 the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child* which encapsulated 10 principles for the protection of children's rights, including the universality of rights, the rights to special protection and the right to protection from discrimination.<sup>24</sup> This marked the first major international consensus on the fundamental principles of children's rights, and was notable for the recognition of special rights for children that reflected their inherent vulnerability. In 1989 the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history, changed the way children were to be viewed and treated, emphasising their position as human beings with a distinct set of rights, instead of as passive objects.<sup>25</sup>

The last 50 years has also seen an increasing focus on children’s wellbeing and happiness. Childhood began to be regarded as an important stage of life in its own right. Greater academic interest in children and subsequent research, has provided overwhelming evidence that the experience in the womb and the physical, emotional and cognitive development in early childhood has a life-long and critical impact on a person’s future wellbeing.<sup>26</sup> This period lays down the foundations for life. There is now,

*‘...unequivocal evidence that early experiences from birth to five years of age determine brain architecture and that, once formed, this provides the foundation for all future learning, behaviour and physical and mental health.’<sup>27</sup>*

Adverse circumstances, neglect and maltreatment of children has been conclusively shown to be linked to higher levels of violence and anti-social behaviour, mental illness, school and economic underperformance, as well as poor physical health in later life.<sup>28</sup> A great deal is also known about what children need to thrive throughout the middle years and teenage years<sup>29</sup> and the services that are needed to address challenges they may face.

Today the role of the state in protecting children, and the requirement to act in the best interests of children is accepted and embedded in legislation and policy, notwithstanding significantly different perspectives over the last 100 years as to how this has, and should be translated into practice and policy. The primary role of the family, and support for parents and carers, is recognised as pivotal to a happy and safe childhood. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new models of child protection have endeavoured to achieve a balance between statutory child protection services and family support services,<sup>30</sup> underlined by a public health model focusing on prevention of child abuse and neglect, as opposed to services responding only when abuse and neglect has already occurred. Since 2009 there has been a national approach to child protection, the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009 – 2020. In December 2015, the Third Action Plan (2015 -2018) was launched.<sup>31</sup>

The modelling of the long term economic benefits of investing in children to give them a good start in life, and the support they require whilst growing up, has provided more evidence that enhancing the lives of children and helping them reach their potential, benefits not only individual children, but the whole community.<sup>32</sup> Social and wellbeing outcomes are increasingly recognised alongside economic indicators as a measure of a nation’s success.<sup>33</sup> Children and young people’s wellbeing is critical to that success.<sup>34</sup>

In the last decade, States and Territories have legislated to establish statutory bodies headed by Commissioners and Guardians for Children and Young People, to provide greater independent protection and advocacy. In Western Australia the inaugural Commissioner for Children and Young People, (the Commissioner) was appointed in 2007. The role of the Commissioner is primarily advocacy for those under the age of 18 years old.<sup>35</sup> A National Children’s Commissioner was appointed in 2013. Despite some differences in their roles,<sup>36</sup> the Commissioners and Guardians Offices are premised upon the principle that the views of children and young people in matters affecting them should be listened to, and taken into account.

*Children have an important contribution to make, and are best placed to say what makes for a good childhood.*

Heeding what children say is now regarded as essential to inform policy makers and to protect children.<sup>37</sup> Children have an important contribution to make,<sup>38</sup> and are best placed to say what makes for a good childhood.<sup>39</sup> The concept of the child as a citizen from birth, a possessor of rights over and above those rights recognised by society, is challenging the idea of the child as the, ‘...weak subject, a person with needs rather than rights.’<sup>40</sup> In the last decade the promotion of child inclusive practice has led to greater emphasis on listening to the needs and wishes of children, and taking them explicitly into account in therapeutic practice.<sup>41</sup>

Amongst the many individuals and organisations committed to children, there is widespread agreement about what still needs to be done. This includes more rapidly translating evidence into policy, action and best practice,<sup>42</sup> ensuring adequate resources,<sup>43</sup> breaking down silos, overcoming fragmentation,<sup>44</sup> and having better coordination of state and federal responses and responsibilities.<sup>45</sup>

The changes in attitudes to all children over the past 200 years, and the plethora of services, organisations, institutions and all levels of government dedicated to children's protection and wellbeing today, is without doubt testament to society's ability to adapt its social norms, and the genuine commitment to children in Australia. If responsibility for their protection, and recognition of their rights and wellbeing is accepted as a crude measure, then it is true to say that children today are more valued than ever before.

### WHY ATTITUDES TO CHILDREN MATTER

How we value children matters. It directly impacts on our attitudes, behaviours and actions towards them.<sup>46</sup> The change in attitudes to children over the last two centuries is evidence that attitudes are intimately connected to how we understand, regard and treat children and our perception of childhood. Attitudes are similarly reflected in the priority we give to children's needs and rights. The dramatic drop in the rate of infant deaths in Australia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>47</sup> reflected both public health and scientific advances, but it also signalled attitudinal change as infant mortality came to be viewed as a, '... social problem,' and, '... an important indicator of social well-being.'<sup>48</sup> High rates of infant mortality were no longer tolerated as inevitable, or acceptable.

*Attitudes are reflected in the priority we give to children's needs and rights.*

The VCI's simple proposition is that while children today are valued, they are simply not valued enough. The need to move further from platitudes, and make Australia a better place for all children, has been identified by some of the most respected and committed advocates for children in Australia. They have highlighted the need to reconsider the priority we give to children, as well as the need for the entire community to understand its shared responsibility for children.

*... while children are valued, they are simply not valued enough.*

Professors Fiona Stanley, Sue Richardson and Sue Prior in 2005 in their seminal book, *'Children of the Lucky Country? How Australian society has turned its back on children and why children matter,'* challenged Australia to, *'...put children in the centre of our society, (and) ...encourage a cultural change in Australian society towards greater equality and opportunity for our children.'*<sup>49</sup>

June Oscar AO, lauded for her work in leading the campaign for alcohol restrictions in Fitzroy Crossing, has spoken about the huge population of traumatised children affected by family violence in the Kimberley and pointed to the need for society to more explicitly assume responsibility for all children, because it is, *'... a societal issue, when we are wanting healthy human beings for the future.'*<sup>50</sup>

Those working at the coal face recognise that in tackling the most basic responsibility to protect children, child protection services alone are *'... unable to provide support to all families in need and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. Child protection approaches now recognise that protecting children is everyone's business and that parents, communities, governments, non-government organisations and businesses all have a role to play.'*<sup>51</sup>



Given then what we know makes for a good childhood, and the commitment there is to children in Australia, it should be unacceptable that so many children are, ‘... not faring as well as they could.’<sup>52</sup> What then accounts for the gap between what we know, what we do and the lives that some children have to endure? It is timely then to consider if there are other contributing factors, ‘... embedded in the cultural attitudes and behaviours of the community ... conscious or unconscious,’<sup>53</sup> about how we value and regard children.

Changing attitudes in Australia in recent decades, have played a significant role in focusing attention and elevating societal expectations about what is acceptable, and should be expected. The rapid pace of change globally, has been mirrored in the striking changes in attitudes to women’s participation in all aspects of public life, diversity in what constitutes a family, protection of the environment and smoking for example. The question that needs to be asked then, is whether attitudes to children have evolved to keep pace with what we want for children, believe they deserve, and have a right to expect?

This is an uncomfortable question. It should be. It is a question that must be asked if we are to move closer to the goal of ensuring that all children have a caring, safe and supportive childhood. It is a question made even more urgent in the face of the stark knowledge of our failure to protect so many children from abuse.

*It is timely to consider if there are other contributing factors, ‘...embedded in the cultural attitudes and behaviours of the community... conscious or unconscious,’ about how we value and regard children.*

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ATTITUDES TO CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA TODAY?

In 2009, ARACY issued a Communiqué referring to Nordic countries, noting that:

*‘Australia must learn from cultures with a positive attitude to children and young people (and) from public policies that achieve high levels of child wellbeing.’<sup>54</sup>*

*... a strong culture if valuing and respecting children has been identified as an important factor contributing to the wellbeing*

In countries such as Sweden, a strong culture of valuing and respecting<sup>55</sup> children has been identified as an important factor contributing to the wellbeing of children.<sup>56</sup>

In New Zealand, *Every Child Counts* launched a ‘1000 days to get it right for every child’ campaign in 2011( the campaign) focused on the first three years of a child’s life, with the aim of encouraging political parties and members of parliament to put children at the centre of their policies.<sup>57</sup> Marking 500 days from the launch of the campaign in May 2013, progress was described as follows:

*‘While it is clear that this parliament has focused on children more than previous parliaments have done, there remain significant challenges for parliamentarians in all parties to ensure that New Zealand has the policies and practices and attitudes needed to ensure that every child thrives.’<sup>58</sup>*

Part of the campaign was the commissioning of a study of the Netherlands to assess the effectiveness of public investment in children in New Zealand and to identify whether there are specific policies contributing to the Netherlands high child wellbeing outcomes that may inform New Zealand’s efforts to improve the wellbeing and status of children. It highlighted that an inherent culture of valuing and respecting children played a central role in contributing to their wellbeing.<sup>59</sup> It is notable that Nordic countries were amongst the first to outlaw corporal punishment of children.<sup>60</sup>

The ‘*Australian Attitudes to Young People Survey*’, (the survey) undertaken by ARACY in 2012 asked participants to rank in order of importance, seven pre-defined aspects of wellbeing.



'Being loved and valued' was considered the most important aspect for wellbeing by both child and adult participants<sup>61</sup>. Children in Australia want to be valued and respected,<sup>62</sup> but do we know if they are as highly valued and respected as children are in a country such as Sweden?<sup>63</sup> Have we as a society considered what valuing children means, and does it extend further than just our own children and those children that we have immediate contact with?

What proportion of the society would agree that children and young people, (who make up almost one quarter of the population), should be at the forefront of our considerations?<sup>64</sup> The Survey undertaken by ARACY in 2012, found nearly three quarters of respondents, believed society shares the responsibility for improving the health and wellbeing of children, but only 39% of adult respondents typically considered the wellbeing of children and young people when making decisions.<sup>65</sup> Is it assumed then that the views and interests for example of the business sector, or other groups within society such as the aged, should have greater influence, and be given greater priority than those of children and young people? <sup>66</sup> Are our attitudes to children influenced by proximity, or clouded by how we perceive other features of their lives and circumstances?<sup>67</sup> Do we feel more empathy for some children than others? <sup>68</sup> How connected are we, as a society and as individuals, to the plight of children who suffer from poverty, from domestic violence, from abuse? Do children's rights, needs and wishes still hold less weight today, than those of adults and institutions, <sup>69</sup> as in the past? Even today, is a child's word less likely to be believed than that of an adult? <sup>70</sup>

### WAYS FORWARD

The VCI seeks to inspire Australian's to value all children by building understanding and acceptance that children are precious in and of themselves, and that a child's wellbeing is the shared responsibility of the entire community. It also seeks to ensure that all children are at the forefront of our considerations.

The VCI hopes to play a role in creating a compelling picture of what is possible when we do value all children, and that is better lives for all children, and a better society for everyone.

The VCI is an ambitious project. The hope is to engage with as many individuals and organisations in Australia as possible, in the belief that leadership at multiple levels and across sectors is needed for the success of the initiative.

The purpose of the foundation paper is to provide a rationale for the VCI and a starting point to stimulate discussion.

In 2016 the VCI will:

- 1) Commission a baseline survey about attitudes to children in Australia.
- 2) Consult with stakeholders to seek their feedback, support and input.
- 3) Find opportunities to promote discussion and engage with the community about the VCI.
- 4) Build support for a simple, clear and consistent message that all children should be valued, that a child's wellbeing is the shared responsibility of the entire community, and that children should be at the forefront of our considerations.

*A child's wellbeing needs to be seen as the shared responsibility of the entire community, and children should be at the forefront of our considerations.*

The Valuing Children Initiative invites you to join us.

---

## References

1. F. Stanley, S. Richardson & R. Prior, 2005. *'Children of the Lucky Country? How Australian society turned its back on children and why children matter.'* Sydney, Australia. Pan Macmillan. p. 162
2. Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth  
REPORT CARD: The wellbeing of young Australians. March 2013.p.4.  
[www.aracy.org.au/documents/item/104](http://www.aracy.org.au/documents/item/104)  
(Accessed 10 February 2016).
3. Ibid. REPORT CARD  
(Accessed 10 February 2016).
4. REPORT CARD p.1
5. REPORT CARD p.1
6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014. Type 2 diabetes in Australia's children and young people: a working paper. Diabetes Series no. 21. Cat. No. CVD 64. Canberra: AIHW  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/overweight-and-obesity/>  
(Accessed 25 February 2016).
7. D. Lawrence, S. Johnson, J. Hafekost, K. Boterhoven De Haan, M. Sawyer, J. Ainley, SR. Zubrick SR (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Department of Health, Canberra.  
[https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/9DA8CA21306FE6DCA257E2700016945/\\$File/child2.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/9DA8CA21306FE6DCA257E2700016945/$File/child2.pdf)  
(Accessed 25 February 2016).
8. 'Mental health professionals are increasingly concerned about the prevalence of sexualised images of children and early adolescents in the media. These images appear to be widely used in advertising, and represent children, including pre-pubertal children, in ways more congruent with adult sexuality'. Australian Psychological Society.  
<https://www.psychology.org.au/community/public-interest/sexualisation>  
(Accessed 4 March 2016).
9. In 2015 approximately one in five (22.0 per cent) children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s). One in nine (11.1 per cent) were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. (P.31). Australian Early Development Census National Report 2015; A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia.  
<file:///C:/Users/eking/Downloads/National%20Report%202015.pdf>  
(Accessed 10 March 2016).
10. One in four Australian children are overweight or obese.  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/overweight-and-obesity/>  
(Accessed 25 February 2016).
11. S.Prescott, 2015. *'Origins: Early-life solutions to the modern health crisis.'*  
Crawley, Western Australia. UWAP,p.39
12. Australian Council of Social Services, Poverty in Australia, 2014.  
This measure of poverty does not take into account that of a child who lives in a household that is not defined as being in poverty, may still experience material deprivation because of the spending choices of the adults.  
[http://www.acoss.org.au/images/uploads/ACOSS\\_Poverty\\_in\\_Australia\\_2014.pdf](http://www.acoss.org.au/images/uploads/ACOSS_Poverty_in_Australia_2014.pdf)  
(Accessed 10 February 2016).
13. CLOSING THE GAP: THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPORT 2016.  
[closingthegap.dpmc.gov.au/assets/pdfs/closing\\_the\\_gap\\_report\\_2016.pdf](http://closingthegap.dpmc.gov.au/assets/pdfs/closing_the_gap_report_2016.pdf)  
(Accessed 12 February 2016).
14. Commonwealth, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.  
<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au>  
(Accessed 15 February 2016).
15. Children's Rights Report 2015, *'All I want is a life free from violence.'*  
[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)  
(Accessed 8 February 2016).
16. In 2013-14, 40,844 children were the subject of substantiated reports, an increase of 31% from 31,295 in 2009-2010.  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Child Protection Australia 2013-2014 (2015) p.28  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publicationdetail/?id=60129550762>  
(Accessed 5 February 2016).
17. Australian Institute of Family Studies: Child abuse and neglect statistics. July 2015.  
<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/child-abuse-neglect-and-statistics>  
(Accessed 5 February 2016).
18. Third three-year action plan, 2015-2018:  
Driving Change: Intervening Early : National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 p.6  
(Accessed 17 February 2016).  
[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12\\_2015/pdf\\_third\\_action\\_plan\\_for\\_protecting\\_australias\\_children.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2015/pdf_third_action_plan_for_protecting_australias_children.pdf)
19. Over three-quarters (78%) of children and young people, and almost nine in 10 (88%) adults, indicated that being 'loved and valued' is one of the top three aspects of wellbeing. This was followed by 'being healthy', 'being safe', and 'being able to learn and develop.'  
*The Nest consultation*. Findings from consultation with children, young people, parents and other adults conducted between March and September 2012. p.2.  
<https://www.aracy.org.au/documents/item/151>  
(Accessed 8 March 2016).
20. Custody of Infants Act (UK) 1839
21. Guardianship of Infants Custody Act (UK)1886
22. H Radi, 'Whose Child', in J Mackinoly and H Radi (eds.) *In Pursuit of Justice: Australian Women and the Law 1788 -1979* (1979).p.125.
23. [www.undocuments.net/gdrc1924.htm](http://www.undocuments.net/gdrc1924.htm)
24. <http://www.humanium.org/en/childrens-rights-history/references-on-child-rights/declaration-rights-child/>
25. <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
26. Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning in the prenatal period and expanding throughout the early years.'  
J. Shonkoff & D. Phillips (2000). *'From Neurons to Neighbours: The Science of Early Childhood Development.'* Washington, DC, USA: National Academies Press. P.6
27. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (Submission 27) to the Commissioner for Children and Young People's 'Report of the Inquiry into the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia.' April 2011, p97.  
<http://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/files/MentalWellbeingInquiry/CCYP%20Mental%20Health%20Inquiry%20-%20Report%20to%20Parliament.pdf>

(Accessed 1 March 2016).

28. R.F Anda et al "the enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood: a convergence of evidence from neurobiology and epidemiology." *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 2006; 256(3): 174-186.

29. Participation in education is a key factor affecting the life chances of all children and young people C for C&YP Annual Report 2014-2015 p.44  
In responding to the Closing the Gap report

30. Research has long recognised that families are a child's single most important environment in terms of influence on development, with family relationships and interactions being critically important. Consequently, family functioning, quality parenting, and access to social and family supports all contribute strongly to optimal health and wellbeing.

See J. Gabarino 1992. *Children and families in the social environment* (2nd edn.). New York: Aldine De Gruyter

J. Bowes, J. Watson & E. Pearson 2009. Families as a context for children. In: J. Bowes & R. Grace (Eds.). *Children, families and communities: contexts and consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 91–110

31. Third three-year action plan, 2015-2018

Driving Change: Intervening Early

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 p.6

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12\\_2015/pdf\\_third\\_action\\_plan\\_for\\_protecting\\_australias\\_children.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2015/pdf_third_action_plan_for_protecting_australias_children.pdf)

(Accessed 17 February 2016).

32. See the work of Professor James Heckman at:

<http://heckmanequation.org/>

(Accessed 15 February 2016).

33. <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/about/the-imperative>

(Accessed 21 March 2016).

34. <http://www.andi.org.au>

(Accessed 21 March 2016).

35. 'A Review of the Exercise of the Functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People'

Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Report No.11, November 2012, p13.

36. <http://www.cryp.wa.gov.au/content/Other-Children's-Commissioners.aspx>

(Accessed 10 February 2016).

37. The UNICEF 'Listen to Children Report' argues that despite ratifying the Convention in 1991, Australia has not effectively incorporated human rights into policy and legislative frameworks to nurture and support Australian children. Instead, successive governments have perpetuated a traditional welfare approach to children's wellbeing and have not learned to listen to and work with children—to create child-sensitive bodies, systems and initiative. <http://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Documents/ListenToChildren2011report.pdf>

(Accessed 25 February 2016).

See: Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (2015). *Creating Child-Safe Organisations – Report on consultation with children and young people*. Commissioner for Children and Young People WA: Perth

(Accessed 11 March 2016).

38. Press Release. 2002. *UNICEF. Why Children Must Be Heard*

*UNICEF Says Giving Young People A Constructive Role Is Essential to Their Development - And to a More Cohesive, Peaceful World.*

<http://www.unicef.org/newsline/02pr67sowc.htm>

(Accessed 23 February 2016).

39. See endnote 19

40. C. Rinaldi *Re-Imagining Childhood* (2013) p.15.

<https://www.reggioaustralia.org.au/carla-rinaldi-re-imagining-childhood>

(Accessed 16 February 2016).

41. 'Listening' to a child includes their silence, drawings, and behaviour and physical symptoms.

Department of Social Services (Cth) Family and Children.

'Through a Child's Eye's – Child Inclusive Practice in Family Relationship Services.'

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/publications-articles/through-a-childs-eyes-child-inclusive-practice-in-family-relationship-services>

(Accessed 10 February 2016)

42. For example in Western Australia the Early Childhood Development and Learning Collaboration at the Telethon Kids Institute, supported by Founding Partner the Minderoo Foundation.

See also Collective Impact Initiatives such as 'Opportunity Child'. [www.opportunitychild.com.au](http://www.opportunitychild.com.au)

(Accessed 10 March 2016).

43. G Freed, J Sewell & N Spike (2011) 'Challenges to children's health care in an ageing Australia.

*Medical Journal of Australia*. 195 (8) p.436-437.

44. G. Redmond et al, 2016. "Are the kids alright? Young Australians in their middle years." Final summary report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project. P. 31.

<http://australianchildwellbeing.com.au/sites/default/files/uploads/ACWP-Final-Report-2016-short.pdf>

(Accessed 25 February 2016).

45. Third three-year action plan, 2015-2018

Driving Change: Intervening Early: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 Strategy 3.1 & 3.2. p.4

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12\\_2015/pdf\\_third\\_action\\_plan\\_for\\_protecting\\_australias\\_children.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2015/pdf_third_action_plan_for_protecting_australias_children.pdf)

(Accessed 17 February 2016).

46. In a power point presentation to the ARACY Conference, 'Making Prevention Work' (2009), Dr Lance Emerson (CEO ARACY), and Pam Muth (Allen Consulting Group), described the antecedents of complex problems affecting children and young people beginning with societal values beginning with how we individually and as a community value children, where the primary need to focus is because it directly impacts on attitudes and behaviours towards children, which directly impacts on programs and policies.

<file:///O:/Perth/Valuing%20Children/VCI%20research/ARACY%20powerpoint.pdf>

(Accessed 1 March 2016).

47. Over the 20th century, the rate of infant deaths decreased from 103 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1900 to 5.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/d37892d01d1832c3ca2570ec000ace6e!OpenDocument>

(Accessed 22 February 2016).

48. D. Armstrong, *The invention of infant mortality*, 1986.

[Onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1986.+b0029.x/pdf](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1986.+b0029.x/pdf)

(Accessed 22 February 2016).

49. F. Stanley, S. Richardson & R. Prior, 2005 *Children of the Lucky Country? How Australian society turned its back on children and why children matter.* Sydney, Australia. Pan Macmillan, 2005, p. 173.

50. C. Egan, 'Family Trauma behind Aboriginal kids' crime.' *The West Australian* 10 February, 2016. p.10.

51. History of Child Protection Services. CFCA Resource Sheet – January 2015  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs22/>  
 (Accessed 10 February 2016).
52. REPORT CARD p.1.
53. From the Desk of the Chief Executive, Basil Hanna, Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc.) 'Valuing Children Initiative'. November 2015.
54. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, Communique from Transforming Australia for our children's future: Making prevention work Conference held in Melbourne, Australia. 2-4 September, 2009.
55. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has recently referred to respect as fundamental to addressing domestic violence saying, 'Let me say this to you: disrespecting women does not always result in violence against women. But all violence against women begins with disrespecting women.'  
<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2015-09-24/transcript-joint-press-conference-womens-safety-package-stop-violence>  
 (Accessed 1 March 2016).
56. S.Janson. 2012. An overview of Nordic Policy for Children: Lessons for Australia on how to reduce inequalities. Citizenship and Globalisation Research Papers. Vol. 3, Special Issue, July 2012.  
<http://apo.org.au/resource/changing-childrens-chances-can-australia-learn-nordic-countries>  
 (Accessed 10 February 2016).
57. 'Every Child Counts' established in New Zealand in 2004. In 2011 it launched a campaign to highlight the importance of adequate public and community investment in a child's early years – the first 1000 days of life – by releasing a report that shows poor outcomes for children are costing the nation at least 3 percent of GDP, or \$6bn per annum. In a media release to mark the end of the 500 days, it recorded where progress had been made, and where there had been no progress including continuing high rates of child abuse and neglect, and patchy consideration of the impact of policies on children. Every Child Counts has indicated that they may be re-launching the 1000 days campaign for the next parliamentary term. Document provided to VCI by Lisa Woods, Executive Officer. Every Child Counts. (25 February 2016). [www.everychildcounts.org.au](http://www.everychildcounts.org.au)
58. 1000 days to get it right for every child: just 500 days to go. Media Release. 3 May 2013 <http://www.everychildcounts.org.nz/news/1000-days-to-get-it-right-for-every-child-500-days-to-go/>  
 (Accessed 25 February 2016).  
 See also 'Improving legislation for children and young people guidelines' developed by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA). <http://www.cryp.wa.gov.au/>  
 (Accessed 10 February 2016).
59. Rowe Davies Research Ltd. "The Netherlands Study- Learning from the Netherlands to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children. July 2012. Final Report. P.3  
[www.rowedaviesresearch.co.nz](http://www.rowedaviesresearch.co.nz)  
 (Accessed 10 February 2016).
60. In Australia corporal punishment is regulated at the State level and is lawful under the right of 'reasonable chastisement.'  
<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/progress/country-reports/australia.html>  
 (Accessed 29 February 2016).
61. 'Australian Attitudes to Young People Survey' ARACY 2012  
[https://www.aracy.org.au/publications/resources/command/download\\_file/id/109/filename/Key\\_Findings\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Attitudes\\_to\\_Young\\_People\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.aracy.org.au/publications/resources/command/download_file/id/109/filename/Key_Findings_of_the_Australian_Attitudes_to_Young_People_Survey.pdf)
62. See endnote 56
63. Report of the 2014 Thinker in Residence - Resilience. Dr Michael Ungar.  
 Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People. Western Australia.  
<https://www.cryp.wa.gov.au/media/1119/report-2014-thinker-in-residence-michael-ungar-resilience-may-2014.pdf>  
 (Accessed 29 Jan 2018).
64. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Welfare-In brief (2015).  
<http://aihw.gov.au/publication-detail?id=60129552016>  
 (Accessed 20 February 2016).
65. 'Australian Attitudes to Young People Survey' ARACY 2012  
[https://www.aracy.org.au/publications/resources/command/download\\_file/id/109/filename/Key\\_Findings\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Attitudes\\_to\\_Young\\_People\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.aracy.org.au/publications/resources/command/download_file/id/109/filename/Key_Findings_of_the_Australian_Attitudes_to_Young_People_Survey.pdf)  
 (Accessed 1 March 2016).
66. Today how we value future generations is being discussed around the world. In 2013 'The Report of the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations – Now for the Long Term', chaired by Pascal Lamy, argued that discounting, that is the means used to calculate the future value of something today, too often, '...give(s) less weight to the worth of future generations.' The report argues that this amounts to discrimination against future generations, and it is because they do not currently have political or economic influence. (Part C Revalue the Future. Discounting p.61).  
[http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/commission/Oxford\\_Martin\\_Now\\_for\\_the\\_Long\\_Term.pdf](http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/commission/Oxford_Martin_Now_for_the_Long_Term.pdf)  
 (Accessed 18 March 2016).
67. Are we influenced by arbitrary facts, or conscious or unconscious biases? See John Rawls and his conception of justice and the veil of ignorance. Wenar, Leif, "John Rawls", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/rawls/>  
 (Accessed 1 March 2016).
68. T. Singer, B.Seymour, J. P. O'Doherty, K.E. Stephan, R. J. Dolan & C.D. Frith.  
 Empathetic Neural Responses are modulated by the perceived fairness of others. *Nature*, 2006  
<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v439/n7075/full/nature04271.html>  
 (Accessed 4 March 2016).  
 See also Roman Krzarnic, 'Empathy: Why it Matters and How to Get it.' 2014 (First edition titled Empathy: A Handbook for Revolution.'  
<http://www.amazon.com/Empathy-Handbook-Revolution-Roman-Krzarnic-ebook/dp/B00FAXJJHM>  
 (Accessed 4 March 2016)
69. In evidence to the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Ms Doyle was asked why the licence for Riverview, (one of four institutions run by the Salvation Army for wards of the state) was not removed given clear concerns. She said that the responsible Minister was reluctant to move against an institution run by any religious organisation, whether it was the Anglicans, the Catholics or The Salvation Army.  
 'Report of Case Study No. 5: The response of The Salvation Army to child sexual abuse at its boys homes in New South Wales and Queensland'.  
 17 March 2015, p.61.  
<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2015-03/royal-commission-releases-findings-on-the-salvation>  
 (Accessed 29 February 2016).
70. In evidence to the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Cardinal George Pell said that views held in the 1970's and 1980s in Ballarat in relation to disclosures of child sexual abuse were, "generally not to believe the child."  
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/in-depth/royal-commission/george-pell-testifies-from-rome-for-abuse-royal-commission/news-story/76586670c699496b9ddf160dfc5a8c55>  
 (Accessed 29 February 2016).