



ACCSA

Convenor & Project Worker Report 2015

During the past year the Australian Children's Contact Services Association has continued to be proactive as an information provider, communication conduit and advocate for better resourcing and responsible government oversight of the CCS sector.

The Association received no funding assistance during this period and operated with minimal paid hours and many volunteer hours.

With the assistance of Project Worker, ACCSA has:

- Convened another successful and well attended ACCSA National Training and Networking Forum. The Forum was conducted in Glenelg in March 2015, and was attended by over 100 Children's Contact Services practitioners. The feedback received from this event again confirmed the high value attendees place upon both the training provided and the opportunity to compare and discuss practice processes and issues with those from other services.
- Continued to lobby the AGD's for the government accreditation of all CCS services. Conversations and emails have been steadily flowing back and forth with regard to this matter. To date the Government are not prepared to engage in the regulation of the sector.
- Maintained a full and nationally representative Board of Management which includes members from each State and Territory and four

General Representatives. For the first time in ACCSA history there has also been representation from the privately operated CCS sector.

- Convened monthly meetings with the Board to discuss sector and operational practice development issues and concerns.
- Maintained a healthy membership base, with a majority of both funded and private services being associated.
- Maintained and administered the website. The Association's site has become a first point of call for those wanting information about, and communication with, the Australian CCS sector. The ACCSA website logged over 90,000 pages views during the 2015 calendar year.
- Engaged with those who are planning to operate a private CCS. ACCSA receives regular communications from those who are considering or intending to operate a for profit service. In the absence of any regulation the Association encourages membership and exposure to the range of better practice based information and resources that ACCSA produces. A phone consultation also takes place to explore both the responsibilities attached to operating a CCS and the types of environments required to adequately supervise high conflict families.
- ACCSA representatives met and communicated with the Youth and Child Committee of the Law Institute of Victoria, the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia, the Queensland Family Law Practitioner's Association and Family Violence Victoria on the matter of the lack of CCS regulation.
- ACCSA made a written submission to the Vic Royal Commission into Family Violence as a means of further identifying the concerns about vulnerable families being referred to unaccredited services.
- Produced a paper for the Australian Institute of Family Studies on CCS regulation and the national framework.
- Submitted comments and recommendation for changes to the Revision of Guidelines between Family Law Court and CCSs.

- Provided CCS related research information to the Chief Justice of the Family Court.
- Submitted a proposal to the Attorney-General's Department for the development of a comprehensive online CCS data base. This proposal contends that, in the current absence of regulation, clear and detailed information needs to be available for those referring families to a CCS. The AGD has indicated that they will pilot this project over an eighteen month period starting in mid 2016.

The year ahead will see us working on the online data base, with the cooperation of all services we hope this will provide a much more efficient way for refers to choose the most suitable service for their needs.

We will continue to lobby for regulation with the intent of professionalising the sector so that all who use the services are equally provided with safe, efficient and respectful services.

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