

# Forged in the fires of advocacy

## – the Australian Childhood Foundation timeline

**1986**

On October 6, the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (VicSPCAN) is 'forged in the fires of advocacy,' says our CEO, Joe Tucci.

**1988**

VicSPCAN's first publication, *Victoria's Protective Services: Dual Track and Double Standards*, the book by Prof Chris Goddard based on his paper of the same name, has major impact. Media attention spurs radical reform of Victoria's child protection system, including establishment of a central register, a 24-hour crisis service, additional funding and staffing and the abolition of the tragically flawed 'dual track' approach.

**1991**

Our first specialist trauma centre is established, providing counselling and support to children who have suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse. We have a staff of just one full-time worker and one part-time worker.

**1992**

VICSPCAN takes on a national focus and changes name to Australians Against Child Abuse. Pioneers in the field of child advocacy and protection, police surgeon Dr Robert Birrell and paediatrician Dr John Birrell, are our first patrons.

**1995**

Pioneer the first therapeutic program in Australia for children under the age of 12 years who engaged in problem sexual behaviour.

**1998**

Win the Australian Institute of Criminology National Violence Prevention Award for our efforts to prevent child abuse.

**2001**

Advocate for establishment of National Sex Offenders Register and compulsory Working with Children Checks.

**2001**

Launch and roll out national Every Child Is Important campaign with the support of singers Van Morrison and Rod Stewart. Over 1.5 million booklets are distributed to parents across Australia.

**2002**

Now have 14 staff and an operating budget of \$1 million.

**2003**

Change our name to Australian Childhood Foundation to reflect our status as an organisation with multiple and complex approaches to addressing the issue of child abuse across Australia.

Release *Tolerating Violence Against Children* - a report tracking community attitudes to child abuse in Australia



## 2004

Pioneer Australia's first trauma-informed Therapeutic Foster Care Program in collaboration with Anglicare Victoria and Department of Human Services Victoria.

Release *Do Not Turn Away* tracking Tasmanian community attitudes about child abuse and child protection.

## 2005

Win National Child Protection Award.

Release *The Changing Face of Parenting* report, tracking attitudes of parents in contemporary Australia.

## 2006

Pioneer the application of the emerging field of the neuroscience of trauma to providing therapeutic services for children affected by abuse and family violence.

Release *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* report on community attitudes to child abuse and child protection in Australia.

Release *Every Child Needs a Hero*, a report tracking Australian children's attitudes and concerns about childhood.

## 2007

The Foundation is instrumental in the introduction of Cody's Law in Victoria, which is designed to ensure child homicide offenders are jailed for much closer to the maximum 20-year term. The law is named in honour of 5-year-old Cody Hutchings who died violently at the hands of his stepfather.

## 2007

Establish Child Abuse Research Australia (CAPRA), a major research centre, in partnership with the School of Primary Health Care, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University.

## 2008

With Monash University and Access Economics, we release a report, *The Cost of Child Abuse in Australia*, that finds that child abuse costs taxpayers up to \$30 billion

## 2008

Our Fresh Start Therapeutic Foster Care program is established in Adelaide in partnership with Anglicare SA and funded by Families SA.

## 2008

In partnership with Anglicare Victoria, we secure funding to pilot specialist therapeutic residential care programs in two metropolitan regions of Melbourne.

## 2008

Launch our national Stop Child Abuse Now prevention campaign.

## 2009

Establish Child Trauma Services in Hobart, Launceston, Canberra and Adelaide, our first outside of Victoria.

## 2009

Merge with the Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations (ACCYO) to deliver the Safeguarding Children Program for child-based organisations.

Develop model of Family Violence Counselling Treatment Services for children and Young people for Tasmanian Government.

## 2010

Become a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and offer Australia's first Vocational Qualification in Developmental Trauma for health, welfare, education and legal professionals working with abused children.

## 2010

Establish therapeutic services in Perth in collaboration with WA agencies.

## 2010

Establish TRaCK, a Therapeutic Foster Care program in Canberra, in partnership with Barnardos and the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Release *Doing Nothing Harms Children* report on community attitudes to child abuse and child protection in Australia

## 2011

Present submission to inquiries in Tasmania and Victoria about improving child protection systems.

## 2012

Present submission to Victorian Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations.

- Commence partnerships in Northern Territory, working with Aboriginal children and their families.

## 2013

The Foundation has Child Trauma Centres in 6 states and territories and provides education and prevention programs nationally.

Present submission to the development of the ACT Out-of-Home Care Strategy.

## 2014

Host our inaugural International Child Trauma Conference to educate, inspire and empower 2000 delegates to support traumatised children towards recovery.

## 2015

Present submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Present submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

## 2016

We have 130 staff providing trauma-informed therapy and care for children, professional education and training, safeguarding children, parenting support, community engagement and fundraising across Australia to protect children and support their recovery from the trauma of abuse, neglect and family violence.



*of safety  
and support*



Australian Childhood Foundation