



National Child Protection Alliance National Child Protection Alliance

in association with the National Council for Children Post Separation

Annual Report 2017 – 2018 **from the Chair, Niki Norris, AM**

Dear Members

It's time for the Annual Report once again and I can assure you it's been an extremely busy and productive year.

We are proud to say that our efforts played a big part in bringing about the current major review of the Family Law Act and systems. This progress does not mean we can step back and slow down. Quite the opposite and we must now intensify our efforts and accept whatever the workload may be, as the Australian Law Reform Commission is now calling for our views on the new proposals in a new submission due mid November. Our views and suggestions will then again be considered and will help to create the quite crucial new amendments which will be formally announced on March 31st 2019.

July 2017 – we now have the support of quite powerful groups of supportive women from the National Council of Women NSW (NCW), Soroptimists and the Country Women's Association. I addressed the NCW NSW group and submitted two resolutions at their Triennial Conference in Canberra (Oct. 17, 18 & 19, 2018).

August/September 2017 – attended various functions and meetings, including Senators Cori Bernardi and Arthur Sinodinus and the Department of Families & Communities.

October 2017 – supported ten years old boy in a police interview. The outcome was excellent and he and his siblings have been safe since then.

November 2017 – We had various meetings including one with a new member who conducted research on experiences and outcomes of DV and child abuse victims in our cases and others.

December 2017 – as expected, December is a quieter month for us as far as meetings are concerned.

January 2018 – Meeting with the Federal Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Commissioner

February 2018 – Meetings and court support for a couple of cases.

March 2018 – Court support, lawyers meeting and others and Family Law Conference.

April 2018 – met with young lady to discuss ways to progress our younger group, ‘Young People Against Child Abuse’.

May 2018 - attended a webinar on Child, Family and Community issues. Attended a full day conference on Family Law and DV and supported victims in court issues.

June 2018 – attended meeting with the NSW Victims of Crime Commissioner and the Interagency Forum. Very soon after this meeting, Charles Pragnell and I were invited to another meeting with the Commissioner, where we were given the opportunity to explain our concerns more fully. This month also brought a lengthy teleconference with the Law Reform and Policy Coordinator of Women’s Legal NSW. Also court support and meetings with lawyers.

We would like to express our gratitude to Lee Evans, State Member for Heathcote, for his ongoing support in all our endeavours to protect children, and for his recent action in taking our concerns to the Police Commissioner and the Attorney-General of NSW, and our thanks also to Federal Member for Hughes, Craig Kelly. Both Lee and Craig have shown unlimited support for victims in our cases and have lobbied other MPs on our behalf.

Our Vice Chairman, Charles Pragnell and I, take very little time off throughout the year and our hard work over long hours has led to very good progress. We are feeling confident that, in March 2019, when the new amendments will be announced, we may see legislative changes we know to be crucial.

Charles is constantly being called upon for his advice and guidance, dealing with cases in Victoria and interstate. We have several cases in far north Queensland and also Brisbane, and I am more than grateful that he somehow manages to take time to help me with cases that need his expertise.

Our Public Officer, Johnny Pace, is to be thanked for his flow of donations which help us so much. He is constantly addressing Probus Club meetings and spreading the word as well as raising funds.

We now have collection boxes at a number of venues in Victoria and NSW which help with operating costs.

We would also like to thank the mothers who make regular direct deposits into the NCPA account to help us cover some of the costs, and ask that perhaps more of you might follow their lead in this wonderful expression of support, which helps so much. Other leaders of organisations cannot believe that we manage without funding.

I'd personally like to thank the dear mothers who have come with me and spoken in meetings, and the children who have met with and explained their stories to the Federal Commissioner for Children. Words cannot express my deep gratitude.

We now have a new Webmaster, Paul Murphy, and we thank Phil Smith for his years of pro bono service which is so much appreciated. Paul is working on a new website that will be up and running soon and which will include interactive membership/donation forms, direct debit facility and automatic generation of tax deductible receipts.

On behalf of the NCPA Executive I thank you for your loyalty and support and hope that you decide to continue to ride along with us, on this never ending journey for children.

Nicolette Norris AM

Chair, National Child Protection Alliance Inc.