

**Post
Placement
Support
Service**



Post Placement Support Service Annual Report 2011-2012



Strong families in kinship care, permanent care and adoption

President's report

The Post Placement Support Service is approaching its tenth official anniversary in early January 2013 and we will formally celebrate this decade next year. It has been a significant journey for many of us. We began as an enthusiastic group of volunteer parents and professionals who initiated a service with very limited donated funds in 2003 – and we now have a professionally run organisation which has been funded by a consortium of philanthropic organisations within the ANZ umbrella. Our CEO, Jennifer Duncan, joined us in January 2012 and, together with our wonderful staff, has achieved a great deal this year.

In 2002 we came together to share our stories of raising children in adoption, permanent care, kinship care and foster care; and to plan for a service which would provide support for parents, carers and their children.

We have come a long way in these past ten years. However, we have never lost our primary (and passionate) commitment which has always been to support parents and carers so that they in turn are better able to nurture the children in their families. We do this through education and training, and through group and individual support.

This year, PPSS continued to play an important role in supporting families and children. From our resource centre in Flemington we:

- Continued to deliver much-needed support programs such as Journal Club, the Carer Information Support Service, and our specialist referral and telephone information services
- Established new service and training programs, such as our popular Let's Talk programs for parents, carers and professionals
- Welcomed 135 new members to PPSS.

I warmly acknowledge, as always, the many volunteers who have supported us – we genuinely could not do it without you. Our ongoing thanks are due to Alice Macdougall of Freehills who has consistently provided us with pro bono legal assistance since 2003.

Finally many thanks to the 2011-12 members of the PPSS Board for the work, passion and commitment that each of them has brought to this organisation. It is always a privilege to work with such a dynamic group. I particularly want to thank retiring Board members Chris Cook, Anne Farrelly (both founding members), Moira Schulze and Judy Thompson. Our continuing Board members are Chris Lockwood, Charlie Salloum, Emily Cheesman, Amanda Stone, Amanda Everton, Jenny Conrick and Dan Barron. We have been fortunate that we have attracted a number of highly qualified and enthusiastic people who have applied to join the Board for the 2012-13 year. We welcome you all and look forward to working with you.

Cas O'Neill, President

Treasurer's report

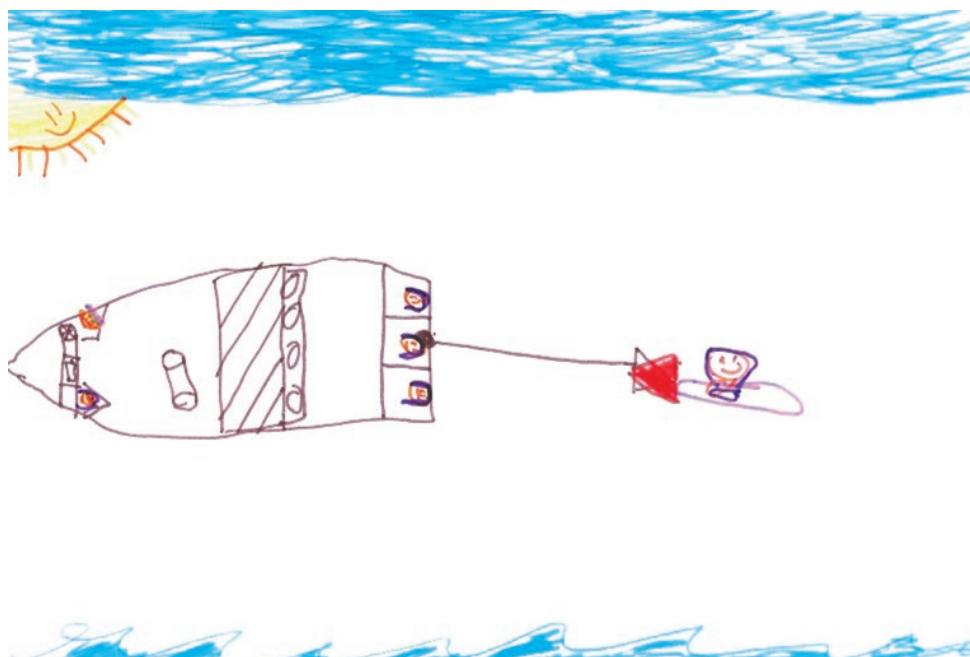
The 2011-2012 financial year finished with a strong balance sheet with equity in the order of over \$146,228. This was mainly due to: the continued strong support from our key funders the William Buckland Foundation, the Truby and Florence Williams Charitable Trust, the Alfred Felton Bequest and the Collie Foundation, managed by ANZ Trustees; income generated from PPSS training programs, such as *Let's Talk*; consultancy fees; and prudent management of resources by the CEO and staff.

Within this, expenses were significantly up on the previous 2010-2011 year but well within budget, signifying activity more in line with expectations and our strategic plan.

The adjustment to the size of our equity as compared with the previous year's report was due to a return to accrual-based accounting, to ensure an accurate reflection of our liability in relation to funds received but not yet expended in implementation of the PPSS forward strategic plan (2012-2015). 2012-2013 will also see a strengthened focus by the management and Board on strategies to achieve financial sustainability in the medium to long term beyond the current funding agreements in place.

PPSS holds a strong financial position at the end of the 2011-2012 year and expects to consolidate this in the coming year with prudent management and focus on growth and sustainability.

Charlie Salloum, Treasurer



Board and staff

Thank you to the skilled and dedicated volunteer Board that provides PPSS with strategic leadership and ensures the delivery of high quality services to our members:

Cas O'Neill – President and member of the Executive and Governance Committee

Moira Schulze – Vice President and member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Chris Lockwood – Secretary and Chair of the Executive and Governance Committee

Charlie Salloum – Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Dan Barron – member of the Strategy and Programs Committee

Emily Cheesman – former Chair and member of the Strategy and Programs Committee

Jenny Conrick – member of the Strategy and Programs Committee

Chris Cook – member of the Strategy and Programs Committee

Mandy Everton – member of the Executive and Governance Committee

Anne Farrelly – member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Judy Thompson – member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (resigned May 2012)

Thanks also to: Patricia McNamara, who sat on the Board in the financial year and resigned prior to the 2011 AGM; and to Mary Natoli and Sam Szoke-Burke, volunteer members of the Strategy and Programs Committee throughout the 2011-12 year.



L-R: Jenny Conrick, Dan Barron, Amanda Stone, Cas O'Neill (President), Charlie Salloum (Treasurer), Chris Lockwood (Secretary), Moira Schulze (Vice President).

Our thanks for the professionalism, commitment and outstanding work of the staff who worked at PPSS in 2011-12, including:

Jennifer Duncan – Chief Executive Officer

Lindy Bok – Programs Manager, Training and Education

Erica Thompson – Programs Manager, Members and Support

Deborah Hunt – Office Manager/Events and Communications Officer

Michele Lazinchuk – Office Manager

A very special thanks to President, Cas O'Neill, who volunteered in the role of Acting CEO during a period of organisational transition at the end of 2011. Special mention also to Beth Laister, coordinator in 2011-12 of the Carers Information Support Service that is jointly delivered by PPSS with the Foster Care Association of Victoria.

Our thanks to those former staff who worked with us in the financial year, including: Janet Elefsiniotis; Andrew Minge; Juliette Borenstein; Jackie Cameron; Maureen Campion; Genine Clements; and Kathleen Williamson.



L-R: Deborah Hunt, Michele Lazinchuk, Lindy Bok, Erica Thompson, Jennifer Duncan

Service highlights from 2011-12

This year, the Post Placement Support Service continued its work to provide high quality services to children and families connected in kinship care, permanent care and adoption, and those professionals who work with them.

Supporting parents and carers in kinship care, permanent care and adoption to be confident and skilled in their role

In July 2011, PPSS hosted the formal opening of the Post Placement Resource Centre at 135 Mt Alexander Road. The centre forms the hub of all PPSS operations, including the PPSS offices and many of our events, and incorporates the PPSS library from which members can borrow either in person or via post.

In December 2011 PPSS launched its revised and updated website, a source of current information, links, resources and references for families and professionals in relation to kinship care, permanent care and adoption. The PPSS website incorporates our ongoing calendar of events, through which families and professionals can find out about and register for PPSS training, workshops and more.

PPSS has continued to deliver its newsletter to members throughout the year, connecting parents, carers and workers in the sector to resources and information about services and support relevant to the needs of kinship, permanent care and adoptive families. Newsletter frequency has been increased to eight newsletters per year; newsletters and other notices continue to be posted by mail to those members without email access.



Throughout the year, PPSS continued to deliver high quality training to parents and carers, including:

- *The First Years of Adoptive Parenting* delivered through the Intercountry Adoption Service (ICAS), addressing the impact of trauma on brain development and attachment and behavioural management for children with a history of loss
- *Meaningful Cultural Connections*, a full-day workshop delivered through ICAS, discussing approaches by adoptive parents to maintain cultural connections for their children and the experiences of adult adoptees in this area
- A three-day series of five training workshops featuring Deb Riley from the Centre for Adoption, Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) in the U.S., jointly sponsored with Families with Children from China (FCC)
- Three workshops on *Let's Talk: About Adoption and Permanent Care*, a new training program to support adoptive and permanent care parents in informing and engaging educators and schools around the experiences and needs of their child(ren), delivered direct to adoptive and permanent care parents
- Eight workshops on *Let's Talk: About Kinship Care*, another new program tailored to the needs of kinship care families in informing and engaging educators and schools around the experiences and needs of children in kinship care, delivered to kinship carers through the supported networks operating in metropolitan and regional areas.

In addition to the *Let's Talk* training program, PPSS has developed two separate *Let's Talk* publications for parents and carers to share with their schools. One of these has been written for permanent care and adoptive parents and was launched in February; the publication for kinship carers is still in development and will be completed before the end of 2012.

These publications provide information around the experiences and needs of children in adoption, permanent care and kinship care. They have been informed by members' own experiences with schools and are designed to increase educators' insights into the needs of children and how they can introduce sensitive and therapeutic approaches within the classroom in response to these.

In 2011-2012, PPSS also continued to deliver support for the Carers Information Support Service (CISS) through its partnership with the Foster Care Association of Victoria. Now four years old, in 2011-12 the CISS responded to 743 queries and concerns from kinship carers, permanent carers, adoptive parents and foster carers; this is almost 1.6 times the number of calls received by the CISS in 2008-9. Over the period of its operation, the top four issues reported to CISS by parents and carers have been:

- Agency-related issues, such as relationships between agencies, workers and carers
- Department of Human Services (DHS) entitlements, particularly in the area of information regarding caregiver and expenses reimbursements
- DHS issues (non-entitlements), including case planning, relationships and access to information
- Permanent care and adoption, with a dominant focus on difficulties in accessing all forms of support following placement.

In 2012, PPSS delivered time-limited support groups for grandparent kinship carers in the Melton Shire and in Moonee Valley. The Melton support group comprised a series of six sessions delivering information, education, support and resources to carers. Through our negotiation with community service organisations operating related programs in the Melton region, many PPSS Melton support group members successfully transitioned to other, ongoing kinship carer support programs local to the area.

Our Moonee Valley program successfully delivered two stand-alone events for grandparent kinship carers; the first focussed on information and advice for kinship carers and the second was delivered as a celebratory and supportive event with information and workshops particularly relevant to grandparent carers.

Journal Club continued its monthly meetings in Collingwood. In addition to the regular participants at Journal Club, many other PPSS members connect to the group remotely through regular reading of the journal articles distributed via the Journal Club flyers. Topics addressed this year were:

- Culture and religion ... what do we pass on to our children?
- Name, culture, religion etc ... how much should we change for our children – and how much should they change for us?
- Young people in adoption and foster care becoming parents themselves
- Funny strategies for managing challenging behaviours
- Unconventional strategies for promoting positive behaviours and negotiation skills
- What works in therapy?
- Do our children take up more of our time than other children?
- Favourite books on adoption, permanent care, kinship care or foster care
- Our children need to join with us and also make sense of having another family – how do they do this?
- How do our children cope with adolescence?

Family Days were hosted at the Collingwood Children's Farm in November 2011 and Scienceworks for the Wallace and Gromit exhibition in May 2012. These were very popular events, providing families with the opportunity to connect with other families and establish new links and networks of support. Our May event at Scienceworks, attended by over 130 parents, carers and children, was booked out within a fortnight of its announcement.



PPSS continued to support and promote playgroups for families in the northern, western, southern and greater western areas, providing parents and carers with an opportunity to develop networks, and to share information while the children have fun. Playgroups are open to all interested families, no matter where they live, and are publicised through the PPSS newsletter.

In June, PPSS hosted what it hopes will become the first of many evening events for members. This event featured PPSS member, Helen Lenga, who spoke about her Gong Shi project in which she works with staff and carers at Chinese orphanages to assist them in better understanding and responding to the psychological and care needs of children.

Also in June, PPSS commenced the process of significantly growing its therapist database to include more practitioners with appropriate knowledge and professional competence in matters relating to kinship care, permanent care and adoption. Over the coming year, this therapist information service will continue to expand and increase its geographic coverage to help connect families with relevant therapists in their local area.

Helping individual practitioners and the systems within which they operate to better meet the needs of children and families in kinship care, permanent care and adoption

In August, PPSS convened a roundtable on behalf of the Respite Care Research Consortium and co-sponsored and moderated the *Forever Families* seminar at the University of Melbourne, featuring international speaker Professor Peter Pecora as well as many local authorities in the field.

PPSS continued its innovative and unique *Mirror Families* project, working with a diverse range of community service organisations to support their implementation of the *Mirror Families* model within their programs. This included: training for community service organisations on implementation of the *Mirror Families* model; participation on the *Mirror Families* reference groups for Odyssey House Victoria (OHV) and Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service; and other intensive supports and advice to a broad range of *Mirror Families* projects.

Mirror Families was widely promoted within the sector in Victoria as well as interstate. Following a presentation on the model to the Statewide Kinship Services Network, *Mirror Families* has attracted particular interest from agencies providing support to kinship carer networks. A joint workshop on the implementation and impact of *Mirror Families* was held in partnership with OHV in October 2011.

Also in October, 2011, PPSS delivered training for professionals *Mental health issues for adopted children and teens*. In the first half of 2012, PPSS delivered three sessions of *Intercountry Adoption and the Implications on Schooling*, a program for ICAS staff and private contract workers regarding the effects of disruption and trauma on children's behavioural and educational development and how this relates to schooling.

Throughout the year, PPSS undertook the role of lead agency for the Kinship Respite Research Project under the auspices of the Respite Care Research Consortium. In particular, this involved undertaking much of the agency interview and research work for the project regarding the availability of and access to respite care amongst kinship carers. This project resulted in the report *Strengthening Kinship Families: the role of respite care* and a fully-subscribed practice workshop around the report, hosted by the Consortium in May.

PPSS maintained a strong interest in the *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children* Inquiry, following the support provided in the previous year to parents and families wishing to participate in inquiry hearings. PPSS promoted its concerns regarding the need for adequately funded, ongoing supports for children, carers and parents through sector forums and the relevant peak bodies as well as in direct discussion with the Minister's office.

PPSS provided support to the Intercountry Adoption Resource Network (ICARN) by auspicing fundraising to bring social workers from India and the Philippines to attend the National Adoption and Permanent Care Conference, being held in Melbourne in October 2012.

Throughout the year, PPSS ensured representation of the issues and interests of families connected in kinship care, permanent care and adoption through its participation in the following groups:

- Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) network
- Statewide Kinship Services Network
- Intercountry Adoption Service Consultative Group
- Adoption Information Services Forum
- Respite Care Research Consortium
- Carers Information Support Service advisory group
- National Adoption and Permanent Care Conference steering committee and working group
- National Foster and Kinship Care *Strengthening Care* conference reference group.

PPSS will be represented on the programs of the National Adoption and Permanent Care and the National Foster and Kinship Care conferences by Board members Dan Barron and Jenny Conrick.

Supporting children in kinship care, permanent care and adoption through the lifespan of their experience

This strategic objective constitutes a new area of service focus, identified in the strategic planning process held in April 2012. Services are still in the process of establishment, with delivery to commence in the 2012-13 year. We look forward to telling you more about them as they emerge; they will include dedicated programs for children and young people.

In July 2011, as part of the *Mirror Families* project, PPSS held a children's art exhibition displaying artworks completed by children from families supported by Odyssey House Victoria. The exhibition was jointly hosted with Odyssey House and opened by Minister Mary Wooldridge.

In October, as part of five days of workshops and training for PPSS members delivered through C.A.S.E., PPSS hosted the highly successful *WISEUp* program, *Beneath the Mask: Adoption through the eyes of adolescents* and *Talking to your children about adoption*.

In May, PPSS heard from many families regarding the responses from their children to the AFL's statement regarding the status of adoptive children under the father-son rule. PPSS collaborated with VANISH to raise our concerns with the AFL on this matter, resulting in a correction of the AFL's position such that "the AFL Commission, after public discussion earlier this year, has determined that any application under the Father-Son rule for adoptive families / guardianship etc will be treated exactly the same way as all other Father-Son applications".

Building organisational knowledge, capacity and sustainability

In 2011-2012, PPSS formally commenced a rigorous, two-year evaluation project being conducted by Dr Julie Contole and Dr Gaye Mitchell. This project will work to measure the impact and value of PPSS programs and services, to: inform their ongoing improvement and development; and, support PPSS in articulating the value of its work to external stakeholders.

In April 2012, the Board and staff collaborated in a workshop to revise and update the PPSS strategic plan, based on the organisation's learning and development since the first plan was written in 2009. This resulted in a revised strategic plan for the period 2012-2015 available on our website, which will see:

- An explicit focus on children in home-based care and adoption as being at the centre of our work
- A refined focus on families connected in kinship care, permanent care and adoption, in acknowledgement that foster care families receive support from our close collaborator, the Foster Care Association of Victoria, and community services organisations funded to provide client-support to foster carers
- A less dispersed model of service, with the strategies for achieving our strategic objectives offering greater opportunity for more complementary services across our member groups.

PPSS undertook an extensive study to assess the feasibility of establishing a therapeutic service for children and families through the Post Placement Resource Centre. The results of this study were inconclusive and further data is being collected for review in the coming year.

Following a period of staff turn-over, PPSS continued to establish and strengthen its operations from the Post Placement Resource Centre in 2011 and 2012, with expanding education and support services in support of our community.



Volunteer thanks

In addition to the volunteer members of our Board and Strategy and Programs Committee, we give our sincere thanks to the following members who have made a valued contribution to our work this year: Anne, Dassana, Dianne, Doris, Isabella, Maria, Roslyn, and Sandra.

Special mention also goes to: our Board and Strategy and Programs Committee members, Chris Cook, Cas O'Neill and Mary Natoli, who facilitate our monthly and much-loved Journal Club located at Collingwood; Chris Lockwood, Board member and Secretary and also our 'IT guy'; and, Dan Barron, Board member and also volunteer leader of the Northern Allways Playgroup for adoptive and permanent care families promoted through PPSS.

Student placements

We acknowledge the hard work and achievements of those students who have undertaken placements with PPSS throughout the year, including Genine Clements and Cassandra Fraser.

Pro bono support

PPSS also thanks: Freehills, which has continued to deliver generous support through its pro bono legal service for not for profit organisations; and, the Graduate Consulting Group located within the University of Melbourne, which undertook our internal feasibility study into the establishment of a therapeutic service.

Acknowledgement of our funders

The Post Placement Support Service is supported by the William Buckland Foundation, the Truby and Florence Williams Charitable Trust, the Alfred Felton Bequest and the Collie Foundation, managed by ANZ Trustees. Charitable grants received and expended during the year included the State Trustees, Sisters of Charity, the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Collingwood Football Club and Melton Shire Council Community Benefit Program and Moonee Valley Council Community Grants Program.



Independent Auditor's Report

The Members
Post Placement Support Service Inc

We have audited the accompanying special purpose financial statements ("statements") comprising a balance sheet, profit and loss statement and accompanying notes and the statement by the Board of Directors of Post Placement Support Service Inc for the year ended 30 June 2012.

Directors' Responsibility

The Directors have determined that the accounting policies adopted are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 in Victoria and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

The Directors are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the statements in accordance with the accounting policies enumerated in note 1. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and presentation of the statements that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to meet the needs of members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and presentation of the statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accruals basis of accounting.

These statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the members of Post Placement Support Service Inc and should not be distributed to or used by other parties.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

We are independent of the Association and in conducting our audit we have met the independence requirements of the Australian Professional Ethical Standards.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the statements of Post Placement Support Service Inc for the year ended 30 June 2012, gives a true and fair view in accordance with the bases of accounting commonly adopted by similar organisations.



Philip Sulman

2 October 2012

570 Glenhuntly Road
Elsternwick 3185

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

• Prepared • Precise • Proactive

Profit and Loss Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2012		
	30 June 2012	30 June 2011
Income \$		
Consultancy Income	8,136.36	6,409.09
Training Income	17,588.00	10,358.15
Gifts and Donations	880.86	94.41
Grants and Funding	508,991.47	278,103.62
Misc Income	1,199.97	0
Total income \$	536,796.66	294,965.27
Cost of Sales	24,205.13	3,199.21
Gross Profit \$	512,591.53	291,766.06
Expenses \$		
Employment Expenses and Consulting	354,028.43	185,137.78
Fees and Charges	15,636.38	2,198.09
Insurance	12,230.68	2,261.96
ICT	7,875.80	6,878.26
Rent and Utilities	32,820.66	22,485.96
PR, Media, Professional Development, and Meetings	31,895.89	13,642.39
Operating Costs	14,289.43	15,702.46
FCAV Helpline	12,225.45	21,727.27
Dep'n and Other Expenses	3,784.04	4,810.47
Total expenses \$	484,786.76	274,844.64
Interest Income	39,313.92	30,415.25
Net Income for the Year \$	27,804.77	16,921.42

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2012		
	30 June 2012	30 June 2011
Current Assets \$		
Cash Assets	697,925.64	558,829.48
Fixed Assets	10,488.81	12,842.85
Total Assets \$	708,414.45	571,672.33
Current Liabilities		
Deferred Grant Income	548,238.00	477,845.00
Current Tax Liabilities	6,516.61	6,680.00
Other Liabilities	7,431.48	8,037.66
Total Liabilities \$	562,186.09	492,562.66
Net Assets \$	146,228.36	79,109.67
Equity		
Retained Earnings	79,109.67	31,773.00
Current Year Income	67,118.69	47,336.67
Total Equity \$	146,228.36	79,109.67

POST PLACEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

CONFIRMATION BY DIRECTORS

The Directors have determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The Directors declare that:

- 1 The financial statements and notes present fairly the financial position of the Post Placement Support Services Inc. as at 30 June 2012 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
- 2 At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Post Placement Support Services Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors and signed on its behalf by:

Director: Car O'Neill CAR O'NEILL (PRESIDENT)

Director: [Signature] CHARLIE SANDHAM (TREASURER)

Date: 17.10.12

**Post
Placement
Support
Service**



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