

## Welcome to our June 2014 Newsletter



It has been an exciting couple of months with submissions being made to the government on inter-country adoption, and more recently the inquiry into Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren. To view these submissions visit our website [www.pcafamilies.org.au](http://www.pcafamilies.org.au)

We have been invited as witnesses before the Senate Community Affairs Committee to discuss our submission on 'Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren'. An appointment has also been secured with the Shadow Minister for Community Services, Ms Jenny Mikakos. We will be discussing the need for reform to legislation, policy, and practice; and the high need for post placement support services for adoptive and permanent care families.

Our 'Legal Answers for Permanent Care Families Forum' was a huge success, with over 130 people in attendance. We plan to continue our partnership with Peninsula Community Legal Centre to explore training of lawyers, providing legal clinics, and creating workshops for parents/carers wanting to represent themselves. We will also be looking at the relationship between the Children's Court and the Family Court in relation to orders and the implications for carers.

We haven't forgotten our people in regional and country Victoria. **Warrnambool, Geelong, Ballarat, and Bendigo** have been visited by PCA Families, and work is underway to develop partnerships, peer support, and workshops for each of these areas. I will be visiting **Warrnambool on June 3 & 4** and **Ballarat on June 17 & 18**. If any of you would like to meet with me, please phone 9020 1833 for an appointment.

*Have some time to spare?* We'd really like you to think about volunteering for PCA Families. We are looking for people who want to assist with promotion, phone advice, bookstore, events, and peer support. Training and support will be provided. Whether you are in the city or country, contact us by the end of June if you'd like a chat about volunteering possibilities, we'd be delighted to have you on board!

Brenda Carmen- *General Manager*

## Dates for Your Diary

Thursday June 5  
8.00 – 9.30 pm  
**Journal Club, Collingwood**

Thursday June 19— *(new group)*  
7.00 – 9.00 pm  
**Peer support gathering on Peninsula—  
Mornington**

Monday June 23  
10.00 – 11.30 am  
**Journal Club, Werribee**

Thursday June 26  
11.00 – 1.00 pm  
**Presentation to parents and interested people  
on Post Placement Support Services in Britain  
and United States**

Thursday June 26  
5.00 – 7.00 pm  
**Presentation to Professionals on Post  
Placement Support Services in UK and USA**

Friday June 27 *(new group)*  
10.00 – 11.30 am  
**Peer support gathering in East —  
Ringwood**

Thursday July 3  
8.00 – 9.30 pm  
**Journal Club, Collingwood**

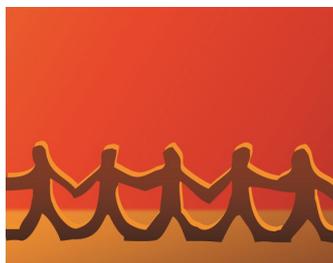
Friday July 4—*Pilot program*  
7.00 – 9.00 pm  
**Parent Session—Tree of Life**

Saturday July 5—*Pilot program*  
10.00 – 3.00 pm  
**Children's Session—Tree of Life**

Saturday July 6—*Pilot program*  
10.00 – 3.00 pm  
**Children's Session—Tree of Life**

Monday July 28  
10.00 – 11.30 am  
**Journal Club, Werribee**

Information including venues and how to RSVP, visit [www.pcafamilies.org.au/event-calendar-](http://www.pcafamilies.org.au/event-calendar-)



## New Directions for Post Placement Support in Permanency—Thursday June 26

In 2010-2011 over 5,000 children in Victoria spent time in out of home care. “Preparing and supporting adoptive and permanent care families both before and after placement not only helps to preserve and stabilize at-risk placements, but also offers children and families the best opportunity for success”.



Over the last decade both Britain and U.S. have focused on increasing the number of children placed permanently each year and both countries offer an array of research-based, educative, and therapeutic services, informed by child development theory, trauma and attachment literature that seek to support children and their new permanent care parents.

Come and hear Jenny Conrick speak about her Vera Scantelbury Brown travelling scholarship to Britain and the US to look at the pre and post placement support services offered to children and their permanent care parents. Jenny is a social worker and current PhD candidate within the Social Work Department at Monash University and she has worked as a clinician and manager in the child and family field for over 30 years.

PCA Families board representatives and permanent care parents will also speak about the current services offered to permanent care parents. All welcome.

### For Parents and interested people

**Date** Thursday June 26 (for parents and interested people)

**Time** 11.00 am—1.00 pm

**RSVP** via <http://www.trybooking.com/EZTH>

**Refreshments served**

**Venue** PCA Families

Level 5, 50 Market Street

Melbourne

### For CEO's and workers in the sector

**Date** Thursday June 26 (for CEO's and workers in the sector)

**Time** 5.00 pm—7.00 pm

**RSVP** via <http://www.trybooking.com/EZTI>

**Refreshments served**

**Venue** PCA Families

Level 5, 50 Market Street

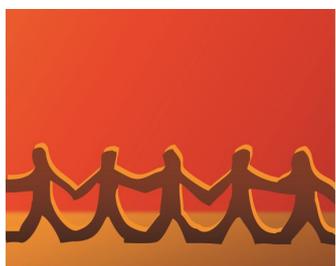
Melbourne

**Parking** Surrounding streets or secure city car parks, visit our [website](#) for details

**Public Transport** very accessible, tram, train, bus

**There is no charge to attend this event**

**For all queries or to register by phone, contact Deborah on 9020 1833 or [info@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au)**



## New Support Group in Eastern Suburbs

PCA Families held our first eastern suburbs peer support group on the morning of Thursday May 29. It was a great turn out and we are hopeful that now we are up and running that others will feel excited and encouraged to join in.

The group decided that we will meet on the fourth Friday of each month from 10.00—11.30 in Ringwood.

Pencil June 27 in your diary and come and meet others who are just like your family. To make it easy for everyone, we will choose an article to discuss each month—this provides a focus for the group but it is not necessary to pre-read the article.

**Meet at 10.00am on June 27 in Ringwood (venue TBC).**

**If you would like to be involved or attend**, please contact Deborah on 9020 1833 or email [info@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcfamilies.org.au)

## New Support Group on Peninsula

Join us on **Thursday June 19 from 7.00—9.00pm** for our inaugural support group in **Mornington**.

Come and meet Kate Forbes an accomplished Mental Health Social Worker who provides expert advice to adoptive and permanent care parents in a relaxed setting. Kate will discuss the complex needs of children who have been adopted or placed in permanent care

The group is tailored to the participants needs and can meet monthly or fortnightly for parents only or parents and children, etc. We are holding the first session in the evening to accommodate working parents who can then decide on the best day and time to meet going forward.

**Meet at 7.00pm on June 19, Mornington Library; Vancouver Street, Mornington.**

**If you would like to be involved or attend**, please contact Deborah on 9020 1833 or email [info@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcfamilies.org.au)

## Parenting Plus!

Don't miss out on this strength's based course which is delivered across four separate modules built around the core challenges of parenting children with early experiences of disrupted attachment and trauma. The sessions explore:

- Impact of early experiences
- Understanding the impact of early experiences
- Models of Therapeutic Parenting
- Tools and strategies
- Triggers for parents and children

**Date** **Thursday** May 15 and May 22  
7.00—10.00pm and  
**Sunday** June 1 and June 15 from  
9.00am—3.30pm

**Venue** Northcote Library,  
32 Separation St, Northcote

**Cost** PCA Families members \$240,  
Concession Card Holders \$150

### Testimonials from parents

*"It is affirming, challenging and ultimately left me feeling empowered, optimistic and energised about parenting".*

*"Don't wait a minute longer before signing up for this course. It has been the most effective, practical course I have ever experienced. It has changed my life and our families for the better".*

# SALE

## PCA Families book sale



# 10% off all books

For the first time ever PCA Families book store is offering **10% discount** on all books **until June 30, 2014**. Our books relate specifically to adoption, permanent and kinship care; from entertaining and educational kids picture books, to the latest non-fiction titles for adults.

All our materials have been lovingly handpicked and reviewed by our team, as well as recommended by our members.

All orders will be placed on receipt of order and delivery will be soon after (unless on back order).

Beyond Consequences Institute titles will be placed on June 10, 2014 and received within fourteen days.



## Legal answers for Permanent Care Families

On April 30, PCA Families together with Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) and Victorian Law Foundation hosted “Legal answers for Permanent Care Families” with Russell Kennedy Lawyers kindly accommodating the forum in their La Trobe Street boardroom.

We launched six fact sheets which can be found on our website at [www.pcafamilies.org.au/fact\\_sheets](http://www.pcafamilies.org.au/fact_sheets), followed by a questions and answer segment.

The first half saw a brief introduction from Gillian and Saskia from PCLC along with Brenda Carmen of PCA Families.

Saskia expanded on how she researched the fact sheets and then the panel took their opportunity to explain their role in the Permanent care system. The panel consisted of Dan Barron, Permanent Care parent; Beth Allen from DHS, Robyn Hamilton, Victoria Legal Aid and His Honour Magistrate Francis Zemlijak from the Children’s Court.

During the second half, parents were given a chance to ask the panel questions. At the conclusion of the forum attendees were invited to provide feedback which is vital to improving our services and understanding what families need. Below is some feedback which arose from the forum:

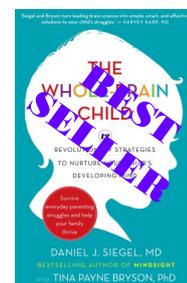
- Encouraged to be involved in all court proceedings
- Contact can be letters, not just face to face
- Wonderful opportunity to speak with other permanent care parents
- All conditions must be included in the PCO for it to be upheld legally
- Needs for better information to be disseminated, such as information to carers regarding the birth family and child
- Streamlining of child protection process to include timeframes for children

If you have any suggested topics that you would like to see covered in our fact sheets, please email [info@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au) or telephone 9020 1833.



## The Whole Brain Child

by Daniel Siegel



The “upstairs brain,” which makes decisions and balances emotions, is under construction until a person is in their mid-twenties. Especially in young children, the right brain and its emotions tend to rule over the logic of the left brain. No wonder kids throw tantrums, fight, or sulk in silence.

This book offers a revolutionary approach to child rearing with twelve key strategies that foster healthy brain development, leading to calmer, happier children. The authors explain—and make accessible—the new science of how a child’s brain is wired and how it matures.

To purchase this book, visit [http://shop.ppss.org.au/search/whole brain child](http://shop.ppss.org.au/search/whole%20brain%20child)

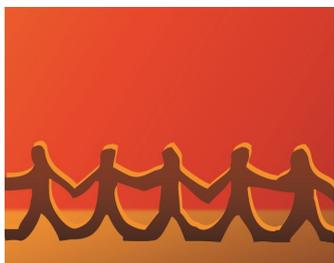
## Tree of Life Program - Pilot

We are delighted to announce our upcoming program specifically designed for children and young people. During this two day program the metaphor of a tree is used as the framework to assist children to explore and speak about aspects of their lives (positive and challenging). The concept was originally developed in South Africa in association with David Denborough (Dulwich Centre, Australia).

The *Tree of Life* framework encompasses: **roots** (where they come from), **ground** (where they live and what they do each day), **trunk** (special skills and abilities), **branches** (hopes and dreams), **leaves** (special people), and **fruit** (gifts).

You will receive more information, via email, in the coming weeks.





## A 'Carers' Perspective on Permanent Care: [Is there a Third Way between Permanent Care and Adoption?](#)

This paper discusses the merits of the Permanent Care system in Victoria, in comparison to other methods of providing permanent families for children unable to live with birth parents. It raises the possibility of a new type of order which would combine the best aspects, for a child and family, of both a Permanent Care Order (PCO) and an Adoption Order.

"If you try telling my 10 year old son that I'm not actually his Dad, but that I'm his 'Permanent Carer', or even his 'Guardian', he would wonder what you were talking about. What is important to him is that he has a real life, genuine, loving, caring Mum and Dad. Even though we are described by the State as 'permanent carers', to our son we are simply his Mum and Dad. He knows we weren't there when he was born, but he knows who he is, where he's come from, and that his Mum and Dad are going to be travelling alongside him to wherever he's going." Click on the [link](#) to read the full article.

*Dan Barron, Permanent Care Parent*

## Australian Birth certificates for intercountry adopted children

For Families with Children who's adoption was finalised in a Hague Convention country, ie. China; you can now apply for an Australian birth certificate registered with Birth, Death's and Marriages for the purposes of obtaining a Victorian Birth Certificate. Please see the link to access the application form.

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/forms-and-templates/registration-of-adoption-application-form>

## Update for Intercountry Adoption [Intercountry Adoption homepage](#)



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department

On 5 May 2014, the Prime Minister and Attorney-General announced the commencement of a new intercountry adoption program with South Africa. South African children in need of adoption have complex medical and health needs. The program will, at least initially, be small. More information about the program can be found on the [South Africa](#) page.

As you are aware, there has been much discussion around reform of Intercountry Adoption at a Federal Level with the Prime Minister implementing an inquiry. Here is the [link](#) if you would like to read the report... [please note the report is not the full report, however this is what has been released to date.]

We are unclear regarding the details of the proposed changes however the key aspects are as follows

- The Commonwealth will assume full responsibility for Intercountry Adoption.
- The Government will look at moving to a single accredited agency (potentially a non-government organisation) to begin operating next year.
- The Commonwealth will work closely with the states to ensure that families with existing applications to adopt children are not disadvantaged.
- Australia will open a new Intercountry Adoption program with South Africa commencing immediately.

## Thank you!

Post Placement Support Service (VIC) Inc. trading as Permanent Care and Adoptive Families thanks its supporters: **The William Buckland Foundation**, **The Collie Foundation**, **The Felton Bequest Committee** and **The Truby & Florence Williams Charitable Trust**, which are managed by **ANZ Trustees**; and **The Jack Brockhoff Foundation**. We depend on your support; donations enable Permanent Care and Adoptive Families to continue to deliver high quality programs in support of families formed through permanent care and adoption. [Please give.](#)