

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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QUICK LINKS

[Click & Connect -
9/2/22](#)

[Journal Club -
3/2/22](#)



News - Board Announcement

The PCA Families Board congratulates the three incumbent directors - Dan Baron, Meredith Carter and Chris Lockwood, who were re-elected by PCA Families members for terms of three years at our recent Annual General Meeting on 27 October, 2021. The Board also acknowledges and greatly appreciates the commitment to PCA Families shown by an additional four nominees, who at this time were not successful. The PCA Families Board for this coming year includes Leslie Annear, Dan Barron, Meredith Carter, Judy Gouldbourn, Roslyn Rule, Chris Lockwood, Kris Peach, Naomi Colville and Sarah Witty.

As our Interim CEO, Amanda Bresnan, has completed her contract, Kris Peach has temporarily taken a leave of absence from the Board to act as our part time Interim CEO until Lisa Milani returns from parental leave next year.

Under the new Constitution the remaining Board members have now elected PCA Families Office Bearers for the coming year as follows:

Chair: Naomi Colville

Deputy Chair: Chris Lockwood

Treasurer: Roslyn Rule

"Delivering trauma-informed services that empower"

News - Board Chair



The Board welcomes Naomi as Chair. As a permanent care parent of a child with special needs, living in rural Victoria, and as an Aboriginal descendent, she is well placed to understand the unique challenges faced by marginalised and, at times, isolated families. With leadership roles in corporate recruitment, disability employment and experience in migrant services and various executive governance roles, Naomi's focus will be on enhancing our stakeholder relationships and advocating on behalf of members. During 2021 Naomi has served as PCA Families Deputy Chair and completed ICDA's Diploma in Governance.

The Board thanks outgoing Chair, Meredith Carter. Meredith has been instrumental in the development of two respected research reports commissioned by PCA Families on the importance of supporting permanent care and adoptive families. Under her leadership as Chair there has been a significant increase in funding from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to administer our service and programs - Flexible Funding, Homestretch and Better Futures. An increase in the Flexible Funding program available to carers, and the certainty of helpline funding obtained through to June 2024 are also achievements of note. Key advocacy outcomes achieved during this time include the expanded eligibility of Homestretch and Better Futures programs to include permanent care young people. Meredith will remain on the Board to continue sharing her lived experience, extensive governance experience and knowledge of the sector.

News - Board Secretary

PCA Families Board is outsourcing the role of Secretary in recognition of the particular skill set and resources required for a growing organisation like PCA Families. The Board thanks the outgoing Secretary, Chris Lockwood and Jaclyn Letts, who have provided significant support to both the Board and its Executive Committee as a volunteer over the past two years.

PCA Families is always interested in hearing from people keen to volunteer and gain governance experience – we intend to establish an advisory committee and to establish other project specific sub committees and welcome expressions of interest.

Please contact the Chair at Chair@pcafamilies.org.au



News - Outgoing Chair



Dear members and friends of PCA Families

You are the heart of PCA Families and the reason we exist. I'd like to thank you all for your support this year - a tough one as we all know for everyone. I hope that PCA Families has been part of what has enabled you and your family to get through it. I know our staff have worked incredibly hard to get the Flexible Funding out to our community and also to develop new and creative ways of delivering support. I especially loved the podcasts this year and that we could offer retreats to some of our families.

Proud to highlight the importance of permanency

The whole board is very proud of the increasing profile and attention to the needs of permanent carers that we have been able to achieve in these last few years. In particular it seems there is increased recognition that families who offer permanent care and adoption to children and young people who cannot live with their birth parents are actually performing a role on behalf of the state. These children would otherwise be living in arrangements that are not stable or permanent. The impact on both their life outcomes and on the state itself is increasingly understood to not be good. At the same time the evidence that stable, permanent families deliver positive outcomes is increasingly well known. In that light I'm also really pleased to see that support extended beyond age 18 through Home Stretch, helping to ensure young people can stay in their permanent care families.

Grateful for your support

I am really grateful for the support given to current board members including me returned at two elections this year. After four years, I have stepped down as Chair, in what will be my last term on the Board. I am pleased to report that Naomi Colville is the incoming Chair.

Keen to promote your priorities

We are keen to take advantage of your creative ideas for strategic advocacy and action. Member engagement will be particularly important to the Board's decisions about how to prioritise the recommendations from the research report Permanence and Stability we recently launched. This is especially important in an election year at both state and federal levels. If you haven't checked out the report and recommendations yet have a look at them here. More advice on ways to contribute will be coming up however please feel free to share your views with any of our staff or board members.

And hope you have a relaxing festive season

Finally, I've got fingers crossed that interstate members of my family will make it here for the festive season - our plans last year went completely out the window! I do hope you will be able to catch up with friends and family for fun times without too much stress.

Meredith Carter, Outgoing Chair

News - Children's Vaccinations

Children aged 5 to 11 will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations from 10 January 2022. This includes 5-year-olds attending early childhood education and care services.

The vaccine is one-third of the adult dose and will be delivered at 2 appointments, expected to be 8 weeks apart. The time between the 2 doses can be shortened in special circumstances, such as in an outbreak response or for international travel.

The Victorian Government aims to enable all children aged 5 to 11 to receive at least one vaccine dose before the end of January 2022,

See the detailed booking information, which includes eligibility at general practices and pharmacies [here](#).



News - Vaccine Podcast

Margie Danchin, from the Murdoch Research Institute is an immunisation expert with more than 10 years of vaccine research and clinical work. She answers common questions about vaccines for children and others in this podcast [here](#).

News - Covid Positive

If you are unfortunate enough to be Covid Positive,

1. During our office closure from 25 December to 4 January, support is available [here](#)
2. If at other times, please make this clear on your Flexible Funding Application and provide a copy of your positive notification so that we can prioritise your application. We can provide assistance with groceries and other essentials if needed.

News - Safety Tip

Reportedly 26,000 people have a cardiac arrest each year in Australia. Only 1,400 survive. So why not learn CPR? And the best bit, some of your favourite songs are the best for counting chest compressions. Songs like Staying Alive!! See the article and detailed CPR instructions [here](#).



Click and Connect - 2022 Plans

We recently reviewed the 2020 Click and Connect topics with our regulars and we were pleased to hear they continue to value the small meeting format online, where information and resources are shared in an easy to digest format in an hour each fortnight. We will be returning in 2022 with a mixed format approach from looking at books and articles, to reviewing podcasts and alternative websites, in addition to having a topical focus. We will maintain a focus on trauma informed advantaged thinking on a fortnightly basis, led by an advisor. Peer content will be shared to learn from each other and to share the challenges of the lived experience.

Future dates for 2022 include: Wednesday's 9 February, 23 February, 9 March, 23 March, 6 April, 4 May, 18 May, 1 June, 15 June, 20 July, 3 August, 17 August, 31 August, 14 September, 12 October, 26 October, 9 November, 23 November, 7 December. All welcome. Links to these Zoom meetings are on the [website](#).

Alternative face to face peer connection meetings are also expected to resume in 2022 and we will advise more about that next year. If you have any suggestions regarding future Click and Connect meeting topics or the structure of these meetings, please email sonia@pcafamilies.org.au

Journal Club - 2022 Dates

Journal Club has finished for 2021 and we now have dates for your diary for 2022: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3 and December 1



Flexi-Funds

A reminder that PCA Families has Flexible Funding available to meet the extraordinary needs of children and young people subject to a Permanent Care Order, or where you are receiving DFFH care allowance and have a Family Court Order or Special Needs Adoption Order.

Flexi funds can be used for therapeutic, educational and medical services, to build skills, interests or attachment, to elevate family contact and cultural identity, to offer respite, home medication or other services like whitegoods, one off clothing, estate planning or vehicle needs eg car seats.

[For details about what the funds can be used for - see here](#)

PCA Families cannot guarantee we are able to fund every application and request received.

PCA Families access to COVID-19 funding support will cease at the end of 2021.

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