



## Message from Brenda Welcome to PCAF *Thrive* Spring edition

Dear Members

Wonderful news has been received that the Helpline will continue with government funding for another three years which will take us up to 2021. We have been advised that this year the Flexible Funding Service will receive \$2 million dollars to assist permanent care families.

We have a lot happening over the months of September and October. Spaces are still available in our training workshops; Life Story Work for professionals on 6 September and Life Story Work for parents and carers on 9 September. Our Children's Program, Mindfulness in Motion has evidenced great success. I highly recommend you consider registering your child/ren for the final term.

Our outreach and peer support services continue through Spring to Warrnambool and Horsham, with Frankston starting a new group.

We are happy to organise an individual appointment in those areas if you would like to chat privately. Our service is totally professional and confidential.

My condolences to all who have experienced the loss of a loved one or significant person in your life. Our advisor Liz Powell has prepared some advice for you in this newsletter, *see page 9*.

Journal club in Collingwood will be running the next session on "How to stop yelling at your children". Great title don't you think?

At the October Journal Club I will be the guest speaker running a session on Youth and Family Mediation. I will be discussing my past experience as a mediator, and how to use mediation as a tool in resolving conflict with your children and teenagers. You will get to see mediation in action via role play and possibly have a good laugh; I hope you can attend. The October Journal Club will be at the usual time of 8.00pm to 9.30pm on the first Thursday of the month.

Read Vin's invitation to "Adoptee Dinner Out in Melbourne" and see your invitation to our AGM on the last page; it would be great to meet you on our night of celebration!

Regards

Brenda Carmen—CEO

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# Board recruitment

One of the key areas of focus in our Strategic Plan is the development of a stronger member engagement strategy. So the Board is delighted to have received such a strong response from members following our request in the Winter Newsletter for expressions of interest from those interested in the governance of our organisation.

We are currently particularly seeking members with qualifications and skills in the areas of **accountancy**, **marketing** or **fundraising** and preferably also with prior experience in governance to join the Board. However it is clear that many Permanent Care and Adoptive Families' members are seeking to engage more closely with the Board and to influence our direction.

In light of that, our succession plan for the Board involves interested persons joining a subcommittee to gain closer experience prior to potentially joining the Board itself. We are delighted that a number of members will be joining the Board's Marketing and Fundraising Committee and helping us review data about what members would like us to focus on. This will not only inform our marketing and fundraising strategies but will also help flesh out our strategic advocacy and member engagement strategy.

We will keep you informed as this work progresses. Meanwhile if you want to be more engaged with Permanent Care and Adoptive Families, especially if you do have formal **accountancy**, **marketing** or **fundraising** qualifications and expertise, there is still time to get in touch. Please email a short resume to [info@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcfamilies.org.au) which will then be forwarded to President, Meredith Carter. If you would like to talk to Meredith regarding these positions, please contact her on 0400 511 763.

## DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN:

- ACCOUNTING
- MARKETING *or*
- FUNDRAISING?

## Parenting Tip#1

**What you think and feel is more important than what you say in how your child responds.**

Kids will do almost anything we request if we make the request with a loving heart. Find a way to say YES instead of NO even while you set your limit.

*"YES, it's time to clean up, and YES I will help you and YES we can leave your tower up and YES you can growl about it and YES if we hurry we can read an extra story and YES we can make this fun and YES I adore you and YES how did I get so lucky to be your parent? YES!"* Your child will respond with the generosity of spirit that matches yours.

# What's on

Tuesday September 4  
12.15pm – 1.45pm  
**Peer support – Frankston**

Thursday September 6  
9.30am – 1.30pm  
**Life Story Work for professionals – CBD**

Thursday September 6  
8.00pm – 9.30pm  
**Journal Club – Collingwood**

Sunday September 9  
10.00am – 2.00pm  
**Life Story Work for parents & carers - CBD**

Thursday September 13  
10.00am – 11.30pm  
**Peer support – Warrnambool**

Thursday October 4  
8.00pm – 9.30pm  
**Journal Club – Collingwood**  
**TOPIC: Youth and Family Mediation**

Monday October 15  
12.30pm – 2.30pm  
**Peer support – Horsham**

Tuesday October 16  
5.20pm – 6.15pm  
**Mindfulness in Motion**

Wednesday October 24  
6.30pm – 8.30pm  
**Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday October 30  
5.20pm – 6.15pm  
**Mindfulness in Motion**

Thursday November 1  
8.00pm – 9.30pm  
**Journal Club – Collingwood**

Tuesday November 13  
5.20pm – 6.15pm  
**Mindfulness in Motion**

Tuesday November 20  
5.20pm – 6.15pm  
**Mindfulness in Motion**

Tuesday November 27  
5.20pm – 6.15pm  
**Mindfulness in Motion**

Thursday December 6  
8.00pm – 9.30pm  
**Journal Club – Collingwood**

# Permanent care

## Boosting services for permanent carers

Permanent carers provide a stable and secure family life for children who cannot live with their own families.

That is why Minister Mikakos was pleased to announce an additional \$2 million in funding for the continuation of flexible support packages to existing permanent carers, to cover expenses for things like educational, health and medical needs, as well as preserving cultural identity.

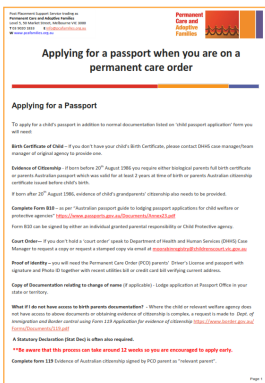


Message from Minister Jenny Mikakos MP

The Victorian Government is also committing \$308,550 to continue the permanent carer helpline run by Permanent Care and Adoptive Families launched in April last year.

The helpline provides greater support for permanent carers, as well as referral, advocacy and advice to assist them to look after the children and young people in their care.

This is all part of the \$390.7 million over four years committed by the Victorian Government in the 2018-19 Budget to improve services and outcomes for children in care.



## Passports

If you already have a Permanent Care Order in place please refer to our [fact sheet](#) for information on how to apply for a passport. If this is not clear or you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact one of our team on 9020 1833.



**\*\*\*\*\* PRIOR TO PERMANENT CARE ORDER \*\*\*\*\***

If you are in the process of moving toward a PCO please consider the need for a child's passport after the permanent care order is granted. Prior to court please make sure that your DHHS case worker applies for Australian Citizenship for your child. They are able to do this whilst the child is still on an order to the Secretary prior to PCO. Also please make sure you are given a copy of the child's birth certificate and the parent's birth certificates. If the parents birth certificates are unable to be provided it is essential that citizenship is applied for and granted and that you are given an original citizenship certificate. In an ideal case DHHS can apply for and provide you with a passport for your child.

# Outreach and peer support



We have many forms of support and play groups scattered around Melbourne and regional Victoria, including; Collingwood, Bendigo, Ballart, Shepparton, Horsham, Morwell and newly formed Frankston. People gather for shared learning and talk about some of the challenges of raising children. Learning and support occurs around parenting our children and the opportunity to build relationships with others.

Our support groups are friendly and welcoming and are open to all parents; adoptive, permanent care and kinship care. You can also arrange a one-on-one appointment by calling the office on 9020 1833 if required.

## Outreach and peer support in your area

We will be in your area on the dates below. If you would like an individual appointment, please contact PCA Families on 9020 1833.



**TOPIC: Assisting children and young people to establish and maintain healthy attachments**

### Frankston - Liz

**Date:** Tuesday, September 4

**Time:** 12.15pm – 1.45pm

**Venue:** Frankston library,  
Frankston Community Room, 60 Playne Street  
*(enter from outside on right of the building)*

**NEW  
group**

### Warrnambool - Brenda

**Date:** Thursday 13 September

**Time:** 10.00am – 11.30pm

**Venue:** Warrnambool Library, 5 Liebig Street

### Horsham - Alannah (pictured)

**Date:** Monday, October 15

**Time:** 12.30pm – 2.30pm

**Venue:** Wimmera Regional Library Corporation  
28 McLachlan St, Horsham



*These peer groups are proudly funded by The William Buckland Foundation*

## Journal Club – Collingwood

Journal Club is a monthly facilitated discussion and support group where participants discuss an article relevant to parenting in home-based care and adoption. It allows confidential conversations around the challenges of parenting and is facilitated by skilled volunteers with lived experience in raising children through home-based care and adoption.

**Date:** Thursday September 6 from 8.00—9.30pm

**Venue:** Collingwood Library, 11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford

**Topic:** **How to stop yelling at your children**

**October 4 Journal Club, TOPIC: Youth and Family Mediation delivered by CEO, Brenda Carmen**

## Life Story Work for professionals working in sector



Learn how *Life Story Work* can be used by parents and carers as therapeutic tool to use with children. *Life Story Work* begins a healing journey with children, helping them understand their past and present while providing resources to move on into the future.

At the session you will explore

- Current research and thinking on *Life Story Work* and the role it can take in family life
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories
- An invaluable 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities, and
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving.

Young people and children in Kinship Care, Foster Care, Permanent Care and Adoptive families often require additional guidance from the adults in their lives to ensure they have opportunities to record their history.

**Date** Thursday September 6

**Time** 9.30am—1.30pm

**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne

**Cost** \$110.00 inc. GST (to arrange an invoice, please contact Deborah on 9020 1839 or email [Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au))

**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/WKZR>

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## Life Story Work for parents and carers



Develop another therapeutic tool to use with your children. Learn how to begin a journey with your child towards helping them understand the past and present while providing resources to move on into the future. Discover how to enhance your child's reflection and problem-solving skills.

At this training, you will learn about:

- Current research and thinking on *Life Story Work* and the role it can take in family life
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories
- An invaluable 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities, and
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving skills.

**Date** Sunday September 9

**Time** 10.00am—2.00pm

**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne

**Cost** \$60.00—including light lunch

**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/WQHG>



# Youth Programs

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

### TERM 4 dates

**Tuesdays 5.20—6.15pm**  
**October 16, 23, 30,**  
**November 13, 20, 27 and**  
**December 4**

mindfulness  
in motion



The *Mindfulness in Motion Kids Program* is designed specifically to assist young peoples' personal growth. Classes blend skill development, personal observation and experiential learning in an environment that is fun, supportive and engaging for young people.

Classes focus on acquiring:

- Resilience
- Focus
- Teamwork
- Assertiveness
- Emotional regulation
- Self-reflection
- Body awareness

We are continuing the Mindfulness in Motion program in term 2. As PCA Families has been heavily subsidising the program, going forward we need to ask for a contribution to the program.

The classes will run **Tuesday** evenings on the dates listed below.

<b>Age limit</b>	5 - 12 years old
<b>Time:</b>	5.20 – 6.15pm
<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Tuesday October 16, 23, 30, November 13, 20, 27 and December 4</b>
<b>Address:</b>	Mindfulness in Motion, 6 Oakover Road, Preston
<b>Cost:</b>	<b>free of charge to permanent care and intercountry adopted children</b> \$100.00 per child otherwise
<b>To register:</b>	contact Deborah on Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au or call 9020 1839

### Your Instructors:

Guy Rhynsburger is the senior instructor at Mindfulness in Motions, with over 20 year's martial arts experience. Guy has been working with young people from a variety of backgrounds teaching life skills for well over 15 years.

Alan James is a Kung Fu Black Belt and an experienced Youth Worker with more than 10 years' experience. *All instructors have a current Working with Children Check and police check.*



# Education and Youth

## Going to TAFE and Uni is a real possibility

### Study at TAFE and pay no tuition fees!

The Skills First Youth Access Initiative supports young people up to age 22 who have been/or are on a Child Protection Order, Family Court Order or a Youth Justice Order. Eligible young people can study VCAL/VCE through to Advanced Diploma and pay no tuition fees. For more information, call **131 823** or go to <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx>



## In-school and post-school education support for young people in care/care leavers.

Go to <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations/> and click on our flyer with clickable links or for more information contact [Joanna.Humphries@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:Joanna.Humphries@cfecfw.asn.au).

## Study at Federation Uni and La Trobe Uni – over 200 care leaver students are doing just that!

Are you caring for or know a young person in care who is thinking about TAFE or Uni? **Over 200 students** who have experienced foster, kinship, permanent and residential care are studying at Federation and La Trobe Universities. We want to increase this number!

### INSPIRING YOUR FUTURE

Do you know someone who has experienced foster, kinship, residential or permanent care? There are in-school and post-school departmental programs to support them to achieve their higher education dreams.

Click the following links for more info and to check eligibility

#### AT SCHOOL

##### LOOKOUT Education Support Centres (DET)

Headed up by a school principal and specialist team, each of the four centres support primary and secondary schools with students in care.

##### Navigator re-engagement program (DET)

Supports young people aged 12-17 who are disconnected or are at risk of disengaging from secondary school.

##### Springboard (DHHS at school and post school)

For young people aged 16-21 who are living in or who have left residential care, Springboard provides intensive support with a focus on education, training and employment.

#### POST SCHOOL

##### Skills First Youth Access Initiative (DET)

Formerly the fee-waiver initiative, this program supports young people under 22 who have been/or are on a Child Protection Order, Family Court Order or a Youth Justice Order. Eligible young people can study VCAL/VCE through to Advanced Diploma and pay no tuition fees.

##### Reconnect Engagement and Learning Support Program (DET)

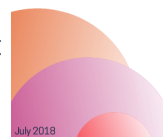
Assists young people aged 17+ to enrol and stay in vocational training and to find employment.

### Raising Expectations

#### Raising Expectations

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare has partnered with Federation and La Trobe Universities to support young people leaving care and care leavers to go onto higher education and university – providing financial, academic and personal support to care leavers. Contact Jo at [Joanna.Humphries@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:Joanna.Humphries@cfecfw.asn.au) for more information.

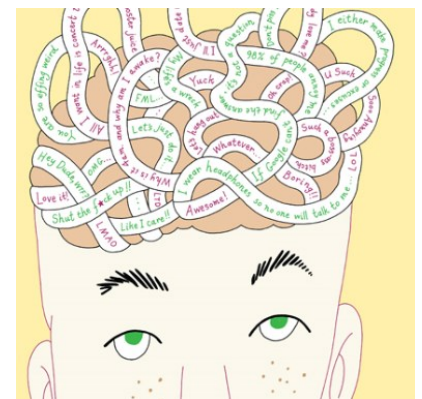
On ABC Radio listen to care leaver students at La Trobe University talk about why uni is so important.



## The Amazing, Tumultuous, Wild, Wonderful, Teenage Brain

“What’s going on in that head of yours?” How many adults have asked an adolescent some form of that question? In his book, *Brainstorm*, a New York Times bestseller, Dr. Dan Siegel decided to go a step further and actually answer that question. The results are surprising—and very exciting

Adolescence is as much a perplexing time of life as it is an amazing one. Running roughly between the ages of twelve and twenty-four (yes, into our mid-twenties!), adolescence is known across cultures as a time of great challenge for both adolescents and the adults who support them. Because it can be so challenging for everyone involved, I hope to offer support to both sides of the generational divide. If you are an adolescent, my hope is that the information I am offering will help you make your way through the at times painful, at other times thrilling personal journey that is adolescence. If you are the parent of an adolescent, or a teacher, a counsellor, an athletic coach, or a mentor who works with adolescents, my hope is that these explorations will help you help the adolescent in your life not just survive but thrive through this incredibly formative time



<https://www.mindful.org/amazing-tumultuous-wild-wonderful-teenage-brain/>

<https://www.mindful.org/>

# Flexible Funding

## Flexible Funding Applications for Educational Needs

Term 4 is fast approaching so now is the time to think about your 2019 school requirements. It's also a busy time here at PCA Families for processing the Flexible Funding educational requests for uniforms, textbooks, devices and school fees. Schools are also closed over the Christmas period so please just check with your school as soon as possible their deadlines for:

- ◆ Payment of fees
- ◆ Pre-ordering of textbooks
- ◆ School specifications for devices - *ipads, laptops*
- ◆ Uniform requirements

We also ask for your help in exploring with your school any financial assistance you may be eligible for prior to contacting PCA Families. This helps our Flexible Funding go further for everyone.

All Victorian government schools provide assistance through **State Schools' Relief (SSR)**. SSR funds can assist with school uniforms, school shoes and textbooks. You will need to make a time to speak with your school's Principal, Assistant Principal or School Welfare Co-ordinator. They can discuss with you your eligibility and submit a request to SSR on your behalf.

**Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF)** is available to government and non-government schools with financial assistance for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Funds are available to families and carers:

- ◆ holding means-tested concession cards
- ◆ on bridging or temporary protection visas
- ◆ in community detention
- ◆ with students in out of home care
- ◆ with students in statutory care.
- ◆ Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from [www.education.vic.gov.au/csef](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/csef)

**PCA Families**



Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families) Helpline can assist with a variety of queries in relation to permanent care and adoption.

We have professionals available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm with an understanding of legal, financial, educational and psychological issues.

Our staff have professional and lived experience of the reality of caring for children who come from out of home care and can support you to access appropriate trauma informed services, either from our database or by researching your area. Where needed, our staff can support you to educate your child's school in trauma sensitive schooling, and advocate on your behalf to build a community of trauma sensitive understanding and support around your child.

We endeavour to respond to your call within 48 hours.

We also have **flexible funding** which you can apply for by calling our office during business hours 9.00am—5.00pm Monday to Friday. T: 03 9020 1833 or E: [info@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcfamilies.org.au)

The services we support are:

✓ **medical**      ✓ **education**      ✓ **therapies**      ✓ **respite**      ✓ **transport**      ✓ **cultural connection.**



# Grief and loss

**Staff at PCA Families would like to offer our condolences and support to our families who have recently been bereaved.**

Our Helpline has received a number of calls from our families/carers who have recently had a family member die or are finding that recent events in their lives trigger their grief regarding an earlier loss. It is sometimes helpful to be aware that feelings related to the death of a significant person can surface at the time of significant events such as birthdays, anniversaries or as we head towards the end of year celebrations. When this occurs it is helpful to acknowledge that grief has no timeline and each person will experience this differently. Reactions themselves, are also individual and can include irritability, forgetfulness, sleeplessness, feeling numb and overwhelmed, together with physical symptoms of pain and nausea.

**Grief is not something you get over; more grow around as you adapt to a new normal. During these times self care and being kind to yourself is crucial.**

Take time to care for yourself and acknowledge your own needs – taking time out to do something that you enjoy like;

- Read a magazine, have a coffee, watch a favourite movie that makes you laugh
- Journal your feelings
- Do something creative; art, music, appreciate nature
- Share memories with family and friends
- Spend time connecting/honouring the person you have lost
- Exercise – gentle regular walks have a large impact on your own mental health.

## **Managing Anniversaries**

- Take time for yourself and acknowledge your own needs
- Link back to the self-care strategies above
- Plan your day – This can give a feeling of some control concerning overwhelming emotions. Remember each person handles anniversaries individually. You may find it comforting to stick to your normal ritual or you may want to adapt plans for the day. It helps to share your plan with family and friends so they can support you and your wishes such as limiting time at a particular event. Make sure you have something planned though, as too much time alone can lead to feelings of isolation.

## **Children and grief**

Children can experience grief in different ways depending on their chronological/developmental age. Some common themes are:

- Change in sleep pattern/nightmares/bed wetting
- Alternating between grieving and carrying on as if nothing has happened
- Asking same questions over and over
- Irritability/withdrawn/insecure
- Regressing to younger behaviour
- Feeling responsible/searching for person that has died.

## **Supporting children who are grieving**

- Give children time to talk and be honest with them
- Maintain routine as much as possible to provide stability
- Include in decision making
- Keep connection to loved one by developing rituals and including their name in conversation
- Provide creative opportunities for children to express emotions such as memory boxes, drawing, reading, music or dance.

**If you are struggling with your own grief below are some organisations that can provide help, some of which offer 24hour support.**

1. **Grief line** [www.griefline.org.au](http://www.griefline.org.au) Telephone grief support from midday—3am PH 9935 7400
2. **Compassionate friends** [www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au/](http://www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au/) Grief support for bereaved parents and siblings PH 9888 4944
3. **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement counselling** [www.grief.org.au](http://www.grief.org.au) support face to face and phone PH 9265 2100
4. **Kids help line** [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au) Also provides on line chat service for children aged 5 – Young adults aged 25 PH 1800 551800
5. **Support after suicide** [www.supportaftersuicide.org.au](http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au) PH 9421 7640
6. **Lifeline** [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) 24 hour support PH 131114

## Adoptee Dinner Out in Melbourne

My name is Vin. I came over to Australia in 1987 from India. I was adopted in to a Australian/ Dutch family and grew up with a very happy family life.

It wasn't until I turned 30 that I realized I wanted to start looking into my adoption and seeing what was out there on the internet for adoptees.

Since then I have met and connected with over 2000 adoptees world-wide and often have video chats with them. I feel that seeing them and speaking face to face is a bit more personal than just typing on a keyboard as a way of getting to know them.



At the start of this year I started organizing dinners and events in Melbourne for adoptees.

It's a fun and social way to meet others who are also adopted. All adoptees are welcome to come along to these events. I encourage people to bring partners, families and even best friends if they don't feel liking coming along on their own. Our events are also LGBTIQ inclusive.

We have had three dinners so far including our very first annual Christmas in July. It was a hit! My aim is to try and hold a dinner once every month or two which gives adoptees a chance to stay in contact and not feel so alone and isolated.

The dinners are a great way to talk to other adoptees about similar things we share in common, as we all have a lot in common.

I like to think of the dinners as a great support group but not only is it a support group, we are all great friends. At each dinner we have had so far there are always new faces and new stories to hear about. There is no judgement brought by anyone in the group as we acknowledge that we are all from different walks of life with our own journeys and stories to tell.

Some of the adoptees who come to the dinners are social workers, DNA experts, and people who work with the government in the adoption field just to name a few. We each bring something different to the group but most of all it's our common bond as adoptees that make it that extra special.

I run a Facebook group called

Adoptee Dinners & Events in Melbourne (ADEO)

Feel free to join the group to get the latest updates on where we are going for our next dinner or event. I try and keep it to just dinners in winter as the weather is too cold to do other things. When the weather gets a bit warmer there will be lots of other great events to come along to. All the events and dinners are at your own expense, but I do make sure it is affordable for everyone. If you don't feel like coming for dinner, at least come for a coffee and meet everyone. We are all very friendly and always enjoy meeting new faces. I hope to see some new faces over the next few months.

So please join the group on Facebook, send me an email or find me on YouTube

Email: [adopteedinnerout@hotmail.com](mailto:adopteedinnerout@hotmail.com)

YouTube: Vin Adoptee

# Annual General Meeting

## AGM

### Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 24 October at 6.30pm



Join us at our 15th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday October 24 at 6.30pm at the Reading room in Fitzroy Town Hall.

We have comedian **Corey White** who performed his debut stand up show *The Cane Toad Effect* which is a staggeringly personal story of his experience growing up in foster care. He handled this material with a deftness and humour that far exceeded his experience, garnering critical praise and winning Best Show at the 2014 Sydney Fringe and Best Newcomer Award at the 2015 Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Sydney Comedy Festival.

In 2018, *Corey White's Roadmap to Paradise*, a series created by Corey for the ABC, will solve all the world's problems while continuing to advocate for change in the out of home care system.

We will also be treated to a performance from our children who have been participating in **Mindfulness in Motion**, demonstrating the powerful motto **Be Strong, Be Calm, Be Kind, Try Hard**.

**Doors open at 6.00pm and supper will be served.**

- Date** Wednesday October 24, 2018
- Time** 6.00pm for 6.30 start
- Where** Reading Room, Fitzroy Town Hall, 201 Napier Street, Fitzroy
- Parking** around Napier streets
- RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/XGFD>
- Queries** call PCA Families 03 9020 1833

PCA Families has zero tolerance of child abuse and we are committed to establishing and maintaining child safe environments

