

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Office closed from 22 Dec 2023 to 2 Jan 2024

Flexi-Funding

Better Futures

Helpine

CAP

ADDITIONAL COSTS OF CARE

INDEPENDENCE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

REFERRALS, ADVOCACY

CARER ASSISTANCE



PCA Families office closed for festive season from 22 December 2023 to 2 January 2024



Carers are advised to submit their flexi funding applications for items relating to "return to school" asap to prevent delays and assist the team with processing their applications. Over the December/January period, applications may take longer to process.

AGM elects two Board members



Lynette Landy



Kris Peach

At the PCA Families AGM, two Directors were appointed. This is Kris Peach's second term after being re-elected for another three year term. This is Lynette Landy's first time elected as a Director.

To read more on their profiles, please visit our [website](#).

Presentation from two specialists



Jenn Colechin

Last week, we were fortunate to have Jenn Colechin join our Share and Connect last week to discuss **Understanding and Responding to Challenging Behaviour**.

Jenn is a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) and highly skilled clinician who utilises the science of behaviour analysis to guide assessment, strategies and implementation approaches within a positive behaviour support and trauma informed practice lens.

Jenn also formed her family with her partner through permanent care so comes with lived experience. You can watch [here](#)



Stacy Blythe

For those who could not attend our AGM, we enjoyed hearing from Stacy Blythe's who presented on **Understanding and loving complicated children: the impact of trauma and prenatal substance exposure on children**. As an adoptive parent living in New South Wales, she has first hand experience of the joys and challenges parents face.

Listen to her presentation which focuses on the health and well-being of children in out-of-home care and their families. Drawing on her skills as a nurse, knowledge as a researcher and experience as a carer, Stacy provides training to health care workers, social service providers, educators, and foster/kinship carers in relation to working with children who have prenatal substance exposure and/or have experienced trauma. Click [here](#) to see her presentation

Always playgroup Christmas party

Thank you to all the families who attended the family Christmas party on the weekend! We had a mix of families who have been in this adoption/permanent care world for years and some only weeks! It was wonderful to see both the parents and children connecting with others who have similar lived experiences. Merry Christmas to all!



Commences Thursday 1 February 2024

Always playgroup will start up again in February 2024 which runs on the first Thursday of the month in Scoresby. If you are interested or would like more information please email:

alwaysplaygroup@gmail.com

Families can fall apart over this stuff': the children refusing to go to school

The widely used term 'school refusal' isn't about wilful truancy but the emotional distress students can associate with school.

The incidence of children refusing to go to school is on the rise. The stress that families experience reflects an education system under pressure.



"When I tell people – even friends – that my son has school refusal they will say things like 'so you just let him stay home?'," she says. "But this is nothing like a kid just wanting a day off." Right now the general consensus is that Jack is suffering from extreme separation anxiety, and it's agonising to witness.

To read more about this interesting topic, visit <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/sep/26/families-can-fall-apart-over-this-stuff-the-children-refusing-to-go-to-school>

New headspace in South Melbourne to open in 2024

South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network will lead a consortium to support and deliver youth services in a new headspace centre in South Melbourne, due to open in mid-2024.

South Melbourne is home to approximately 13,000 young people (12-25 years) with more than 1,500 young people living in low-income households.

According to headspace's [2022 National Youth Mental Health Surveys](#), young people are struggling with their mental health due to stresses associated with the high cost of living, social media, climate change, and the pressures of working and studying.

headspace is tailored to provide young people in the area with better access to personalised and youth-friendly support services. headspace South Melbourne will support young people to access early intervention mental health services as well as supports around their physical and sexual health, alcohol and other drug (AOD) and work and study.

Young people will be involved in designing, monitoring and evaluating the headspace South Melbourne activities and services which is funded by the Australian Government under the Primary Health Network program. To find a headspace near you, please click [here](#)

New PCA Families staff



Meet Billy

Senior Worker - Better Futures and Homestretch

Meet our newest member of the Better Futures and Homestretch team; Billy who holds a diploma in youth work. Billy brings practical experience from working in the out of home care sector at Anglicare as a skills coach.

Billy is passionate about social justice and working with young people to create a better future and enjoys the outdoors and live music. Billy works Tuesday to Thursdays. You can read more about Billy on our [website](#).



Meet Yufei

Intake and Engagement Officer - Better Futures and Homestretch

Yufei commenced her role as Intake and Engagement Officer in the Better Futures and Homestretch Program in September. Prior to this Yufei was on placement as a Social Work student in th PCA Families' Flexible Funding Program.

Before joining PCA Families, Yufei volunteered with the Red Cross and engaged with her local community where she gained knowledge of the value of empowerment and a strengths-based approach to supporting clients and having their needs met. To read more see our [website](#)

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Carer Assistance Program - Therapeutic Support

Self referral available [here](#).

DFFH Flexible Funding - Funding Additional Needs

Further information available [here](#).

Helpline - Information, support and referrals

Further information available [here](#).

Better Futures and Home Stretch - Support to 21

Find out more [here](#).

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