

Australian Centre for  
Child Protection

**Protecting and Nurturing Children:**  
*Building Capacity Building Bridges*

# **The Evaluation of the Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative**

**Christine Gibson  
Helen Francis  
Stewart McDougall  
Fiona Arney  
Rachael Grauwelman-Smith  
Samantha Parkinson**



Australian Centre for  
Child Protection

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*Protecting and Nurturing Australia's Children, Building Capacity, Building Bridges* was a national workforce development initiative funded by the Australian Government under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children. It was undertaken by the Australian Centre for Child Protection in partnership with twelve Communities for Children programs across the land, as well as the large number of organisations working within each of these twelve sites. Such an ambitious and complex initiative was an innovative endeavor for a university to undertake, and the transfer of knowledge it embodied went both ways.

While highly complex in nature, its purpose was stunningly simple – to bring together diverse services working in specific communities with different members of vulnerable families around different problems so they could work more holistically with children and their families. Why is this necessary in relation to protecting Australia's children? The reason is that “the adult problems which cause the children's pain”, such as substance misuse, mental illness and family violence, are bringing more children into our child protection systems, and a different approach is desperately needed. It is only relatively recently that we have become aware of the serious impact which such parental problems can have on the development of well-being of children.

The vision of holistic services in itself is not new but by 2010, when this national workforce development initiative commenced, a renaissance with renewed vigour was emerging. Ideas about transcending “service silos” through “joined up” strategies, “place-based” approaches” and “integrated services” were beginning to gain currency in many policy domains in Australia and elsewhere. Yet the knowledge of how to translate such a vision into reality was, and still is, new territory. The Australian Centre for Child Protection and its partners in the *Protecting and Nurturing Australia's Children, Building Capacity, Building Bridges* initiative have helped pioneer this territory.

The initiative's twin strategies of “*building capacity*” and “*building bridges*” through workforce development were thus very timely. The “building capacity” strategy focused on how service providers can work in ways that transcend the traditional focus of a service on just one problem or need of just one member of a family. When a family has multiple and complex needs, then a plethora of “single input services based on categorical funding” becomes part of the problem, not the solution. It is very costly and often results in fragmented service delivery which alienates and confuses families. While one service provider cannot meet those needs which require specialist responses, many families with multiple needs can be best served by a “competent generalist” service provider, just as many of our medical needs can be best served by our local General Practitioner. Building the capacity of service providers to offer “child and family sensitive practice” regardless of whether the child or the adult is “the client” of the service, was at the heart of this strategy.

The second strategy focused on “*building bridges*” – creating stronger and more effective collaboration across services and sectors when multiple services were required to provide a comprehensive response to families with complex needs. Calls for collaboration have become something of a cliché, as if by exhorting people to work

together, they can and they will. The very real obstacles to collaboration, including funding models, narrow performance indicators, privacy issues, resource scarcity and professional and philosophical differences, are experienced daily by those at the coalface of service delivery. Through the “building bridges” strategy of this initiative creative ways to address many of these obstacles were identified, and organisations that had never worked together before used the opportunity to forge novel ways of collaborating.

This report evaluates the success of these twin strategies as they unfolded in the twelve very diverse communities. It is not easy to evaluate a complex initiative in new territory that lacks established baseline measures. Yet the formative evaluation offered here gives rich insights into how we can build the capacity of services in relation to child and family sensitive practice and how we can strengthen collaboration. The extensive feedback of the many participants was instructive and affirming.

There are major learnings from *Protecting and Nurturing Australia’s Children, Building Capacity, Building Bridges* which policy makers, educators, managers and service providers across many sectors may wish to heed. One is the importance of individually tailoring place-based approaches in close partnership with the specific community. Another is the importance of generating a strong “authorizing environment” for child and family sensitive practice and collaboration at the highest levels in each sector and across all levels of government. Last but not least is the need to tap the creativity and commitment of those who work day to day with vulnerable families, often under the most difficult circumstances, to go beyond the often narrow perimeters of their programs to make a difference in the lives of children and their families.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010, the then Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now the Department of Social Services) funded the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) to develop and deliver *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity Building Bridges (BCBB)* over three years as an integral initiative supporting the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020: *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business*. The Framework espouses a public health approach which seeks greater involvement of a range of professionals and others to enhance the variety of systems that are available to protect children (COAG, 2009).

BCBB was tasked with transforming the goals of the National Framework into action that made an impact within communities, including recognition that beyond mandatory reporting protecting children is the collective responsibility of all of our sectors and community members.

In particular, BCBB had two main foci: the first being to enhance the knowledge and skills of practitioners in child and family focused and adult focused services to support parents to meet the needs of children in their care (building capacity). The second was to strengthen collaboration between adult focused and child and family focused services to improve the way that families with multiple needs experience the service system (building bridges).

This report outlines the formative evaluation of BCBB and the learnings from this innovative initiative. The ongoing evaluation of BCBB was a key part of quality improvement, organisational learning and program development, conducted throughout the life of the project. The report draws upon information from program documentation, and surveys and interviews held throughout the course of the initiative.

### ***Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)***

Between 2010 and 2013 the ACCP, supported by a National Steering Committee, undertook a pioneering national workforce development initiative, *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)*. The BCBB initiative was conducted by the ACCP in partnership with 12 Communities for Children sites across Australia.

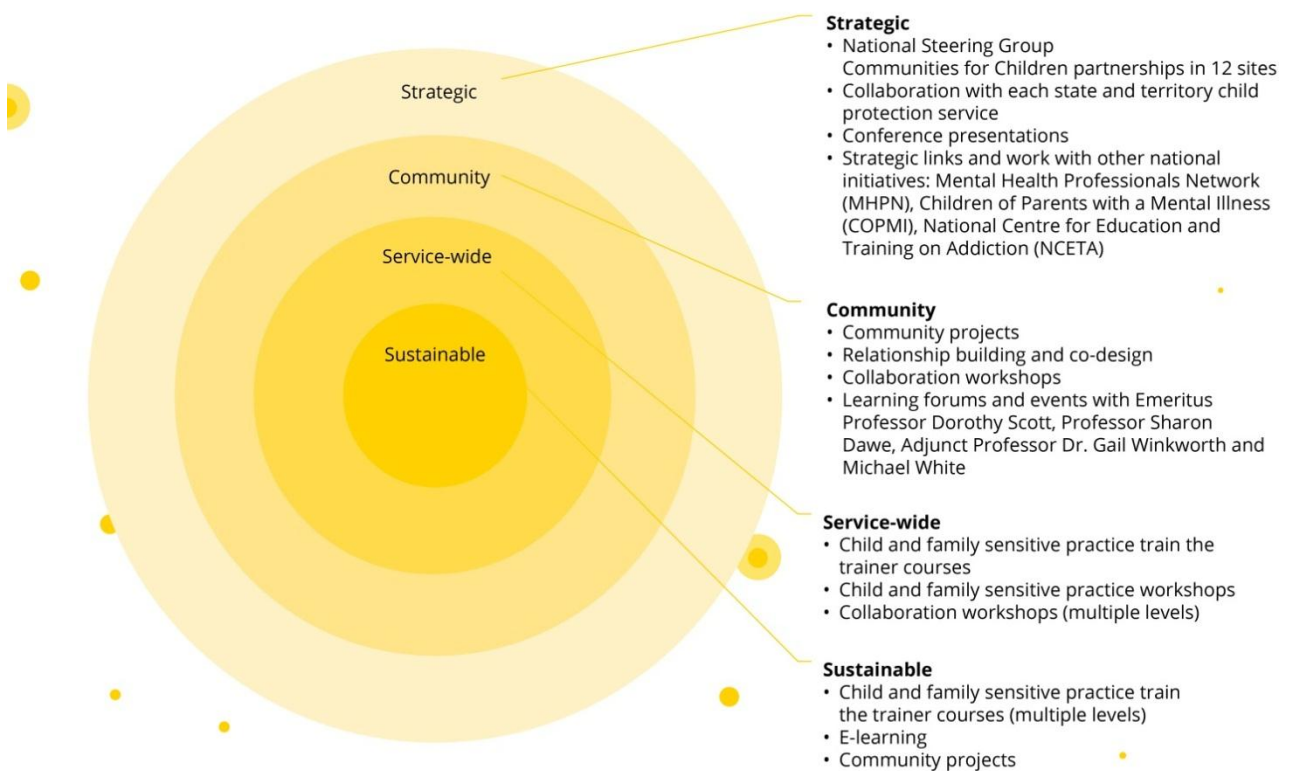
The 12 sites were: Alice Springs (NT, lead agency Anglicare NT); Midland (WA, lead agency consortia Ngala, Anglicare WA & Mission Australia); Mirrabooka (WA, lead agency The Smith Family); Playford (SA, lead agency Anglicare SA); Onkaparinga (SA, lead agency Anglicare SA); Launceston (Tas, lead agency Anglicare Tas); Townsville (Qld, lead agency The Smith Family); Ipswich (Qld, lead agency Mission Australia); Lismore (NSW, lead agency YWCA); Kempsey (NSW, lead agency The Benevolent Society); Campbelltown (NSW, lead agency The Benevolent Society); Cardinia (Vic, lead agency Anglicare Frankston).

The objectives of the initiative are to:

- Enhance ways of working with children and families in traditionally adult-focused services (such as drug and alcohol, mental health, family violence and homelessness) to build participants' capacity to work more effectively with parents and respond to the needs of children.
- Strengthen inter-agency collaboration to provide more holistic services to families where there is a high risk of children being abused and neglected, and consequently entering the child protection system.
- Support services to manage organisational change by providing strategies for service redesign, and process re-engineering of service provider roles.

*Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges* was a far-reaching, large and complex initiative that evolved through its community-based, collaborative approach to best seek improved outcomes to children with parents who come into contact with service providers. At each interaction, the initiative explored the possibilities of enhancing collaboration between family and children's services and the adult service sector. This approach was developed to provide strategic, community, service-wide and sustainable strategies to achieve the program goals of supporting parents to better meet the needs of their children (see the Figure below).

## What was involved?



The key focus of the BCBB initiative was to improve outcomes for children in families with multiple and complex needs, regardless of whether these families present to an adult specialist service or a child and family service. The goals of the initiative were to strengthen inter-agency collaboration and 'child and family sensitive practice' in the 12 sites, in close partnership with the community service organisations delivering the Communities for Children program. The initiative used multiple strategies to build relationships with relevant people and services in each site, and combined community engagement strategies, collaborative approaches and training workshops to meet its goals.

Broadly, BCBB included the involvement and training of over 2000 practitioners across Australia, from more than 250 organisations. Over 40 trainers were trained in child and family sensitive practice, 12 community projects were supported to grow and achieve their goals, and free to use two e-learning resources were developed with two other national bodies, the Australian Infant Child and adolescent and Family Mental Health Association (AICAFMHA) through their Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) initiative and the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), to support the BCBB initiative and practitioners and supervisors to lead and promote child and family sensitive practice within their organisations. Additional activities were conducted to promote organisation-wide recognition of children's needs within the Australian Red Cross, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, and mental health and homelessness services across Australia. Learnings and content from the initiative were also disseminated through presentations and workshops at national and international conferences and meetings with international organisations.

### **Key outcomes**

This innovative initiative attempted to challenge service providers to enact a 'paradigm' shift; to think and act differently to bring the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children to life. In 12 sites across Australia, BCBB promoted understanding that 'protecting children is everyone's business' by enhancing the knowledge and skills necessary for changing the way that Australia addresses the protection of children. It sought to build the capacity of a diverse range of services to work purposefully with parents of vulnerable children and to build bridges between services to enable the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The National Steering Committee has been a vital contributor to the initiative, encouraging a child and family sensitive approach at the highest level of key delivery agencies and peak bodies. Members of the National Steering Committee are committed to disseminating the message of child- and family-sensitive practice throughout their own organisations and through to the wider community. The National Steering Committee have provided high level strategic advice bringing the knowledge from individual sectors and frameworks to the same table, a first for a sustained period to inform a National initiative.

The initiative depended on the exchange of knowledge between the Australian Centre for Child Protection, the 12 communities involved, many of which are rural, key personnel of relevant service providers in each of these



communities, and members of the BCBB Steering Committee. This continual flow has informed both the practice and policy that underpins 'Protecting Children is Everyone's Business'. Those involved, at all levels of the initiative, genuinely attempted to share power and to limit sector and personal agendas to bring about Australia-wide change in policy and practice related to work with families.

Via a process of continual engagement with sites and a community development approach to support collaborative, child- and family-focused activities, the initiative has demonstrated the possibilities for individual, organisational, and sector wide responses to the needs of vulnerable children. The participants at workshops came from both child and family and adult-focused services. In some areas people had not previously met and/or were unfamiliar with each other's services. The feedback indicated that for many the workshop provided a useful opportunity to meet others and consider what could be developed collaboratively in their location.

At an individual level BCBB provided an opportunity for participants to examine their practice in a manner that was both rigorous and evidence-informed by developing an understanding of child- and family-sensitive practice and the complexities of working with adults where children are present. It developed peoples' understanding of children's safety, welfare, and wellbeing where children's and parents needs have not often been considered. The vast majority of participants thought that useful information was provided, that it was delivered in a skilled way, and was something they would take back into their workplaces.

On the whole, attending the workshop was seen as a useful opportunity to reflect on refresh, providing affirmation the current practice and providing a way to synthesise knowledge gained from workshops. Importantly, the majority of participants strongly agreed that they felt that they could engage parents in discussions about parenting and the children's needs following the workshop.

BCBB helped service providers to develop a greater understanding of life for marginalised families, including day-to-day pressures and ongoing need as it affects children and parents. BCBB provided opportunities for people who have never discussed issues relating to children to begin to do so. It provided opportunities for adult-focused service providers to begin to negotiate different ways of working with their clients; to broaden their perspective and focus.

At both a practice and policy level, this was reported to have come about through the project providing a new platform for professionals focused on adult issues in different sectors to talk about risks to children in the family. Opportunities were created for professionals to develop cross-sector relationships so such conversations are easier to initiate. In some organisations, BCBB was able to create a cohort of trained staff which generated opportunities for peer contact for support and discussion of child- and family-sensitive practice in the workplace, supported by BCBB through follow up visits and resources. Having multiple staff sharing a common workshop experience also helped to promote more buy-in from the agency management structure as they are more likely to want to see a return on their investment of releasing staff to attend the workshop.

Several examples of community-wide collaboration and organisation wide policy and practice change were also given highlighting the potential of locally based, tailored workforce initiative to build significant change for families.

### Key learnings

An initiative of the scale and vision of BCBB required outstanding leadership at all levels of the initiative. This leadership needed to be grounded in an acute understanding of the strengths, pressures, capacities, capabilities and competing interests of the individual practitioners, local communities, collaborating organisations and broad sectors involved in the initiative. In this way, both a ground up *and* top down approach were necessary.

Listening and trust building was fundamental. Collaborating at a local level resulted in new actions for practitioners and managers. At the same time the BCBB steering group reviewed change agendas at state, territory, and Commonwealth levels, and engaged with key bureaucrats about the importance of this work.

It was suggested that communication could have been improved by being clearer about the purpose and expectations earlier in the life of the initiative including the funding body's expectations.

Some Communities for Children sites felt that the approach taken resulted in practitioners at the 12 Communities for Children sites feeling like they were singled out and had extra work imposed on them by the initiative. Therefore the commitment to building strong relationship with the Communities for Children partners, across sectors and within the community, was integral to action learning approach undertaken throughout the life of this initiative by all the BCBB team.

Other important learnings that came from the initiative are:

- Using the expertise of the Commonwealth government, states and territories, local communities, and the BCBB team in site selection would likely have enhanced engagement from the beginning. Considerable time was spent within the initiative building local support and highlighting the relevance of an initiative that was not selected by the Communities for Children sites themselves.
- Engagement with communities needs to be continual so that connections remain strong, momentum for change is maintained, and to protect against turnover in small teams (both in the BCBB project team, and in community facilitating partners) that can mean that relationships need to be rebuilt
- Purposeful engagement with managers and practitioners allowed workshop content to be tailored to the needs of a community. Champions at the local level can support change;
- Getting middle managers and supervisors on board is necessary to support the organisational change needed to improve the support available for vulnerable children;
- Getting everyone together in the same room is hard and can take a lot of effort - a lot of time is needed to understand the local context to ensure that any training reflects the local situation;

- Providing collaboration and child- and family-sensitive practice workshops at no cost a number of times built capacity within agencies and community and a critical mass of child- and family-sensitive, collaborating practitioners;
- A University-based organisation facilitating workforce development can bring credibility and drive interest in local communities. Taking knowledge out of “ivory tower” settings and into communities was particularly important.
- Tailoring knowledge and training to the different experience, confidence and skill levels of potential participants is important to maintain the relevance of workshops for participants
- The importance of training practitioners to learn how to address parental concerns. Both adult-focused and child- and family-focused services acknowledged that approaching the parental roles of their clients could be challenging;
- Implementation support is required to support and maintain practice change;
- Access to reflective supervision that supports practitioners’ learning is essential to sustain change.
- Seeking and seizing opportunities to broaden the reach of BCBB was a highly successful strategy and will likely improve the sustainability of the initiative. In particular, linking with other national initiatives (e.g., COPMI and NCETA) with a similar focus and approach greatly enhanced the reach and impact of the initiative

## The Future

The findings of this report highlight that, despite a number of systemic barriers to advance the national policy direction that “protecting children is everyone’s business”, there is much to be positive about. It is clear that many practitioners, organisations and sectors want to, and can, work together to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

Sustaining the knowledge developed and the learnings from undertaking a large scale collaborative initiative is important. Ongoing difficulties related to sustainability and diffusion of learning were discussed by half the Committee members. Concerns related to difficulties keeping alive what was learned and changed by the BCBB initiative and building on the excitement, commitment, momentum, and enthusiasm generated. A few felt a dissemination strategy that facilitates translating BCBB beyond the 12 sites and beyond the life of the initiative despite different agendas that exist in the professional and political environment would be useful.

Difficulties sustaining what BCBB started around integrated service delivery relate to how to keep pushing the initiative’s premise and continue to integrate services in a policy environment that perpetuates agencies working in sector specific silos. There are difficulties in continuing to support people working together, particularly when cultural differences exist between sectors and when these differences are historical and embedded in professional practice. A couple stated that it is very important there is a champion at the political level to

support the initiative. An important aspect of this is the development of strategy to talk about the successes and learning from the initiative.

Steering Committee members also spoke about the kinds of new possibilities that they hope will arise from the project in the future, along with perceived difficulties related to sustainability. They also spoke of how the project could lead to developments in research and knowledge related to inter-sector child- and family-sensitive practice. They felt that more work of this nature would open opportunities for cross-sectoral training and for research that can lead to developing evidence-informed practice models, logic models, and practice manuals.

It is heartening to note that the momentum generated through this project is able to be continued through a focus on Child Aware Approaches at a national, organisational and community level. The focus on “child aware” policy, service development, and practice is, in part, a legacy of BCBB, continuing the focus on the needs of vulnerable children at policy, organisational and practice levels, when these needs may otherwise be overlooked or obscured by a focus on adult dysfunction. Since BCBB’s commencement, the child and family, and adult focused sectors, have developed child aware organisational and community based initiatives, and principles for practice and service design have been developed.

This national focus on protecting Australia’s children meaning more than a narrow child protection investigative response has a solid foundation in the work of BCBB. Key messages from the National Framework are now embedded firmly in organisational and community responses to children, and it is our hope that from these inspiring examples, greater awareness and action for vulnerable children will flow.

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgments .....	2
Foreword by Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott.....	4
Executive Summary .....	6
Contents.....	13
Chapter One: Introduction .....	15
Chapter Two: The Approach to Building Capacity and Building Bridges .....	22
Chapter Three: To What Extent did this Initiative Increase the Knowledge of Practitioners in Adult and Child Focused Services? .....	34
Chapter Four: To What Extent did this Initiative Strengthen Inter-agency Collaboration? .....	42
Chapter Five: To What Extent did this Initiative Support Organisational Change?.....	57
Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion .....	67
References .....	75
Appendices .....	78
Appendix 1: Final Activity Workplan.....	78
Appendix 2: Feedback Form to Monitor the Impact of a One Day Workshop on Cross-sector Collaboration. ....	96
Appendix 3: Child and Family Sensitive Practice Workshop Feedback Form.....	99
Appendix 4: Reflections From Project Team (Field Agents) .....	101
Appendix 5: Interview Questions for Communities for Children Manager/Coordinator Partners .....	102
Appendix 6: Questions for Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative Steering Committee Members.....	103

***The challenge of ending child abuse is the challenge of breaking the link between adults' problems and children's pain.***

UNICEF, A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations, September 2003

### Purpose of the report

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children promotes the view that to better serve Australia's children all services, communities and individuals need to work together: 'Protecting Children is Everyone's Business'. In 2010, the Commonwealth Government introduced the first major workforce development initiative under the National Framework. The Australian Centre for Child Protection conducted *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)*, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of practitioners from a diverse range of services, both child- and family- and adult-focused, to work purposefully with the parents of vulnerable children to prevent child abuse and neglect. This initiative also aimed to build effective connections and support collaboration between adult-focused and child- and family-focused services at both local and strategic levels.

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Describe the *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges* initiative and its developments in the 12 *Communities for Children* localities (sites);
2. Evaluate the progress and results of *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges* against its objectives; and
3. Record the learnings gained from carrying out this innovative national initiative, in particular the effectiveness of bringing together multiple stakeholders for children.

This chapter describes the background to the BCBB initiative and describes the formative evaluation process. The following chapter describes the approach and activities of the BCBB initiative in detail. The next three chapters then explore progress towards the three aims of the initiative, with the final chapter providing a brief summary of outcomes and learnings and a conclusion to the report.

### Background

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 'Protecting Australia's Children is Everyone's Business' (Council of Australian Governments, 2009) is a foundational direction-setting document for child protection policy and practice. It developed out of awareness that for state and territory governments child protection is a 'wicked problem'; one that requires the adoption of a fundamentally different approach (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth [ARACY], 2009). The National Framework was achieved through close collaboration between the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children (a coalition of non-government organisations and researchers). It was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2009. The Framework espouses a public health approach (see Hunter, 2011) that calls for greater involvement

of a range of professionals and others to enhance the variety of systems that are available to protect children (COAG, 2009).

For many people concerned about a child or family, their first and perhaps only response is to make a report to child protection services. The majority of cases that are being notified are children in vulnerable families in which there is a risk from chronic adverse family circumstances and not necessarily from a specific episode of harm. Higgins and Katz (2008) propose that the majority of families who are notified to the child protection system may not meet the criteria for child protection intervention but nonetheless have significant support needs. If these notifications do not reach the risk threshold, intervention may not be offered. This means that families may fall through the gaps and receive no response. To help these families, intervention aimed at alleviating the familial factors which are known to increase the risk of child abuse and neglect may be useful. Early intervention is advocated as a means of reducing risk factors and bolstering protective factors to prevent or minimise the consequences of the family circumstances which bring families to the attention of child protection systems (Stern, 2002; Jeffreys, Rogers & Hirte, 2011).

Adult problems are significantly associated with child abuse and neglect and it is necessary for practitioners to recognise and support the parental roles and responsibilities that their clients may present with. Research has shown that adult issues such as domestic violence (Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008), alcohol and substance misuse (Dawe et al., 2007; Jeffreys et al., 2009), mental illness (Huntsman, 2008; Jeffreys et al., 2011) and homelessness (Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr, 2011) among others, can impact upon the parent-child relationship and have a number of negative impacts including increasing the risk of child maltreatment. These adult issues can compromise the parent's capacity to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children (Bromfield, Lamont, Parker & Horsfall, 2010). Further, such adult problems can be significantly associated with children's entry into care. Jeffreys and colleagues (2009) found that substance misuse is associated with children's entry into care in approximately 70% of cases in South Australia. Similarly, Gibson and Johnstone (2009) suggested that there may be overlap in the families seen by homelessness and child protection service systems. In expanding child protection systems, O'Donnell, Scott and Stanley (2008) argue that the challenge for adult-focused services is to broaden their focus to include the wellbeing of the child as well as to support parents.

There is increasing evidence that a lack of collaboration between services can be unhelpful to both children and parents. Involvement with a large number of different services can be overwhelming for families at times of crisis and the failure of services to work together can have devastating consequences. There have been multiple Australian State and Territory inquiries into child protection systems as well as reports on child deaths that have pointed to the failure of collaboration between services limiting their ability to prevent or minimise harm (NSW Ombudsman, 2014; Wood, 2008). Similar findings are reported internationally with Ofsted (2008 as cited in Arney, Lange & Zufferey, 2010) reporting that "an important finding when serious case reviews have been undertaken after children have been injured or killed is that no single agency had a complete picture of the family or the risk factors". The serious consequences that can arise from a failure to share relevant information



between services highlight the need for improved collaboration to prevent child abuse and neglect. To address the complex problem of child abuse and neglect, it is necessary for all human services to:

1. Recognise the impact of adult problems on children; and
2. Work together to address these complex adult problems in ways that limit their negative impact on children.

### **Moving towards a new approach**

The move towards a public health model of child protection requires more than the traditional statutory response and requires services to work across the boundaries that have traditionally separated them in order to achieve a population-level impact and maximise the potential for prevention. The central message of the National Framework is that ‘child protection is everyone’s business’. This means that adult-focused, and child- and family-focused services need to be more involved in the prevention (and early intervention) of child abuse and neglect. The Framework states that “Australia needs to move from seeing ‘protecting children’ merely as a response to abuse and neglect to one of promoting the safety and wellbeing of children” (COAG, 2009, p.7).

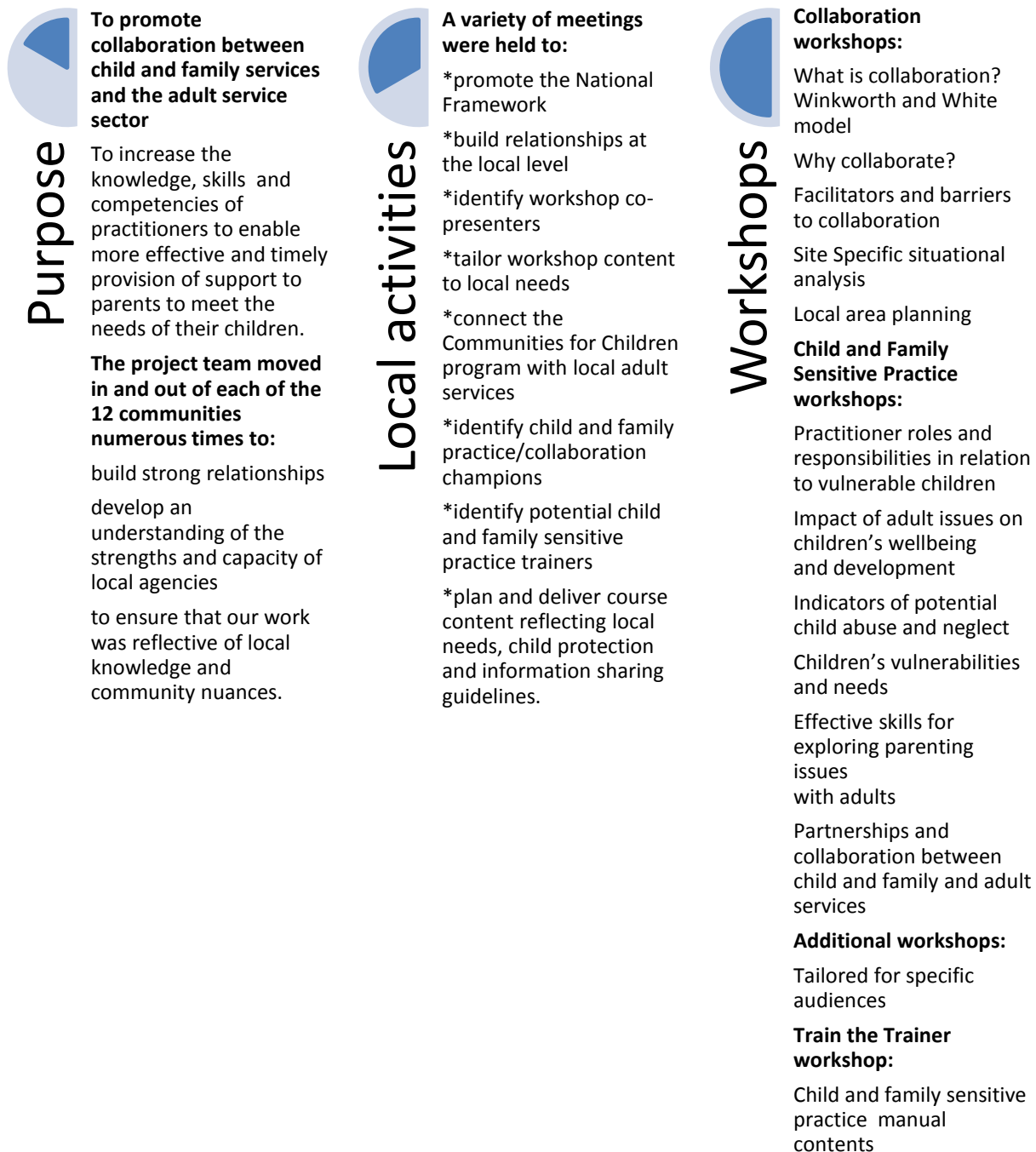
The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children provides a national policy direction to **build the capacity** of universal and targeted child and family services and the adult specialist sectors to deliver child and family sensitive services; and to **build bridges** between them so risk factors for child abuse and neglect can be reduced and protective factors enhanced. To this end the Australian Centre for Child Protection received three years’ funding from the then Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now the Department of Social Services) for a new Australian initiative, *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges*.

### ***Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)***

Between 2010 and 2013 the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP), supported by a National Steering Committee made up of sector leaders, undertook a national workforce development initiative, *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges (BCBB)*, funded by the then Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs under the first three year plan of the National Framework. BCBB aimed to enhance the capacity (Building Capacity) of diverse practitioners to work purposefully with the parents of vulnerable children. Also in the interests of children, it aimed to build effective connections (Building Bridges) between adult-focused and child- and family-focused services at both local and strategic levels.

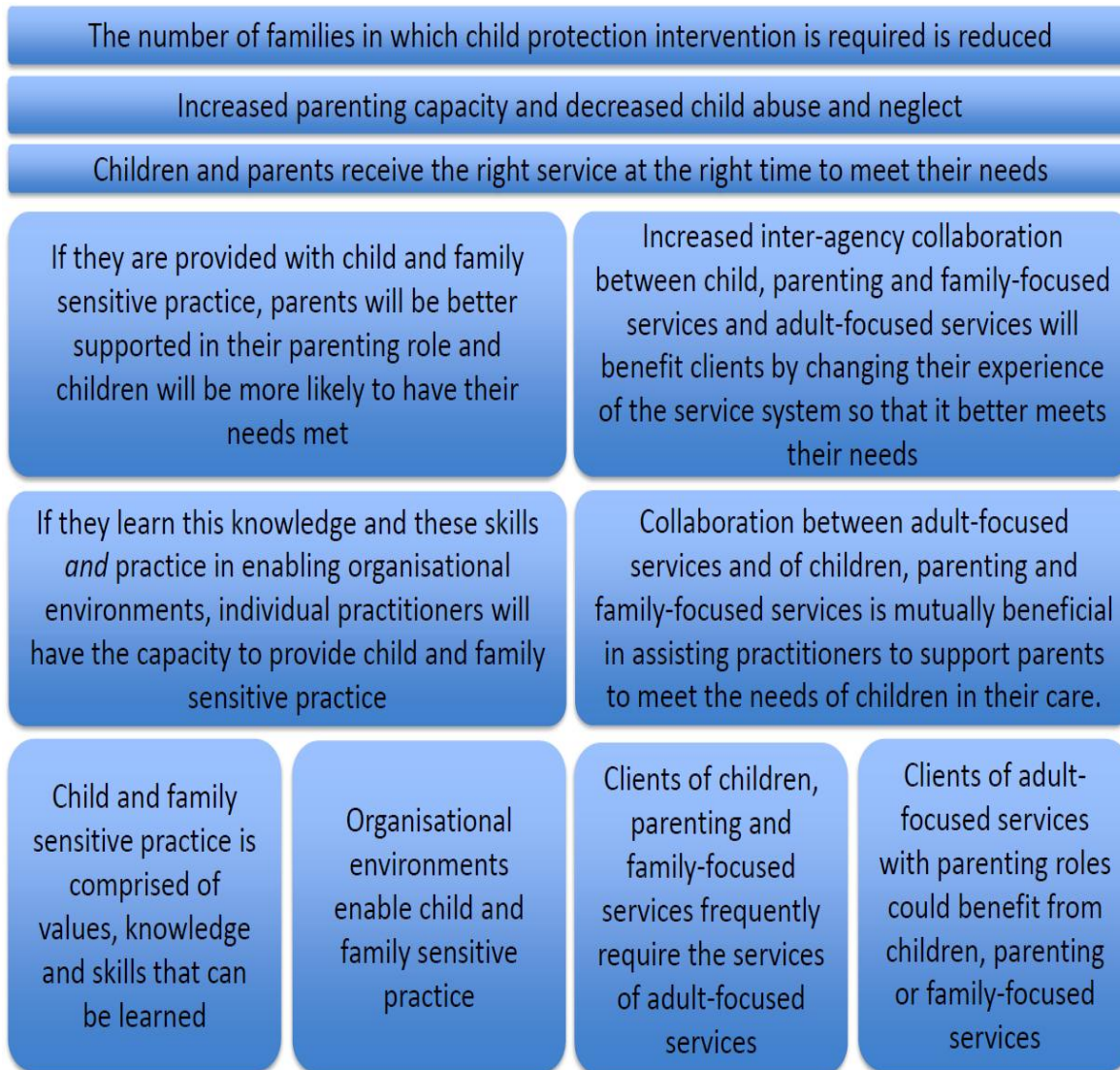
The BCBB initiative was conducted by the Australian Centre for Child Protection in partnership with 12 *Communities for Children* sites across Australia. The key focus of BCBB was to improve outcomes for children in families with multiple and complex needs, regardless of whether these families present to an adult specialist service or a child and family service. The goals of BCBB were to strengthen inter-agency collaboration and ‘child

and family sensitive practice' in the 12 sites, in partnership with the community service organisations delivering the Communities for Children program. BCBB used multiple strategies to build relationships with relevant people and services in each site, and combined community engagement strategies, collaborative approaches and training workshops to meet its goals (see Figure 1, more detail about BCBB's approach and activities is provided in Chapter 2).



**Figure 1.** Purpose and strategies of the BCBB initiative

A major focus of BCBB was to reach out to adult specialist services to create closer links between them and child and family services. BCBB also aimed to support practitioners in adult-focused services to enhance their knowledge, skills and collaborative relationships (see Figure 2 for detail of the assumptions underpinning BCBB).



**Figure 2.** Working assumptions underpinning the *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges* Initiative

This report describes the initiative in detail and evaluates progress towards the aims of *Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges*.

### Evaluation of BCBB

As part of an ongoing process of quality improvement, organisational learning and program development, a formative evaluation of BCBB was conducted throughout the life of the project. The BCBB evaluation and the learnings from this initiative are the focus of this report.

The objectives of BCBB provide the framework for this evaluation, specifically to:

- Enhance ways of working with children and families in traditionally adult-focused services (such as drug and alcohol, mental health, family violence, and homelessness) to build participants' capacity to work more effectively with parents and respond to the needs of children.
- Strengthen inter-agency collaboration to provide more holistic services to families where there is a high risk of children being abused and neglected, and consequently entering the child protection system.
- Support services to manage organisational change by providing strategies for service redesign, and process re-engineering of service provider roles.

### Evaluation design

This evaluation utilised a participatory action research approach, focusing on the strengths and limitations of the implementation to inform continuous improvement throughout the initiative. As BCBB was a new and complex national initiative, which evolved in response to changing policy and local landscapes, formative evaluation methods were used. Much was able to be learnt in the process of 'doing' the Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges initiative, which was then able to be reflected in adjustments to the process. This action-reflection-adaptation cycle helped to make the project increasingly participatory as it progressed.

The evaluation received approval from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee.

A number of different data sources were used to address each evaluation question. Data sources included activity workplans and program documentation, reflective feedback surveys from the project team, interviews with stakeholders including representatives from participating *Communities for Children* sites and the steering committee, and feedback surveys from workshops held throughout the course of the initiative. Details of the data sources are provided below.

Activity workplans which documented activities and progress against the program's objectives and key performance indicators were developed and updated throughout the life of the BCBB initiative. The final activity workplan describing the activities of the project from inception to project end is attached as Appendix 1.

At the completion of workshops regarding enhanced collaboration, participants' knowledge about the framework for collaboration and its application to their site was assessed by a brief survey instrument (see Appendix 2). Participants' experience of the collaboration workshop, and their attitudes towards collaboration, were assessed by asking participants to rate their agreement using a 5-point scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree somewhat, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly agree.

Collaboration workshop participants were also asked what they know more about since having undertaken the workshop, what they think needs to be included in future workshops, and were given the opportunity to provide any other ideas about how the workshops could be improved.

The second part of the evaluation of the project aimed to demonstrate the impact of strategies to enhance ways of working with children and families in traditionally adult-focused services.

The impact of this initiative was assessed by:

1) using survey data (Appendix 3) to assess the impact of child and family sensitive practice workshops and attendees' knowledge, confidence, and intention toward practice change. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with a number of statements about the child and family sensitive practice workshop. A 5-point Likert Scale was used: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree, 5 = Not applicable. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to provide any additional feedback or comments as desired.

In addition an email was sent to participants following their attendance at a child and family sensitive workshop and responses from these have been included in the analysis.

2) documenting region and site specific feedback, reflections and examples of where BCBB had supported and enhanced the development of child and family sensitive practice. This was achieved through a process of continuous journaling and record keeping of conversations and unsolicited feedback about the Initiative including exemplars of success and innovative practice as well as unforeseen barriers (Appendix 4).

Phone interviews were also conducted with staff from eight of the twelve Communities for Children partners to gather their opinions about developments since working with the BCBB initiative. Change of staff and restructuring at the other four sites prevented their input from being gathered (Appendix 5).

Project Steering Committee comments from surveys and interviews were analysed by an external researcher using Nvivo software to draw out common themes. The views of 11 members were provided via telephone interview or email (Appendix 6).

*Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges* (BCBB) is a large, complex initiative that has evolved through a number of iterative phases. It has worked together with a range of people, organisations and systems to strive for improved outcomes for children with parents who come into contact with services as a result of their alcohol and/or substance misuse, mental illness, homelessness, exposure to domestic violence or other adverse circumstances. This chapter describes the approach and activities taken by the BCBB initiative (also see the activity plan in Appendix 1 for further detail). The key outputs of BCBB are shown in Figure 3 (developed by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation), below.

## Over 2000 practitioners across Australia

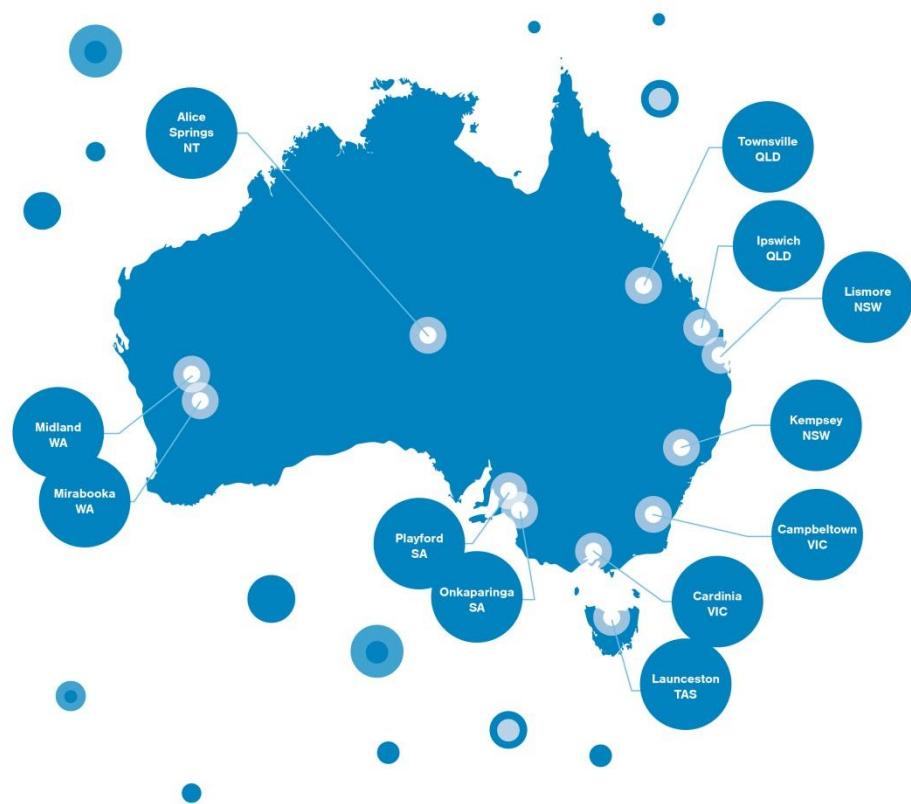
**250+**  
organisations

**1,000+** copies of  
the national framework  
distributed

**40+**  
trainers trained

**12** community  
projects

**2** e-learning resources

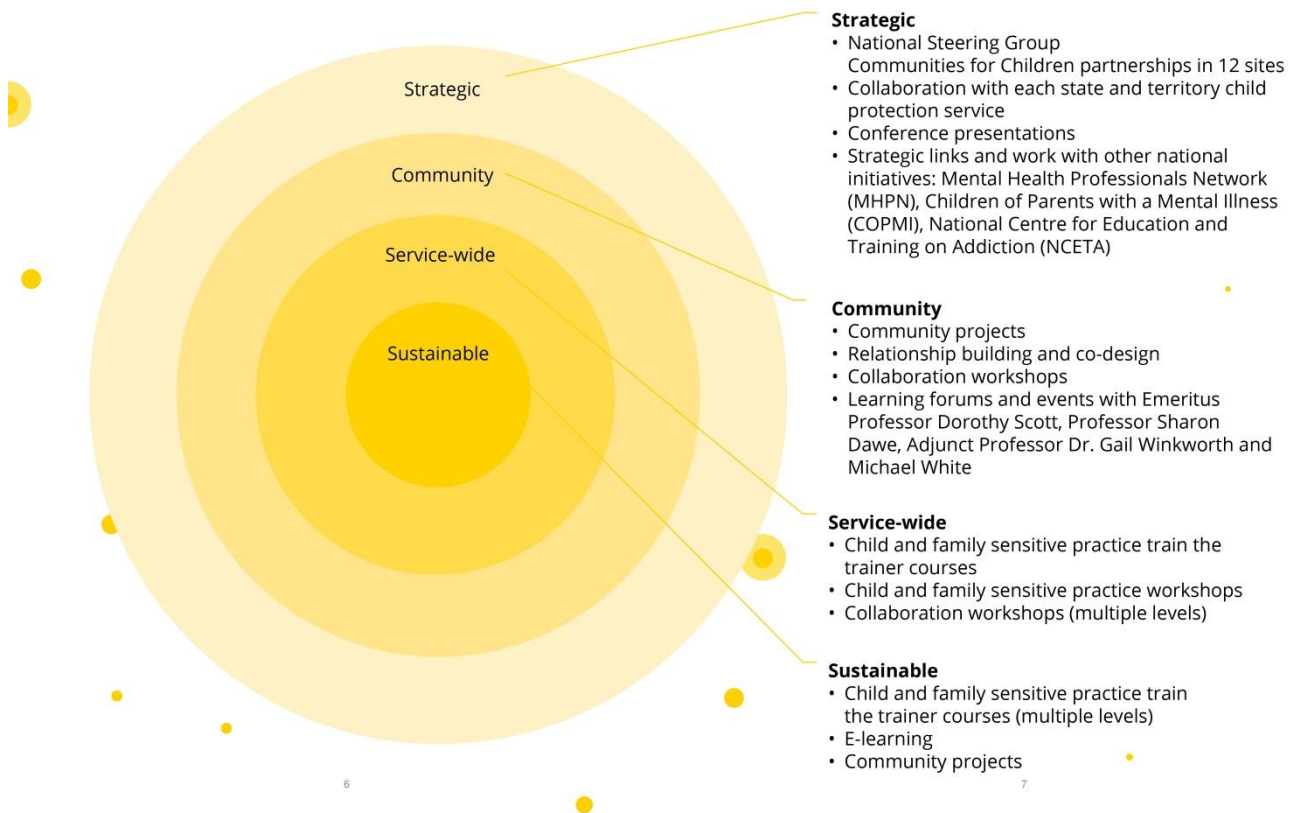


**Figure 3.** Key outputs from the BCBB initiative.

The BCBB initiative takes a community-based, collaborative approach in which each interaction is used to explore the possibilities of enhancing collaboration between family and children’s services and the adult service sector. Increasing the knowledge, skills and competencies of practitioners in these agencies is the focus. If practitioners can respond in a more effective and timely manner to parents, then parents can be supported to better meet the needs of their children. The approach was developed to provide strategic, community, service-

wide and sustainable strategies to achieve the program goals (see Figure 4 provided by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation).

## What was involved?



**Figure 4.** Key strategies of the BCBB initiative.

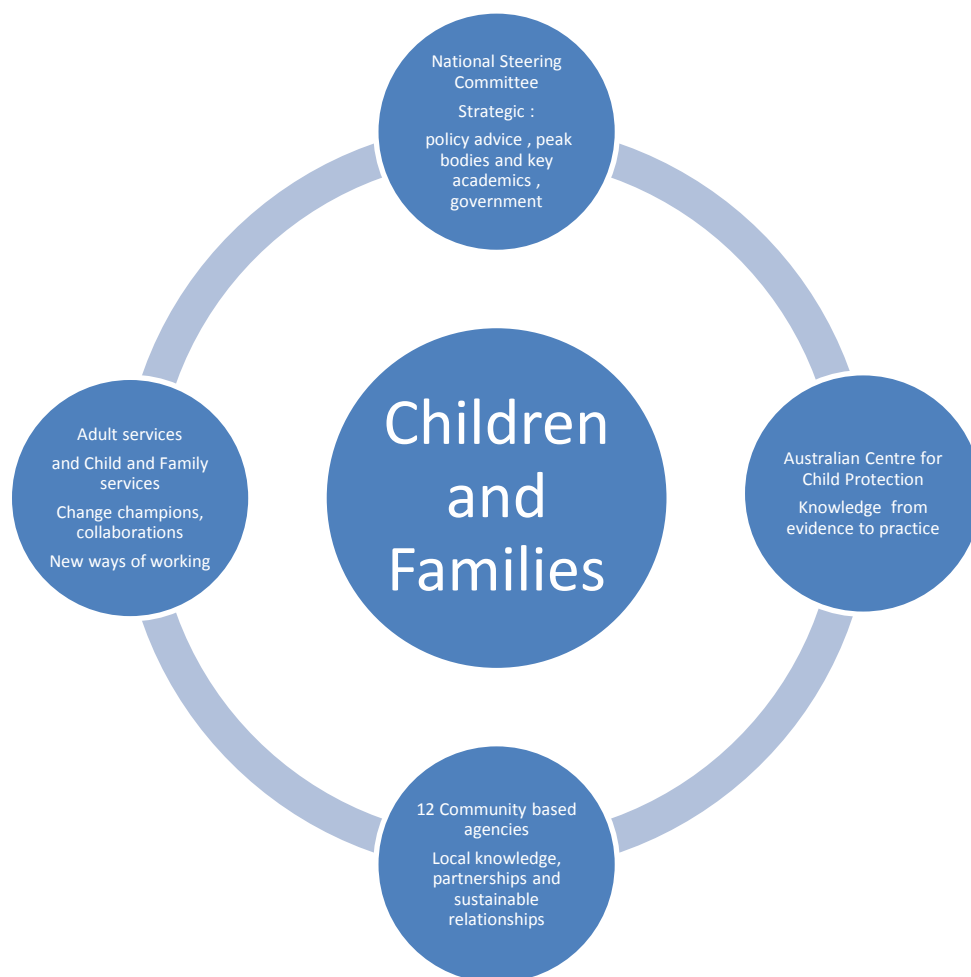
BCBB was supported initially by a National Advisory Committee and later by a National Steering Committee. These groups were designed to assist BCBB to build a bridge to better outcomes for vulnerable children by fostering sector interdependence and providing ‘permission’ to work differently.

The BCBB initiative needed to develop relationships to bring on board both those on the ground and at a strategic level in order to create change. A national steering group chaired by Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive of Uniting Communities was made up of senior people from renowned peak bodies, including:

- The homelessness sector
- The Australian National Council on Drugs
- The Mental Health Coalition
- The disability sector
- Families Australia and the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia’s Children
- The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

- The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- As well as leading academics and researchers in family violence and child protection

In the community development approach undertaken, BCBB depended upon an exchange of knowledge between the Australian Centre for Child Protection; the 12 communities involved in BCBB, many of which are rural; key personnel of relevant service providers in each of these communities; and members of the project Steering Committee. This continual flow informs both the practice and policy that underpins ‘Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business’ (see Figure 5). More detail is provided on the significant role played by the Steering Committee in Chapter 5.



**Figure 5.** BCBB knowledge exchange model illustrating that “Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business”

### Site selection and engagement

The initiative was funded for three years by the Australian Government under the Family Support program, initially in 10 socially and economically disadvantaged communities across Australia. The original agreement dated 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2010 nominated seven *Communities for Children Plus* sites and three *Communities for Children* sites with high Indigenous or newly arrived populations. The site selection aligned the initiative with



emerging Communities for Children programs. Two additional communities were added with a change in service agreement in May 2010 bringing the total to 12 communities (see Figure 6). The Australian Centre for Child Protection and the facilitating partners/lead agencies at the 12 sites were not involved in the site selection process, so it was essential to support engagement regarding BCBB and its potential in each community.

It was recognised from the outset of the BCBB initiative that change brought about through workforce development at the service provider level is a necessary but not sufficient condition for systemic change. In addition, organisations needed to support their staff in taking a more child and family sensitive approach. At the commencement of BCBB, letters were sent to key State and Territory leaders giving information about the initiative. Consultations about BCBB were given by BCBB’s Project Manager and the Learning and Development Coordinator to national peak bodies. Crucial relationships were forged with staff of the 12 Communities for Children partners and key community stakeholders.

## Sites and lead agencies

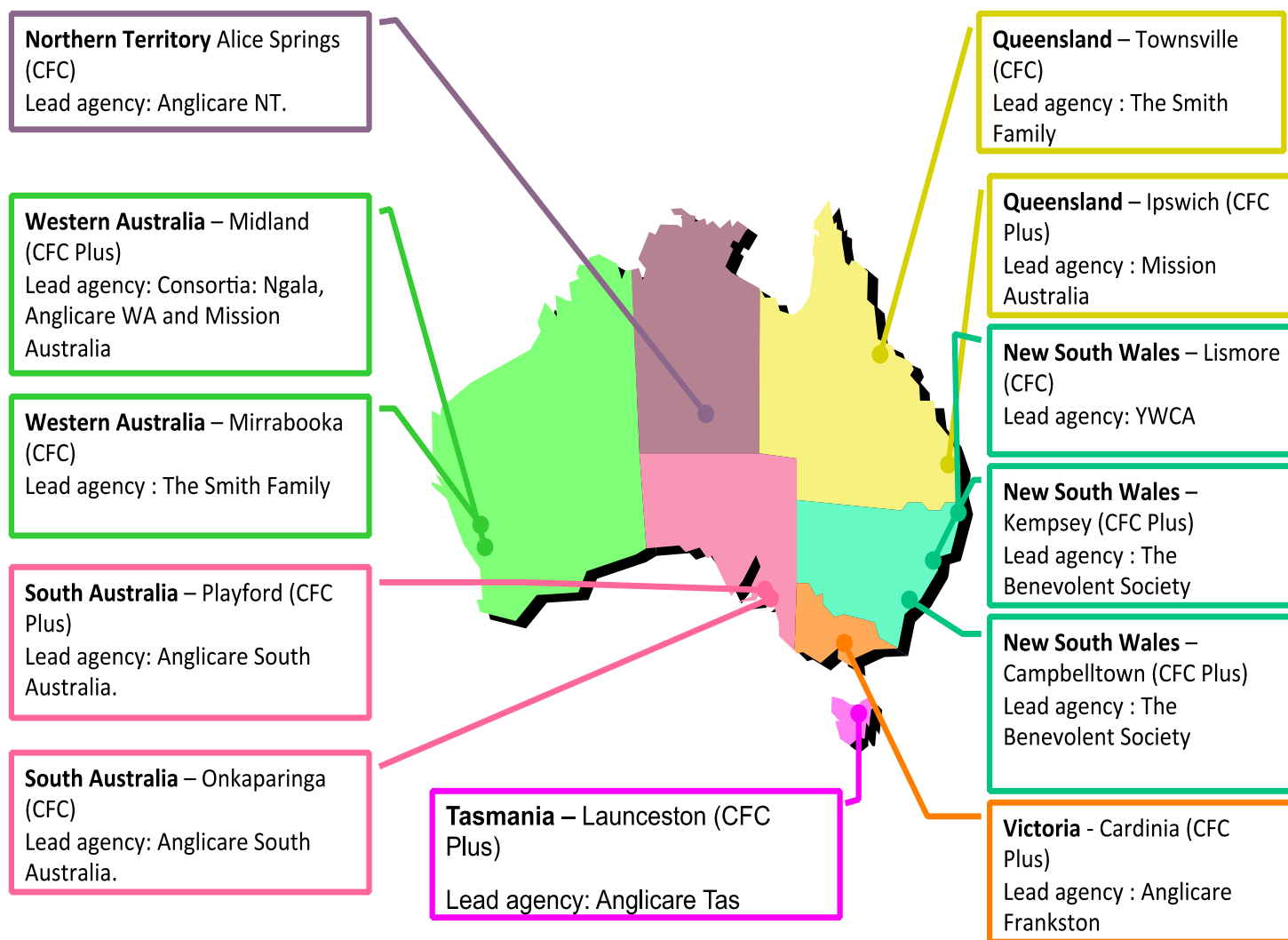


Figure 6. Twelve Communities for Children Sites and their Lead or Facilitating Agency

BCBB staff met with managers and senior staff of services in the site communities and discussed the aims of the National Framework, the principles of BCBB and the potential benefits of this pioneering approach to their services, their clients, and their clients' families. Time was invested in developing an understanding of the key issues and service dynamics in each area so as to harness local support and energy to strive for better outcomes for children. There was, however, concern from some Communities for Children Coordinators that the initiative would add to their workload and they questioned how BCBB intended to add value. This concern was most prominent in sites where planning had already commenced or there were strategies in place to achieve joined up responses for families with children at risk. In Launceston, for example, the creation of a collective, whole of community accord was being planned and there was concern that BCBB might cause confusion in their community. This initial concern can in part be explained by the fact that the Communities for Children sites did not have an opportunity to opt in or out of BCBB and this meant that engagement was likely to be challenging.

Engagement was also made more difficult by staffing changes at the Australian Centre for Child Protection, and significant delays in the appointment of new staff. Following feedback from the sites and the appointment of a new Program Manager in late 2011 a successful process of re-engagement occurred. Changes in staff in some of the 12 sites also meant that engagement was a continuing process throughout the life of the project.

### **Developing a Shared Vision**

A shared vision is an important facilitator of greater collaboration and can enhance collaboration and coordination between services and agencies (ARACY, 2009). Hayes and Higgins (2014) state that "collective awareness of the issues involved and common narratives are the starting point for better coordinated approaches to promoting the resilience of individuals and the wellbeing of their families" (p. 303).

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children provides the rationale at a policy level to support a greater focus on children's needs and greater collaboration between services. One of the central principles of the Framework is that responsibility for keeping children safe does not rest with a single agency, but is shared among families and communities, and government and non-government agencies.

The Framework ideally provides an authorising environment for adult-focused services to 'join' with child- and family-focused services to better address the often multiple and complex needs that families present, focusing attention on the particular needs of children at an early stage in the intervention. However, the Framework alone is not sufficient to enact change; it has to be performed by 'actors', primarily agencies and workers, many of whom will have other frameworks, policy agendas and procedural requirements relevant to their sectors.

Through BCBB, the Australian Centre for Child Protection widely distributed copies of the Framework at meetings with agency managers and to the participants of the child- and family sensitive practice workshops held around the country. Many participants, especially those employed by State and Territory funded agencies, were initially unaware of the National Framework and so its potential to provide an authorising environment for

collaboration was limited. However, BCBB has itself served as a mass dissemination arm for the National Framework to many agencies, broadening the perception of responsibilities for protecting children across sectors.

### Collaboration workshops

Support from senior and middle managers is essential for putting policies into practice as these individuals make decisions regarding caseloads, resource allocation, and training and supervision requirements (Reupert & Maybery, 2008; Tilbury, Walsh & Osmond, 2012). Managers, coordinators, and senior managers were invited to collaboration workshops to help create an authorising environment at agency level. The involvement was important because insufficient resources and time to attend to children's needs, and insufficient support and supervision have been identified as major barriers to adult-focused services recognising and addressing the needs of children (Maybery & Reupert, 2009).

Day-long collaboration workshops at the Communities for Children sites were developed as site-specific initiatives to identify, develop and extend local collaborative activity between child and family-focused services and adult-focused services. The content for the workshops was developed and delivered with the Parenting Research Centre, and was based upon the ideas in the Winkworth and White model of collaboration (Winkworth & White, 2010). They identify a range of conditions as enablers of greater collaboration between adult-focused services and child- and family-focused services, summarised as:

- Is there legitimacy and support for the collaborative activities? or “what are we permitted to do to achieve our goals?” (*May we?*)
- Is there shared understanding of the value of the enterprise? or “what should we do to achieve our goals?” (*Should we?*)
- Is there operational capacity to implement the enterprise? or “what can we actually do to achieve our goals?” (*Can we?*)

Eleven one-day workshops were held in the Communities for Children sites (Launceston declined the offer of a collaboration workshop and chose instead to have input on collaboration by the Australian Centre for Child Protection embedded in the keynote address at their conference).

The workshop aimed to bring managers from adult-focused and child- and family-focused services together, to develop a shared language, and to begin to identify and consider potential local collaboration. The strategies employed related directly to the existing relationships between these sectors and to the local perception of the Communities for Children. The Centre worked closely with the Parenting Research Centre and Communities for Children staff to tailor these activities to the requirements of each location.

Following each workshop a brief report was prepared from notes of the day and sent to the site for confirmation. The confirmed notes were intended to provide an outline of what had been decided and who had committed to progress the agreed activities. BCBB staff offered to provide ongoing assistance and some financial brokerage to progress promising or emerging local collaborations. To this end, contact was continued with the Communities for Children partners after the workshops to renew the offer and provide assistance with the development of local collaboration efforts.

Three hundred and thirty four participants attended the collaboration workshops. Participants predominantly represented agencies supporting families as the main client group (73%), followed by adult clients (17%), children as clients (11%) and finally parents (3%). The main types of services provided by these agencies were family support (27%), health/mental health (10%), domestic violence (7%), and alcohol and other drugs (4%). The majority of the sample (59%) held positions of authority e.g. Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager.

### **Child and Family Sensitive Practice workshops**

One aim of the BCBB initiative was to foster shared responsibility for protecting children across the human services sector. It was felt that such responsibility could be developed through the process of acquiring particular skills, knowledge, and confidence. Child- and family- sensitive practice workshops provided a forum for the development of the skills, knowledge, and confidence useful for talking with parents about the impacts of adult problems on their children.

The key components of child and family sensitive practice were scoped, drawing on the literature and utilising evidence-informed research. Scoping and mapping the course content for the child and family sensitive practice workshop, and identifying the appropriate competencies which met the requirements for national accreditation, was a time-intense foundational activity. Linking this with feedback from participants at the collaboration workshops and input from consultations across the sectors, the BCBB team developed a pilot child and family sensitive practice workshop format which aligned with two generic competencies that offer a pathway to a Certificate IV qualification in community services and health.

The course content was aligned with core competencies in Certificate IV in Community Services

- CHCCS422A Respond holistically to client issues and refers appropriately
- CHCCS416A Assess and provide services for clients with complex needs

The Association of Children's Welfare agencies was engaged as the Registered Training Organisation, selected on the basis of their value and fit with BCBB goals. The resource material to support the delivery of the course was developed, and licences to use references and readings were obtained to support the course work.

Over several months the format was trialled with people from a range of services within the sites and their feedback incorporated into subsequent versions of the pilot. Seven pilots were conducted in six locations between November 2011 and February 2012 with 209 participants. A South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Agency, Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS) greatly supported the development of the course content over a number of meetings and pilots of the workshop content. Management, senior staff, and practitioners from AFSS shared cultural practice and knowledge which contributed to the BCBB child and family sensitive practice workshops.

Practitioners giving feedback regarding the pilot workshops thought the content was relevant and they liked the mix of theory and practice. They said that talking to parents about parenting was hard and asked us to include conversation starters for engaging with parents about parenting. While it was initially envisaged that some participants would benefit from gaining accreditation through the workshops, this did not turn out to be the case as most practitioners were qualified at a higher level than Certificate IV.

It also became apparent at an early stage that many child and family service staff were struggling to engage parents in conversations about the impact of their problems on the lives of their children. Building the capacity of practitioners across all service systems then became a critical element of BCBB. To help achieve this, each conversation explored possibilities of enhancing collaboration between both family and children services and the adult service sector as well as increasing the knowledge, skills and competencies of practitioners in all agencies.

Once the core components of the child- and family-sensitive practice workshop were established, the BCBB team conducted an extensive period of consultation with key local people and relevant Communities for Children partners. Through this consultation process, workshop content and format was tailored to incorporate local knowledge and to harness local input. Meetings were then held with managers and leadership teams in key community based agencies to promote the workshop and to create the organisational 'authority' to maximise the opportunity for practitioner attendance. Planning meeting/s were held with the local co-presenters and/or co-facilitators to ensure content was relevant and reflective of local needs. Child protection agencies presented at these meetings to ensure information sharing and child protection legislation was best reflected in the workshops. A workshop schedule was then developed to meet the identified local needs. Workshops were offered a number of times with local partners in each of the 12 sites.

The workshops aimed to build:

- Understanding of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children: Protecting Children is Everyone's Business;
- Awareness and clarification of practitioner roles and responsibilities in relation to vulnerable children;
- Awareness of the impact of adult issues on children's wellbeing and development;

- Awareness of indicators of potential child abuse and neglect;
- Awareness of children’s vulnerabilities and needs;
- Development of effective skills for exploring parenting issues with adults; and
- Development of partnerships and collaboration across child and adult services.

Forty-three workshops were held between April 2012 and May 2013. A total of 1500 people from more than 250 organisations attended. The child- and family-sensitive practice workshops were co-facilitated with a local service provider and the non-core content was tailored to particular local circumstances. Most often it was delivered over two days to allow for relationship building and to provide opportunities for reflection and practice of enhanced skills.

Communities for Children Coordinators/Managers were asked to identify relevant adult sector partners at each location. They were also actively involved in engaging with and co-facilitating the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops in some locations. The workshops were attended by people from a range of different agencies (government and non-government) delivering a range of services in the area.

- Large numbers of mental health practitioners from both government and non-government services attended (keen interest from PHaMS funded services);
- Workers from family violence services attended each workshop and frequently co-presented;
- Large numbers of workers from Centacare, Mission Australia, the Benevolent Society, Anglicare, and the Smith Family and from Family Relationship Centres attended. Family Support Workers attended consistently;
- Child Protection Services have been involved in each workshop and co-presented in many;
- At least one person from Alcohol and Other Drug Services attended each workshop;
- Strong participation from Queensland Health;
- Representation of Aboriginal organisations from most of the nominated sites

Several additional workshops were also conducted at their request for specific groups such as Alcohol and Other Drugs, Mental Health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott was keynote speaker at several large group sessions at Playford, Onkaparinga, Cardinia, Alice Springs, Lismore, Townsville, and Launceston. A child- and family-sensitive practice workshop was also tailored for Alcohol and Other Drug services was developed by request and provided to the staff of the Langton Centre (NSW) and of Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia.

## **Promoting sustainability and ongoing learning and collaboration – Train the Trainer**

As part of the sustainability strategy the content knowledge from the child and family sensitive practice workshop was developed into a train the trainer package. In July 2013, 27 people from across Australia, who had previously participated in a BCBB workshop, attended a two-day Train the Trainer workshop to become a trainer in child- and family-sensitive practice. Participants came from agencies in Communities for Children sites in Campbelltown, Townsville, Mirrabooka, Alice Springs, Launceston, Lismore, Midland, Kempsey, Onkaparinga and Playford. Additional participants were from Drug and Alcohol Services SA, University of South Australia, Kids in Families in SA, and Relationships Australia SA. The agencies participants represented were Southern Health, Community West, Ngala, Health SA, the Smith Family, the Benevolent Society, Anglicare, Centacare, Ozcare, North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service, and the North Coast Aboriginal Health Service.

In addition, in March 2014 thirteen team leaders from the Benevolent Society in Sydney attended a two-day Train the Trainer workshop, with a particular focus on alcohol and other drug services.

The trainers intended to increase the capacity of their own and other organisations' staff. Each trainer was provided with a detailed child- and family-sensitive practice manual and a pack of resources including core readings, the National Framework, training slides and a DVD of scenarios for use in the workshops.

Along with adult training methods, the Train the Trainer workshop covered the content of the five modules in the child and family sensitive practice training manual:

- The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- Intake and assessment
- Talking with parents about the effects of adult issues on children
- Talking with parents about their parenting needs and the needs of their children
- Collaboration

## **Development of e-learning resources with other national initiatives**

The BCBB project team partnered with two other national bodies, the Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association (AICAFMHA) through their Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) initiative and the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) on the development of e-learning materials. COPMI is a national initiative which promotes better outcomes for children of parents with a mental illness and NCETA is an internationally recognised research centre that works as a catalyst for change in the alcohol and other drugs field. BCBB, COPMI, and NCETA share similar aims and principles around improving the capacity of services to be responsive to children's needs.

The e-learning resource, hosted on the COPMI website (<http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/child-aware-supervision.html>), supports practice change by aiding supervisors who are supporting practitioners to implement a Child Aware Approach. It is specifically relevant for supervisors to support their staff to reflect on their practice with children and parents. It also offers practical strategies for having conversations with parents. This resource has since been embedded into training provided by the mental health department in Queensland around what makes good supervision.

A second e-learning resource - the Child Aware Child and Family Sensitive Practice has also been developed by the BCBB team and COPMI and is hosted on the COPMI website (<http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/elearning-courses.html>). It is aimed at practitioners using storytelling to focus and change practice around the 'invisible child'.

### **Extending the reach of child and family sensitive approaches**

The BCBB team seized many additional opportunities to extend the reach of the initiative – by sharing core messages in postgraduate training, building skills through sector specific training, facilitating organisational change, and sharing the learnings with a wide audience through conference presentations and workshops.

For example, a master class about child and family sensitive practice was held for 80 postgraduate Social Work students at the University of South Australia. This aim was to build student awareness of the complexities of practice and around how generalist services can better focus on the needs of children.

Also, in response to requests, additional tailored child- and family-sensitive practice workshops were developed for a range of audiences including: Alcohol and Other Drug services in New South Wales (Sydney and Lismore), South Australia, and Western Australia; Mental Health services across Australia, and in homelessness services and Red Cross Australia.

The project was also able to collaboratively create and disseminate additional resources by:

- 30 presentations/workshops/symposiums at National conferences and 5 International presentations. International Society for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect. Hawaii 2010, 2 in Dublin 2013, Nagoya 2014. Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development Melbourne 2014.
- Partnership established between Communities for Children and Mental Health Professional Network in 11 communities
- Strong partnership with Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drug workforce development initiatives, Bouverie Centre, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) Children of Parents with a Mental Illness National initiative (COPMI), Mental Health Professional Network (MHPN) .



- Working with National Peak bodies, Anglicare Australia, Mental Health Coalition, Families Australia, Family and Relationship Services Australia, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care , the disability sector, Alcohol and other Drug Council of Australia, Communities for Children Australian forums and others to drive collective change.
- Peaks and community collectives in South Australia, for example Child and Family Welfare Association (CAFWA), South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS) , the Family Alcohol & Drug Network (Fadnet), Communities for Children SA collective, Child Protection Interagency Forum.
- Tailored workshops for Alcohol and other Drug services; Langton Centre Sydney, Cyrenian House Perth, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, Riverland Drug and Alcohol Services Lismore.
- International meetings to promote Australia's development of the National Framework and BCBB in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland, Finland, Japan and New Zealand.
- Supporting international aid agencies to include Child and family sensitive practice (Child Aware) into Child Protection frameworks: Red Cross Australia and Austraining.

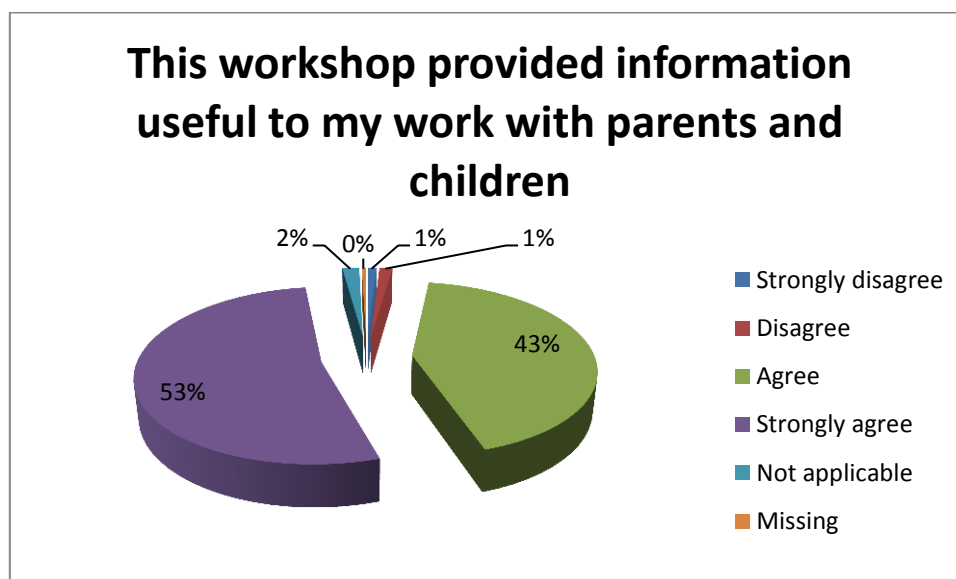
## CHAPTER THREE: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THIS INITIATIVE INCREASE THE KNOWLEDGE OF PRACTITIONERS IN ADULT AND CHILD FOCUSED SERVICES?

This chapter focuses on the impact of workshops and related activities delivered under the Building Capacity Building Bridges initiative, in which the goal was to enhance participant knowledge, confidence and skills in relation to child and family sensitive practice (Building Capacity). Results for this chapter are predominantly taken from quantitative and qualitative participant feedback at child and family sensitive practice workshops.

Of the 1500 participants in the child and family sensitive practice workshops, 959 (64%) provided feedback on the training. In addition to written feedback, six fixed-response questions from the workshop feedback at the pilot child and family sensitive practice workshops addressed the aim of “increased knowledge” and application of that knowledge with families. Results are provided in the following sections. It should be noted that the questions were answered by participants only *after* the workshops (i.e., there was no pre-training assessment). Therefore it is not known to what extent participant responses reflect a pre-existing level of knowledge, belief or intention regarding child- and family-sensitive practice, changes in these characteristics, or both.

### Information provided in the child and family sensitive practice workshops

The majority of participants providing feedback (53%; n=506) *strongly agreed* that the workshop had provided information useful to their work with parents and children (see Figure 8). An additional 43% *agreed* with this statement. A small proportion of respondents (2%; n= 17) indicated that this question was *not applicable* to them, suggesting that they may not work in a frontline practice role.



**Figure 8.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about usefulness of information provided (n=959)

Written responses from participants indicated that they appreciated the simple way in which the message was delivered without it being simplistic or reducing the complexity or seriousness of the issues discussed. Other comments related to the idea that the workshop provided a basic and realistic overview of child- and family-sensitive practice.

Remarks included *a good first step, real, did not paint a glossy picture*. Others respondents used terms like *useful, valuable information, informative* to describe the workshop. Other participants valued seeing strengths-based practice in a practical setting, both *on display [and] incorporated into the workshop* and felt that the material was presented in a way that affirmed their current approach, which helped them gain a sense that they are engaged in good practice that follows *recommended guidelines*.

On the whole, attending the workshop was seen as a useful opportunity to reflect and refresh, providing affirmation for current practice and providing a way to synthesise knowledge gained from disparate workshops. The workshops encouraged professional development, but also professional reflection, and afforded opportunity for building collaborative relationships with other professionals in the local area.

Most comments about the workshop experience focused on how facilitators engaged the group along with the practical nature of the sessions. There were many comments about how interesting and engaging the workshops were. The use of guest speakers and the interactive nature of the sessions were positively endorsed. There was also appreciation for the expertise of the speakers, the way in which facilitators encouraged group participation, and their respectful behaviour towards participants.

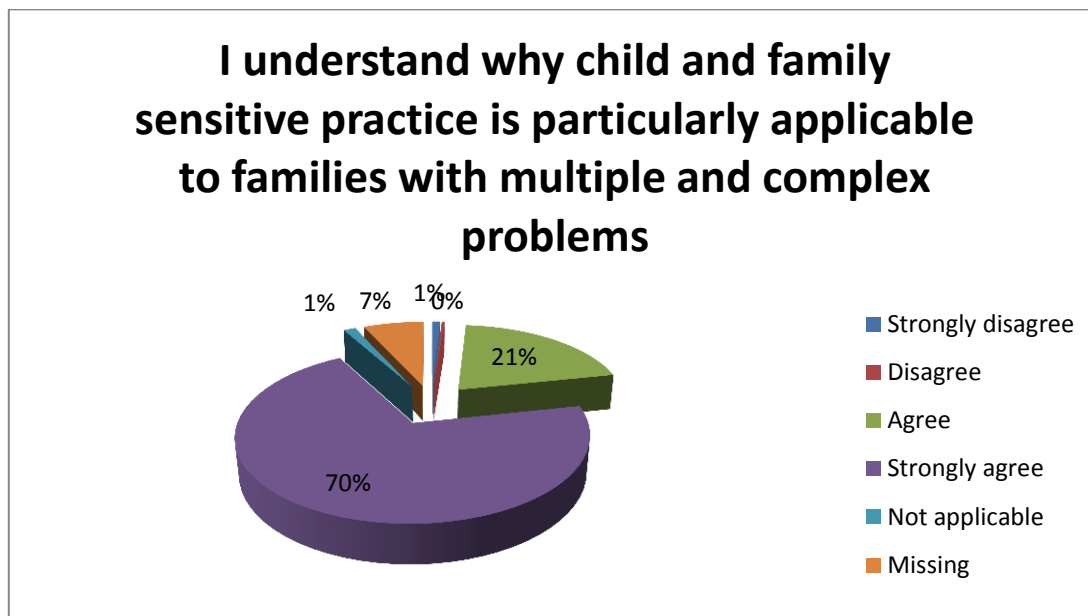
*I have attended extensive workshops. I would like to advise that this facilitator is an exception. I found her to be stimulating of group discussions and her knowledge and skills excellent. She was very approachable and her ability to clarify and articulate subjects excellent. This is one of only a few trainings I have left feeling my skills had been increased and also my input and skills acknowledged. (Workshop participant)*

*One of the best most useful workshops I have attended in 10 years. Have put lots into my tool box. (Workshop participant)*

While some participants reported finding participation challenging, others felt the training should be directed towards students, those in leadership and funding-related positions and those in a statutory child protection role. For example, one participant gave their reason for thinking this: because statutory child protection workers *'hold more power than NGOs and would benefit more from this training as I feel like NGOs already work well/collaboratively'*. A handful of respondents noted that the materials were more relevant for workers working in services focused exclusively on adults because the topics did not relate to their client populations such as Aboriginal families and youth or where workers refer adults to other services

## Understanding the importance of child and family sensitive practice

The majority of participants providing feedback (70%; n=673) *strongly agreed* that they understand why child and family sensitive practice is appropriate for families with complex needs (see Figure 9). A further 20% (n=196) *agreed* with this statement<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 9.** Child and family workshop participants' responses about understanding the relevance of child and family sensitive practice for families with multiple and complex needs (n=959)

Respondents commented about building knowledge around working with parents, placing the child in the context of work with the family, building knowledge of child welfare issues, and feeling more confident to work with parents about their children's needs. A few comments related to the way in which the workshops facilitated knowledge development regarding engaging, communicating with, assessing, and challenging the parents with whom they work.

*I work predominantly with adults and this training has given me information on how I can support the work that is needed from child and family services. (Workshop participant)*

A few respondents noted that the workshop helped develop practical understanding of relevant theory, models and national policy matters related to attachment, child development, welfare, and maltreatment. A handful also noted that attending the workshop increased their confidence to work with parents about their children's needs. This mainly related to feeling more confident to start conversations with parents about difficult and

<sup>1</sup> There is a higher proportion of *missing* responses to this question (7%; n=65) compared with other questions as this statement was not included in the evaluation form at one workshop (the total of 65 includes 63 participants at the workshop where this question was not included).

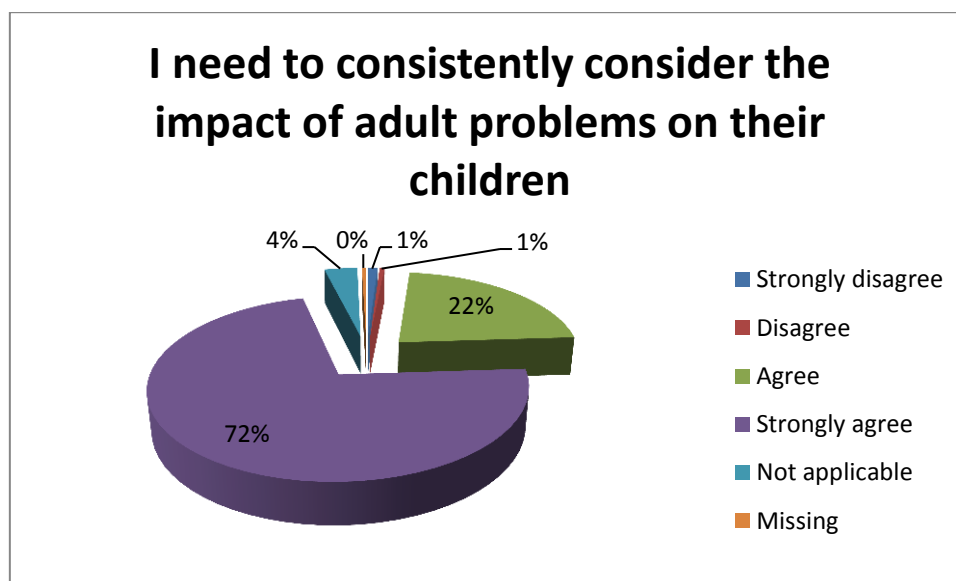
sensitive issues, and developing these conversations in ways that focus on children’s needs, safety, and wellbeing, especially regarding ways in which parents’ behaviours negatively affect their children.

Participants felt that they were able to synthesise knowledge gained in the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops with that learned through various other training experiences. The practical and applied approach was also valued.

*“Talking thru (sic) the scenarios helped me to relate the information to reality and made it easy for someone with no parenting background to understand and adopt the things discussed”.*

(Workshop participant)

The majority of participants providing feedback (72%; n=692) *strongly agreed* that they need to consistently consider the impact of adult problems on children (see Figure 10). An additional 215 respondents (22%) *agreed* with this statement. A small proportion of respondents (3%; n= 33) indicated that this question was *not applicable* to them, suggesting that they may not work in a practice role with adults who have complex problems.



**Figure 10.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about the need to consistently consider the impact of adult problems on children (n=959)

Participants described the value of being reminded of the importance of prioritising children’s needs when working with adults who are parents, and being reminded of approaches, such as child-focused and family systems practice. Participants felt that learning about child and family sensitive practice in the workshop heightened their sense of responsibility to children when working with adults who are parents.

*[It] was fantastic in being able to remind me to bring everything back to basics on how to approach the issue and parent behaviour on [children] and different ways to link in with other services to provide better care of clients. (Workshop participant)*

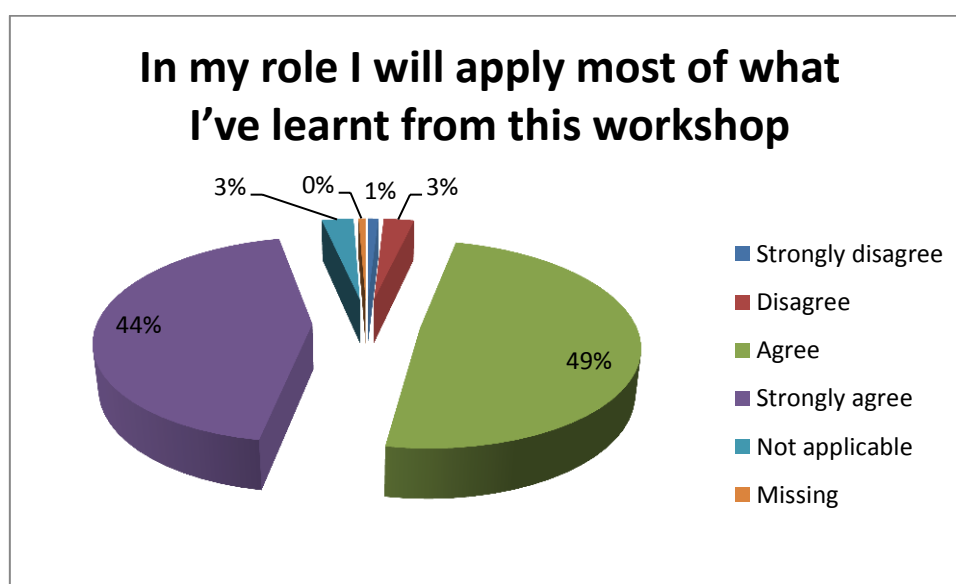
Despite overwhelmingly positive feedback about the workshops, a small proportion of comments stated that there was too much information, that the information reiterated previous knowledge, that the focus on adult services got a bit lost, and that the information was a bit vague towards the end.

*Even though info is great it was hard to apply to current role and wasn't new - most is part of compulsory training for organisation. (Workshop participant)*

*Although a lot of content I've done before, was good to sit and listen to content and sharing of other workers ideas and thoughts. Training could have been in one day - a little long at times. Indigenous/ aboriginal focused section or training would be good as well, run by an Aboriginal facilitator. (Workshop participant)*

#### Ability to practice in a child and family sensitive way

Forty-four percent (n=420) of participants providing feedback *strongly agreed* that they would apply most of what they had learnt at the workshop in their roles (see Figure 11). An additional 471 respondents (49%) *agreed* with this statement. A small proportion of respondents (3%; n= 27) indicated that this question was *not applicable* to them, suggesting that they may not work in a practice role in which the knowledge and skills gained could be applied. Chapter 5 provides additional detail about why transferring knowledge into practice may be difficult in some organisational contexts.



**Figure 11.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about applying the knowledge and skills gained at the workshop (n=959)

*I will be taking back the resources and information obtained from this workshop back to my team. Has been a great reminder of importance of keeping children as a focus, despite working with the adult (parent). Well-structured and presented training. (Workshop Participant)*

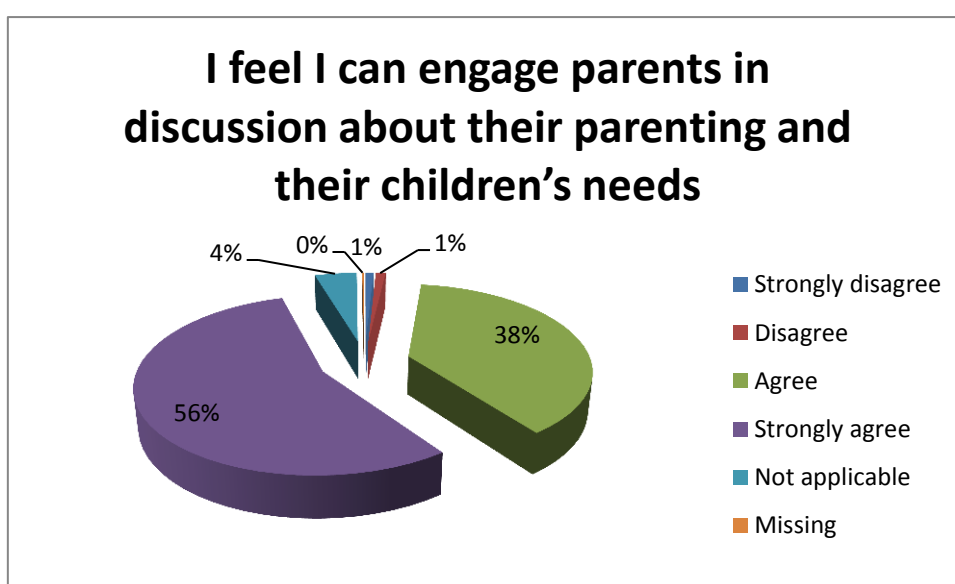
Feedback from another participant highlights the enhanced confidence to implement some of the knowledge and skills gained in the workshop:

*...Thank you for the training you delivered last week. It has been really useful (already) for me personally, in that it has given me the confidence to bring children into the conversations we have even with new applicants. And I know that my team enjoyed it also.*

Many respondents reported that they developed knowledge through opportunities the workshop provided for reflection on practice; opportunities that were not always available in their workplace. Participants identified where they can use the types of ideas raised, evaluating, and challenging their current approach to become more sensitive to the needs of children and families, and identifying room for improvement and change in their approach. Descriptions of how participants applied learnings from the workshops to change within their organisations are provided in Chapter 5.

*most informative, provided opportunity to reflect on my practice and incorporate other information/strategies into my practice. Thank you. (Workshop participant)*

The majority of participants providing feedback (56%; n=532) *strongly agreed* that they felt they could engage parents in discussions about parenting and their children’s needs (see Figure 12). An additional 365 respondents (38%) *agreed* with this statement. A small proportion of respondents (4%; n= 42) indicated that this question was *not applicable* to them, suggesting that they may not work in a frontline practice role with parents.



**Figure 12.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about their ability to engage parents in a discussion about their parenting and children’s needs (n=959)

Many respondents stated that the workshops included good cases and helpful scenarios, concrete questions to ask parents, helpful tools, and offered practical suggestions, strategies and opportunities to practice ways to work with parents.

In particular, the workshops helped respondents learn concrete strategies and techniques to engage and interact with parents whom they had previously found difficult to engage. This included learning more sensitive, tactful, and non-judgemental ways to communicate with parents about sensitive issues, to talk about their children, and their children's safety, welfare, and wellbeing. Learning to be sensitive of children's needs when working with parents and providing a service more holistic to the needs of the family, rather than the adult client alone was mentioned along with the idea of taking a new perspective on children and recognising the child is a *'very big part of the adult's life'*.

*Found it particularly helpful in expanding my 'counselling' skills – the way to word conversations with parents to try to engage families and address issues like the scenarios was helpful.*

(Workshop participant)

Some also reported they found the specific conversation starters around talking to parents about their children very helpful. Suggestions for alternative techniques included multimedia and different types of group activities. A few respondents noted that they liked the concrete questions, good exercises and discussion, good handouts, useful readings, and that there was a good balance of theory and practice. A few participants reported that they wanted more written information, rather than group interaction, and some others said that they found the scenarios unrealistic, preferring more tools and skills that were realistically linked to practice.

*...allowed me and made me feel confident in discussing parental AOD use and its effects on children. The way in which I approach this discussion will now move from a purely facts talk to more about parents' views on how their alcohol and other drug use impacts their children.*

(Workshop participant)

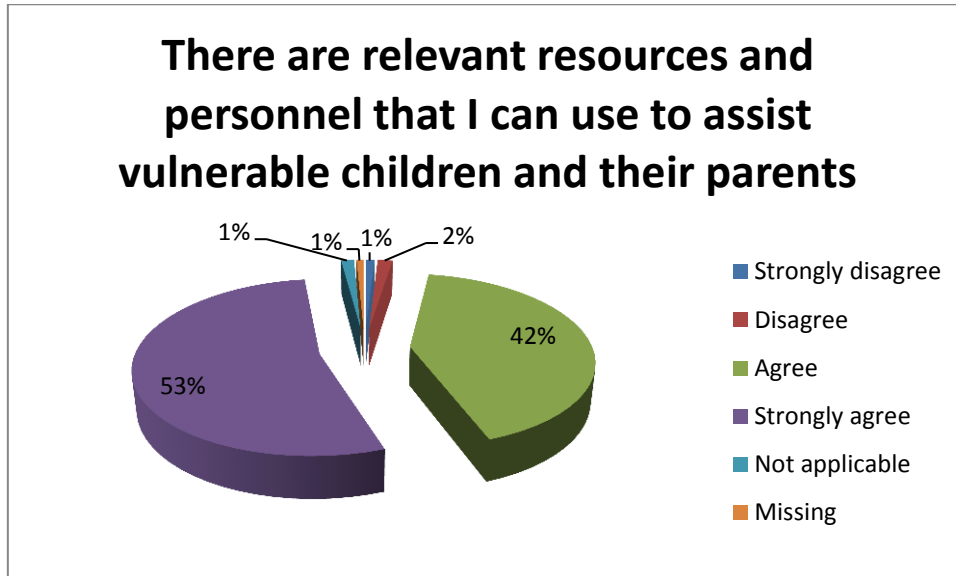
*I have encountered child protection issues in my work and felt uncomfortable in my role. This workshop has helped me understand the impact of parental substance abuse and distress on children and I will be more alert to the needs and experiences of such children. I have been equipped with knowledge and strategies for promoting the welfare of children and monitoring their safety while also providing emotional support to their parents, I feel more prepared for engaging in difficult conversations with parents about the needs of their children. Thank you*

(Workshop participant).

Related to the ability to apply knowledge from the workshops in practice, was the access of participants to resources and personnel who can assist them. The majority of participants providing feedback (53%; n=512)



*strongly agreed* that they had access to these resources (see Figure 13). An additional 403 respondents (42%) *agreed* with this statement.



**Figure 13.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about access to relevant resources and personnel to assist children and parents (n=959)

A number of respondents noted that they would like future opportunities to participate in such workshops, where they revisit the kinds of ideas discussed, and continue to receive support for their work. They also noted the need for management staff within their agency to attend such workshops in order for the knowledge and skill regarding this new approach to be translated into practice and agency change.

## CHAPTER FOUR: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THIS INITIATIVE STRENGTHEN INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION?

This chapter focuses on the impact of workshops and related activities delivered under the BCBB initiative, in which the goal was to enhance skills for collaboration and develop and implement collaborative strategies between child-focused and adult-focused services (Building Bridges). Results for this chapter are taken from quantitative and qualitative participant feedback at collaboration and child- and family-sensitive practice workshops, steering committee interviews and case studies of collaborative initiatives resulting from BCBB.

In considering these findings, it should be noted that the BCBB initiative spanned three years from 2010 to 2013. Some participants may have had just one contact with the initiative through a workshop, or they may have had contact for the life of the initiative as a facilitating partner. The views reported also do not relate to a specific stage in the life of BCBB. The BCBB initiative also occurred within a context of increasing emphasis on inter-agency collaboration in a range of sectors and jurisdictions so it cannot be assumed that strengthened inter-agency collaboration was directly or entirely due to BCBB. Regarding the survey feedback, it should be noted that the questions were answered by participants only *after* the workshops (i.e., there were no pre-training assessments). Therefore it is not known to what extent participant responses reflect a pre-existing level of knowledge, belief or intention regarding collaborative approaches, changes in these characteristics, or both.

### Results from collaboration workshops – commitment to collaboration

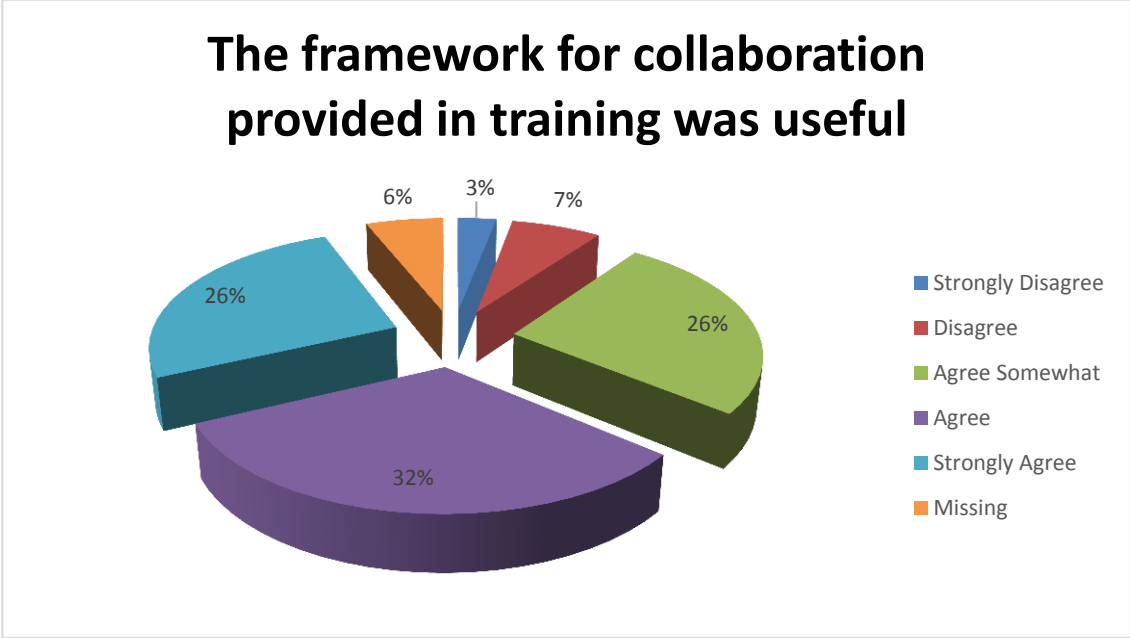
The first major activity undertaken as part of the BCBB initiative was collaboration workshops in the communities. Senior management from lead agencies in each region were invited to participate in a one day learning and development workshop. The aim of this activity was to increase managers' knowledge about facilitating collaboration between child and family and adult services at a local level. The BCBB initiative used a learning and development strategy, based on Winkworth and White's evidence-informed framework (2010), to increase knowledge about how to build collaborative practice between child and family and adult services. It was theorised that the involvement of senior managers would build an 'authorising environment' in which collaborative networks would be more easily developed.

Collaboration workshops were attended by 334 participants and feedback was provided by just over a third (34%; n=113<sup>2</sup>). Five fixed-response questions from the workshop feedback addressed the aim of "increased collaboration" including the framework to understand collaboration and commitments to promoting it.

Of the 113 attendees who provided feedback at the collaboration workshops, 36 participants (32%) *agreed* that the collaboration framework provided was useful (see Figure 14). An additional 30 respondents (26%) *strongly agreed* with this statement.

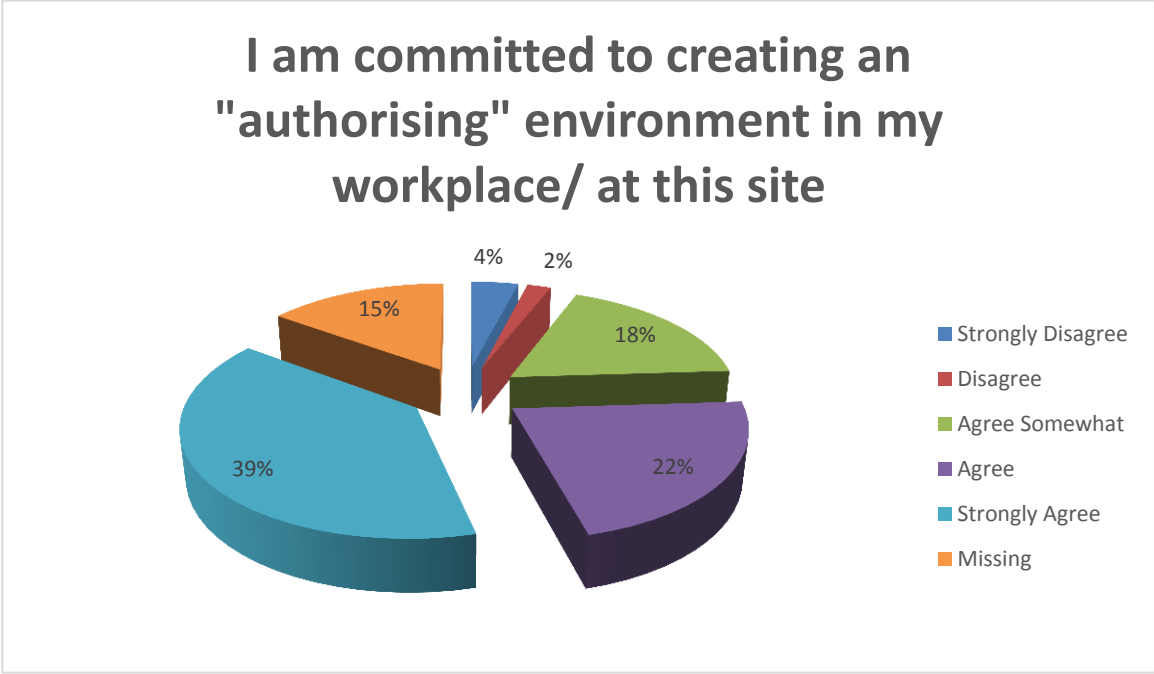
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<sup>2</sup> Participant feedback was sought from 8 of the 11 sites. The 113 respondents are 65% of 174 participants in those sites.



**Figure 14.** Responses from collaboration workshop participants about usefulness of frameworks (n=113)

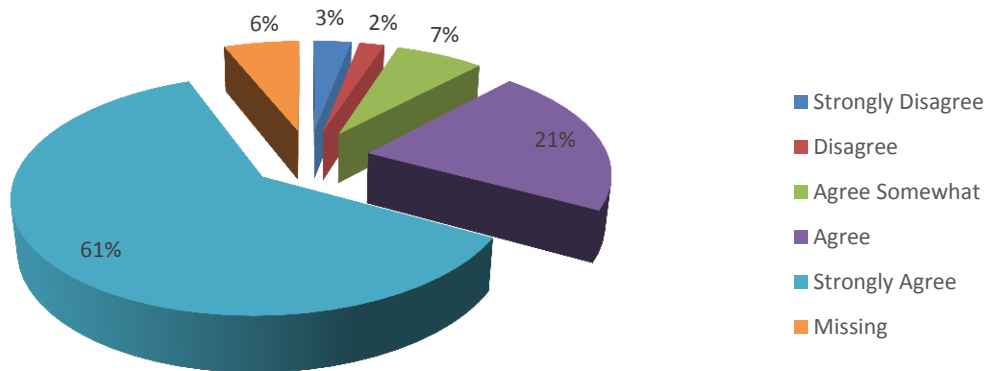
Forty-four participants who provided feedback (39%) also *strongly agreed* that they were committed to providing an “authorising” environment for collaboration (see Figure 15). An additional 25 respondents (22%) *agreed* with this statement.



**Figure 15.** Responses from collaboration workshop participants about providing an authorising environment (n=113)

The majority of participants providing feedback (61%; n=69) *strongly agreed* that they were committed to increasing capacity for collaboration (see Figure 16). An additional 24 respondents (21%) *agreed* with this statement.

## I am committed to increasing the capacity for collaboration between adult and child services



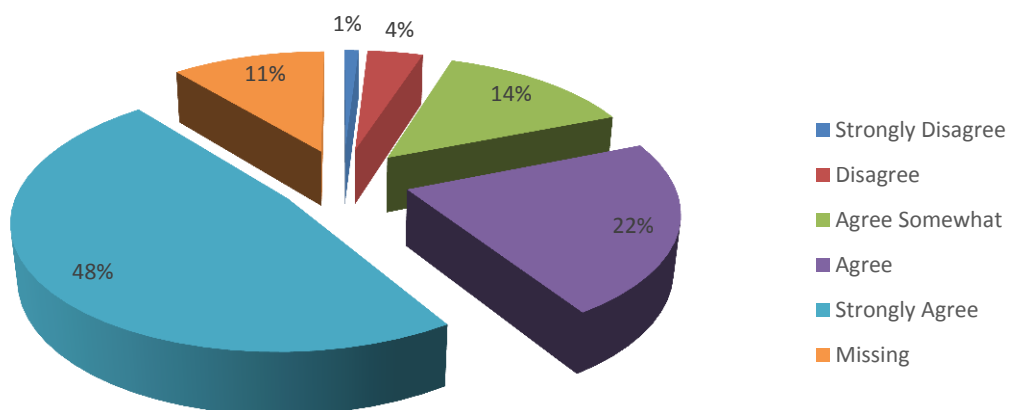
**Figure 16.** Responses from collaboration workshop participants about capacity for collaboration (n=113)

*...It is part of a growing sector to be able to understand everyone's beliefs and visions; overall the relationships and collaborative potential is encouraging and confidence-building.*

(Participant, collaboration workshop)

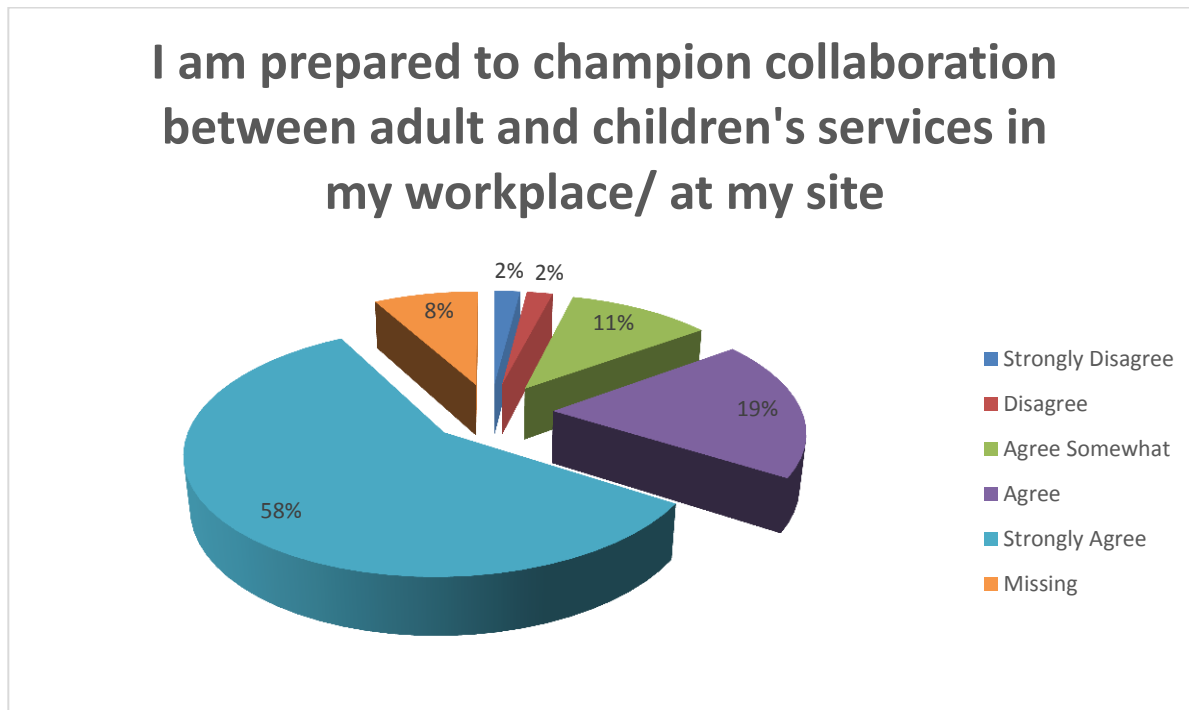
Fifty-four participants providing feedback (48%) also *strongly agreed* that they were committed to progressing shared goals from the workshop (see Figure 17). An additional 25 respondents (22%) *agreed* with this statement.

## I am committed to progressing the shared goals agreed upon today



**Figure 17.** Responses from collaboration workshop participants about progressing shared goals (n=113)

The majority of participants providing feedback (58%; n=66) also *strongly agreed* that they were prepared to champion collaboration between adult and child- and family-focused services (see Figure 18). An additional 22 respondents (19%) *agreed* with this statement.



**Figure 18.** Responses from collaboration workshop participants about championing collaboration (n=113)

Respondents reported that the experience of coming together to discuss collaboration promoted good collaborative outcomes. Some noted that sharing ideas was a positive experience, while others commented that involvement in the workshop was an opportunity for people to open up about what does, does not, and could work better.

In addition, some reported that the workshop was useful for developing collaborative and respectful relationships with local colleagues from a variety of sectors, and that meeting together for the workshop helped develop the local interagency network. Some noted that it was particularly useful to meet staff working in services for adults, and to access child and family service contact lists. One remarked that it was affirming to hear others' experiences of similar challenges. Another commented on how the workshop helped them learn a model (Winkworth and White, 2010), and practical strategies, for starting to build and maintain collaboration. Another participant was positive about leaving the workshop with a plan for a project to improve local collaboration.

*Having the opportunity to discuss freely across different service providers attending the workshop was valuable. (Participant, collaboration workshop)*

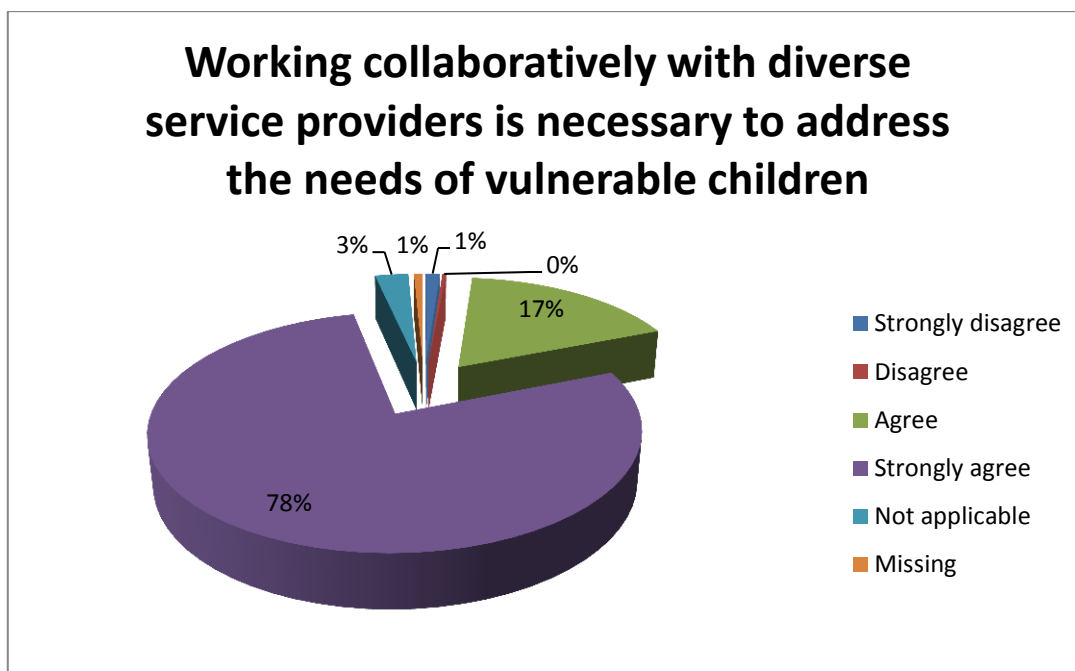
In addition, some participants took the time to suggest how collaboration between adult and child services could be encouraged more generally. Strategies such as striving for greater diversity of services present, with an

increase in the attendance from adult services, along with more informal time to learn about the other services attending, were recommended.

### Results from child and family sensitive practice workshops – building bridges to collaboration

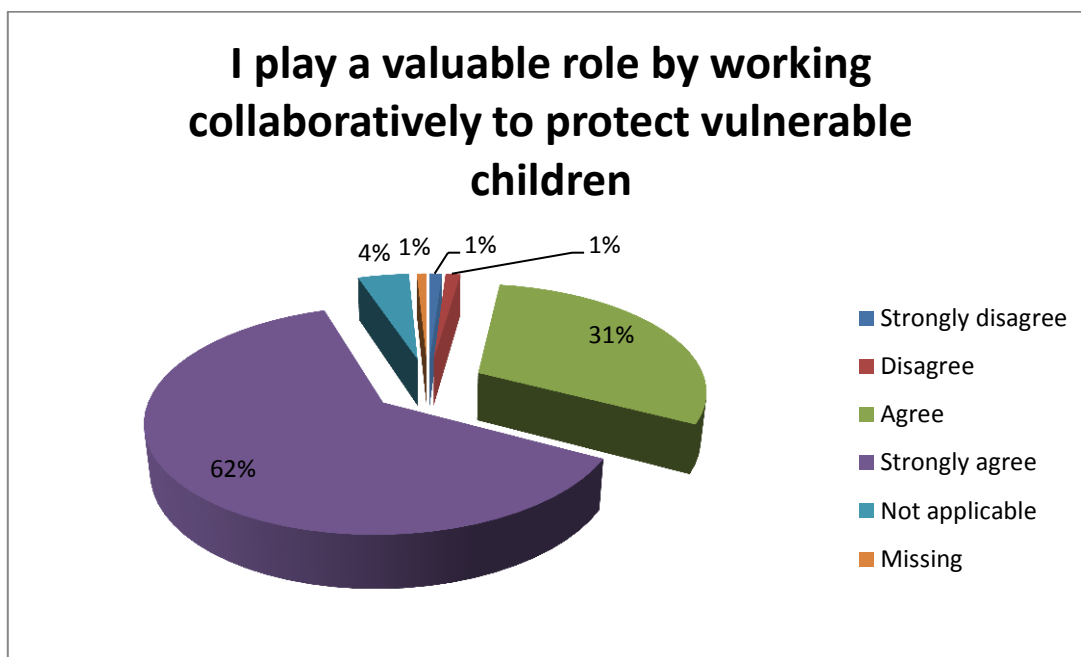
As described in the previous chapter, 64% (n=959) of the 1500 participants at the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops provided open-ended and fixed response feedback. Two questions related to collaborating to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

The majority of participants providing feedback (78%; n=744) *strongly agreed* that working collaboratively with diverse service providers is necessary to address the needs of vulnerable children (see Figure 19). An additional 168 respondents (18%) *agreed* with this statement.



**Figure 19.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about the necessity of working collaboratively (n=959)

The majority of participants providing feedback (62%; n=596) *strongly agreed* that they play valuable roles in protecting children by working collaboratively (see Figure 20). An additional 292 respondents (30%) *agreed* with this statement.



**Figure 20.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about the valuable role of collaborative working (n=959)

#### The workshops themselves providing opportunities to collaborate

Key to the BCBB workshops was attendance and participation by representatives from a mix of adult-focused and child- and family-focused services. These workshops provided opportunities for practitioners from varied services to reflect on what skills and other supports are needed for effective collaboration to occur. Each workshop was developed in consultation with Communities for Children partners, child protection authorities, and local agencies with a great deal of pre-planning. Most were held over two days, with a mix of attendees from child- and family-focused and adult-focused services from health, education, homelessness, family support, alcohol and other drug, mental health, and domestic violence fields. Key workers from agencies who had initiated a child and family focus were invited to co-present, enabling participants in the training to hear from those in the community who could support practice change.

The use of case studies in the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops enabled participants to explore together the skills and knowledge they each bring to a particular situation. The opportunities created by this experience allowed different skills to be recognised, individual practice approaches to be reflected on, ideas to be shared, and new skills to be developed.

The feedback suggested that engaging with service clients as parents was a challenge for both those from adult-focused and those from child- and family-focused services. The workshop environment allowed the forming of relationships between professionals from different services; a step along the pathway to service collaboration.

*Provided avenue for developing increased collaboration with other agencies.*

(Workshop participant)

After participating in the workshop together, contact with another service can change from making a 'cold call' to calling a person who had been met at the workshop. Feedback from the participants stressed the importance of informal networks to enhance their capacity to assist clients.

Participants established new contacts, strengthened relationships with professionals they had met previously, developed new referral options for their clients, and increased opportunities for accessing resources. A couple noted that they had become aware of services they did not know operated in the area.

*Workshop was very enjoyable and informative topics covered encouraged creative thinking, good networking opportunity. (Workshop participant)*

The many networking opportunities that arose during the workshop helped people develop greater understanding of, and appreciation for, other service providers in their area. Respondents learnt more about what other professions and organisations do, and how they work. Discussing practice scenarios in groups with practitioners who held perspectives about child-centred practice quite different from their own, was experienced as helpful. A few commented that the networking opportunities increased their confidence. A small proportion would have liked greater opportunities to explore collaborative practice within current policy agendas in their region.

*I would have liked to explore collaborative practice and moving along in the current model of NGOs and government bodies needing to work together and how we can do this.*

(Workshop participant)

### **Developing strategies to strengthen collaboration**

A full day workshop on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012 was held to bring together the National Steering Committee, the Chief Executive Officers and the Key contact person from each of the 12 Communities for Children partner organisations working with BCBB as well as the Project team from the Australian Centre for Child Protection and FaHCSIA (as it was then). It offered a unique opportunity to gather leaders from a number of major community service organisations, peak bodies representing mental health, homelessness, drug and alcohol, and disability sectors, and those directly involved in BCBB to explore the barriers and facilitators to collaboration at the community level and to hear about case examples in the 12 sites (the following section provides more detail about case examples).

*If ever we were in doubt about the importance of integrated service delivery and of different types of service delivery organisations, whether they be child related or adult related services, working much more intimately together, this project left me in no doubt about it. So by hearing the experiences in delivering the project and about the evident value that was being seen by the service providers that the centre was working with, to see the value that they were placing in*



*working across different sorts of organisations in ways that maybe they had been doing, but maybe they hadn't been doing in the past, brought home the value of integrated service delivery.*

(Steering Committee Member)

This Workshop identified that:

- Collaboration needs time, resources, trust and relationships, persistence, and perseverance
- Staff moving between agencies in rural communities was a supporting factor
- Staff moving into metro based services was seen as a barrier
- Knowledge of a counterpart's organisation or agency is important
- Shared understanding of each sector's perspective was identified as a key ingredient
- Getting people in the room is not always hard, but making conversation collaborative and meaningful is; as sometimes people need to have "hard" conversations.
- Collaboration between the adult sectors and child- and family-sector is in its infancy in most communities.

#### **Case examples of collaborative activities in sites**

The initiative was guided at the community level by listening to local professionals about what was required to meet local needs, rather than adopting responses based on policy level assumptions and decisions about what communities need. The BCBB initiative acknowledged that communities have particular characteristics, and that it was necessary to work with and within 12 community sites that functioned differently from each other in terms of the programs they delivered. 'A one size fits all approach' was not taken.

BCBB aimed to support the growth of local collaborations by providing advice, concrete resources, and brokerage funds. Examples include:

- the provision of brokerage funds to fund 'Speed dating forums for Adult and Child Services', Cardinia (May 2012, 52 participants , August 2013, 48 participants)
- 'Cross-sector induction and orientation opportunity for services and workers in area of child protection and family and community services', Alice Springs (March 2013, 49 participants, March 2014, 90 participants);
- 'A conversation about coordination and collaboration and child-centred practice', Playford (May 2012, 98 participants);
- 'Strengthening connections between services to make a difference for children and their families', Onkaparinga (March 2013, 91 participants);
- 'Keeping focus on fragile families in turbulent times - a focus on strengthening services to make a difference for families and children', Townsville (March 2013, 91 participants);

- ‘Child and family forum’, Lismore (December 2013, 66 participants); and
- ‘Keeping focused on fragile families in turbulent times’, Alice Springs (February 2014, 100 participants)

*Feel empowered by buzz that's developed and discussions made and future hope of collaboration between orgs. (Workshop Participant )*

*Thought provoking and inspiring. Sometimes you get lost in your work and the struggles and it is events like this that bring like people/profs together, share info, share passion which enables you to go back to work with a reignited passion. (Workshop Participant)*

*I think what the project has done well is that it has, from the evidence that I've seen of being brought back to the steering group, it has demonstrably sort of improved, I suppose, deepened the connections between services out in the field, and that is to have encouraged either a strengthening of the culture of collaboration or a rethinking of why collaboration doesn't occur as much as we would like it to have occurred, and to sort of put into the mix the questions to practitioners about why is it that they can't - what are the barriers to greater collaboration. (Steering Committee Member)*

The value of a community needs approach that allowed the development of specific facilitated workshops, such as ‘Keeping focused on fragile families in turbulent times’, brought 100 service providers from across the Alice Springs community to explore; ‘How do we retain a focus on “Fragile families” and sustain morale and optimism in a changing landscape?’ The day facilitated by Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott focused on solutions and strengthening connections between services to make a difference for children and their families. The importance of BCBB facilitating these opportunities in communities is demonstrated in the press release below.

Keeping Focused on our Fragile Families, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014 Press release

*Through the Anglicare NT Communities for Children Initiative, 100 Alice Springs human service workers have gathered to develop 'inter-agency collaborative practices' for the benefit of children and their families. Participants represent over 20 government departments and community based agencies.*

*Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott led the discussion on behalf of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at University SA. The agencies who gathered are focussed on "The challenge of ending child abuse is the challenge of breaking the link between adults' problems and children's pain".*

*One participant said "The children & their families are at the Centre. The need for us to collaborate and challenge the boundaries of funding and how we are structured to work is urgent."*

*The seeds of collaboration are clearly evident in Alice Springs with some robust examples of good practice. Moving towards a family centred approach requires partnership of adult and children's services. Professor Dorothy Scott stimulated discussion about how to build effective collaboration between our adult focussed services and children's services. She challenged us to consider how we might build this collaboration between housing and child-focussed services and how we might work more effectively with schools.*

*Agencies are keen to build bridges. We need to build an environment where we start with thinking about children and their relationship with their families.*

*Kate McGarry, Executive Manager with Anglicare NT said "We have many people here with a commitment to working better together so the most vulnerable families receive the support they need. Having Professor Dorothy Scott lead the workshop today has been significant as we have shared what actually is working and move forward and make changes."*

Many project partners maintained a focus on building local relationships with adult services by holding regular shared lunchtime sessions about topics of mutual interest. In other communities a stronger move toward more complex case coordination is demonstrated by the following:

*Now there is also a commitment to complex case coordination. Until there was a shared language, understanding was not growing. Then it increased as awareness rose about working on a family by family basis. The ability to navigate the service system has improved as understanding of all players has increased and awareness of commonalities grew.*

(Communities for Children)

The strong relationships developed through BCBB created other opportunities to broaden the message of the National Framework and child- and family-sensitive practice. For example in Onkaparinga a Family-Focused Practice Training for Professionals Working with Adults managing co- morbidity was co-facilitated by Communities for Children Onkaparinga with Andris Banders (Director, SANDAS) and the BCBB team. This created an opportunity for 40 Adult-focused Alcohol and other Drug service providers the chance to explore 'Familiarisation with the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, Intake & Assessment; Talking with Parents about the impact of Adult issues on Children; Talking about Parenting needs and the needs of Children and the need for Collaboration'. Many reported this was their first exposure to the National Framework and stated that having a copy of the framework would make having conversations within their respective agencies easier.

Another example of the impact of BCBB is illustrated below:

*Initial perception that adult services not responding but they couldn't get access to child services! It provided openness to inclusion – cross sector input child and family, family, adult services and opened up challenging opportunities. A number of cross sector projects resulted eg. 5 community partner organisations pooled dollars for AOD home visiting with family home visiting service equalling cross sector skill development and respect. Increased sense of achievement/celebration. All fostered by BCBB workshops and support.*

(Communities for Children)

The following case examples also highlight how BCBB supported different collaborative approaches to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families in three communities.

### **Lismore In Touch Kiosk**

Lismore Communities for Children (YWCA NSW Northern Rivers)

*As Communities for Children project managers we partner with various community service providers to manage seventeen projects in our area which support disengaged, marginalised, vulnerable, and disadvantaged families in our community. Through the strong community partnership with the Australian Centre for Child Protection based at the University of South Australia we have been involved in the implementation of their community awareness raising and training events aimed at engaging Health staff and workers in the Community Services sector. Building Capacity, Building Bridges has motivated them to be proactive in working for the safety of vulnerable children of parents with mental health, substance abuse, gambling, and incarceration issues that affect the children's lives.*

*Building Capacity, Building Bridges' engagement of community services has directly led to positive social outcomes for the most vulnerable children in our community, by targeting the disconnected Health and Community Service sectors and motivating them to change their practice. These kinds of shifts are difficult to create from within rural communities and in this case it was the energy and professionalism combined with the authority and evidence base that University of South Australia staff brought to this conversation that started the shift in our community.*

*Their work has had a significant impact in that we are now regularly convening a very well attended forum that is engaging more stakeholders than we thought possible. We are running regular gatherings for anyone who works with families where mental health issues affect the wellbeing of children. These are being attended by school counsellors, Job Service Agency staff,*

*Health staff, early childhood staff, Veterans Affairs counsellors, parents experiencing mental illness challenges, and staff who work within Acute Care and Community Mental Health facilities.*

*The most innovative outcome of the project has been the upcoming trial of a touch screen kiosk which will be placed inside the Adult Mental Health Unit at Lismore Base Hospital. The purpose of the kiosk is to allow staff to overcome the “silo” effect of working within the hospital and provide them with easy and instant access to dynamic community service information about how they might best support the children of people with mental illness challenges. The kiosks will also be available to friends and family of people with mental illness bringing them in to contact with the services that can strengthen the resilience of children. Northern Rivers Social Development Council and Interrelate are partnering with us and providing a worker one day a week to update the site. She currently works on the Family Referral Service database so she is well placed to carry out this function.*

*I met with North Coast Community housing yesterday at their invitation. They want to help, and also want to install a Touchscreen in their waiting room ASAP. They brought 5 staff into the meeting and it was great link building exercise between our two organisations discussing sharing and working together to make sure everyone has access to information. They have also offered help- which at this stage will be coming to Lismore in Touch working group meetings and all going through the site and evaluating its accuracy, comprehensiveness and ease of use.*

Initially the BCBB initiative brought together people from across different services in a local collaboration workshop. Ollie Heathwood, in her role at the YWCA (the facilitating partner of Lismore Communities for Children), said this revealed a fragmented workforce where workers did not know about each other: *“They said ‘even if we did want to help parents and children get to services, we have no idea what’s around’. There was little sense of what was out there outside their workplaces”.*

The challenge in Lismore was to connect one service to another with the goal of putting parenting and vulnerable children in the spotlight, and the possibility to connect families and the broader community directly. A website wasn’t seen as the answer. Staff said: *“We never get anywhere near computers, we’re always on our feet”.* Many families also didn’t own, know how to use, or have access to a computer. A hardcopy directory wouldn’t work either, quickly becoming outdated. From the perspective of families, previous research has identified that it is important to families that the services in their lives are coordinated; that the families are seeing everyone, service providers and themselves, working as a team (McArthur & Thomson, 2011).

Embracing this opportunity, and with brokerage support from BCBB, a set of touchscreen kiosks have now been built with the needs of children and families in mind. They are found in carefully located spots across Lismore - the family law court, the emergency adult mental health unit in the hospital, and the Aboriginal medical centre - where vulnerable family members or busy workers might gather. By using a simple-to-use design (see Figure 21),

people can quickly interact and access information in plain English, in a non-stigmatising way. Through its use of warm, informal language, the kiosk moves beyond being mere communication to something that connects.

The Lismore in Touch kiosks are a lasting legacy of the BCBB initiative, and have the potential to spread to other communities experiencing similar challenges. By bringing the sectors together the community in Lismore now has something that enables practitioners to work differently, and families and children to be more visible and supported.



**Figure 21.** The YWCA Lismore In Touch kiosk (image supplied by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation)

Relationship-building in this community was also strengthened with a two-day camp in Yamba attended by workers from 35 services across both adult and child and family sectors with Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott along to support collaborative learning.

A new context was created where relationships based on trust and shared goals developed, and old stereotypes and suspicions were challenged and shifted. Ollie said: *“The vulnerable child needs a sector where people can pick up the phone and connect with each other. This experience offered us the opportunity to build this so we can all start to see the whole picture”*.

This experience has led to an increase in referral pathways, more networking opportunities and co-operation between services through strengthening understanding. The YWCA has also changed how it does its planning so

that vulnerable children are central, as well as using this process as a way to strengthen relationships by inviting other services to take part and learn together with them.

### Alice Springs

Alice Springs attracts a transient workforce, having a regular influx of new practitioners and practitioners leaving the area. This workforce turnover impacts many services, and was particularly pertinent to the child protection workforce. Caroline Lovell from the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress stated: *“High case-loads leads to workers burning out very quickly. It’s (child protective service) challenged by high turnover of staff and unfilled positions”*. New child protection case workers were seen as being thrust into the thick of crisis intervention with little opportunity to understand how to work better together with other service providers.

Settled workers also battled a growing sense of ‘investment fatigue’, from their repeated efforts of bringing on board new workers who stayed in their roles for only a short time. This made people question whether it was worth continuing to invest their energies. Being part of the BCBB collaboration and child and family sensitive practice workshops provided momentum and support to consider how to respond to this ongoing, critical problem. A local team was formed and given brokerage support by BCBB to address this issue.

What resulted was an annual cross-sector orientation session designed as a day-long event to provide a snapshot of the services in the area, and so workers, new and old, could mix and learn with each other. In the afternoon small groups work together on real case studies, to embed knowledge of how local services could be useful and relevant in different scenarios.

In the two years the orientation has run, the feedback has been positive. As well as offering an introduction to the community, it’s resulted in improved referral pathways. Participants state they feel more capable to assist families and children with their broader knowledge of what’s available. The team plan to build on their success by including more adult-focused services, and making the experience more interactive.

Support from the BCBB enabled this work, and the team are grateful for the ‘scaffolding’ this provided. As Robyn Donnelly, from Relationships Australia, shared:

*“It worked that BCBB were prepared listen to us say: ‘Look, here’s the real need, from local information, and local people saying how we think we can best develop more collaborative practice. And in Alice Springs, it’s about having good induction orientation’. BCBB was flexible in its approach and saw it as a great way to partner us in delivering these events, so it was a really useful initiative”*.

As described earlier, the BCBB initiative also provided a learning forum hosted by Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott on ways to develop collaborative practice across the community sector. Both people from adult focused and child and family services made up the 100+ attendees. They reported feeling more confident and able to

work collaboratively as a result of this experience. Nina Levin, from Anglicare, the auspicing agency of Communities for Children in Alice Springs says both the response to and the positive ripple effect from this event has been fantastic:

“It has served to highlight the importance of keeping children at the centre, to understand vulnerability, and around the need for a better co-ordinated approach. So we no longer mirror a family’s chaos”.

## Cardinia

This case study draws on the Cardinia experience to describe the process of building capacity within services and building bridges between them to better address the needs of vulnerable children.

Cardinia Communities for Children laid down an initial foundation by developing a common vision for the safety and wellbeing of children as part of their strategic planning process. In this rapidly expanding community, a range of new and established services were separately responding to the needs of children and adults. The BCBB initiative provided the impetus and opportunity to harness the potential for collaboration between services in the region. At an initial BCBB collaboration workshop in Cardinia, managers from drug and alcohol, family violence, mental health, and child and family services identified that services did not necessarily have information about what was available in their region. It was apparent that significant barriers existed, preventing adult services from connecting with child and family services to gain support for their clients.

To enhance understanding of each other’s services and roles in protecting children, a speed-dating workshop was held with Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott as keynote speaker. This provided an opportunity for workers to meet each other and share information about available services in a creative and fun way. This well attended event also served as a conduit to engage interest in child- and family-sensitive practice workshops provided by BCBB. Several such workshops were held within weeks of the speed dating event to cement this interest and build commitment to a shared vision.

The workshops provided an opportunity to learn, share and, together, weave a common language and a common approach to working with children and their families in Cardinia. BCBB provided a catalyst for change by demonstrating the link between the vision of the local community and the national policy framework for protecting children. The connection between a national initiative and a local partner leveraged a local commitment for change. The information provided an awareness created through the support of BCBB has led to joint service design, enhanced community collectiveness around responsibilities for the protection of children (e.g. the establishment of a family violence network in the region), and enhanced support to families. For example now when there is a ‘complex family’ needing assistance, the communication channels that have been established identify appropriate community -based resources with the potential to help the family.

The clear message from Cardinia has been that *‘without BCBB we wouldn’t be at this point yet’*.



Throughout this initiative the very consistent message emerging from service providers, supervisors, and managers from both adult-focused services and child- and family-focused services was that translating research and related concepts into practical application to support parents to meet the needs of their children is difficult, and that high quality workforce development needs to be supported at the organisational and policy levels if widespread change in practice is to be achieved.

Walsh, Tilbury, and Osmond (2013) note that there are a number of challenges for adult-focused services who are seeking to become more 'child aware' in their practice. To become 'child aware', Walsh and colleagues propose that an agency needs to go beyond program boundaries and to provide extra training, resources, and support for the staff. Funding is an inherent barrier or facilitator to achieving these changes. There are, however, some supportive changes evident with regards to funding. Reforms of the homelessness service sector in South Australia mean dependent children are now required by the terms of the funding contract with each agency, to be considered as service users in their own right.

While it would appear that BCBB contributed to change within some organisations, whole of organisation change was not within the scope of this initiative. Nevertheless, BCBB highlighted strategic change that may contribute to this. This chapter encompasses all activities across the BCBB initiative and draws from a range of data sources including case studies, participant feedback, and Steering Committee member's views to highlight issues relating to organisational and broader sectoral change.

### **The importance of national leadership – the vital role of the National Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee provided national leadership across all levels of a range of sectors, from policy to service provision. Involvement in the Steering Committee provided a unique opportunity to embed principles and practice common to one sector (that is, child and family) in a range of other sectors. Steering committee members were able to champion the aims of the BCBB initiative more widely than their specific sector (at both policy and practice levels) due to involvement in a range of other policy level committees. They were able to share information about BCBB within these other committees and model collaboration, a key aim of the initiative, across sectors that historically have struggled to share ideas.

The BCBB initiative was seen to break new ground regarding inter-sectoral collaboration by taking a community development approach at the local level.

*... Historically AOD and child protection have not intersected. There's been a lot of previous attempts to get them talking together more effectively, and by having alcohol and other drugs and adult specialist services more generally represented on the committee, it had actually kept us focused on them throughout the life of the project. Because a lot of similar projects tend to*

*revert to working with the specialist services that are easiest to work with, and I suppose drug and alcohol's probably one of the harder ones to work with, from a child protection point of view. And so keeping it kind of there in the spotlight I think has been really important.*  
(Steering Committee Member)

*I think also the need to be cognisant of what's going on in each of the individual sectors, getting that intelligence and then developing the approach around the understanding of the pressures there. I think it's - I'm not sure how to articulate this, but it's being more informed of the operational pressures and ways to work around those pressures in a way that has people feeling validated. So again, it's the importance of getting that and not sort of just coming in over the top and trying to impose stuff onto operations that are usually already well under the pump.*  
(Steering Committee Member)

Steering committee members spoke about the importance of strong leadership. A couple used the word 'champion' across all dimensions at which BCBB operated where 'champions' were needed i.e. the political, Steering Committee, management, and local levels. The kinds of leaders described were 'critical people' committed to, and actively involved in, BCBB as a driving force.

Such leaders were considered 'high calibre', in that others considered them credible, legitimate, and respectable. They were well connected to other 'champions', were clear about what BCBB was working towards, and supported this in a determined and persistent way. They got others enthused and gave direction based on active listening, considered thinking, a learning stance, and a humble approach that valued discussion and interchange of ideas. A strength of these 'champions' was also their ability to build relationships with key people and to use these relationships to help link aspects of BCBB together at different levels.

*...so there was some good strategy there and I guess those policy hooks could be connected up and used in terms of helping people to see the value of their engagement in the project...*  
(Steering Committee Member)

Steering Committee members brought practice wisdom, knowledge about their professional sector, and policy expertise to the BCBB initiative. Committee members were able to contribute knowledge of what works in practice in particular sectors, communities and cultural groups, and what professionals in their sector will respond to. Committee members also contributed ideas on how professionals in their sector would respond to new ideas about BCBB, as well as professionals' feedback on aspects of BCBB once it was underway, including the extent to which it was changing their experience of work for better or worse. Committee members provided realistic and strategic knowledge to support the concept of organisational change. A couple of respondents noted that their association brought a certain legitimacy, credibility, and respectability to the BCBB initiative. This included a sense that their involvement provided an authorising dimension by sending a clear message to the disparate sectors that this is an important initiative and a new way of working that they support. Their

leadership included maintaining a focus throughout the project on keeping historically separate sectors working together and focused on the same innovative outcomes.

*I'm more than happy to throw my weight into any argument that might sort have come around, and I'm well known for that. So I'm more than happy to raise the temperature if needs be.*

(Steering Committee Member)

A number of the Steering Committee members described the importance of a collaborative approach at the strategic level. Steering Committee members spoke about how it was important for the success of the project that they acted in a collaborative way, and that people at the political level acted this way.

*I think one of the really important things, was the open willingness to share, I think that it was really clear that everybody wants positive outcomes and everybody sees the potential for huge change and is willing to talk through processes to get the best outcome. I think that's really important in terms of the working group, there are no underlying agendas that people want to grandstand, or they see this as a personal process or project. I think that there's an absolute willingness to share information and share ideas and it's one of the nicest groups I've ever worked with.* (Steering Committee Member)

*The Steering Committee interactions have enhanced the level of understanding across the group of the growing evidence available in relation to the efficacy of collaborative practice in human services including the conditions under which it best delivers outcomes.*

(Steering Committee Member)

The involvement of senior sector leaders in the Steering Committee also had an impact on their own practices, networks and beliefs. A couple of members noted that their involvement broadened their perspective about what is occurring for professionals outside their sector and in different communities. This helped them to develop a wider sense of the uniqueness of needs, and the distinctive responses required to help people to meet their needs in specific circumstances. This reinforced the importance of one of the innovative features of the initiative; the partner hubs that, while underpinned by common principles, operated differently depending on the unique aspects of the community within which they sat. It also helped to strengthen the importance of developing an integrated approach to service delivery.

*The interaction with leaders across such a range of fields was a unique experience, highly stimulating and very encouraging to see how we could so easily forge a common vision and commitment to child and family inclusive practice.* (Steering Committee member)

The Committee members saw the disconnections between social welfare policy, practice and research and realised the importance of linking these more closely, both across the policy, practice, and research nexus but also across different social welfare sectors. In addition, it was not enough to facilitate integration at a practice

level, but that integration needed to occur between various organisations and at various levels within, and across, sectors.

*....Whilst much of the emphasis of Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative itself has been to engage 'adult' services it has been equally important to reinforce messages to the child and family sector that it needs to provide permission and opportunity for adult-focused services to engage in supporting children and families. (Steering Committee member)*

### **Building a critical mass of child- and family-sensitive practitioners within organisations**

In addition to national leadership driving and supporting sector-based change, a key strategy of BCBB was the engagement of a critical mass of child- and family-sensitive and collaborative practitioners within agencies and communities. As the workshops were offered at no cost and were held a number of times in each of the Communities for Children sites, it allowed several staff from some of the agencies to participate. In this way, the initiative was able to create a cohort of trained staff in these agencies. This generated opportunities for peer contact for support and discussion of child- and family-sensitive practice in the workplace. Further, the BCBB team were able to offer follow up visits to agencies to support the implementation of child- and family-sensitive practice. Having multiple staff sharing a common workshop experience also helped to promote more buy-in from the agency management structure as they are more likely to want to see a return on their investment of releasing staff to attend the workshop.

Change towards child- and family sensitive practice will be more difficult in organisations where fewer staff are committed to such a focus than in organisations where a critical mass of staff are aligned with this perspective. As many agencies provide a range of different services there is room for improved internal collaboration; this may be facilitated if a cohort of staff from different services that are provided by the same agency attend child- and family-sensitive practice training. Also, having a cohort of trained staff may make finding the needed expertise within the organisation easier and increase the likelihood of collaboration between services occurring.

*The training workshop delivered for the ..... Family Support Program has certainly given the team a bigger perspective on delivering outcomes for children. I am delighted to hear this during co-consultation with team members as I had felt it was lacking at times prior to this training. It is very difficult to not get the lines blurred in a program that has parenting as its core business and yet has the adult as its client. I definitely heard comments like 'we already do this' on the first day of training however as we progressed in the second day I felt there was a shift and staff were becoming more reflective on how the intent of their work actually matched with evidence that they were achieving outcomes for children. I know that the concept that better outcomes for parents don't always match with better outcomes for the child has been an 'ah ha' moment for many staff. Many workers now report asking the parent how their issues are affecting the children.*

*The workshop has certainly highlighted some areas for improvement in our practice and the team has decided to establish a working party to ensure that we take a child-focused approach in all aspects of our service delivery. Not bad considering they started out feeling they were already doing this!! So clearly there has been a shift and that says to me a successful training session.*  
(Key community partner organisation)

The Australian Red Cross has 60,000 members and volunteers whose humanitarian mission is to improve lives and reduce vulnerability. The BCBB team worked with Red Cross National Coordinator for Families and Children to pilot a two-day child- and family-sensitive practice workshop with 20 people from across the organisation with the aim of sparking an increase in child- and family-sensitive practice.

Jody Sachs, Team Leader Intensive Tenancy Support, Red Cross South Australia

*As a team leader I found it extremely important. It was a fantastic training; I would describe it as profound.*

*Red Cross already does mandatory notification but it seemed only programs directly interfacing with children used child-sensitive practice.*

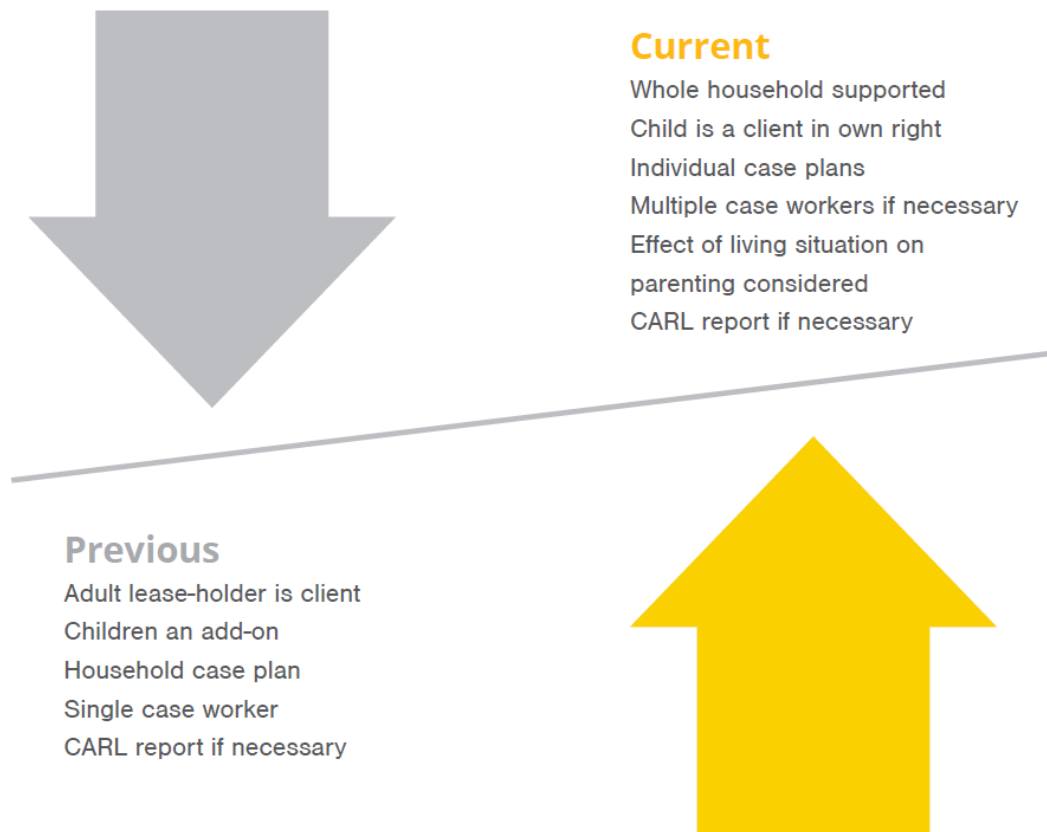
*In tenancy support services the key clients are adults but for us working in outreach, travelling to homes, we see children as well. The workshop made us think further about what our role is with every single person who lives in that tenancy. It reshaped the way our program thinks and acts and does (see Figure 23).*

*Now, parenting has become one of the key things we look at. We examine what effect coming close to eviction has on children and what we can do to make sure that children's needs are being met throughout the crisis and beyond. We not only try to strengthen parents' abilities we also highlight how others may be affected by their behaviour.*

*We learnt from the workshop how to have those discussions in a sensitive way.*

*Now we schedule visits when children are home from school so we see how parents interact with their children and, if possible, bring children into the conversation. We have found this to be powerful as parents start seeing their kids as part of the solution.*

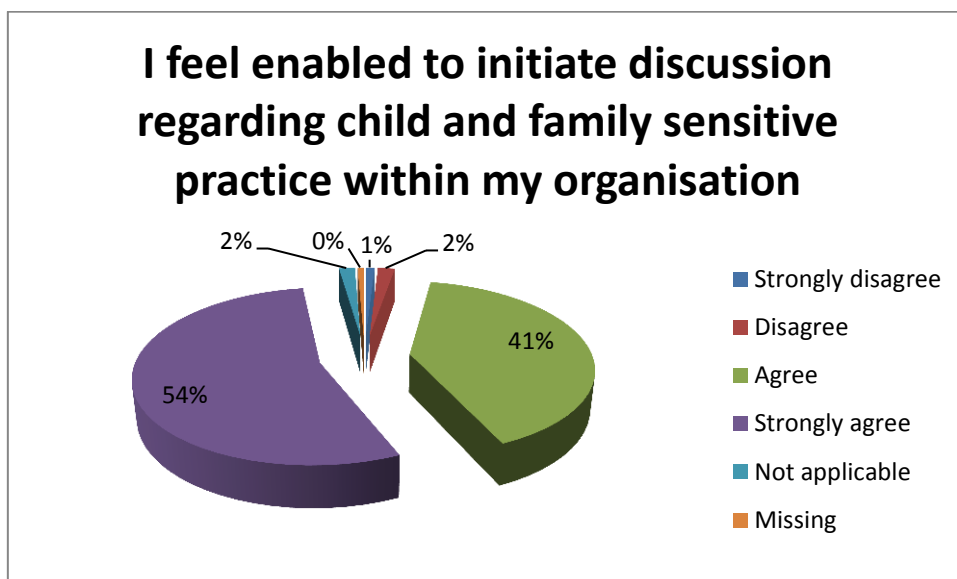
*The workshop has changed the way I work. As a leader I've been able to influence the team. Now about 98% of the conversations we have before we visit families concern the welfare of any children within that family. We frequently rehearse conversations and practice scenarios to prepare us to talk to adults about their child's needs and concerns.*



**Figure 23.** Movement towards child- and family-sensitive practice within the Australian Red Cross

### Influence of individuals within organisations

As discussed in previous chapters, participants noted their abilities to effect change at the organisational level. Participants who gave feedback in the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops (959 of 1500 participants) were asked whether they felt enabled to initiate discussions about child and family sensitive practice within their organisations (see Figure 22). The majority of participants (54%; n=521) *strongly agreed* with this statement and a further 390 (41%) *agreed* that they felt enabled in this way. It should also be noted that this question was not asked before the workshops, so it is not known if these results represent a pre-existing belief of participants, changes in this belief, or both.



**Figure 22.** Responses from child and family workshop participants about their ability to initiate discussions within their organisations (n=959)

At the community level some workshop participants reported taking what they have learned back to their organisations to open discussion on topics such as a how to make physical spaces of the work environment more sensitive to children’s needs.

**Case study**

*A team leader from the Mental Illness Fellowship of SA attended the first collaboration workshop at Onkaparinga May 2011. She also attended the Child- and Family-Sensitive Practice workshop held November 2011 and participated in a follow-up discussion held in January 2013. Over time she has influenced her manager and others in her team and has forged stronger links with other services. This has led to activities to implement whole-of-agency change. This illustrates the cumulative building of awareness and of how much time it takes to sow the seeds upon which collaboration across sectors rests. Reported to Learning and Development Co-ordinator.*

A central purpose of the work was to build capacity in facilitating child and family sensitive practice learning beyond the life of the BCBB initiative. The BCBB team invited over 40 practitioners to take part in a two-day child and family sensitive practice train the trainer course.

Amanda Kemperman took part in this training as her role is a combination of building capacity and building bridges at a local level in Onkaparinga SA, with a particular focus on connecting adult focused services with child and family services. The training provided Amanda with momentum and a mechanism for engaging services and agencies to come together to address the issue of keeping children safe. She’s also taken the key messages into a number of local forums.

*“It’s given me a way to support workers to put children in the picture when they weren’t previously visible and consider the impact and their actions”.* (Amanda Kemperman, Community Development - Systems Enhancement Communities for Children, Onkaparinga SA)

Amanda is using the training in her role to deliver learning programs and events with the aim of prioritising children’s voices and to ensure ‘child protection is everyone’s business’ across the sector. As a trained deliverer of child- and family-sensitive practice workshops, Amanda is helping to provide workshops to services such as Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services, Relationships Australia ‘Together for Kids’ program, and to SA Health mental health workers.

### **Organisational support to create service-wide impact**

One of the most important aspects to enabling the adult-focused services to recognise the impact of adult problems upon children is the provision of adequate organisational support. As mentioned, the National Framework provides an authorising environment for change but it has to be ‘performed’ primarily by agencies and their workers. These agencies have their own authorising environments, or non-authorising, through which the Framework is filtered.

Some of the difficulties preventing workshop participants from fully adopting child- and family-sensitive practice echoed the barriers found by previous researchers. For example, having the authorisation of the National Framework is insufficient if management structures within each organisation do not support staff to attend such learning opportunities, and then be able to put what they have learnt into practice. As training was delivered to mostly frontline workers, cementing the support of managers remains an important challenge to address. More work is needed at the management level so there is greater authorisation from ‘higher up’ in the adult-focused service sector.

*Whilst I will feed this information back to my manager, I feel it is imperative they participate in these activities which will then provide me with the resources and support I need to fulfil/achieve outcomes.* (Workshop participant)

Numerous studies have examined the barriers to, and facilitators for, adult-focused services recognising their clients as parents and working with their children. At the organisational policy level, Tilbury et al. (2012) propose that organisation policies which acknowledge the families of service users, not only as important contributors to the client’s treatment but also as individuals with their own strengths and needs, are an important facilitator enabling practitioners to take the time necessary to consider the child/ren’s needs. Agency-level policy changes need to be reflected in the position descriptions and staff role, workloads, annual performance reviews and in the induction programs for new staff (Maybery & Reupert, 2009; Tilbury et al., 2012).



Participants involved at the community level made comments related to organisational implications of what participants learned during the child- and family-sensitive practice workshops. Engaging in the workshop encouraged them to reflect on their organisation's approach to child- and family-sensitive practice, and to collaboration. It also raised awareness of which aspects of their organisation are not sensitive to the needs of children and families. Some noted how the workshop helped them build on the strengths they already have regarding child and family sensitive practice and persevering with such practice despite the organisations they work for having obstacles to such practice.

Participants in BCBB workshops noted a number of challenges regarding child- and family-sensitive practice at an organisational level. These challenges mainly related to an organisational culture of adult-focused service provision and resistance to change to a child- and family-sensitive practice approach. A few also commented that current organisational culture stifles creativity to work in ways that are sensitive to children's and families' needs, and that individual workers have very little power to bring about cultural change within organisations. This included:

- Others in the organisation having limited awareness of, and commitment to, child- and family-sensitive practice, which means that organisational culture and policy is not responsive to this approach. There is less chance of resources being allocated to change processes that support the needs of children and families.
- Time constraints to work with families and other professionals involved, including limited time to engage in inter-agency meetings. Management have unrealistic expectations of how long it takes to build and maintain working relationships.
- Resource constraints, such as budget and staffing limitations, which inhibit child- and family-sensitive practice particularly noticeable where the organisational focus and priorities differ from a child- and family-sensitive practice focus, so no resources are allocated to meeting children's and families' needs.
- Employment procedures that do not support employing staff with knowledge of, and commitment to, child- and family-sensitive practice. Change towards child- and family-sensitive practice will be more difficult in organisations where fewer staff are committed to such a focus than in organisations where a critical mass of staff are aligned with this perspective.

A few comments related to the idea that government policy culture does not understand the importance of child- and family-sensitive practice. Some reported that this is reflected in high administrative workloads for direct service staff that undermines attempts to build and maintain working relationships and inter-agency networks. A few others commented how a lack of understanding is reflected in short term and highly competitive funding environments that make it difficult to maintain relationships with other professionals. One implication of this is that funding bodies will not resource attempts to make organisations more child and family sensitive.

Despite these organisational constraints, examples of service-wide change were commonly provided.

For example, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) is a state-wide health service that offers a range of prevention, treatment, and education services for all South Australians. A significant number of DASSA staff eventually participated in the BCBB child- and family-sensitive practice workshop, and two were invited to participate in the 'Train the Trainer' workshop.

Around this time DASSA was entering a period of considerable reflection following an external audit report which identified areas where change was needed, and also NCETA's *Family Sensitive Policy and Practice Toolkit* had been released. The resulting adoption of a *Model of Care* meant that the time was opportune to embed a child- and family-sensitive approach across the service.

Karen Abraham, as a member of the Clinical Executive of DASSA, supported the incorporation into the related Action Plan asking questions about children on assessment forms. She also proposed that all staff receive in-house child- and family-sensitive practice training from her and her train the trainer colleague. This proposal for mandatory training for all DASSA staff was supported by the Directors. It was also agreed that DASSA Managers receive training regarding Child Aware Supervision. There are now also child-friendly places within DASSA offices where clients are seen.

In spite of a change in position, Karen has been allowed to maintain her role as a child- and family-sensitive practice Trainer and is now working with another Trainer from a non-government agency. This partnership is building further cross-pollination of information and ideas that supports child- and family-sensitive practice.

*The Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative workshop assisted the development of questions to explore how parents' behaviour impacts on young people and their offending/AOD; unpacking parents' understanding of the impact of their behaviour on children and young people. Now we are noticing and affirming strengths in adults more often, developing an assessment framework, valuing 'modelling' more and using children's behaviour as an opportunity for a conversation about the child.*

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The BCBB initiative was funded out of the first three-year plan arising from the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children. This innovative initiative attempted to challenge service providers to enact a 'paradigm' shift; to think and act differently to bring the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children to life. In 12 sites across Australia, BCBB promoted understanding that 'protecting children is everyone's business' by enhancing the knowledge and skills necessary for changing the way that Australia addresses the protection of children. It sought to build the capacity of a diverse range of services to work purposefully with parents of vulnerable children and to build bridges between services to enable the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

To achieve these aims the Centre worked in partnership with a National Steering Committee comprised of high level representatives from the homelessness sector, the Alcohol and other Drug Council of Australia, the Mental Health Coalition, the disability sector, Families Australia, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the family violence sector as well as researchers, leading academics and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now Department of Social Services). The National Steering Committee has been a vital contributor to the initiative, encouraging a child and family sensitive approach at the highest level of key delivery agencies and peak bodies. Members of the National Steering Committee are committed to disseminating the message of child- and family-sensitive practice throughout their own organisations and through to the wider community. The National Steering Committee have provided high level strategic advice bringing the knowledge from individual sectors and frameworks to the same table, a first for a sustained period to inform a National initiative.

The initiative depended on the exchange of knowledge between the Australian Centre for Child Protection, the 12 communities involved, many of which are rural, key personnel of relevant service providers in each of these communities, and members of the BCBB Steering Committee. This continual flow has informed both the practice and policy that underpins 'Protecting Children is Everyone's Business'. Those involved, at all levels of the initiative, genuinely attempted to share power and to limit sector and personal agendas to bring about Australia-wide change in policy and practice related to work with families.

*The interaction with leaders across such a range of fields was a unique experience, highly stimulating and very encouraging to see how we could so easily forge a common vision and commitment to child and family inclusive practice.*

## Key outcomes

This innovative initiative attempted to challenge service providers to enact a ‘paradigm’ shift; to think and act differently to bring the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children to life. In 12 sites across Australia, BCBB promoted understanding that ‘protecting children is everyone’s business’ by enhancing the knowledge and skills necessary for changing the way that Australia addresses the protection of children. It sought to build the capacity of a diverse range of services to work purposefully with parents of vulnerable children and to build bridges between services to enable the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The National Steering Committee has been a vital contributor to the initiative, encouraging a child and family sensitive approach at the highest level of key delivery agencies and peak bodies. Members of the National Steering Committee are committed to disseminating the message of child- and family-sensitive practice throughout their own organisations and through to the wider community. The National Steering Committee have provided high level strategic advice bringing the knowledge from individual sectors and frameworks to the same table, a first for a sustained period to inform a National initiative.

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Via a process of continual engagement with sites and a community development approach to support collaborative, child- and family-focused activities, the initiative has demonstrated the possibilities for individual, organisational, and sector wide responses to the needs of vulnerable children. The participants at workshops came from both child and family and adult-focused services. In some areas people had not previously met and/or were unfamiliar with each other’s services. The feedback indicated that for many the workshop provided a useful opportunity to meet others and consider what could be developed collaboratively in their location.

At an individual level BCBB provided an opportunity for participants to examine their practice in a manner that was both rigorous and evidence-informed by developing an understanding of child- and family-sensitive practice and the complexities of working with adults where children are present. It

developed peoples' understanding of children's safety, welfare, and wellbeing where children's and parents needs have not often been considered. The vast majority of participants thought that useful information was provided, that it was delivered in a skilled way, and was something they would take back into their workplaces.

On the whole, attending the workshop was seen as a useful opportunity to reflect on refresh, providing affirmation the current practice and providing a way to synthesise knowledge gained from workshops. Importantly, the majority of participants strongly agreed that they felt that they could engage parents in discussions about parenting and the children's needs following the workshop.

BCBB helped service providers to develop a greater understanding of life for marginalised families, including day- to-day pressures and ongoing need as it affects children and parents. BCBB provided opportunities for people who have never discussed issues relating to children to begin to do so. It provided opportunities for adult-focused service providers to begin to negotiate different ways of working with their clients; to broaden their perspective and focus.

At both a practice and policy level, this was reported to have come about through the project providing a new platform for professionals focused on adult issues in different sectors to talk about risks to children in the family. Opportunities were created for professionals to develop cross-sector relationships so such conversations are easier to initiate.

*It has demonstrated that 'adult and child' focussed human services can develop effective working relationship which are mutually rewarding and meet outcomes for both parties. (Steering Committee Member)*

In some organisations, BCBB was able to create a cohort of trained staff which generated opportunities for peer contact for support and discussion of child- and family-sensitive practice in the workplace, supported by BCBB through follow up visits and resources. Having multiple staff sharing a common workshop experience also helped to promote more buy-in from the agency management structure as they are more likely to want to see a return on their investment of releasing staff to attend the workshop.

Several examples of community-wide collaboration and organisation wide policy and practice change were also given highlighting the potential of locally based, tailored workforce initiative to build significant change for families.

## Learnings

An initiative of the scale and vision of BCBB required outstanding leadership at all levels of the initiative. This leadership needed to be grounded in an acute understanding of the strengths, pressures, capacities, capabilities and competing interests of the individual practitioners, local communities, collaborating organisations and broad sectors involved in the initiative. In this way, both a ground up *and* top down approach were necessary.

*... just knowing what Communities for Children are set up for, what it does on the ground, what the staff have as their sense, what they're doing, what the pressure is on them day to day working with other families... I think those kind of ideas of thinking that's what the Community for Children's project certainly should, to a certain extent, should come up from the grass roots because that's what communities will support and what they'll work with and what will eventually turn out into good outcomes versus some of the top down approaches that we might at times be tempted to put in on this kind of project. (Steering Committee Member)*

Listening and trust building was fundamental. Collaborating at a local level resulted in new actions for practitioners and managers. At the same time the BCBB steering group reviewed change agendas at state, territory, and Commonwealth levels, and engaged with key bureaucrats about the importance of this work.

*.... I think the Ministers have got this stuff. [They] understand how these organisations do work and have been pushing themselves to see far more integration and far more cohesion and far more collaboration and sharing of ideas in this space. And that's the only way we're going to make some progress, especially when we talk about the way services are delivered at the moment where you see them all run out of separate silo organisations and so forth. This is a good example that you can bring a whole lot of goodwill together to achieve a far better outcome. (Steering Committee Member)*

It was suggested that communication could have been improved by being clearer about the purpose and expectations earlier in the life of the initiative including the funding body's expectations.

*Initially we needed simple, succinct messages about the project from the project manager. (Communities for Children Facilitating Partner)*

Some Communities for Children sites felt that the approach taken resulted in practitioners at the 12 Communities for Children sites feeling like they were singled out and had extra work imposed on them by the initiative. Therefore the commitment to building strong relationship with the Communities for Children partners, across sectors and within the community, was integral to action learning approach undertaken throughout the life of this initiative by all the BCBB team.

*Sceptical at start as added to workload but over time an organic, positive shift for both Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative and as has happened. People coming from SA gave a boost, brought a common language to the sector. The Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative provides good external support as understands difficulty involved in place-based development. (Communities for Children Facilitating Partner)*

Other important learnings that came from the initiative are:

- Using the expertise of the Commonwealth government, states and territories, local communities, and the BCBB team in site selection would likely have enhanced engagement from the beginning. Considerable time was spent within the initiative building local support and highlighting the relevance of an initiative that was not selected by the Communities for Children sites themselves.
- Engagement with communities needs to be continual so that connections remain strong, momentum for change is maintained, and to protect against turnover in small teams (both in the BCBB project team, and in community facilitating partners) that can mean that relationships need to be rebuilt

*More seamless connection was needed to build work rather than sporadic bursts. Very much enjoyed training, great opportunity, amazing asset; Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative's time was not maximised by us. (Communities for Children Facilitating Partner)*

- Purposeful engagement with managers and practitioners allowed workshop content to be tailored to the needs of a community. Champions at the local level can support change;
- Getting middle managers and supervisors on board is necessary to support the organisational change needed to improve the support available for vulnerable children;

*Better link between child and family sensitive practice and local collaboration. We lacked clarity re expectations following workshops to maintain and build relationships. Wonder about building relationships at manager level- that didn't happen (Communities for Children Facilitating Partner).*

- Getting everyone together in the same room is hard and can take a lot of effort - a lot of time is needed to understand the local context to ensure that any training reflects the local situation;
- Providing collaboration and child- and family-sensitive practice workshops at no cost a number of times built capacity within agencies and community and a critical mass of child- and family-sensitive, collaborating practitioners;
- A University-based organisation facilitating workforce development can bring credibility and drive interest in local communities. Taking knowledge out of “ivory tower” settings and into communities was particularly important.

*Information from outside this community came through an organisation with a reputation and lengthy experience. Coming from a university means that certain standards are followed and reflection is supported. Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative helps to share learning across Communities for Children sites and foster shared practice wisdom. (Communities for Children Facilitating Partner).*

- Tailoring knowledge and training to the different experience, confidence and skill levels of potential participants is important to maintain the relevance of workshops for participants
- The importance of training practitioners to learn how to address parental concerns. Both adult-focused and child- and family-focused services acknowledged that approaching the parental roles of their clients could be challenging;
- Implementation support is required to support and maintain practice change;
- Access to reflective supervision that supports practitioners’ learning is essential to sustain change.
- Seeking and seizing opportunities to broaden the reach of BCBB was a highly successful strategy and will likely improve the sustainability of the initiative. In particular, linking with other national initiatives (e.g., COPMI and NCETA) with a similar focus and approach greatly enhanced the reach and impact of the initiative

## The Future

The findings of this report highlight that, despite a number of systemic barriers to advance the national policy direction that “protecting children is everyone’s business”, there is much to be positive about. It is clear that many practitioners, organisations and sectors want to, and can, work together to improve the lives of vulnerable children.



Sustaining the knowledge developed and the learnings from undertaking a large scale collaborative initiative is important. Ongoing difficulties related to sustainability and diffusion of learning were discussed by half the Committee members. Concerns related to difficulties keeping alive what was learned and changed by the BCBB initiative and building on the excitement, commitment, momentum, and enthusiasm generated. A few felt a dissemination strategy that facilitates translating BCBB beyond the 12 sites and beyond the life of the initiative despite different agendas that exist in the professional and political environment would be useful.

*That, I mean a lot of people sing their praises of this particular project because it's sometimes very hard and very difficult to get - a lot of organisations are in this space come together and work in such a harmonious and respectful way. I think that's to the credit of everyone involved, but a credit to the planning of the whole thing. I mean I would like to see a lot more of this sort of thing happen. (Steering Committee Member)*

Difficulties sustaining what BCBB started around integrated service delivery relate to how to keep pushing the initiative's premise and continue to integrate services in a policy environment that perpetuates agencies working in sector specific silos. There are difficulties in continuing to support people working together, particularly when cultural differences exist between sectors and when these differences are historical and embedded in professional practice. A couple stated that it is very important there is a champion at the political level to support the initiative. An important aspect of this is the development of strategy to talk about the successes and learning from the initiative.

Steering Committee members also spoke about the kinds of new possibilities that they hope will arise from the project in the future, along with perceived difficulties related to sustainability. They also spoke of how the project could lead to developments in research and knowledge related to inter-sector child- and family-sensitive practice. They felt that more work of this nature would open opportunities for cross-sectoral training and for research that can lead to developing evidence-informed practice models, logic models, and practice manuals.

*Look I think it's going to be about how we do this better and more inclusively, and how do we get this rolled out into more areas in a broader capacity. (Steering Committee Member)*

It is heartening to note that the momentum generated through this project is able to be continued through a focus on Child Aware Approaches at a national, organisational and community level. The focus on "child aware" policy, service development, and practice is, in part, a legacy of BCBB,

continuing the focus on the needs of vulnerable children at policy, organisational and practice levels, when these needs may otherwise be overlooked or obscured by a focus on adult dysfunction. Since BCBB's commencement, the child and family, and adult focused sectors, have developed child aware organisational and community based initiatives, and principles for practice and service design have been developed.

This national focus on protecting Australia's children meaning more than a narrow child protection investigative response has a solid foundation in the work of BCBB. Key messages from the National Framework are now embedded firmly in organisational and community responses to children, and it is our hope that from these inspiring examples, greater awareness and action for vulnerable children will flow.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: FINAL ACTIVITY WORKPLAN

#### Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges Project Objectives, Deliverables, and Activity Plan. 27th February 2015.

##### Objectives

Enhance ways of working with children and families in traditionally adult focused services (such as drug and alcohol, mental health, family violence and homelessness services);

Strengthen interagency collaboration to provide more holistic services to families where there is a high risk of children being abused and neglected; and

Support Services to manage organisational change, service redesign, and process re-engineering of service provider roles.

PLEASE NOTE under this activity work plan all objectives are linked and will inform each other.

##### Deliverables and Activities

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
Enhance ways of working with children and families in traditional adult focused services (such as drug and alcohol, mental health, family violence and homelessness services).	Identify the key components of child and family sensitive practice	Scope and analyse the key components of child and family sensitive practice to inform a training program for adult service providers.	Collect and collate evidence based resources. Identify existing resources and or training options that can be utilised.	<p>Consultations with Adult service peak bodies, adult services in each of the 12 communities. Utilised research linking evidence, and the knowledge of the BCBB steering reference group.</p> <p><i>The 'Child and Family Sensitive Practice workshop' content included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children : Protecting Children is Everyone's Business</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of child and family focused and adult services in relation to children</li> <li>• Incorporating a child and parent focus in assessment processes</li> <li>• Engaging with adults who are parents about their parenting</li> <li>• Impact of adult problems on children including definitions and indicators of child abuse and childhood trauma</li> <li>• Impact of trauma on development and attachment</li> <li>• Skills for talking with adult clients about their parenting needs and the needs of their children</li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported referrals and ways that adult services are developing responsive child sensitive practices</li> <li>• Dilemmas and barriers to child and family sensitive practice</li> <li>• ‘Collaboration’ as a concept; how this then translates into practice and where it fits within an organisational perspective as well as at the community level.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: each workshop was adjusted to meet local need. Building on the strengths of the local community. Child Protection presented at most, as did local key services that were on the journey toward child and family sensitive practice. In most sites Family Violence services presented and/or co facilitated. Communities for Children presentations were also built into the workshop content. In NSW and SA we connected with Kids In Focus to co present about AOD issues.</p>
	<p>Training in child and family sensitive practice developed</p>	<p>Meet with groups of adult services practitioners at each of the 12 sites to gather advice on the conceptual framework, practice objectives and specific practices to be included in the training program.</p> <p>Includes scan of local strengths and possible barriers to inform local delivery</p>	<p>Consultations occurred with adult service providers 11 of the 12 sites</p>	<p>In each community (except Launceston at their request) held meetings with local and regional based services: including Child Protection, Mental Health Services, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Homelessness, Family Violence, Aboriginal Community controlled, local government, NGOs.</p> <p>All workshops were designed with local community to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure content was relevant, it built on the community strengths, nuances.</li> <li>• Reflect State legislations, information sharing guidelines</li> <li>• Key local people to co present or co facilitate.</li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
		Identify appropriate competencies and develop assessment activities which meet the requirements for national accreditation.	Competencies: CHCCS422A Respond holistically to client issues and refers appropriately CHCCS416A Assess and provide services for clients with complex needs.	The Competencies are generic and offer a pathway to a qualification for those who wish to achieve a national recognised qualification in community services and health. 8 participants completed assessment process. Note: This was not the draw we first thought it would be, most participants had qualifications higher than Cert 4.
			Assessment activities developed, formatted ready to submit to RTO	Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) selected: value and fit.
			Submitted to Steering Reference Group for comment	
		Develop resource materials to support the delivery of the training course.	Overheads, scenarios developed. Use of references and readings and DVD permission sought and granted.	Two day child and family sensitive practice workshop developed, (see above) this was then tailored to one day for specific audience (e.g. AOD services)  Additional resources elearning Child Aware Supervision course. Partnership with COPMI and NCETA <a href="http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/child-aware-supervision.html">http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/child-aware-supervision.html</a>  elearning Child Aware Child and Family Sensitive practice, launched at Child Aware conference 1 <sup>st</sup> April. This e-learning course is hosted on COPMI learning resources website. <a href="http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/child-aware-practice.html">http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals/professional-tools/child-aware-practice.html</a>
	Develop site-specific variations to the core child and family sensitive practice program.	Meet with identified trainers and CfC <sup>3</sup> coordinators in each site to discuss core course content, define local content, and refine the training package to meet local needs.	Individual training plan developed with and for each of the 12 sites.  Training refined and packaged to reflect the nuances of each site.	Child and family sensitive practice workshops offered a number of times reflective of the demand in each community to maximise the opportunity for practitioners to attend. In many communities over 100 participants have attended. Agency specific follow up workshops held in many communities. AOD and Mental Health focus.

<sup>3</sup> CfC = Communities for Children



Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments																																															
	Pilot, evaluate and refine the training program.	Pilot the (core) training program with 2 groups of adult service providers in South Australia	Meet with Playford & Onkaparinga CfC sites to develop training plan.	Met with adult services in Playford and Onkaparinga to promote pilot																																															
			Training pilot in Onkaparinga	<b>2 Pilots held in Onkaparinga</b> Total 63 participants																																															
			Training pilot in Playford	<b>2 Pilots held in Playford</b> Total 77 participants																																															
		Evaluate the pilot to determine its strengths and appropriateness for adult service providers and make changes as required.	<p>Evaluation on pilot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective conversation at end of training with participants to assess relevance, pace and content. Feedback noted.</li> <li>• Trainer and Project manager reflections and noted.</li> <li>• Training adapted in response.</li> <li>• Reflective evaluation emailed to participants: What changes have you made in your practice from the training? How do we keep conversations and learning alive for you as an adult service provider? What needs to happen to better link adult services and child and family services? What follow up would you like to see from the training?</li> </ul>	<p><b>A total of 8 Pilots conducted in SA with a total of 214 participants.</b></p> <p><b>Onkaparinga: 28 Nov 2011, 35 participants</b></p> <table> <tr><td>Homelessness</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>Drug and alcohol</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Disability</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Mental Health</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Relationships</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>CfC</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Aboriginal Health</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>DV</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Health</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Education</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>7</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Playford: 9/10 Feb 44 participants</b></p> <table> <tr><td>Homelessness</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>Family relationship</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>Mental Health</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>Drug and Alcohol</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Family Support</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>DV</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Victim Support Services</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Adult Counselling</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Social Inclusion</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Education</td><td>3</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Playford 23/24 Feb 33 participants</b></p> <table> <tr><td>Homelessness</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>7</td></tr> </table>	Homelessness	8	Drug and alcohol	2	Disability	3	Mental Health	5	Relationships	1	CfC	1	Aboriginal Health	2	DV	3	Health	1	Education	2	Other	7	Homelessness	11	Family relationship	6	Mental Health	8	Drug and Alcohol	5	Family Support	1	DV	1	Victim Support Services	3	Adult Counselling	1	Child Protection	3	Social Inclusion	3	Education	3	Homelessness	9	Child Protection
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Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<p>Family relationships 6  Drug and Alcohol 2  Education 1  Adult Counsellors 2  Mental health 6</p> <p><b>Onkaparinga 29/30 March 28 participants</b>  Homelessness 5  Mental Health 3  Drug and Alcohol 5  Justice 4  Health 5  Child Protection 1  Education 1  Aboriginal Health 1  Family Support 2  Other 1</p> <p><b>AnglicareSA 28 Feb &amp; 6 March 22 participants</b>  Adult service providers</p> <p><b>Anglicare SA 19/20 March 25 participants</b>  Family Support providers</p> <p><b>Aboriginal Family Support Services 18/19 April 17 participants.</b>  Adult and child and family services. Pre workshop planning and development of the course with AFSS senior staff, post workshop to receive feedback.</p> <p><b>UniSA Masters Social Work 10 participants.</b></p> <p><b>From the pilots, in answer to the question:  Describe how you will implement Child and Family Sensitive Practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider case plans - are they child focused?</li> <li>• Collaborate more with other services</li> <li>• Remember to be mindful of child sensitive practices during future visits</li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to put theory into practice</li> <li>• Try to be more child focused - ask about 'how does this feel for your child?'</li> <li>• Always speak to child- ask what their thoughts and feelings are</li> <li>• Review paperwork especially case plans to be more child focused</li> <li>• Keep children's needs at the centre of everything</li> <li>• Keep the needs of children in mind and refocus with the parent on the needs of the child as well as the needs of the adult</li> <li>• Remember to consider how things are for the child</li> <li>• Continued collaboration with other services that have expertise in an area I'm not</li> <li>• More aware of asking questions with child focus</li> <li>• More child inclusive goals</li> </ul>
			<p>Submit report on Onkaparinga pilot to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Committee</li> <li>• FaHCSIA</li> </ul>	<p>Key learnings from the pilots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was little understanding of the National Framework as the policy context for collaboration and child and family sensitive practice.</li> <li>• Course content was relevant to child and family services.</li> <li>• Talking to parents about parenting is hard (both child and family and adult focused services asked that the program be adjusted to include conversation starters for engaging parents about parenting.</li> <li>• In most communities this was the first opportunity for child and family services and adult focused services to come together in the spirit of learning.</li> <li>• Communities for Children sites identified the child and family sensitive practice workshops would provide opportunity to connect child and family services and adult services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future child and family sensitive practice workshops were offered to both sectors, Communities for Children felt the workshops would act as a conduit to bring sectors together.</b></p>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
	Identify and engage an RTO to gain national accreditation for training.	Conduct a national scan of RTOs to auspice the training and then engage an appropriate RTO to gain national accreditation for child and family sensitive practice training and a linked train-the-trainer program for local trainers.	8 RTOs approached. 3 expressed interest. RTO selected: ACWA (value and fit)	Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies (ACWA) selected: value and fit. Key learning: most who undertook the child and family sensitive practice workshops had qualification higher than Cert 4. Accreditation was not a draw card.
		Contract the RTO.	MOU and agreement developed. Check by legal. Process to action agreement. Auspice document prepared.	Agreement signed.
	Develop a network of skilled, locally-based trainers.	Meet with adult services in each of the 12 sites to identify skilled locally-based trainers to co-facilitate training in each site. Trainers self-nominated or peer-selected based on knowledge fit and ability to value-add to local context and cultural accountability.	At least two potential trainers identified in each site.	In each community (except Launceston at their request) meetings with local and regional based services: including Child Protection, Mental Health Services, Alcohol and other drugs, Homelessness, Family Violence, Aboriginal community controlled, local government, NGOs. Child Protection and Family Violence workers co facilitated in many sites.  Launceston accessed brokerage to support staff release time for participants to attend child and family sensitive practice workshops. Key people identified in each community to co present or co facilitate.
Support locally based trainers to co-facilitate training with ACCP at the 12 BCBB sites.		Make brokerage available to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support access to Certificate IV training and assessment if required;</li> <li>Support staff release if required.</li> </ul>		
	Roll out the child and family sensitive practice training across the 12 sites.	Develop a timetable for roll out in consultation with the sites.	Training calendar produced and submitted to FaHCSIA.  Book venues. Distribute flyers.  Schedule pre- and post-training support in consultation with sites.	<b>43 child and family sensitive practice workshops over 1,400 participants from 250 organisations.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Townsville 26 ,27 April <b>29 participants</b></li> </ul> Mental health 3; homelessness 2; DV 5; Family 9; mental health/homelessness 4 Counselling 2; Child Protection 1; Drug and Alcohol 1; Health 1; other 1.

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
		<p>Deliver training in conjunction with locally-based trainers.</p>	<p>Make brokerage available to support staff release if required.</p> <p>Training delivered to approximately 5-10 organisations at each site (with at least 2 participants per organisation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Townsville 3, 4 May <b>32 participants</b> Child Protection 1; DV 8; Mental Health 8; Family Relationships 1; Social Worker 1; Drug and Alcohol 2; Youth Employment 2; Family Support 2; Homelessness 5; Health 1.</li> <li>• Campbelltown 8, 9 May <b>29 participants</b></li> <li>• Midland 15, 16 May <b>45 participants</b></li> <li>• Campbelltown 16, 17 May <b>29 Participants</b> Mental Health 10; homelessness 2; Homelessness/mental health 2; DV 3; Family Support 7; Drug and Alcohol 3; child protection 2</li> <li>• Playford with Dorothy one day Collaboration and Child Centre Practice with Anglicare Families SA <b>98</b></li> <li>• Ipswich 29, 30 May <b>40 participants</b> Disability 1; Education 7; Family Support 16; Mental Health 7; flood recovery 1; Family relationship 3; Drug and Alcohol 1; Homelessness 1 Child Protection 2; other 1</li> <li>• Alice Springs 13, 14 June <b>29 participants</b> Mental Health/homelessness 4; Homelessness 2; DV 3; Mental Health 3; Child and Family 16; Health 1.</li> <li>• Relationships Australia Together For Kids 25, 26 June</li> <li>• Campbelltown 3, 4 July <b>29 participants</b></li> <li>• Langton Centre (Alcohol and Other Drug rehab service) in partnership with Benevolent Society and Kids in Focus. 5, 6 July Drug and Alcohol Workers <b>30</b></li> <li>• Launceston 9, 10 July Anglicare Tas. Community Partners <b>20</b></li> <li>• Launceston 11, 12 July <b>25</b></li> <li>• Cardinia 18, 19 July <b>30</b></li> <li>• Playford 23, 30 July <b>28</b></li> <li>• Kempsey 15, 16 August <b>20</b></li> <li>• Murray Bridge in partnership with CfC ac.care 27 August 3 September <b>26</b></li> <li>• Langton Centre (Alcohol and Other Drug rehab service) in partnership with Benevolent Society Kids in Focus 30-31 August, <b>16</b></li> <li>• Onkaparinga 12, 13 Sept <b>23</b></li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kempsey 13,14 September <b>8</b></li> <li>• Lismore 17,18 September <b>35</b></li> <li>• Ipswich 18,19 September <b>30</b></li> <li>• Townsville 19,20 September <b>27</b></li> <li>• Lismore 19,20 September Mental Health workers 2x2 hour workshop <b>16 at each</b></li> <li>• Townsville 19,20 September <b>27</b></li> <li>• Mirrabooka 25,26 September <b>26</b></li> <li>• Pt Augusta in partnership with AFSS and Uniting Care Pt Pirie <b>29</b></li> <li>• Alice Springs 17,18 Oct <b>24</b></li> <li>• Mt Gambier in Partnership with accare 31 Oct, 1 Nov. <b>36</b></li> <li>• Langdon Centre Sydney AOD 5,6 November <b>15</b></li> <li>• Campbelltown 7,8 Nov <b>20</b></li> <li>• Cardinia 20,21 Nov <b>24</b></li> <li>• Lismore 5,6 Dec <b>8</b></li> <li>• Drug and Alcohol Services SA Dec 5 <b>17</b></li> <li>• Riverlands AOD Lismore 23 Jan <b>29</b></li> <li>• DASSA AOD 5 Feb <b>21</b></li> <li>• Social Work Masters 7 Feb <b>35</b></li> <li>• Playford 18 19 Feb <b>27</b></li> <li>• Cardinia 7 8 March <b>24</b></li> <li>• Cyrinian House AOD WA 12 13 March <b>30</b></li> <li>• Phams Bensoc. Campbelltown <b>15</b></li> <li>• Townsville Community (D.SCOTT) workshop 20 March <b>91</b></li> <li>• Train the Trainer 26 27 March <b>27</b></li> <li>• MDSI Campbelltown 8 9 April <b>11</b></li> <li>• Phams Bensoc Campbelltown 10 April <b>15</b></li> <li>• Midland WA 18 April <b>18</b></li> <li>• Townsville 22 23 April <b>27</b></li> <li>• Catherine House homelessness services 7,16,23, May <b>15</b></li> <li>• Ipswich 8 9 April <b>24</b></li> <li>• MIFSA Onkaparinga 17 June <b>10</b></li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
	Develop a sustainability strategy to facilitate training beyond the life of the project.	Develop a sustainability strategy with each site so that ongoing professional development can be conducted locally after the life of BCBB.	A plan inclusive of collaboration, sustainability, and best practice.	One hour phone link meeting hosted to connect each of the 12 CfC sites with the Mental Health Professional Network (MHPN). 10 sites participated. All expressed value in this connection. Trained trainers in all sites, except Ipswich. New strategic alliances set in many communities. Increase in the number of adult services on CfC committees, engagement with newsletters, shared training calendars across sectors.
		Identify 2 or 3 practitioners at each site as trainers/facilitators to develop child and family sensitive practice during and beyond the life of the BCBB project.	Train between 24 and 36 practitioners (2-3 per site) as trainers/facilitators to maintain and develop child and family sensitive practice. All costs covered by BCBB	Train the Trainer 26, 27 March; Adelaide invitations to all 12 sites CfC providers other local facilitators in each community. All costs met by BCBB. 27 trained participants from Campbelltown, Townsville, Mirrabooka, Alice Springs, Launceston, Lismore, Midland, Kempsey, Onkaparinga and Playford. As well as CfC , participants from Drug and Alcohol services in SA and NSW, UniSA, Kids in Families SA, Relationship Australia, Southern Health, Community West, Ngala, Health SA, The Smith Family, the Benevolent Society, Anglicare, Centacare, North Queensland Domestic Violence, North Coast Aboriginal Health Service.
		Identify ways that local facilitators can maintain and develop child and family sensitive practice within adult services.	Follow up meetings with each site.	Support plan for each trainer developed at the Train the Trainer workshop.
		Develop a train-the-trainer program for local practitioners linked with the child and family sensitive training program.	Train the Trainer program delivered.	27 trainers trained and supported. Resources and training manual with key reading, DVD and workbook. 5 modules developed, these are designed to be delivered together as a one day workshop or individually over two hours. The modules included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children</b></li> <li>• <b>Intake and assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>Talking with parents about the effects of adult issues on children</b></li> <li>• <b>Talking with parents about their parenting needs and the needs of their children</b></li> <li>• <b>Collaboration</b></li> </ul>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
	Link with universities and learning institutions to seek ways that child and family inclusive practice can be included in relevant courses.	Connect with University SA Masters in Social Work course for Child and Family Sensitive Practice training included in course content.	Meet with course convenor and develop a one-day workshop to be included in course content.	One day child and family sensitive practice for Masters Social Work, University of South Australia's School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy students. <b>10</b> attended
		Explore opportunities to include in curriculum before Student Placement.	One day workshop delivered to Masters in Social Work students.	Second one day session with Master Social Work students. <b>35</b> attended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecturer Dr Carole Zufferey, UniSA attended the Train the Trainer in Child and Family Sensitive Practice.</li> </ul>
		Reflective evaluation at end of day: scope opportunities to develop further.	Collate evaluation, and seek steering group advice about how we might include this professional develop into other settings.	This training will now be included for Social Work students.
	Evaluate the impact of the training and its suitability for adult services.	Develop evaluation tools for assessing "Child and Family Sensitive Practice" at individual practitioner level and program/organisational level across a range of service sectors.	Evaluation tools identified: modified with consultation in each site. Assess sites and offer additional training where relevant.	Evaluation tools developed approved by Steering Committee and submitted to FaHCSIA.
		Develop mechanisms for research and theory to inform practice.	Site specific learning to inform collaboration and site specific sustainability plan.	Examples from sustainability plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lismore information kiosk (partnership with Mental Health)</li> <li>Interagency lunch box forums in Playford, Launceston.</li> <li>Key workers to progress aims of BCBB employed in Lismore and Onkaparinga</li> <li>Training calendar and Speed Dating workshops, Family Violence forum in Cardinia.</li> <li>Orientation workshops for new workers to Alice Springs</li> <li>Community based strategic alliances, Campbelltown, Ipswich , Townsville</li> <li>Links with Mental Health Professional Network in all communities except Ipswich.</li> <li>Trained Child and Family sensitive practice trainers across all communities except Ipswich.</li> </ul>



Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
<b>Strengthen interagency collaboration to provide more holistic services to families where there is a high risk of children being abused and neglected</b>	Create a local and national network of child and family sensitive practitioners.	Hold an all sites meeting to discuss a range of issues relating to collaboration. Note meeting held on 29th August 2012 with Steering Committee, CEOs and key contacts of each Communities for Children site. Min Collins invited.	Share examples of community capacity and collaborative practice that improve responses to vulnerable children.	Limited number of CEOs attended. 10 of the 12 sites represented. Staff shortages impacted on the two services who did not attend. Workshop identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration needs, time, resources, trust and relationships, persistence and perseverance</li> <li>• Staff moving between agencies in rural communities was identified as a supporting factor</li> <li>• Staff moving on in metro based services was seen as a barrier</li> <li>• Knowledge of a counterpart's organisation or agency is important</li> <li>• Shared understanding of each sector's perspective was identified as a key ingredient</li> <li>• Getting people in the room is not always hard, but making conversation, collaborative and meaningful is; as sometimes people need to have "hard" conversations.</li> <li>• Collaboration between adult sector and child and family sector in infancy in most communities.</li> </ul>
			Develop and present report to Steering Committee and FaHCSIA.	September 2012 submitted.
		Organise and facilitate local network forums of child and family sensitive practitioners from both adult and family services to identify new ideas for collaborative practice.	Network forum established in each site or child and family sensitive practice included on local network agendas.	Collaboration workshops held in 11 of the 12 sites. 334 attendees, Launceston chose to have Dorothy as a key note speaker at annual conference 2012, 2013. <b>300</b> attendees at each, followed up with ½ Collaboration reflective practice workshop 2013. Additional one day collaboration forums held in Playford (Dorothy Scott, Gail Winkworth and Michael White co presented) <b>98</b> participants, Onkaparinga ( Dorothy Scott) <b>98</b> participants , Townsville (Dorothy Scott ) <b>91</b> participants , Alice Springs to be held Feb
	Develop individualised collaboration plans for each site.	Conduct collaboration workshops in each site. Project Manager follows up on environmental scan with each site.		

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
		<p>Conduct a strengths-based scan for each site including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are child and family sensitive practitioners at each site?</li> <li>• What are the supports and what are the barriers to child/family sensitive practice?</li> <li>• Existing collaborative practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Individualised collaboration plans developed for each site, linked with sustainability and best practice plans. Where applicable, Common Language frameworks developed with self-identified CfC sites.</p>	<p>2014. Speed Dating collaborations supported in Cardinia x2, <b>50 at each</b> New worker orientation forums in Alice Springs x3, <b>40 at each</b>, Lunch box forums in Launceston x 6 8 -10 at each.</p> <p>Helen Francis held a 2-day workshop from 15 August, 2014, "Child and Family Sensitive Practice 2 day workshop" for CatholicCare NT, Darwin, Northern Territory</p> <p>Christine Gibson and Dr Sara McLean (ACCP) held a workshop on 05 June, 2014, "Supporting Knowledge for Residential Care Workers" for Aboriginal Family Support Service, Ceduna, South Australia.</p> <p>Helen Francis held another workshop on March 27, 2014, "cross sector orientation workshop", Alice Springs, with Relationships Australia/Anglicare NT, Northern Territory</p> <p>Dorothy Scott held a workshop on February 14, 2014, "BCBB workshop and agency visits", Alice Springs, Anglicare NT, Northern Territory</p> <p>Use of common language identified as a key factor yet there was no take-up of offer to facilitate common language frameworks at the local level.</p> <p>Evaluation: Found that the dissemination of the National Framework. Including this in all conversations and in the Child and Family Sensitive practice workshops, helped provide a common language for interagency - collaboration.</p> <p>Multiple meetings held in each site, with Communities for Children, their steering committees with key agencies including child protection, mental health, family violence, and homelessness services and AOD services. Workshops designed to reflect local nuances and to draw on community strengths.</p>
<p>Where applicable, workshop common language with site participants to develop meanings assigned to common language used in relation to collaboration and child and family practice.</p>				

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
<b>Support Services to manage organisational change, service redesign, and process re-engineering of service provider roles.</b>	Develop and support implementation of best practice plans in each site.	Conduct individual consultations with service providers to build capacity and manage organisational change, with brokerage funds utilised when needed.	One plan for each site linking collaboration, knowledge development and sustainability.	Each site working to individual strengths,, needs to be noted that at this stage CfC programs are not currently funded beyond June 2014.
	Identify and disseminate 12 best practice examples of exemplary practitioners and services	Collect narratives in consultation with CfC and their local evaluators.	Collect 12 narratives highlighting the process and impact of holistic child and family sensitive centred service delivery.	Each site presented an example of collaboration in practice from their community to share. Workshop highlighting the barriers to collaboration and how these can be overcome.
		Disseminate key learnings from BCBB at national and international conferences	Present at least 5 national or international conferences over the life of the project	Through presenting at key national and international conferences, including 'Linking Up for Kids' Conference (ARACY), Sydney, and Child Aware Approaches conference 'Joining the Dots to promote child wellbeing and safety', staff were able to disseminate the key learnings from BCBB, promote child well-being and safety and connect practitioners to this national initiative.  It also served to increase the visibility of children and sought to strengthen practice with vulnerable families. Ultimately, the aim of these conference presentations was to encourage the wider adult service sector to consider children as a key component of their practice, and to harness the potential outside of the child and family sector to transform the lives of children  BCBB project staff presented the following at national and international conferences:  <i>Candlin, A. &amp; Gibson, C. (2014, 31 March-1 April). 'My Kids and Me: Building capacity in the parents of at-risk children', Families Australia Child Aware Approaches - Promoting child and family wellbeing and safety, 31 March - 1 April 2014, Melbourne.</i>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<p><i>Francis, H. (2014, 9 May) 'Ensuring the visibility of the child' presentation delivered at the SA Family Law Pathways Forum, Adelaide.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. (2014, 21 May) 'Building Skills and Knowledge', a facilitated workshop delivered at the Child and Family Welfare Association, in partnership with the Department of Education and Child Development, Adelaide.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. (2014, 9-12 July) 'Policy to Place-Based Practice: "Child and family sensitive practice" in adult specialist sectors; responding to evidence that parental problems are high risk factors for children', Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development: Promoting social and economic equality, 9 - 12 July 2014, Melbourne.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; Banders, A (2014, 10 April) 'Family Focus Practice Training' - a full day workshop hosted by AnglicareSA, Adelaide.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; Gibson, C. (2014, 31 March) 'Joining the dots to promote child wellbeing and safety by connecting national initiatives', Families Australia Child Aware Approaches - Promoting child and family wellbeing and safety, 31 March - 1 April 2014, Melbourne</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; Gibson, C. (2014, 01 April) 'Supporting practitioners' engagement with parents with multiple and complex needs to improve child wellbeing: eLearning', Families Australia Child Aware Approaches - Promoting child and family wellbeing and safety, 31 March - 1 April 2014, Melbourne.</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. 2014, 14-17 September) 'Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity in services, Building Bridges between services to make a difference for vulnerable children', ISPCAN conference, Nagoya, Japan.</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. (2014, 30 July - 1 August) Convenor and discussant: symposium topic "Transformation in the way families with multiple and complex needs are served by all human services: meeting the challenge", AIFS conference, Melbourne.</i></p>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<p><i>Gibson, C., Francis, H. Templeman, D., Lappin, S. &amp; Christophers, S. (2014, 30 July - 1 August) Symposium presenters: Topic "Transformation in the way families with multiple and complex needs are served by all human services: meeting the challenge", presenting 'In Policy', 'The Homelessness Sector', 'Within organisations', 'Supporting practitioners', AIFS conference, Melbourne.</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. &amp; Lotto, K. (2014, 14-15 April) 'Assessing vulnerable children's health needs via school and community collaboration', Linking Up for Kids Conference, 14-15 April 2014, Menzies Hotel, Sydney.</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C., &amp; Francis, H. (2014, 20 August) 'Supervision for safety', Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Conference 2014, 18- 20 August, Sydney.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; Arney, F. (2013) From policy to place-based practice: Seeing and hearing the child in adult specialist services, IPSCAN 13th Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect 15-18th September, Dublin, Ireland.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; Gibson, C. (April 2013) Who needs a Child and Family Sensitive Practice workshop, Child Aware Approaches Conference, Melbourne 11-12 April 2013.</i></p> <p><i>Francis, H. &amp; White, M. (Nov 2012) Child and Family Sensitive Practice: an AOD case study in Children Community Connections Conference, Adelaide 15-16th November 2012.</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. (Nov 2013) Enhancing the safety of vulnerable children by improving inter-professional communication. Australasian Conference of Child Abuse and Neglect Melbourne</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. &amp; Francis, H. (Nov 2013) Child and family sensitive practice: a response to evidence that parental problems are risk factors for children. Australasian Conference of Child Abuse and Neglect Melbourne</i></p> <p><i>Gibson, C. &amp; Francis, H. (Nov 2013) Child and family sensitive practice: a workshop for all sectors? FRSA National Conference Investing in Families and Communities Canberra</i></p>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
				<p>Gibson, C. &amp; Francis H. (2012) 'Children's Rights: What's Right for Children?' 2012 Association of Children's Welfare Conference, Sydney.</p> <p>Scott, D &amp; Francis, H (2012) 'From Policy to Place-Based Practice: Seeing and Hearing the Child in Adult Specialist Services', 12th Australian Institute of Family Studies conference, July 25-27, Melbourne Australia.</p> <p>Gibson, C. "Think Child, Think Family: New Directions in Human Services", <i>Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect</i>, 2011.</p>
		Disseminate key learnings via the internet and through social media	Content included on at least one social media site and one website	<p>BCBB featured in the Australian Centre for Child Protection's PREZI clip, available from 2014 on YouTube, ACCP website, Facebook and Twitter <a href="http://www.unisa.edu.au/Research/Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/Latest/latest-container/Whats-new-at-the-Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/-Centre-launches-new-video-clip/">http://www.unisa.edu.au/Research/Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/Latest/latest-container/Whats-new-at-the-Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/-Centre-launches-new-video-clip/</a>.</p> <p>BCBB information and learnings from the initiative published on the ACCP website <a href="http://www.unisa.edu.au/Research/Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/Training-and-Coaching/Protecting-and-Nurturing-Children-Building-Capacity-Building-Bridges/">http://www.unisa.edu.au/Research/Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/Training-and-Coaching/Protecting-and-Nurturing-Children-Building-Capacity-Building-Bridges/</a></p>

Objective	Deliverable	Activities	Output:	Comments
		Publish key learnings, including best practice examples of exemplary practitioners and services	Publish journal article and information for practitioners, managers and policy makers	<p>Based on findings and learnings from BCBB, the following publication was authored: "McDougall, S. &amp; Gibson, C. 'Advancing the visibility of the child in adult and child and family services', <i>Communities, Children and Families Australia</i>, vol. 8, no. 1, pp 21-35, ISSN: 1833-6280.</p> <p>Authored and published 'Stories of Impact: the Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity Building Bridges (BCBB) Initiative ', highlighting best practice examples and outlining the BCBB journey, 2014.</p> <p>BCBB will also feature in upcoming Australian Centre for Child Protection's 10 year Anniversary publication, '10 out of 10' as one of 10 pivotal projects or initiatives that ACCP has produced or has been involved with, to be released in 2015 (currently in production).</p>
		Showcase the work of exemplary practitioners at site network forums for national network.	Show case one example in each site.	Cardinia, Launceston presented at Children, Communities, Connections conference Adelaide 15,16 Nov 2011.
		Develop mechanism with sites to showcase examples at state and national forums	Show case 12 examples for state or national audience.	Presentations for national conferences, Cardinia, Townsville, Lismore, Launceston.

**APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK FORM TO MONITOR THE IMPACT OF A ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION.**

**BUILDING CAPACITY, BUILDING BRIDGES INITIATIVE: Collaboration: Building knowledge about collaborative networks**

**Part 1 Monitoring the impact of a one day workshop on cross sector collaboration**

Dear Participant

Thank you for attending today's workshop. The aims of the workshop are to:

- Present an evidence informed framework for supporting cross sector collaboration
- Provide managers from child and adult sectors the opportunity to jointly identify local solutions for enhancing collaboration and to identify what collaboration should look like in your region

The Australian Centre for Child Protection is committed to providing high quality learning opportunities, and as such is evaluating the workshop provided today.

- The evaluation comprises a survey which will take approximately 10 mins of your time at the completion of today's workshop.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time from the research project without affecting your ability to take part in this or any future workshops.
- Your individual feedback will be confidential and will not be identifiable.
- The surveys obtained from this study will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Australian Centre for Child Protection for 7years following completion of the study and will only be accessible to the lead researcher on this project.
- Aggregated results from this and other sites will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this learning and development strategy. Upon completion of the project, you will be able to download a summary of the research report from the Centre's website. It is envisaged that this report will be available by July 2012.
- Your completion and return of this survey indicates your consent to your views contributing to this evaluation.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research and Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about the evaluation project, please contact Associate Professor Leah Bromfield, Deputy Director Australian Centre for Child Protection, on (08) 83022924 or via email [Leah.Bromfield@unisa.edu.au](mailto:Leah.Bromfield@unisa.edu.au) If you have any ethical concerns regarding this project please contact the Executive Officer UniSA HREC Ms Vicki Allen on 8302 3118 or via email [vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au](mailto:vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au).



**Measures to be completed by participants:**

**What is the main client group that your agency supports? (Select one)**

- Children
- Families
- Adults
- Parents

**What is the main service your agency provides? (e.g., drug and alcohol counselling, early literacy supports etc.)**

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**Please describe your role:**

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**How would you classify your role?**

- Caseworker
- Manager
- Senior Manager
- Other (please describe)

**How many years have you been working in your field?**

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**Age group (please tick one)**

- |                                |                                |                                |                                 |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| < 20 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 21-25 <input type="checkbox"/> | 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/> | 31-35 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 36-40 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41-45 <input type="checkbox"/> | 46-50 <input type="checkbox"/> | 51-55 <input type="checkbox"/> | 56 -60 <input type="checkbox"/> | 61+ <input type="checkbox"/>   |

**Gender (please tick one)**

- Male  Female

Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

The framework for collaboration provided in training was useful

Strongly disagree		Agree somewhat		Strongly agree
1		3		5

Name the three levels of collaboration indicated in the diagram

\_\_\_\_\_

Name three factors that influence collaboration, as indicated in the diagram

\_\_\_\_\_

Name three barriers to collaboration that have been identified at this site:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name three factors that facilitate collaboration at this site:

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the outcomes/ goals that you have agreed on in order to enhance collaboration at this site?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your agreement with the following questions, taking into consideration the scope of your current work role.

I am committed to creating an “authorising” environment in my workplace/at this site

Strongly disagree		Agree somewhat		Strongly agree
1		3		5

I am committed to increasing the capacity for collaboration between adult and child services

Strongly disagree		Agree somewhat		Strongly agree
1		3		5

I am committed to progressing the shared goals agreed upon today

Strongly disagree		Agree somewhat		Strongly agree
1		3		5

I am prepared to champion collaboration between adult and children’s services in my workplace/ at my site

Strongly disagree		Agree somewhat		Strongly agree
1		3		5

What would you like to know more about?

What could be included to make the workshop more useful?

What other comments would you like to make about the workshop?

**APPENDIX 3: CHILD AND FAMILY SENSITIVE PRACTICE WORKSHOP FEEDBACK FORM**

**Protecting and Nurturing Children:  
Building Capacity, Building Bridges  
Child and Family Sensitive Practice Workshop**

Date:

Please circle the focus of your service:

- |                      |               |                |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| DV                   | Homelessness  | Adult          |
| AOD                  | Mental Health | OR             |
| Other (please state) |               | Child & Family |
- \_\_\_\_\_

For each statement below please circle the response that indicates your level of agreement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
This workshop provided information useful to my work with parents and children	1	2	3	4	5
I understand why child and family sensitive practice is particularly applicable to families with multiple and complex problems	1	2	3	4	5
Working collaboratively with diverse service providers is necessary to address the needs of vulnerable children	1	2	3	4	5
In my role I will apply most of what I've learnt from this workshop	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to expand the range of resources and services I draw on to assist parents	1	2	3	4	5
I need to consistently consider the impact of adult problems on their children	1	2	3	4	5
I feel I can engage parents in discussion about their parenting and their children's needs	1	2	3	4	5
I play a valuable role by working collaboratively to protect vulnerable children	1	2	3	4	5
There are relevant resources and personnel that I can use to assist vulnerable children and their parents	1	2	3	4	5
I feel enabled to initiate discussion regarding child and family sensitive practice within my organisation	1	2	3	4	5

- I would recommend this workshop to others Yes / No

Comments:

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**Follow-up email**

**Why are you getting this email?**

You indicated your agreement to be contacted again when you gave feedback about the ***Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges*** Child and Family Sensitive Practice Workshop.

We would be grateful if you would respond to the following questions:

1. How has the information from the Child and Family Sensitive Practice Workshop supported your practice?
2. What ongoing challenges do you have in growing your child and family sensitive practice?
3. Have you initiated a discussion about Child and Family Sensitive Practice within your organisation?  
Yes/No
4. Did you use the tool distributed at the workshop to support these conversations?  
Yes/No
5. What challenges face your organisation as it becomes more child and family sensitive?
6. Would your organisation like support from the Australian Centre of Child Protection to further this conversation?  
Yes/No

Other comments

#### APPENDIX 4: REFLECTIONS FROM PROJECT TEAM (FIELD AGENTS)

##### **Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity, Building Bridges: Project Team**

This tool is to help record your **reflections, community nuances and related comments** that have arisen through your involvement in the process of developing the Protecting and Nurturing Children: Building Capacity Building Bridges Initiative. Please use the tool as mechanism to document relevant thoughts collected from contact with each of the 12 sites. Such active listening will inform the Initiative keeping it respectful and relevant to the communities in which we are working.

A powerful research team is created by bringing together the skills of the professional researcher and the local knowledge of those inside the research context. The knowledge of local stakeholders is an essential ingredient. It is this knowledge about the problem and the context in which it occurs that is invaluable to 'designing social change processes' (Greenwood and Levin 2000, p 96).

As this Initiative is an evolving process of many parts there are multiple opportunities for acquiring learning which can be usefully shared and applied to the needs of each of the 12 communities.

Please record information about the event and/or conversations that triggered particular reflections or 'aha' moments e.g. if discussion at a meeting raises an interesting point write it down plus a note of the context such as who was at the meeting or a copy of the attendance list etc.

##### **Date**

**Briefly provide details of meeting/conversation/observation (where, who, what). Give examples of adult & child/family collaboration (or barriers or opportunities) and identify what to do next.....**

## APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN MANAGER/COORDINATOR PARTNERS

1. Have any new or existing service/sector relationships or networks developed or strengthened their focus on vulnerable families?
2. Has there been increased awareness of the need for child and family sensitive practice by services that support families dealing with complex issues? Have any new activities resulted?
3. What signs do you consider indicate that services and workers are informed by the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children?
4. Do you have any success stories to share? Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?
5. How has the Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative helped your Communities for Children?
6. What could the Building Capacity, Building Bridges Initiative have done differently?
7. What services are represented on your steering committee? Has there been any change to the membership?

## APPENDIX 6: QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING CAPACITY, BUILDING BRIDGES INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Please describe the contribution made to this project by having your area of influence represented on the steering committee
2. Please outline any learning that your area of influence has gained from involvement in this project
3. Has anything been gained from your interaction with other members of the steering committee?
4. What do you think this project has done well?
5. What do you think that this project could have done better?
6. What do you think are the key learnings from this project?
7. Any other comments?