

**Editor:** Margarita Frederico

**Associate Editors:**

Annette Hourigan  
Cliff Picton

**Chairman The Children's Bureau  
of Aust. Inc. Publications**

**Committee:** John Edwards

**Subscriptions:** Lee Richmond

**Book Review Editor:** June Allen

**Secretary:** Enid Sheehy

**The Children's Bureau of  
Australia Inc. Publications  
Committee**

June Allen, B.A.,

Dip. Soc. Stud.

John Edwards, Dip. Y.L., B.A.,

B.S.W. (Hons.)

Margarita Frederico, B.A.,

Dip. Soc. Stud., M.S.W., M.B.A.

Christopher R. Goddard,

B.A.(Hons.), M.S.W.

Annette Hourigan, B.A.,

Dip. Soc. Stud.

Denis Oakley, B.A.,

Dip. Soc. Stud.

Lloyd Owen, B.A.,

Dip. Soc. Stud., M. Soc. Wk.

Cliff Picton, B.A.,

Cert. Soc. Stud.

## Editorial

The issues relating to protection of children are central to family and child welfare. At times those issues seem to be addressed only in terms of protecting children from physical and sexual abuse, even though it is known that children also suffer from institutional and emotional abuse. As it is generally acknowledged that children have a special claim on the State and the community for protection, it remains surprising that funding for children's services remain so low. Contrasted with spending for other groups in the community it can be seen that children fare extremely poorly financially in all areas other than education. Funds are needed not only for services but for research into all aspects of protection of children. The spurious tension generated from the debate between a rights and needs approach should not cloud the scene nor prevent funds being provided so all children can have a better chance of protection. Children's rights are an integral part of their needs and they have the right to be protected from harm and to have access to the services they need to assist them develop their potential. Children's rights often appear to be translated as parents right's and the assumption that they are synonymous does not always hold.

In this issue we explore the question of protection of children, from a number of

perspectives. In the first article the issue of involuntary sterilization of minors is explored. By considering recent legal judgements and relating them to policy the author canvasses the extremely complex issues and highlights the importance of legal and welfare approaches to policies relating to this area. In the next article the need for professionals' protection of children in the courtroom is considered. This relates to situations where there is a danger that protection of the parents' legal rights may interfere with the child's right and need for protection. The author considers the tensions between the legal and welfare approach. The links between welfare of children and the law are taken up in the third article which explores the effects divorce legislation can have on the financial welfare of children of the divorcing couple. Protection of children remains the theme for the following articles. Exploring the issues of parent education the authors of the article consider what may occur if professionals intervene in the parenting of children without considering the long term effects on parents who may be led to feel only professionals have the elusive 'right' answers to caring for their child. Institutional neglect of children is seen in the discussion of the availability of (or lack of) community supports for children with disability and their parents.