

ions about what services to provide will flow from the best available knowledge and from a genuine interest in the safety and long term well being of children, not narrow sectarian or short term political interests or what is cheapest.

The articles give some indication of the breadth of issues to be explored to glean the knowledge needed. In each case, they point to the risk of misapprehension in this threatening and emotive field. We have much to learn about preventing the abuse of power; about enhancing the positive power in family life; about managing the impact of mass communication; about managing our sexuality in today's world; about understanding each other and finding win win solutions to the problems which beset our children and each other; about discovery of better perspectives through open discussion of difficult issues. Freda Briggs and Russell Hawkins have provided some interesting research pointing to the way in which parents may perpetuate their children's vulnerability to sexual abuse through a mismatch of common morés and risks and the need to appreciate differences in the perception of children at different developmental stages. Bala Mudaly reports on a support group program for parents of adolescents based on a systems approach. It appears to be a positive, dynamic and empowering approach to capitalise on the resources inherent in the family members and the internal and external family environment. Frank Bates has provided a bonus for the students of family law by extracting some more evidentiary dilemmas from recent cases involving child sexual abuse.

The death of Daniel Valerio mobilised much feeling in the Victorian Community and appears to have influenced that Government's adoption of mandatory reporting. Phillip Swain looks at mandatory reporting in this context and draws attention to the complexities and the importance of having a child protection system in which the community has confidence. Chris Goddard and Max Liddell trace some of the developments in child protection in Victoria and the United Kingdom with particular reference to the role of the media. Its influence in shaping policy and public viewpoints is considered using the Herald Sun campaign and the events flowing from Daniel's death as a case study. In a follow up to her article on placement disruption in the previous issue, Cas O'Neill has provided a brief literature review. As a response, a rejoinder, to Lesley Cooper's article in the last issue on Victoria's skills enhancement program, standards for competent practice in the health and community services industry gets another airing by Bob Burgell.

It is still the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples and another opportunity has emerged to enhance cultural understanding through the Koorie Heritage Trust Newsletter which the Trust will publish quarterly. Its first edition has been included in this issue.

There are some book reviews and Chris Goddard's column. In this and the next issue, through an interview, Chris enables a mother to speak about the immense difficulty encountered following her son's report of abuse at the hands of a teacher in the education system.

ADOPTION AUSTRALIA

A comparative study of adoption legislation and policy

by **Peter Boss** with the assistance of Sue Edwards

**Introduction by the Hon. Justice Asche
Chief Justice of the Northern Territory**

Published by the National Children's Bureau of Australia Inc. 1992

This book provides the first comprehensive study of adoption legislation and policy in all eight adoption jurisdictions in Australia. The material is organised on a state by state and territory by territory basis under thirteen subject headings, which makes comparison between the jurisdictions easy to follow. In addition, there are chapters which provide an overview of adoption in Australia, past and present; a summary of the legislation; and a discussion on how it might match up with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The work has been prepared with a view to meeting the interests and needs of people who are or have been parties to an adoption; workers in the fields of adoption, social policy, welfare and social work; students in the human resources disciplines; family lawyers; policy shapers and makers. The book can be used as a ready reference guide as well as giving a thorough appraisal of how adoption stands in our times.

The National Children's Bureau has published this book from its own resources in the belief that it is necessary to provide objective coverage of a subject area which is complex to negotiate. It is also timely in view of the obligations laid upon Australia's legislation as a result of the recent ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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