



## **childaware** Developing a Child Aware Local Plan.

Child Aware Local Initiative is a capacity-building initiative which supports communities to undertake early intervention and prevention activities that contribute to keeping children safe and well.

Child Aware Local Initiative is a central priority under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and the Second Action Plan 2012-15. Endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, the National Framework represents an unprecedented level of collaboration between Australian, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations to protect children.

The Child Aware Local Initiative is implemented through partnerships between the community sector, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

The six supporting outcomes of the National Framework are key drivers to the initiative:

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and well being
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support

Key messages of the Child Aware Local Initiative:

- Protecting children is everyone's business.
- Children have a right to be safe, valued and cared for.
- The best way to protect children is to prevent abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.
- Children and families should have a 'voice' in decisions affecting their lives.
- Governments, communities, organisations and individuals can work together to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.
- Children are usually best supported within their families.
- A 'one size fits all' approach does not work across Australia's diverse communities.
- Local solutions are required for local problems.
- Culturally diverse groups need culturally sensitive responses.

### **What are our community's gaps/needs?**

An initial Child Aware Local Initiative gathering led by the Australian Centre for Child Protection was attended by community members, local services and Government department officers. Discussion at this event highlighted a range of issues in the Huon Valley from low literacy levels in children to youth stealing cars. All services identified issues with child neglect being prevalent in the community.

As the number of volunteer CALI committee members declined, the remaining members decided to take an approach of *child protection being everyone's business* and raise community awareness.

Due to a small membership of CALI committee members, the community site was reduced from the whole of the Huon Valley in Tasmania to the Geeveston municipality.

The SEIFA score for Geeveston is 896.

47.8% of Geeveston's children are developmentally vulnerable on one or more of the AEDC domains. Compared to 21.8 percent of Aust.

34.8% of Geeveston's children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

The data above, for Geeveston, reflects many children are not achieving their full potential.

By raising awareness about the rights of children we hope to move them from invisible family members to community members, with a recognised presence and voice.

All local businesses, schools and service providers will be given the opportunity to be 'Child Aware' by displaying our poster and keeping children and their needs/rights at the forefront of their decision-making and interactions.

### **Who are the stakeholders we will draw together to build a Child Aware community?**

- Schools – Geeveston State Primary School, Sacred Heart Catholic School Geeveston
- Save the Children Australia
- wayraparattee Child & Family Centre
- GeCo – Geeveston Community Centre
- Local businesses and service providers
- Agencies and service providers

**What is our vision for a Child Aware community?**

*The vision for the Huon Valley CALI is to make Geeveston a Child Aware community, where children live in a safe and supportive environment.*

<b>Resources</b>	<b>What do we need?</b>	<b>Who will provide/source resources?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evidence</li></ul>	Thoughts and issues discussed and recorded in a community forum	(Completed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Training</li></ul>	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tools</li></ul>	Survey to capture thoughts of primary school children and adults/parents within the community to gauge current and post-delivery levels of knowledge of children's rights	Nicole (SCA) to provide primary school survey Donna (SCA) to provide adult/parent survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implementation support</li></ul>	People to distribute survey and CALI information within the local schools and Child and Family Centre	Tanya (SCA) and Nicole to support schools in delivery of information and survey, follow up discussions within an art session and information collection  Child & Family Centre staff to distribute info and survey among attendees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Advocacy/using areas of influence</li></ul>	n/a	n/a

**How do we get there? What are we doing to realise our vision?**

In order to gauge the community's baseline awareness of children's rights and the level to which our community values the issues important to our children, we will survey a sample of adults through the Child and Family Centre, and all primary school children through the use of surveys and discussions in their classroom groups.

The primary school children will use an art session to focus their thoughts on the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child and formulate some visual artwork to be sampled in the subsequent design of a locally owned poster featuring the Convention in child friendly language.

With support from Families Australia to cover the cost of art work design and printing, this poster will then be distributed throughout the community and displayed in all supportive businesses, schools, health centres, community centres and public notice boards as a statement of unity in our plight to make Geeveston a Child Aware community.

We hope to re-visit the same sample group in a more informal manner after 12 months to ask them if they have noticed the poster, seek their thoughts on children's rights and if they feel their awareness of children's rights has increased as a result?

**What organisations/agencies/businesses are supporting this initiative?**

**What are their roles/ commitments?**

Good Beginnings (as part of Save the Children) Australia

Leading the initiative

wayraparattee Child and Family Centre

Provision of space for meetings and assistance with delivery of adult survey

Geeveston Community Centre (GeCo)

Assistance with development and delivery of youth survey

Geeveston State Primary School and Sacred Heart Catholic School Geeveston

Enabling children's thoughts to be heard and survey to be conducted among students. Provision of art time to enable students to design artwork for the poster/s

Local businesses and public agencies

Displaying posters

**How are we collecting our story/learning?**

The initial survey results will collect the current community view on children's rights.

The use of subsequent survey results will inform whether a poster displaying the rights of children in public spaces does result in a raised collective awareness about the rights of children, and whether those rights are visible to adults.

Hold a joint Child Aware forum with children who attend Geeveston Primary School and Sacred Heart Primary School. The discussion will be facilitated by Save the Children and Families Australia staff. The forum will be filmed for use on the Child Aware website.

**How are we sharing the learnings?**

- Publish summary of findings in local media.
- Inform Minister of Human Services about CALI as she has displayed a strong interest.
- Inform the TAS Commissioner for Children about the project.
- Invite the Minister for Human Services to launch the poster, in her electorate.
- Present learnings at relevant conferences.
- Utilise the Child Aware website to promote our learning and Child Aware Community journey.

**How will we sustain momentum into the future?**

We are hoping that by raising the profile of children within the Geeveston community that there is community interest to expanding into the greater Huon Valley, utilising the support of other services and community leaders within those areas.