



## Katherine 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

**Our vision for a Child Aware community in Katherine**

“The children of Katherine are happy, healthy and safe, and have every opportunity for a fulfilling future.”

**CALI Katherine Aims to:**

Develop strategies to better support vulnerable and disengaged children and young people in Katherine, particularly those who experience domestic and family violence.

**Our strategic objectives include:**

1. Gather the views of children and young people about their needs and aspirations
2. Develop strategies to ensure that the views, needs and aspirations of children are fed into the Department of the Attorney Generals and Justice ‘Safety is Everyone’s Right’ NT Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014-2017,
3. Strengthen collaboration across the Katherine community to improve ways in which children and young people who experience domestic and family violence are supported

**Lead community partners:**

- Good Beginnings Save the Children
- The Smith Family

**Clarifying gaps, needs and/or concerns**

Information gathered through CALI community meetings & related ongoing discussions in Katherine from late 2014 and during 2015 identified the following issues could be addressed through Katherine’s Child Aware Local Initiative:

- Children and young people’s exposure to domestic violence and drug/alcohol abuse, means that they may be unsafe at home, and not have their basic needs met, such as for food and housing.
- The limited options in Katherine that address this for children and young people: e.g. suitable alternative accommodation or leisure/recreation activities.
- The current (2014) practice of school exclusion appears to have the following unintended consequences:
  - 1) an increase in the numbers of disengaged youth from education and training
  - 2) children missing out school based meals, and sport/recreation activities, and
  - 3) children learning perverse ways of managing life

- The need for more strategic collaboration within the service network to overcome the fragmented and unstable nature of Katherine's community services sector. Contributing factors: short term funding, overly prescriptive program guidelines re: client group, shortage of volunteers.

**Stakeholders we will encourage to help us build a Child Aware community**

Community Services Sector – NGOs and early childhood services	Education sector – school principals and specialist education support teachers
Tindal Army Base, Family Support team	Health Services Sector
NT Police (youth team)	NT Department of the Attorney Generals and Justice Domestic Violence Directorate
Katherine Town Council: CEO and Mayor	Business leaders: McDonalds, local licensee
Djilpin Arts	Service and sporting clubs and recreational activity groups
Flinders University	

<b>Resources</b>	<b>What do we need?</b>	<b>Provide and/or source resources</b>
Access to relevant evidence and research	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impact of DV on children and young people</li> <li>• effective strategies to address impact of DV on children and young people</li> <li>• importance of hearing the views of children and young people when addressing the issue of DV, family violence</li> <li>• respect and value the views of children and young people to identify what they need from the service sector</li> </ul>	<p><b>Links to submissions, resources and articles on 'voice' and working with children:</b></p> <p><a href="http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-the-senate-finance-and-public-administration-committees-inquiry-into-domestic-violence-in-australia-october-2014/">http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-the-senate-finance-and-public-administration-committees-inquiry-into-domestic-violence-in-australia-october-2014/</a></p> <p><a href="http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-australian-human-rights-childrens-commissioners-examination-of-children-affected-by-family-and-domestic-violence-june-2015/">http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-australian-human-rights-childrens-commissioners-examination-of-children-affected-by-family-and-domestic-violence-june-2015/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.goodbeginnings.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Connect-with-Children-Consultation-Report.pdf">http://www.goodbeginnings.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Connect-with-Children-Consultation-Report.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ImpactofDVonChildren.pdf">http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ImpactofDVonChildren.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.childhoodinstitute.org.au/Assets/204/1/EthicalandSafeMorriesHegartyandHumphreys.pdf">http://www.childhoodinstitute.org.au/Assets/204/1/EthicalandSafeMorriesHegartyandHumphreys.pdf</a></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>resources and links to 'best practice' in consulting with children and young people</li> </ul> <p>Create an e-library of relevant materials</p> <p>Identify current information from the Katherine community about the ways in which the opinions/ideas of children and young people are currently gathered and used, to assist in developing and designing community services. Obtain baseline understanding of data collections if possible.</p>	<p><a href="http://epubs.scu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&amp;context=ccyp_pubs">http://epubs.scu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&amp;context=ccyp_pubs</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dcyu.gov.ie/documents/publications/Listening_childrens_stories_domestic_violence_11_Oct_07.pdf">http://www.dcyu.gov.ie/documents/publications/Listening_childrens_stories_domestic_violence_11_Oct_07.pdf</a> (Ireland)</p> <p><a href="http://childethics.com/resources/">http://childethics.com/resources/</a></p> <p>CALI lead agencies designed and distributed a survey to determine ways in which the views of children and young people are currently sought and used. The survey was unable to assist with baseline information as the majority of organisations surveyed advised they were unable to share data.</p>
<p><b>Training:</b> identify PD needs that will help implement the local plan</p>	<p>Consider accessing PD in effective ways to consult with children and young people to improve service responsiveness</p> <p>Consider harnessing skills of academics who visit Katherine, skilled in consulting with children and young people</p> <p>Undertake PD for working with children to address cyber bullying</p> <p>Identify resources on 'voice' and agency for children and young people</p>	<p>CALI members to attend "ThinkUKnow" training, NT Police training program, to address cyber bullying of, and among, children and young people</p> <p>Articles/resources:</p> <p><a href="http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/documents/published-research/taking-us-seriously-children-and-young-people-talk.pdf">http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/documents/published-research/taking-us-seriously-children-and-young-people-talk.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-the-environment-and-communications-legislation-committee-on-the-enhancing-online-safety-for-children-bill-2014-and-enhancing-online-safety-for-children-consequential/">http://familiesaustralia.org.au/submission/families-australia-submission-to-the-environment-and-communications-legislation-committee-on-the-enhancing-online-safety-for-children-bill-2014-and-enhancing-online-safety-for-children-consequential/</a></p>

<p><b>Tools: policy and practice</b></p>	<p>Australian Institute of Families Studies “Good Practice Guide to Child Aware Approaches”</p> <p>Good Beginnings “Connect with Children” program and Report</p> <p>As and when identified, include other practice guides in the CALI Katherine resource library</p>	<p><b>Resources and articles:</b></p> <p><a href="https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/good-practice-guide-child-aware-approaches-keeping-c">https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/good-practice-guide-child-aware-approaches-keeping-c</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.goodbeginnings.org.au/presentations/connect-with-children-consultation-report/">https://www.goodbeginnings.org.au/presentations/connect-with-children-consultation-report/</a></p>
<p><b>Implementation support:</b></p> <p>Identify possible sources additional external funding (philanthropic and Government)</p>	<p>Interviewers will be needed to gather the views of children &amp; young people</p> <p>Hold event in National Children’s Week (Oct 2015) with an address by the Children’s Commissioner, followed by a workshop to progress idea for Katherine CALI. Venue &amp; facilitator for October workshop</p>	<p>Interviews with children will take some time to gain necessary permissions and to scope the rationale and project. Planning by community leaders is under consideration.</p> <p>Convened a community event in National Children’s Week 2015. The NT Children’s Commissioner Coleen Gwynne delivered a presentation followed by a community workshop. The Australian Centre for Child Protection (UNI SA) and Families Australia assisted with facilitation, recording and venue.</p> <p>CALI Katherine reference group supported a submission to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to fund a Domestic and Family Violence Duty Solicitor to be available to children and spouses who were victims of DV. The new service, if funded, aimed to ensure that the specific needs of victims were recognised and not “lumped in” with any other matters the perpetrator might be facing i.e. assault, resist arrest, disturbing the peace, assault police etc. The submission has been unsuccessful in the first instance.</p>
<p><b>Advocacy/using areas of influence:</b></p>	<p>Input into NT government Review of NT Domestic Violence Act 2007</p> <p>Links with Department of the Attorney Generals and Justice ‘Safety is Everyone’s Right’ NT Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014-2017, Reference Group</p>	<p>CALI Katherine contributed to the Katherine DV community reference group’s submission to the Review of the NT Domestic Violence Act 2007. CALI members had identified that the current Act did not refer to children as victims of domestic violence, and that as a consequence did not align with the NT Child Protection Act.</p>

	<p>CALI is a standing agenda item on the LRG agenda which Bev reports against</p> <p>Interest/support of NT Children's Commissioner</p> <p>Other identified useful links within CALI group to key community leaders/groups</p>	<p>As a consequence of the omission, children are not formally recognised or counted as "victims" of domestic and family violence in the NT, and perpetrators cannot be charged with these offences unless the child is physically assaulted.</p> <p>Katherine CALI group holds the view that the omission discounts the impact and trauma experienced by children.</p> <p>Katherine CALI members endorse definition of a perpetrator of domestic and family violence as someone who "intentionally uses violence, threats, force or intimidation to control or manipulate a family member, partner or former partner. It is characterised by an imbalance of power whereby the perpetrator uses abusive behaviors and tactics to obtain power and control over the victim causing fear. The violence is intentional and systematic and often increases in frequency and severity the longer the relationship goes on" see, Carrington &amp; Phillips 2003, Tually, Faulkner, Culter &amp; Slater, 2008.)</p> <p>The CALI group holds the view, that in these situations, children are truly powerless and that it is imperative that this is recognised across all NT legislations and that all relevant "Acts," align to ensure that children are at the centre of all investigations into domestic and family violence.</p> <p>This evidence was included in a verbal submission presented to NT DV Act Reform Investigative Commission, September 2015.</p> <p>The NT 'Safety is Everyone's Right' Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014-2017, Implementation Plan (circulated October 2015) has identified 'strategies' and 'actions' that aim to improve safety and wellbeing for NT children and young people. The Safety is Everyone's Right strategy implementation plan has five action areas – Prevention, early intervention, protection – safety for victims and their children, rebuilding victims lives and accountability. The Katherine CALI plan fits neatly into these five areas of action which ensures that children are recognised through all stages of the strategy development and implementation.</p>
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<p><b>Which organisations, agencies and businesses are supporting CALI?</b></p>	<p><b>What are their roles/ commitments?</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save the Children</li> <li>• Smith Family</li> <li>• Other NGOs:</li> <li>• NT Children's Commissioner</li> <li>• Department of the Attorney Generals and Justice Domestic Violence Directorate</li> <li>• 'Safety is Everyone's Right' NT Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014-2017, Reference Group</li> <li>• NT Department of Children and Families</li> <li>• NT Department of Education</li> <li>• Katherine District Hospital</li> </ul>	<p>Save the Children and The Smith Family are leading the local community sector to reflect on the impact on children, of domestic and family violence, misuse of alcohol and drugs and abuse and neglect, in an effort to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Katherine.</p> <p>The services and local community organisations and members will be encouraged to participate in developing on-going strategies to promote safety and wellbeing for children and young people.</p> <p>Katherine CALI will make submissions as and when resources permit to relevant inquiries.</p> <p>Contribute to events, and consultations, and engage local community members in the vision for children and young people of Katherine.</p>	

### **How are we collecting our story/learnings?**

- Minutes of meetings
- Continue documenting implementation progress on CALI Local Action Plan
- Contribute to the Child Aware video project
- When the opportunity rises, use network and other meetings to contribute to learnings about the importance of valuing the contributions of children and young people and their families to policy development and service planning

### **How are we sharing the learnings?**

- Families Australia **Child Aware** website ([www.childaware.org.au](http://www.childaware.org.au))
- Child Aware 2016 conference ([www.childawareconference.org](http://www.childawareconference.org))
- Presentations at relevant conferences
- Developing and distribute a resource which would help include the voices of children and young people in policy development and service planning, e.g. video, guidelines booklet
- Local Katherine media, newsletters
- Katherine community networks, e.g. follow-up workshop to present findings from CALI project

### **How will we sustain momentum into the future? How do we build the practice of giving children and young people a voice into everyday practice throughout the Katherine community? How do we embed it into policy and practice?**

Existing national events could be used to focus attention on the CALI Katherine plan and vision, e.g. Children's Week, Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, NAIDOC, National Families Week, R U OK day, Mental Health Week, White Balloon Day.