

## **Area Partnership supporters come together to share what they are learning about how collaboration drives change for Victoria's most vulnerable**

Improving the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families is a complex challenge. No one organisation, service or program alone can tip the scales in their favour. Collaboration across sectors and communities is required to achieve lasting change and improve outcomes.

The Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, together with the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training, brought together the partners of the Children and Youth Area Partnerships from all sectors to discuss how they are leading the way in collaborative work to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

"Bringing together service organisations, government departments, schools, academia, and also at different times children, young people and families who use these services, has led to some great initiatives and gives me inspiration and great hope that we can make a difference," Anglicare Victoria Development Manager Tim Pedlow said.

The forum:

- demonstrated the ways in which Area Partnerships can support the work different sectors do at the local level with vulnerable children, young people and families
- shared examples of good practice where Area Partnerships are making a difference, and the factors contributing to these positive outcomes
- shared the early learning of partners who are working together to test new approaches
- gave attendees the chance to discuss practice challenges and to share examples of effective partnering with colleagues.

At the forum, partners of the Children and Youth Area Partnerships shared their insights into how the Area Partnerships' collaborative approaches are contributing to lasting change at the local level, including successfully engaging in co-design activities to address a specific problem.

"Co-design with young people with a care experience tipped the scales for me and others. It taught us that we need to listen to them, they actually know what will work," Heidi Tucker, Chief Executive Officer of Anchor and Steering Group Member of the Outer Eastern Melbourne Area Partnership, said.

"When we share the flaws and challenges in our care system with others, we gain a richness and insight often not possible from those of us deep in the problem. When we say, 'Oh that can't be done,' they say, 'Why not?'"

Speaking about her co-design experience with the Inner Gippsland Area Partnership, Anglicare Victoria HIPPY Coordinator Jade Walsh said she was inspired by the sincere commitment and passion of the people involved in the work.

"What is making this process work is the incredible team that we have and the additional members from our community that are joining us in our work. We are seriously kicking goals together. Not only

are we supportive of one another, but we continue to push one another to reach our full potential,” Ms Walsh said.

“It’s inspiring – and when we are all sitting together getting stuck into the co-design process, we can see just how passionate all those around the table all are about making some much needed changes to our community, for our community.”

Speakers included member organisations of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and Victorian Government representatives shared their experiences as partners of the Area Partnerships, including:

**Nick Beckingsale, Director, Vulnerable Children's Reform Unit**

The Children and Youth Area Partnerships: how they work and what they do

**Tim Pedlow, Development Manager and Jade Walsh, HIPPY Coordinator, Anglicare Victoria**

First 1000 days: strengthening the capacity of parents to support their children in their child's first 1000 days

**Kim Sykes, CEO, Bendigo Community Health Services**

Shared measurement: developing a shared measurement approach to track progress

**Heidi Tucker, CEO, Anchor**

Brighter Futures: improving education, employment and community connection for young people leaving care

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