

Media release

20 March 2018

Child Safe Organisations – MacKillop conference shares best-practice strategies to keep children safe

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse undertook the most extensive investigation of child sexual abuse in Australia's history, and has been widely praised for the compassion with which it engaged survivors and the depth and breadth of its recommendations.

While the Commission made it clear the prevention and identification of abuse is a collective responsibility, there is a particular onus on organisations that work with vulnerable children, young people and families to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

In recognition of this important responsibility, MacKillop Family Services is hosting a national conference – [Child Safe Organisations: Prevention and Practice Beyond the Royal Commission](#) – on **Wednesday 21 March at the MCG in Melbourne**.

Bringing together managers and practitioners in child and family welfare, educators, researchers and policy-makers, the conference will provide an opportunity to reflect on the Royal Commission, explore evidence-based strategies to prevent child sexual abuse and investigate cutting edge approaches to child-safe practice

MacKillop Family Services CEO Dr Robyn Miller said the sector needs to share best-practice approaches to keeping children safe.

“Now the Royal Commission is complete, it is critical the lessons learned do not fade with time,” she said. “The final report is particularly relevant to all agencies with children in their care and it has far reaching implications across multiple sectors in our society. Creating a space where practitioners can share experience and knowledge on evidence-based practice is a crucial first response to the findings of the Commission.”

Keynote speakers include Robert Fitzgerald AM, Commissioner, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, who will speak to the key learnings from five years at the Commission in his address: *Important messages for child and family welfare and the education sectors*.

Panellists include Liana Buchanan, Victorian Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Dr Gemma McKibbin, Research Fellow, University of Melbourne, who will share evidence-based safe practice strategies on respectful sexual relationships.

Keeping the voices of young people centre stage, a keynote address on *How children process loss and grief... and how adults need to respond*, will be delivered by Professor Anne Graham, Professor Childhood Studies, Southern Cross University and author of *Seasons for Growth*, an innovative grief and loss education program.

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Focusing on safety and creating an understanding of how past adversity and trauma can continue to affect someone's behaviour will be a key element of MacKillop's conference. Recognising that trauma has an impact not only on the people who have experienced it, but also on the staff who work with them and on organisations, Dr Sandra Bloom (US), M.D, Co-creator of the Sanctuary Model and international expert on trauma, will address the conference via video link on *Creating Sanctuary: Child Safe Organisational Cultures*.

[Child Safe Organisations: Prevention And Practice Beyond The Royal Commission](#) takes place on Wednesday 21 March 2018 at the Olympic Room, MCG, Melbourne.

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