

Pot Pourri

National Secretariat on the Way

The National Press recently carried an advertisement for an Executive Director for the Child and Family Welfare Council of Australia. It is hoped that an appointment will be made in time for the appointee to take up his responsibilities early in the New Year. The Council will be established in Melbourne and will operate from the offices of the Children's Welfare Association.

The Minister of Social Security, Senator Margaret Guilfoyle recently announced that a \$10,000 grant towards the establishment of the secretariat.

Further information on this position can be obtained from the President of the Council, the Rev. Ian Ellis, Director of St. John's Homes for Boys & Girls, 18 Balwyn Road, Canterbury.

Uniform Adoption Legislation

At a recent meeting of Commonwealth and State Welfare Ministers, Victoria was asked to draft legislation which would be considered as uniform legislation by the Commonwealth and all States for possible implementation into the Spring Sessions of Parliament throughout Australia.

Mr Brian Dixon, Minister for Social Welfare, said that a draft document which had been prepared by the attorney-General of Victoria, Mr Haddon Storey, and himself had been approved in principal by Social Welfare Ministers to be the basis of the draft legislation. This document followed numerous meetings of Attorneys-General and Social Welfare Ministers.

Mr Dixon said that the legislation would allow automatic recognition of adoptions which had been made by foreigners (persons other than Australian residents) in any other country, provided that the adoption met the legal requirements of that country.

The same simple recognition situation would apply where any person makes an adoption in another State or Territory of Australia, New Zealand or any foreign country which has been formally proclaimed as having approved adoption arrangements. Such adoption agreements will be reached between Victoria and other countries as quickly as possible Mr Dixon said. If Australians are approved as suitable adopting parents before going overseas, or have lived in the country concerned for at least two years, the adoption will be automatically recognized.

The Minister said that only where adopting parents had not sought approval, or had not satisfied the residency requirements above, would the situation

become more complicated. Then, the adoption would have to be supervised for twelve months after the adopters and child return to Australia.

Mr Dixon said he was confident that adopting parents would find these approaches straight forward and convenient. He expected that the compulsory supervision provision would be necessary only in isolated cases because he anticipated early uniform proclamation of approved countries and the co-operation from people requesting approval to adopt inter-country.

Mr Dixon said that the special inter-country adoption unit in the Social Welfare Department was now operating effectively.



*New Executive
Director for C.W.A.*

Max Lidell

The Childrens Welfare Association of Victoria recently announced the appointment of Mr Max Lidell, formerly the Assistant Director of Melbourne Family Care Organization as the new Executive Director of the Association.

Max replaces Vernon Knight who has taken up an appointment as the Director of Unit 64, a residential treatment program for young people in Brighton.

Between 1960 and 1963, Max worked as a psychologist and probation officer at the Children's Court Clinic in Melbourne. In 1963 he began a Master of Social Work degree at the Toronto University in Canada. After successfully completing the course in 1965, he worked as a Social Worker in Canada for five years with a family welfare agency. In 1970, Max returned to Melbourne and was appointed as the head of the Social Work Department at Melbourne Family Care Organization. Later, he was promoted to Assistant Director and, as such, was the senior staff member responsible for the Organisation's child and family services. During the past seven years Max has actively supported the major co-ordinating bodies in the field. He was a member of the Family Services Committee of V.C.O.S.S. from 1971 to 1974, a member of the C.W.A.'s Survival Committee and a foundation member of the Editorial Board of the Australian Child and Family Welfare Journal.

Alternatives to Residential Care

The State Government is examining a scheme to establish Temporary Family Care Homes as one alternative to placing young children in old style residential care facilities.

The Minister for Youth and Community Services, Mr Rex Jackson, made the disclosure when addressing a Child Care Week function today.

Mr Jackson said the Government viewed residential care as only a substitute for the family and not as a replacement.

"Because of what I call the industrial situation it is impossible, no matter how hard we try, to make a residential facility identical to the family home," he said.

"Of course we are trying very hard and facilities like 'Minali' at Lidcombe and 'Lark Hill' at Campbelltown, as well as our family group homes, are excellent for brothers and sisters and in keeping families together.

"Nevertheless, staff changes and employees on duty for so many hours per working day do prevent us from duplicating what is recognised as the natural normal way — the family unit.

"Personally, I would like to see a situation where children under three, and especially the quite high proportion of those who have no brothers and sisters, are not placed in old style residential care facilities.

"In these establishments they are part of a large group and a close relationship with parent substitutes is rarely possible.

"As an alternative I believe it is feasible to have Temporary Care Homes for such young children, except perhaps for those who are quite severely handicapped and need care from more professionally trained staff."

Mr Jackson said Temporary Family Homes would comprise families selected by officers of the Department of Youth and Community Services.

Mr Jackson said he envisaged the house parents being paid an annual financial retainer and a fee for each child taken into care.

"Assessment of the child could be carried out in the home by psychologists, social workers and Departmental District Officers so that long term plans for each child are quite specifically worked out," he said.

"In many cases, it will be possible to help parents so that their child may come back home quickly.

"In such a case, a temporary care home will help keep the disturbance in a child's life to a minimum."

Director of Office of Youth Affairs

The Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development, Mr Kevin Newman, has announced the appointment of Mr John Way as Director of the Office of Youth Affairs.

Mr Newman said that Mr Way brought to the Office wide experience in youth affairs; he had established community youth clubs in Kaniva, Victoria, and worked as a youth director at the State level. He has been both Vice-President of the Victorian Youth Council and an adviser to the Victorian Government on Youth Leader training. He has had responsibility for policy and research into community recreation and youth services in the former Department of Tourism and Recreation.

In 1976 Mr Way was seconded to the Prime Minister's Department as a member of the Study Group on Youth Affairs which recommended that young people warranted consideration as a group with special needs. The Government established the Office of Youth Affairs in February of this year.



*New President
for National Body*

A Victorian child care senior executive has been appointed as the new national President of the Child and Family Welfare Council of Australia. He is Mr Ian Ellis, the Director of St. John's Homes for Boys and Girls, Canterbury. Mr. Ellis, who is also an Anglican clergyman, is a graduate in Arts and Social Work at Melbourne University. He has had a close association with the work of the Council since its formation in 1971, and was its honorary secretary for three years.

Before his appointment to St. John's Homes, Mr Ellis was chaplain to the Victorian Social Welfare Department's youth training centres. Previously Mr Ellis was a clerk of courts at Geelong, and had trained in law for work as a stipendiary magistrate.

Mr Ellis succeeds Mr. E. L. Reilly who has recently gone overseas on study leave from the University of Queensland.

