The good life for children
Do we really care about the trends?

Dr Lance Emerson
CEO - ARACY
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

• around 700 members and 2,000 subscribers
• majority of those involved in child and youth agenda
• 3 offices (Canberra, Melbourne, Perth)
  – Melbourne focused on ARC/NHMRC program: capacity building & seed funding collaborations
  – around 15 FTE staff
• funding from Department of FaHCSIA & philanthropic / corporate
• board:
  – Prof Fiona Stanley AC (Chairperson)
  – Prof Rob Moodie – Chair of Prevention Taskforce
  – Prof Gus Nossal AC CBE
  – Dr Jeff Harmer – Secretary of FaHCSIA
  – Mr Peter Mason AM – Chair of AMP
  – Ms Elaine Henry OAM – CEO Smith Family
  – Mr Tim Goodwin – Lawyer Federal court, member of Yuin nation
our space

• Everything we do has the ultimate aim of improving the wellbeing of children and young people.
• We focus on prevention
• We focus on life-pathways
• We provide a neutral space for organisational collaboration
• We work across sectors and disciplines.
• We value add to our members work
• We progress sustainable, evidence-based action
The report card – why?

• ‘... to improve something, first measure it’ (UNICEF 2007)
• No internationally comparable child wellbeing report:
  – Aust av. Vs. Aboriginal Aust Av. ?
• Allows evidence based dialogue on need
• Allows prioritisation of effort
How?
Developmental model
(modified from Silburn, 2002)

Low SES

Genetic factors

Early brain development

Self-regulation of emotion, attention & social interaction

Adverse parenting

Drug availability, norms

School & learning difficulties

Violence & Crime

Suicidal behaviour

Drug misuse

Depression

Acute stress significant loss

Increasing psychosocial difficulties

Peer problems

Negative thinking patterns

Poor problem solving skills

Time

Drug use in pregnancy

Low SES

Diet & nutrition

Poor self-esteem

Drug misuse

Increasing psychosocial difficulties

Suicidal behaviour

Acute stress significant loss

Depression
Report Card Domains

- material wellbeing
- health and safety
- education, training & employment
- peer and family relationships
- behaviours and risks
- subjective wellbeing
- participation
- environment

Source ACG 2008 - adapted from Brofenbrenner & Morris (1998)
Reported deprivation: % of children having fewer than 11 books in their home
(Australia 10/30, Indigenous 29/31)
Family relationships: % of children who report eating the main meal of the day with parents several times per week (Aust 21/27, Indigenous 24/28)

Family relationships: % of children (15 y.o) who report that parents spend time ‘just talking to them’ more than once per week (Aust 18/27, Indigenous 17/28)
Teenage fertility: age specific fertility rates for females 15-19 years
(Australia 21/30, Indigenous 31/31)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Australia Rank</th>
<th>Indigenous Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injury death rate 0-4 years</td>
<td>7 / 8</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School achievement (reading)</td>
<td>6 / 29</td>
<td>29 / 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School achievement (maths)</td>
<td>8 / 30</td>
<td>29 / 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School achievement (science)</td>
<td>5 / 30</td>
<td>29 / 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% young people (15-19) not in education, training or employment</td>
<td>17 / 25</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
doing well:
- material wellbeing
  - joblessness
- school achievement
- some behaviours / risks:
  - smoking, illicit drug use
- subjective wellbeing
- participation

doing poorly:
- aboriginal wellbeing overall
- material wellbeing:
  - households with income below 50% of median
- health & safety:
  - infant mortality, immunisation, intentional self injury death rate, accidental injury 0-4 years, non-accidental deaths under 19
- transition to employment
- family / peer relationships
- some behaviours and risks:
  - teenage fertility, road deaths, justice supervision
- environment

- not leading any domain
- 16/30 OECD
What do we value?

United States
Great Britain
Germany
Australia
Japan
Italy
France
Netherlands
Spain
Canada
Poland
Hungary
Norway
Czech Republic
Slovakia
New Zealand
Denmark
Switzerland
Mexico
Turkey
Finland
Belgium
Portugal
Sweden
Greece
Austria
Ireland

United States
Great Britain
Germany
Japan
Italy
France
Netherlands
Spain
Canada
Poland
Hungary
Norway
Czech Republic
Slovakia
New Zealand
Denmark
Switzerland
Mexico
Turkey
Finland
Belgium
Portugal
Sweden
Greece
Austria
Ireland
What do we value?

• defines prosperity holistically
• Includes factors that promote economic competitiveness and improved livability
• “drivers & restrainers of prosperity”
• Australia 1 / 104
## World Values Survey: Important child qualities (%)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(highest Innocenti result)</td>
<td>(lowest Innocenti result)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard work</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling of responsibility</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tolerance/respect for others</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determination</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>religious faith</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only listed are variables where difference between values is greater than 10%
values translate to policies & programs

Award wage for CareTaker = $15.89 p/hr

Award wage for ChildCare worker (teacher) = $14.65 p/hr
Policies & programs translate to children's wellbeing:

Preliminary work of Sharryn Sims, Lyndall Strazdins (NECPH), OECD:

- Examine child & family friendly work policies across OECD
- e.g. families friendly leave, flexibility, job security, work load, job control, pay, etc
- compare across OECD
DRAFT

Parental Job Quality Across 19 OECD Countries Ranked in Order of Best Average Family Friendly Job Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Ranking position across five Dimensions</th>
<th>OECD Country</th>
<th>Job Security</th>
<th>Job Control</th>
<th>Family Friendly Leave</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Workload</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Czech republic</td>
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**Dimensions of child well-being**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average ranking</th>
<th>Material well-being</th>
<th>Health and safety</th>
<th>Educational well-being</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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**An overview of child well-being in rich countries**

A comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations.
From Jonathan Bradshaw, ‘Child Well-being in Comparative Perspective’
ARACY Access Grid presentation, August 2008
we are not alone …

For example:

Children's Society (UK) “ … We identified a common thread in these problems, which is excessive individualism in our culture.”

Sir Michael Marmot (Chair of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health): “It begins with values ..”

USA  Dr David Korten (Positive Futures Network, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, International Forum on Globalization etc.. “corporations have to invest billions of dollars in advertising to manipulate our psyches to convince us that consumption is the path to happiness, I think tells us a lot about what our natural inclination is, because if we were really as materialistic and greedy and so forth as it appears, they wouldn't have to spend all that much on advertising ..”

A rising tide does not raise all ships
GDP at current prices, US dollars, PPP - 2004

overall child well-being by domain

From Jonathan Bradshaw, ‘Child Well-being in Comparative Perspective’
ARACY Access Grid presentation, August 2008
creating an economically, environmentally & socially sustainable society

• To thrive, children need to be valued
• Increasing the value placed on children helps create the conditions in which their wellbeing can be improved
• This requires a major shift in how we all think, feel and behave
• It really does take a village (whole of nation)
changing social norms

• need for large scale innovative communication and primary prevention strategy to:

  • promote the value of children and young people
  • shift social norms and attitudes towards putting children in the centre and a shared sense of responsibility for children’s wellbeing
  • reduce fragmentation of services and programs
  • foster a climate that supports government initiatives for children and young people.
Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Whole of nation strategy

- Promote value of children & youth
- Shift social norms, attitudes & beliefs
- Augment capacity of individual orgs
- Foster conducive climate

TARGET GROUPS:
- General public
- Parents
- Professionals
- Politicians, Public servants
- Journalists, Planners, Producers
- Corporates

Media, Advocacy, Services, Partner Projects
Primary prevention via social marketing works:

Smoking  HIV/AIDS etc  Road safety  Skin Cancer
Whole-of-nation preventive strategy

**OUTCOMES**

- Change in behaviour and attitudes
  - Increased awareness
  - Support for government initiatives
  - More collaboration between services
  - More effective protection
  - More opportunities for children and young people

**5 years**

- Innovation

**10 Years**

- Decreased abuse and neglect
- Better mental health
- Increased human capital

Wellbeing of children and young people is a priority nationwide
Relationship between risk factors and protective factors. Shaded area: cost of doing nothing.