

# Program

Together with Families, Family Services Symposium  
Friday 24th November 2023 at the Rydges Melbourne.



9:15am to  
10:00am

Doors open with MC Jeremy Dooley

10:00am to  
10:30am

Welcome to Country by Murrundindi (ngurungaeta of the Wurundjeri people)  
Welcome Address by CEO Deb Tsorbaris (The Centre) and Alysha (Lived Experience Parent Designer)  
Welcome Address by The Hon. Minister Blandthorn (Minister for Children)

10:30am to  
11:10am

**Keynote Session 1: Supporting Families Under Stress**  
Professor Bruce Smyth (Australian National University)

11:10am to  
11:20am

Morning Tea

11:20am to  
12:10pm

**Celebrating Family Services in Victoria (Mary Roberts, DFFH)**  
Panel Discussion with Annette Lancy, Melanie Heenan, Fran O'Toole, Danny O'Kelly and Mary Roberts.

12:10pm to  
12:40pm

**Keynote Session 2: Setting the Family Services Agenda: Reflecting on the Past Forty Years**  
Connie Salamone (VACCA)

12:40pm to  
1:10pm

**Insights from VACCA: Evidence, Culture & Practice in Family Services**  
Presentation from Anita Mobourne and Celleste Regan

1:10pm to  
1:55pm

Lunch

1:55pm to  
2:55pm

**Showcase: Effective Family Services Practice**  
A showcase of examples of effective practice from Anglicare Vic, Uniting Vic/Tas, Windermere, FamilyCare, KidsFirst, OzChild, Upper Murray Family Care, and Family Life.

2:55pm to  
3:25pm

Afternoon tea

3:25pm to  
4:15pm

**What does it mean to support families in 2023?**  
Panel Discussion with Sarah and Alysha (Lived Experience Parent Designers), Jordie van den Berg (Housing Advocate), Zakia Baig (Human Rights Advocate and Founder of the Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network), Katie Stevens (Senior Practitioner - Starting Out), Heidi Tucker (CEO, Anchor Inc) and Jane Gatto (Lead Practitioner - Functional Family Therapy).

4:15pm to  
4:30pm

**Closing Remarks by Deb Tsorbaris**

The Centre would like to thank our family services practitioners, leaders, and partners who support families across Victoria. Your work is life changing. We're grateful for you. The Centre would also like to thank our sponsors. Your support has made this event possible:



## Speakers



### Deb Tsorbaris

Deb Tsorbaris is the CEO of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. The Centre is Victoria's peak body for child and family services. The Centre provides sector training, facilitates and publishes research and advocates for better supports for struggling families.



### Murrundindi Hunter

Murrundindi is the Ngurungaeta (Head Man) of the Wurundjeri people and a descendant of William Barak. Murrundindi has spent the last 40 years sharing his culture through education in schools and Healesville Sanctuary and includes his strong values which include Respect and Unity.



### The Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn

Lizzie Blandthorn is the new Minister for Children and a member of the Victorian Legislative Council representing the Western Metropolitan Region. She became the Minister for Children and Minister for Disability in October 2023 following the appointment of Jacinta Allan as Premier of Victoria.



### Professor Bruce Smyth

Bruce Smyth is Professor of Family Studies with the Australian National University. In 2018, he received the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award from the American Association of Family & Conciliation Courts (AFCC) in recognition of outstanding research and research achievements in the field of family and divorce.



### Connie Salamone

Connie Salamone's life has been devoted to working in the child and family sector. In 2002, she commenced with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and went on to hold responsibility for VACCA's front-line services. Connie was recipient of the 2023 Leaving a Legacy Award at this year's Victorian Protecting Children Awards.



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is in Naarm (Melbourne) on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. The Kulin Nations is a collective of five First Nations clans; Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Wathaurring, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung. The Centre respectfully acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways where we live and work and recognise that our work is delivered on many lands across the Kulin Nations.