
CONFERENCE SUMMARY
Barbara Baikie
Director, Child, Youth and Family Support

The conference 'Children, Young People and Communities – The Future Is In Our Hands' was a very important event in that it brought over three hundred participants from all parts of Tasmania, Australia and even New Zealand together to share their knowledge and experience with others.

The themes of the conference 'Early Intervention' and 'Building Communities' were chosen because of the need to secure the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. Research has shown that without adequate opportunities to live and learn within secure and supportive families and communities, children and young people are unlikely to reach their full potential and live a satisfying and rewarding life.

However, while families are the primary source of care for children and young people, there are many parents today who are without the support of family or friends and experience financial and personal problems that affect the quality of care they provide. The provision of early intervention services is essential to the health and well-being of their children, as is the provision of a safe community that will support children in their early years and beyond. The conference gave us an exciting opportunity to explore ways to address the many challenges that face us in the delivery of services to clients.

My thanks to our sponsors who provided financial assistance: the Australian Institute of Criminology; the School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania; and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. Thanks also to the many participants who attended the conference; the speakers who shared their knowledge and ideas with us; and the staff of the Division of Child, Youth and Family Support who made it all possible.

The challenge now is to incorporate the ideas and information that we gained into planning and development processes so that we can make the dream a reality and build a rewarding and positive future for children, young people and families in Tasmania.

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