



Introduction

Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc is pleased to make this brief submission to the Treasurer regarding the Australian Budget for 2020-2021. It is based on our support of the Charities Crisis Cabinet submission and our experience as a service provider to children, young people and families who have experienced significant trauma as a result of child protection related safety and wellbeing issues.

About us

Our organisation has been operating in the Western Australian Community for over 117 years in the provision of out of home care for children who are unable to live with their parents. We have, over the course of our history expanded our services to include early intervention and prevention services to support parenting and child development; two evidence based multi-agency Child Advocacy Centre Services in the Perth Metropolitan area; clinical treatment services to address complex trauma; youth homelessness accommodation and support services; and services that are aimed to build skills and abilities for practitioners working with children, young people and their families where complex trauma is evident.

Our purpose as an organisation is to provide advocacy, services and supports to reduce the impacts of child abuse and in doing so help WA to become the safest place in the world to bring up children. Our organisation exists to protect, care, advocate and promote recovery for children and young people who have experienced trauma from abuse. We also support families to be the best version of themselves, and we work with the community to prevent child abuse. We do this because we want to create a community that is free from child abuse so that children have the opportunity to grow to their full potential and flourish as adults.

Our values are important to us as they drive all that we do. We hold these close as we deliver services, contribute to social discourse and policy, and when we take a public position on issues such as this current pre-budget submission:

- *Caring* – we ensure that children, young people and their families feel safe, supported and their voices are heard; and we openly acknowledge the challenging environment in which we work and support each other to be the best versions of ourselves
- *Respect* - we are inclusive and value diversity; we uphold the rights of children, young people and families; and we communicate with regard to the feelings and rights of others

- *Hope* – we believe that working together will make a difference; we have faith that change is possible; and we recognise the potential in each and every person and help them to achieve it
- *Integrity* – we do what we say we will do; we are transparent and ethical in our dealings with everyone by being consistent, accountable and responsible in the work that we do.
- *Bold and Courageous* – we stand up for what is right and assist to amplify the voices of the children, young people, families and communities we support
- *Curious and Humble* – we search out information and data that will help us to remain at the forefront of all that we do

Our submission

Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc agrees with the Charities Crisis Cabinet who have tabled a more fulsome pre-budget submission than what is provided below. In essence we also believe that for all people to live a good life, or one where they are able to begin to flourish, we need to make sure that we retain a strong sense on inclusive citizenship. To do that, and at its most basic, we as a community need to make provision for the following:

1. **Provide a ramp rather than a cliff as JobKeeper ends.**

Charities employ over 1.3 million staff and contribute more than 8 per cent of GDP. The Australian government has provided invaluable support through JobKeeper to thousands of charities and their staff across Australia. JobKeeper is likely to have already saved over 100,000 charity jobs. Providing a transition phase for charities receiving JobKeeper payments so they can better adapt to post COVID-19 requirements will enable more charities to survive and serve their communities.

2. **Encourage more giving by providing increased tax deductibility for donations to charities.**

Increased community engagement and philanthropic contributions to charities produce a net benefit to governments as well as to the communities charities serve. Providing one off incentives for philanthropy and social investment is not unusual in some countries and provides an important stimulus to giving at a time when fundraising revenue is likely to be diminishing.

3. Make it feasible for charities to establish fundraising initiatives quickly and efficiently by removing dysfunctional red tape fundraising regulations and creating a national registration process through existing regulators the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Governments across Australia have established a dysfunctional time-consuming dog's breakfast of state and territory regulations to effectively stymie even the smallest charity seeking to run an online fundraising campaign. Now, as many charities are forced to pivot to online fundraising, it is critical that the government fix this major barrier to Australian charitable fundraising.

4. Subject to strong performance, ensure greater certainty in government contracts by locking in existing payments and extending contracts wherever possible.

One of the greatest barriers to investment in improved productivity and effectiveness across the charities sector is lack of certainty. Many government departments – including at a federal level – have been willing during COVID-19 to provide greater certainty to charities that receive government funding by extending funding and support. The practice of extending existing contracts for longer periods – preferably at least three years – is to be commended and broadened.

5. Allow greater flexibility in government funding to charities and not for profits to respond to the emerging needs in their communities.

During COVID-19 and beyond, it is in everyone's interests to offer much greater flexibility in applying the terms and performance requirements of Australian government contracts with charities. This flexibility should include acknowledgement that COVID-19 has increased the demand for many services provided by charities and government resources need to reflect that increased demand.

6. Invest in a one-stop shop registration process to enable volunteers to be registered and insured more quickly without the red tape of multi-jurisdictional compliance.

ANU and Volunteering Australia research indicates two thirds of all volunteers have reduced their volunteering behaviour because of COVID-19. There are many barriers to returning volunteers and new volunteers including the need for new insurances and COVID-19 specific responses such as infection control training. This is compounded by the need for police checks and working with children clearances often across multiple jurisdictions. Now it is more important than ever that these barriers are minimised by streamlining the registration, background checks and insurance requirements.

7. Support initiatives to unlock new sources of capital for charities including underwriting medium-term loans schemes and impact investment options that will enable charities to smooth out inconsistent income streams and invest in their future.

Philanthropy Australia and Impact Investing Australia have both proposed innovative ways to boost the capital available to charities across Australia with minimal investment from the Australian government. These proposals include a medium-term low interest loan scheme with first loss risk underwritten by philanthropists, and the creation of an impact investment fund. Both are strongly supported.

8. Provide transformational funding to charities in critical areas such as information technology, energy efficiency, collaboration, measurement of impact, research, staff development and other productivity focused areas.

There is a need for a government-backed transformation fund to enable charities to adapt to post COVID-19 requirements in the ways they operate and serve their communities. Part of this measure is to support more timely and informative research into exactly where the charities sector is in terms of responding to COVID-19 and the challenges of continuing to serve communities when needs are changing and new ways of meeting those needs have to be developed and applied.

9. Provide targeted funding and support for those struggling to fully participate in our communities and our economy, including ensuring people receiving JobSeeker are not locked into poverty.

The Charities Crisis Cabinet supports maintaining a high rate of JobSeeker payments and a more needs-based approach in the provision of support to marginalised communities including the unemployed, refugees and international students.

10. Increase philanthropy by enabling employers to establish more effective “opt out” systems of workplace giving.

Workplace giving programs in Australia are currently operating in less than 4 per cent of Australian workplaces. If this could increase to 10 per cent of Australian workplaces by adopting the well-established “opt out” processes applied in some other countries, it would generate at least \$250 million in additional donations to charities.

We also believe that there should be strong provision in the budget to:

11. Invest in families so that all children can grow and develop into the leaders of tomorrow

Investing in early intervention programs that address family safety, functioning and ability to provide safe and secure parenting will provide children with the best opportunity to flourish. Targeted prevention and intervention for high risk and/or vulnerable families should take precedence in order to redress issues such as intergenerational trauma, the impact of family violence on individual and family functioning, and to build community and family strengths.

12. Ensure children and young people have access to meaningful and appropriate mental health and wellbeing supports

Particular attention in the budget should be focused on the mental health of children and young people as this has been significantly impacted by the advent of COVID-19. The long-term implications of not investing early and appropriately to address increasing presentations of anxiety and depression in children and young people will be dire to the wellbeing of both the individuals concerned and our country. Innovative digital technology and child focused engagement models that have the capacity to flex and pivot dependent on the current context (i.e. recovery phases and lock down periods) should be codesigned and made available as soon as practically possible.

13. Support families and individuals with liveable levels of income support so that poverty is not the fuel that drives other more negative social, familial and individual outcomes

Sir Michael Marmot describes poverty, and children living in poverty as the number one public health issue in the world. We would agree. Ensuring that families have the financial capability to provide for the holistic wellbeing of their children must be a high priority if we are to flourish as a country into the future.

14. Build robust and contemporary approaches to address safety and wellbeing concerns for children who live in unsafe familial contexts

Reducing the number of children coming into care systems must be addressed. Adopting evidence informed models of support from the first contact or disclosure of abuse (via services such as the Child Advocacy Centre models), through to ensuring children are provided the opportunity to retain safe and ongoing contact with family and culture if they must be in care should be fundamental to the models adopted. Co-design and innovation in assisting families to remain with or heavily involved with the day to day care of their children should be the focus.



We hope that in providing this submission we are acting to amplify the principles outlined by the Charities Crisis Cabinet as well as offering some of our own practical and pragmatic ideas to support families and children who struggle in our community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Brooklyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kim" and last name "Brooklyn" clearly legible.

Kim Brooklyn
Chief Executive Officer
20 August 2020