

|  |
| --- |
| Good Practice Bulletin |
| Spotlight on the voice of the child  Office of Professional Practice, Issue 25, September 2019 |

# Chief Practitioner’s welcome

# Chief practitioner Tracy Beaton smiles at camera

**Tracy Beaton**

This month we have had an opportunity to recognise and celebrate good practice across the state. Child Protection Week 2019 kicked off with the Child Protection Symposium at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, giving many of us the chance to connect and share experiences. Strong practice in the court system was the focus of the day and a highlight for me was hearing practitioners talk about the way they worked in situations that led to successful appeals to the Supreme Court. It was fascinating to hear about how these matters influenced outcomes for other children across the state. Where appeals were successful, unique precedents were set.

While all the case studies presented in the session were remarkable, I was struck by the extraordinary length practitioners went to in order to understand each child’s unique experience. This included working with adolescents who had been sexually abused, through to very young babies presenting with non-accidental injuries. The importance of persevering under immense pressure could not be under-estimated, nor could the importance of collaboration and team work. The [Supreme Court decision in the Brown case](https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/vic/VSC/2018/775.html) <<https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/vic/VSC/2018/775.html>> can be accessed at the Supreme Court of Victoria’s website as well as the [Department of Health and Human Services vs County Court case](https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/vic/VSC/2018/322.html) <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/vic/VSC/2018/322.html>. Both decisions may be considered within reflection practice sessions.

The symposium also provided the opportunity to launch the [2019 good practice videos](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice) <https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice>. I invite you to watch them if you haven’t yet had a chance. For the first time these stories include the (de-identified) voices of children, young people and their families together with the reflections of practitioners.

In addition to the good practice videos, [The voice of the child](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice)<https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice> (DHHS staff access only) is a short video vignette showing practitionersfrom across the state reflect on what the of voice of the child means to them. I am pleased in my work across areas, to hear more and more examples of where children’s voices have been respectfully captured. I can see how much better the case planning is for children when true engagement and connection occurs.

I hope that each of you had the opportunity in Child Protection Week to celebrate your successes and those of the children and families with whom you work. We are better when we work together.

# Case studies

To view the five good practice videos, see [Celebrating and promoting great practice](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice) <<https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/celebrating-and-promoting-great-practice>>  on the Department of Health and Human Services intranet (DHHS staff only).

# Discussion prompts

Think about the children you work with – what does it mean to really understand what life is like for them currently, in this family?

Very young children can have a voice too – see the focus Baby led yarning from the womb as practiced in the Early Years Service at Mallee District Aboriginal Service available from the [Overview of the 2018 open Symposium page](https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/overview-of-the-2018-open-symposium/) <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/overview-of-the-2018-open-symposium/> on the Centre for Excellence website, see Symposium Presentations.

What are creative ways to listen to even the very smallest child?

Can you think of an example of where the child’s voice was not listened to? What happened? What did you learn?

# Congratulations to the following 2019 award winners:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Excellence in child protection  North Division: Changing the culture, Hume Moreland  South Division: Joseph Nemhara, David Bikaako and Marcus Tawfik  East Division: Shepparton Case Management Team 1  West Division: Erin Ross |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | chief practitioner’s Award  Winner: Emily Middleton, South Division |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | Rising star award  Winner: Hannah Rauris – East Division |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | emerging leader in child protection award  Winner: Anusha Perera – East Division |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | best new talent Award  Winner: Zoe Trajkovski – North Division |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | excellence in case practice Award  Winner: Karlos Dearmatossian – North Division |
| Ok, Check, Todo, Agenda, Icon, Symbol, Tick, To Do, Gui | The full list of 2019 Victorian protecting children award winners can be seen on the [Victorian Protecting Children awards page](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-protecting-children-awards) on the DHHS intranet (DHHS staff access) <https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-protecting-children-awards> |

If you have any feedback or ideas about what you would find useful to include in the bulletin, please email *officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au*

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 03 9096 9999, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Office of Professional Practice](mailto:officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <[officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:officeofprofessionalpractice@dhhs.vic.gov.au)> Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne. © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services September 2019.

Available at the Good [Practice](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/good-practice-bulletin) Bulletin page of the DHHS Providers website <<http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/good-practice-bulletin>>