



Family Relationship Services  
A U S T R A L I A

## Leadership & Governance Consultation Report

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### Supporting the Development of Future Leaders in Family and Parenting Services, Perspectives from the Field

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June 5, 2009

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of a solid maroon shape that starts as a thin line on the left and curves upwards to form a rounded, hill-like shape on the right.



## About Us

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) is the national peak body for community organisations delivering services to families, children and young people across Australia. FRSA and its member organisations seek to work in partnership with the Federal Government to strengthen and support Australian families. FRSA's vision is for an Australian society that is enriched through respectful relationships in all of their diversity. In the achievement of this vision, our role is to support the delivery of quality services and engage in the development of public policy.

Full membership of FRSA is available to organisations that receive funding from the Federal Government to deliver services funded through the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP). Associate membership is available to a broader scope of organisations and individuals that support the vision and values of FRSA. FRSA currently has 137 organisation members. In addition to the financial support of members, FRSA receives Federal Government funding through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to provide industry representation and support.

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## Executive Summary

In early 2009, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) commissioned Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) to consult with service providers about the current and future needs of the family, parenting and children's services sector in the area of leadership and governance. This work was to complement another project commissioned by FaHCSIA in which Families Australia has scoped the leadership and governance training options currently available to the sector. Both projects are to inform FaHCSIA's deliberations regarding potential investment in the development of leadership and/or governance training.

Consultation occurred through an online survey completed by 154 respondents and 21 in-depth interviews with executives from a cross section of organisations. Participants in both the survey and the interviews included CEOs, Senior Executives, Service and Program Managers from organisations ranging in size, location and function.

The capacity to articulate a clear mission and then engage people in its achievement was consistently identified as the primary role of leaders in this sector, requiring qualities such as:

- Communication skills
- Vision/inspiration
- Identifying talent in others
- Strategic skills
- Experience and practice wisdom

Survey respondents and interview participants identified both strengths and weaknesses in leadership development across the sector. There are very good examples of comprehensive programs within some organisations and strong interest in a sector-wide approach to enhancing the capacity of organisations to support the next generation of leaders. Priority training and support needs are identified with analysis on the driving and restraining factors likely to impact on the effectiveness of various approaches.

In relation to governance, key findings include the difficulties organisations face in providing training to board members and encouraging take-up of training opportunities. Strategies for improving this are identified but need to be weighed against the risk of making board recruitment more difficult.

Overall our conclusion is that there is scope for doing more in this area to support the capacity of the sector while at the same time building confidence in the existing programs available and governance structures that are working well.

### Recommendations

1. Invest in leadership and governance development programs that are tailored to the community service context and adaptable to suit different purposes.
2. Engage with training providers to enhance access to affordable leadership and governance training, particularly in rural and remote areas through coordination, planning and support.
3. Develop strategies to enhance the uptake of governance training amongst board members.
4. Recognise leadership and governance strengths within the sector to build confidence, attract and retain talent.



# Methodology

## Background

In early 2009, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) commissioned Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) to consult with service providers about the current and future needs of the family, parenting and children's services sector in the area of leadership and governance. This work was to complement another project commissioned by FaHCSIA in which Families Australia has scoped the leadership and governance training options currently available to the sector.

Both projects are to inform FaHCSIA deliberations regarding potential investment in the development of leadership and/or governance training. Initial thinking was to develop and trial a short training course for 'next generation' leaders in the family and parenting sector as well as the government agencies that work in this area. Such a course would need to be self-funded in the longer term.

Community services and governments are increasingly being challenged to work together in new, more collaborative ways. As well as preparing future leaders for the sector, a course that helps workers understand the new and evolving service delivery environment may contribute positively to current program and service management.

## Defining the sector

In undertaking this project FRSA sought to engage service providers who currently operate within the broad portfolio area of the FaHCSIA Family Support Program (FSP). The Family Support Program is a new national program that brings together a number of existing family, children and parenting services that share a common interest in supporting Australian families, parents and children, including:

- Family Relationship Services
- Strengthening Families Program funded under the National Illicit Drug Strategy
- Communities for Children Initiative
- Invest to Grow
- Child Care Links
- Responding Early Assisting Children
- Indigenous Children Services
- Playgroup
- Indigenous Parenting Support Services

The Family Support Program does not encompass the early childhood education and care services or health services such as child care, preschool and maternal child health services. Consultation with these providers was therefore beyond the scope of this project.



## Online Survey

Initial consultation was undertaken through an online survey distributed to community organisations delivering Family Support Program services, including the FRSA Membership as well members of Families Australia and other peak national networks. The survey questions are listed in Appendix 1. Because there is overlap in the membership and distribution networks used to circulate the survey it is difficult to estimate how many organisations received an invitation to participate but it is estimated to be over 300. The survey invitation was sent to key contact persons in organisations with a request that they forward it on to all executive level staff within the organisation. Responses were collected over 3 weeks during May 2009 with a total of 154 individual responses received.

### Survey Respondents

Survey respondents included a mix of CEO's, senior executives and program or service managers. More specifically:

- 34% (51 respondents) were a Paid CEO / Director / Executive Officer
- 30% (46 respondents) were Senior Executives
- 30% (46 respondents) were Service or Program Managers / Team Leaders
- 4% (6 respondents) identified as other, including a coordinator, project manager, clinical supervisor & ex senior manager returned to a clinical role.
- 2% (3 respondents) were voluntary CEO's or equivalent.

Reflecting the composition of the sector 92% of survey respondents were employed in direct service delivery organisations, while 5% were employed in an advocacy or representative organisation and 3% in an organisation that was either combining service delivery and advocacy or government agency or supplier.

Respondents were asked to indicate the size of their organisation in terms of paid employees, including part time and full time positions. Just over half of respondents were in an organisation with over 100 employees.

**Figure 1: Size of Organisation**

Number of paid employees working in your organisation? (inc. full-time and part-time)	Response Count	Response Percent
0 (Volunteers only)	1	<1%
1-19	23	15%
20-49	24	16%
50-99	23	15%
100+	81	53%

With the exception of this indicative information, survey respondents and their organisation remained anonymous.

## Interviews

To complement the survey results, FRSA also conducted 21 in-depth interviews with current and future leaders. The interviews were conducted in person or by telephone. Interview questions explored similar themes to the survey questions but in more detail. They were also used to identify the range of current leadership development approaches within organisations.



The organisations from which interview participants were drawn ranged in size from 10 paid employees to over 800 employees and there was a cross-section of service types operating in metropolitan, regional, rural/remote communities or across all of these. There was a mix of faith-based and secular organisations; some affiliated with their own national network and other small or locally focused independent community organisations.

**FRSA gratefully acknowledges the contribution of interview participants:**

- Elaine Henry, CEO, **The Smith Family**
- Toby Hall, CEO, **Mission Australia**
- Greg Antcliff, Senior Manager, **The Benevolent Society**
- Jo Cavanagh, CEO, **Family Life**
- Karen Morris, Acting CEO & Jonathon Toussaint & Rachel Evans, **Interrelate Family Centres**
- Annette Tubnor, Services Manager, **Newcastle Family Support Services**
- Jacqui Culver, Community Outreach Manager & Joseph McCarthy, CEO **Centacare Maitland-Newcastle**
- Jayne Meyer-Tucker, CEO, **Good Beginnings Australia**
- Robert George, Director, **Centacare Bathurst**
- Hilary Martin, Chief Executive Officer, **Marymead Child and Family Centre**
- Ms Wendy Protheroe, General Manager - Counselling Services, **BoysTown**
- Lisa Hillan, Programs Manager, **Save the Children Australia, QLD / NT**
- Shane Farmer, Manager, **Kinections** & Amanda Crocker, Director Social Services, **Spiritus**
- Marie Morrison, CEO, **Relationships Australia NT**
- Melissa Perry, Executive Manager & senior management team, **Centrecare WA**
- Sr Mary Ryan, Director & Deearne De Gruchy (FRC Manager), **Centacare Geraldton**
- Peter Mitchell, Manager, **Men's Outreach Service** (Broome)
- Louise Dwyer, Service Manager, **Youth and Family Service Logan City**
- Andrew Davis, CEO & management team, **Relationships Australia QLD**
- Karen Barker & Martin Garsed, Senior Managers, **Anglicare WA**
- Mary Pekin, CEO, **Relationships Australia Canberra & Region**
- Jennie Gray, Manager of Northwest Services (Broome), **Anglicare WA**



# Leadership

## Defining Leadership

All respondents were asked to define leadership in their own words. A wide range of detailed responses were provided (140). The most frequent terms and concepts identified were:

- Articulating the vision, mission or purpose
- Maintaining focus on the mission - across the organisation
- Inspiring and motivating others in support of the vision/mission/purpose
- Acting with integrity – agreed principles and processes, values of the organisation
- Recognising, valuing and developing individual and team strengths
- Clear decision-making, taking responsibility
- Facilitating relationships – internal and external
- Strategic thinking – capacity to see the ‘big picture’

A sample of responses provide some illustrative examples of how leadership was defined:

- *“Leadership is the art of inspiring people to follow the mission of an organisation and to daily enact its values”*
- *“Leadership is about creating an enabling environment that brings out the best in people to effect desired organisational/community objectives/goals within mission and vision aspirations in line with ethical and moral guidelines”*
- *“A leader is a person who guides and inspires others to take action”*

During in-depth interviews these concepts were explored further and the core capacity to articulate a clear mission and then engage people in its achievement was consistently identified as the primary role of leaders in this sector.

## Leadership Qualities

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of a list of leadership qualities from zero to high value. The results presented in the table below identify communication, vision/inspiration and identifying talent as the three qualities most consistently rated as ‘high value’.

**Figure 2: Leadership Qualities**

Importance of Leadership Qualities	No Value	Some Value	High Value	Total
Communication skills	-	3%	97%	100%
Vision/inspiration	-	9%	91%	100%
Identifying talent in others	-	10%	90%	100%
Strategic skills	1%	12%	87%	100%
Experience and practice wisdom	1%	29%	70%	100%
General management	2%	56%	42%	100%
Financial management	7%	59%	34%	100%
Qualifications	7%	83%	10%	100%



Other qualities identified as important included acting with integrity, interpersonal / people management skills, conflict management, clarity of purpose, strategic and ‘big picture’ perspective, passion, self awareness and ability to relate with the needs of others - developing and maintaining positive working relationships at all levels of government and across the sector.

Several interview participants made the point that leadership qualities should not be confused with personality traits or leadership style. Competent leaders can have very different styles - high profile/low profile, extrovert/introvert, passionate advocate/quiet achiever, and analyst/idealist. Indeed a leadership team can be made up of several different and complementary styles with a shared mission and common values.

## Leadership Roles

Respondents were asked to identify leadership roles they hold in the community sector in addition to their primary work role.

Overall, 83% of respondents indicated that they undertake one or more leadership roles in addition to their primary work – on average each respondent was performing 2 additional roles. Amongst the CEO cohort the proportion increased to 92%.

Across the total survey cohort, the most common role undertaken was the provision of education or training to others within the organisation (60%) but almost as common was serving on a community organisation board or management committee (54%), supervising or mentoring people in other organisations (48%) and providing education or training to others outside their organisation (46%).

**Figure 3: Leadership Roles**

Leadership roles additional to primary work role	All Respondents		CEO Respondents	
	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent
1. Provide education or training within your own organisation	77	60%	29	62%
2. Serve on a community organisation's board or management committee	69	54%	34	72%
3. Supervise or mentor people in other organisations	61	48%	26	55%
4. Provide education or training to people in other organisations	59	46%	24	51%
5. Other (Advisory Council for University, Community Reference and Advisory Committees, Volunteer Team Manager, Youth leader, Rotary President, Scout leader )	7	6%	2	4%
<b>Respondents that selected at least one of the above</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>92%</b>
Average number of selections per respondent	2.1	-	2.5	-
Total cohort	154	-	51	-

This theme was explored further with interview participants. Several talked of the skills they had developed by taking on leadership roles beyond their employment role. Examples included serving on boards of other organisations including new organisations and peak bodies or networks, initiating sector development projects, organising conferences or events, developing resources or providing training and mentoring. Advice to ‘up and coming’ leaders was to look for opportunities that would stretch and challenge their skills as well as help them to develop a broader perspective or deeper understanding of community needs, service delivery and policy or program development.



## Valued Experiences

Survey respondents were asked to identify what has helped them to achieve their current leadership roles, almost three quarters (72%) indicated that the experience of working for good leaders was partly responsible, followed closely by training/education (71%), promotion opportunities (60%) and mentoring (60%).

Interview participants spoke about the importance of providing opportunities for people to 'act up' in positions, to gain 'hands on' experience and to broaden their knowledge and skills within existing leadership structures. Indeed many spoke about the importance of creating opportunities for others to undertake projects, manage change processes, lead small teams, take on new challenges and get involved in activities beyond their regular work role (e.g. organising committees, reference groups etc).

Many of the interview participants expressed the view that while leadership skills may be generic, to be a good leader in the community services sector it is important to understand the unique nature of the 'mission driven business' of running a community service organisation and this requires either sector experience and/or on the job learning opportunities and training. "*The needs of the sector are not the same as those of government or of business*" one interviewee stated quite clearly. Cross-sector experience can be very valuable – indeed having a mix of experience across public, private and community sector work is very desirable to some organisations – but the nature of leadership is quite different across these arenas and it is important to understand that.

While there was widespread acknowledgement of the value of training, 'hands on' experience over time was generally considered to be the best teacher.



# Leadership Development

## Current Support

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how their organisations currently support, mentor, engage and challenge future leaders by selecting from a list of options.

As demonstrated in the table below over 90% indicated that an annual performance management (appraisal) process and the opportunity to undertake professional development were primary strategies by which their organisation supports future leaders.

Providing opportunities for individuals to temporarily step up and perform higher duties was also quite common (72%) as was providing opportunities for involvement in sector-wide working groups / committees (68%).

Just over 60% of survey respondents indicated their organisation provides a formal mentoring or supervision program, while almost 50% also indicated involvement in or access to an informal mentoring program. Finally, 57% made reference to study leave / cross sector placement opportunities. This was further explored in interviews and it would appear that study leave is by far the more common opportunity made available to staff, cross-sector placement opportunities are relatively rare.

The provision of mentoring and coaching was followed up in the in-depth interviews. Many CEOs and Senior Executives were accessing formal executive coaching or mentoring programs and indeed some were undertaking training to become qualified in coaching. This was universally considered to be valuable if the mentor or coach was qualified and a good 'fit'. However, it was acknowledged that it is expensive and may be out of reach for some organisations.

**Figure 4: Current Support for Future Leaders**

Support to future Leaders	Response Count	Response Percent
Annual performance management (appraisal) process	141	93%
Professional development opportunities	140	92%
Temporary 'higher duties' roles	109	72%
Involvement in sector-wide working groups / committees	104	68%
Study leave / cross sector placement opportunities	86	57%
Formal (internal or external) mentoring or supervision program	92	61%
'Informal' mentoring or supervision program	75	49%
Other (e.g. internal leadership training/coaching/mentoring; full fee payment for external study and encouragement of a team approach from the CEO)	8	5%
<b>Total Cohort</b>	<b>154</b>	

## Leadership Programs

From the interviews conducted it would be reasonable to surmise that most organisations in this sector have a leadership development program in place or are in the process of designing one. Common components of these programs include a focus on individual leadership development – setting goals, access to training, feedback from peers, regular mentoring or coaching sessions and performance review; together with group



or team development activities that may include regular leadership forums, group training or learning programs. Leadership development programs vary in their level of formality and the layers of management that are involved. Some organisations have invested in multi-faceted leadership development programs, for example:

**The Benevolent Society** has established **Social Leadership Australia** a specialist not-for-profit consultancy established to develop and deliver social leadership programs Australia-wide. Adaptive leadership training is combined with practice and feedback, there are both ‘off the shelf’ and tailored programs available. Within The Benevolent Society a comprehensive Executive Leadership Program is in place. Individual executives have a development plan in which they set goals and are assisted to achieve them, some have external executive mentoring or coaching others are undertaking training to become coaches and mentors. All managers participate in regional leadership forums which meet regularly and there is a learning component in each forum – this may be a discussion on a key topic or a presentation by someone. Managers are also encouraged to take up roles across the broader sector such as serving on the board of a peak body or related organisation. Leadership across the organisation is considered central to achieving the mission and subject to regular discussion and review.

**Logan Youth and Family Service** takes leadership development seriously and for a small-medium sized organisation it makes a considerable investment in leadership support. For example, last year YFS invested in providing Frontline Management training for all coordinators as well as a series of four leadership seminars for the management team delivered by an external facilitator. They also commissioned a review of executive roles that resulted in a restructure and engaged an organisational psychologist to work with the management team to aid understanding of each person’s leadership style and how they contribute to team performance. In addition, each manager has an individual development plan and may choose to receive external executive coaching.

## Enabling Factors

When asked to identify the driving or enabling factors that contribute to the development of leaders in their organisation, 75% of respondents indicated that the organisational culture was a significant enabler. Just under 60% indicated that their organisation actively works to provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to use their skills while just under 55% indicated that the quality of leadership in the organisation’s executive management team is high, encouraging leadership growth and potential.

**Figure 5: Enabling Factors for Leadership Development**

Driving or enabling factors identified	Response Count	Response Percent
Organisational culture - leadership is recognised and celebrated in our organisation	103	75%
We work to provide leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders	82	60%
The quality of leadership in our executive team is high	75	55%
There is a high calibre of people coming through the ranks	59	43%
We have a leadership development program	27	20%
Other	16	10%

Six of the sixteen *other* responses indicated that their organisation was not very good at this or had little in place to encourage potential leaders. Several *other* respondents commented that the style and approach of the current CEO was the primary driver of an informal but valued developmental approach. Two respondents indicated that they were from a small organisation with limited opportunities for ‘stepping up’.

The potential benefits of better recognising and celebrating leadership within the sector was discussed in some of the interviews. This would potentially increase confidence in the sector – both internally and externally which in turn will enhance the capacity of organisations to attract and retain talented people. It was suggested that some opportunities for healthy competition – scholarship or award opportunities for example – also warrant consideration.



## Restraining factors

Respondents were then asked to indicate the barriers to leadership development in their organisation. As described in the table below, by far the most significant issue identified as impacting on leadership development in organisations was the workload pressures on staff (72%). Other common barriers identified were the cost of leadership training and development opportunities (60%), a lack of resources and time to develop leadership programs (56%) and insufficient remuneration (51%).

**Figure 6: Restraining Factors on Leadership Development**

Restraining factors identified	Response Count	Response Percent
Workload pressures on staff	105	72%
Cost of leadership training and development opportunities	87	60%
Lack of resources and time to develop leadership programs	81	56%
Insufficient remuneration	75	51%
Losing future leaders to other sectors/organisations	47	32%
Poor access to relevant leadership trainers/programs or expertise	30	21%
Lack of interest amongst staff to take on increased 'management' responsibilities	30	21%
Note sure 'how to' develop future leaders	18	12%
Organisational structure/culture - 'stepping up' not encouraged	13	9%
High staff turnover	18	12%
Other	22	14%
<b>Total Cohort</b>	<b>154</b>	

## Qualifications

Overall, 57% of survey respondents had formal qualifications in leadership, governance or management – increasing to 68% of those in CEO or equivalent roles. Of those with qualifications the most common level of qualifications was a Masters degree or a post graduate diploma in leadership/governance or management (60%). The Australian Institute of Company Directors *Company Directors Course* (equivalent to 110 hrs of study) is perhaps unique in offering an industry wide recognised qualification in governance – outside tertiary or VET qualification frameworks. 7% of survey respondents reported that they had completed this course and two CEOs interviewed spoke very highly of the benefits of its value, despite not being sector specific.

**Figure 7: Qualifications Reported by Survey Respondents**

Nature of qualifications related to leadership/governance/management:	Response Count	Response Percent
Masters degree or higher	24	28%
Post graduate diploma or certificate	28	33%
Company Directors course graduate	6	7%
Recognised competency based training certificate or diploma	27	32%
Other (Bachelor of Business Management, Commerce, Health Administration and a combination of various short courses, leadership courses)	16	-
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>154</b>	



Interview participants that had come 'through the ranks' and had a background in service delivery or clinical practice indicated that by and large, they undertook governance/management training during their early tenure in the role of senior executive or CEO as they had not had the time or opportunity to do so in senior clinical roles. Several had also begun further research based qualifications such as a PhD or Masters but found it difficult to manage this with the demands of the senior executive role.

Conversely, those who have come into the sector from management roles in the private or public sector were more likely to have achieved their qualifications prior to their entry into such positions. This cohort often spoke of the importance of gaining 'content knowledge' and a depth of understanding of the work of the organisation in order to articulate the mission and gain the confidence of stakeholders including staff.

Several interview participants recognised that good leaders can come from either within the sector 'through the ranks' or from outside the sector. As organisations have grown in size, opportunities to develop a diversity of pathways into management and leadership roles have increased. Some organisations have found, however, that there are increasing numbers of highly experienced practitioners who seek leadership opportunities but do not want to move out of a 'clinical' role into general management. They want to be 'practice leaders' focused on clients and service delivery, perhaps contributing to research but they do not seek general management or administrative responsibilities. At the same time organisations are engaging more people with 'management' qualifications (general or specific to Human Resource management or financial management) that do not have a service delivery background. As a result senior management and leadership teams are becoming more multi-disciplinary with a mix of 'practice leaders' and 'managers' working alongside each other.



# Governance

## Defining Governance

All survey respondents were asked to define governance in their own words. A wide range of detailed responses included terms such as;

- To set and achieve the organisation's vision, mission and strategic direction
- To ensure accountability and transparency
- To ensure adherence to legal and legislative frameworks, financial and funding requirements,
- To direct, guide and oversee decision making and other accountability structures, including policy and procedures, allocation of resources, all based on ethical work practice.

Interview participants highlighted additional governance functions including risk management and planning, recruitment and management of the CEO, human resource development, stakeholder engagement, contract negotiation, performance management and reporting, and critical analysis including both formal and informal feedback, research and evaluation.

There was considerable discussion with participants regarding the importance of balanced representation on boards and the need for a sound depth of knowledge across the many complex governance obligations associated with contemporary community service delivery. Larger organisations tended to feel confident that the operational staff were sufficiently expert to ensure the organisation was meeting legal and ethical obligations while the board focused on strategic direction and ensuring that reporting and accountability structures were in place to ensure compliance and performance management.

Interestingly, contrary to the perception among some larger organisations and government that many smaller organisations are least equipped to deal with complex governance requirements, interview participants from smaller organisations suggested a relatively high level of confidence in their governing bodies and a sense that they have a depth of understanding of both what the organisation does and the legislative and accountability frameworks that apply. Those who lead smaller organisations (under 50 employees) suggested that being at the interface between policy and practice allows for the development of a very practical appreciation of governance requirements and how to ensure appropriate processes are in place. A good leader can use this appreciation and awareness to engage staff in understanding the importance of these requirements and the value of good process.

## Quality of Governance

The question of whether governance in the family and parenting services sector is an area of difficulty or weakness was explored with interview participants. Responses were mixed. Most felt that their own governing body was doing a good job; many spoke of improvements in governance structures and board processes over recent years. However, there was some concern about the quality of governance across the sector more broadly.

In particular, representatives from large organisations were often concerned about the quality of governance in smaller organisations, yet smaller funded organisations did not feel that they had any more difficulty with governance than larger ones. It was generally acknowledged that size isn't everything - there are many small organisations with strong boards and some larger ones that have experienced considerable difficulties with governance, however, there was a persistent perception that smaller



organisations were more likely to have weak governance than larger ones. This is a perception that warrants further research to determine if it is valid.

Strategies to further strengthen governance were discussed with CEOs. Many spoke of the difficulty in addressing governance weaknesses:

- *“Boards often don’t know how much better their governance could be”*
- *“As organisations grow the skills of the CEO can outstrip the board”*
- *“Many people serving on management committees or boards don’t know about it at all or have done it in other arenas (e.g. business) and think they know as much as they need to”*

It is not the place of the CEO to direct the Board. Addressing weaknesses relies on the Board’s commitment to review its own performance as well as the capacity of the Chair to drive continuous improvement. Some CEOs suggested a role for Government funding bodies and/or regulators, others felt that more demands on board members would just make it harder to recruit people to these critical but unpaid roles.

There was general agreement that there is no lack of governance training available but affordability is often an issue and convincing people they need training or will benefit from training can be a real challenge – several CEOs commented on how difficult it can be to get board members to attend training or for the board as a whole to accept training. Some felt mandatory training in governance basics should be introduced; others felt this would make it more difficult to recruit board members.

A CEO in one of the largest organisations in the sector suggested it might be useful to have an advisory service or funding for regular ‘governance quality audits’ and for these to be valued by government funders so that the development of better governance would become a higher priority or more attractive prospect.

## Cross Sector-Government Understanding

One of the areas of inquiry in this project was to look at the relationship between the community sector service providers and government program administrators. Survey respondents were asked whether there is adequate understanding of respective processes for good governance, i.e. do government administrators understand what constitutes good governance in the community sector and vice versa.

As indicated by the responses summarised in the table the majority felt that there is not good understanding across government and the community sectors. Remembering that government representatives did not engage in this survey, there were some strong statements about a lack of understanding of community sector governance within government agencies. The sector is also highly self-critical and many respondents felt that there was also a lack of understanding across the sector of government process and accountability requirements.

**Figure 8: Cross sector-government understanding of governance processes**

Is there adequate understanding across government and community sectors of respective processes for good governance?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	9	23.1%
No	22	56.4%
Unsure	8	20.5%

A recurring theme identified by survey respondents and interview participants was that there is a lack of understanding about the value of community ownership and local accountability to stakeholders.



Government agencies tend to demand a lot of organisations and see their own needs for accountability and control as more important than any other. The compliance regimes have become particularly onerous and every funding contract comes with a set of mechanisms for good governance e.g. data systems, quality systems that are requisite but not fully funded and not consistent across agencies or funding programs. This can interfere with organisations developing more holistic service models and client outcome measures that are the result of multiple interventions or supports.

Another concern raised in responses was a belief that government doesn't value small organisations. For example: "*The is a lack of understanding about the value of community ownership and the value of smaller, specialised services - government has a concept that larger means greater efficiencies and therefore savings in how services are managed*", said one survey respondent.

Respondents were asked to identify specific training that could assist future leaders across both the community sector and the public sector to enhance cross sector partnership, collaboration and advocacy. Across the 82 responses there was considerable diversity. A number of respondents indicated that training was not the issue but that building more trusting relationships was.

Strategies suggested in both the survey and interviews for enhancing mutual understanding across the community and government included:

- Government representatives could visit services more frequently and be encouraged to develop a more in-depth understanding of client needs and service delivery
- Leaders across both community and public sector need to develop relationships based on mutual respect and some common understandings
- Departmental staff cannot ignore the power imbalance between the sectors but can be aware of it and still value the contributions of the sector including expertise and 'social assets'
- Recruitment processes should value cross-sector experience
- Joint training and secondment opportunities would help to build understanding

Interview participants also spoke of the need for more opportunities to engage in genuine consultation and policy/program development to foster more respectful relationships between the sector and government. Several interview participants referred to advisory and reference groups as an effective way to improve mutual understanding and can provide an opportunity for dialogue and shared problem solving.



## Training Priorities

### Qualifications

The value of formal qualifications was explored in both the survey and in-depth interviews. Interestingly most senior executives felt that formal qualifications were not all that important in their own right – though some felt the attainment of qualifications indicated a commitment to learning and self-development. There was also recognition that qualifications may be more important to boards, funding bodies and other stakeholders concerned with competency.

Despite assigning a relatively low importance to qualifications respondents already in leadership roles (CEOs and Senior Executives) generally had obtained qualifications and reported that attaining these qualifications had helped them to progress in their career and/or enhance their performance. In addition, support to assist the next generation of leaders to undertake training and obtain qualifications was consistently identified as a priority for the future. This suggests that qualifications are a means to the development of leadership skills but not the only means, further that it is the application of the skills obtained that really matters.

What has become clear in discussions with leaders is that many ‘up and coming’ leaders within the sector have professional (clinical) qualifications which are relevant to the communication and interpersonal skills required for leadership. However, the broader strategic thinking, general business management and financial skills required for good governance certainly are not covered by any clinical training and are necessary supplementation to create well rounded leaders of the future.

### Training Opportunities

Survey respondents were invited to identify what training or learning resources they had found useful and there were a wide range of responses summarized in Appendix 2. As Families Australia will be scoping current training available we have not investigated this in any depth in our consultations. However, it was interesting to note that respondents and participants were often interested in what training we (FRSA) were aware of and keen to know more about courses and programs that other organisations have identified as useful. There is perhaps scope for making information on training, coaching and development programs more widely available to family support program providers.

The consensus was that there is a volume of generic training and resources but relatively little that has been tailored to have a non-profit focus or awareness. The development of more specific training is desirable; particularly for courses that involve a substantial commitment of time and resources for example: *“The Company Directors Course [AICD 5 day residential] was very good, although it would have been good if this course had a stronger focus on not for profit companies instead of listed companies”* one CEO commented.

The availability and affordability of training also varies according to location. Those in regional and rural areas are more likely to have difficulties in access or face substantially higher costs due to having to pay travel expenses. *“There is a real lack of accessibility in Broome, leadership training has not been a priority, it is not provided here very often if at all and when it is its very expensive”* said one interview participant.



## Gaps in existing training and resources

When asked if there are gaps in the provision of existing training and/or resources in leadership and governance the most common gaps identified by the 76 respondents who answered the question were:

- The cost of most training in the area of leadership/management & governance is prohibitive (21)
- Limited knowledge or guidance about what is available (15)
- Training and resources are not designed for the community service sector (14)
- Much of the training available is just not applicable (11)

While the issue of cost is a challenge across the sector, it is particularly problematic for regional, rural and remote organisations if they have to fund long distance travel and accommodation costs as well as backfill positions while people are away undertaking training.

## Training Priorities

Survey respondents were asked to indicate five specific priority training needs in leadership and governance that would benefit future leaders within their own organisation. 108 respondents made almost 299 suggestions of which the seven areas listed in the table below were most frequently identified. However, perhaps the most significant finding here is that there is a marked lack of consensus, many suggestions receiving only 1-5 mentions and no more than a third of respondents identifying the highest ranked priorities. There were a very wide range of topic areas identified – encompassing governance, leadership, management and specific skills in areas such as recruitment, media engagement, communications etc. Some respondents listed specific products such as the Company Directors Course or Frontline Management while others emphasised the need for interactive, reflective learning opportunities.

Some respondents focused more on the form of the training rather than the content, identifying the need for 2-3 day intensive training or twice yearly training opportunities for Board members. Others identified the importance of training at key transition points, the most obvious being the transition into leadership – from being in a team to leading a team or when first stepping into a position that reports to a Board.

**Figure 9: Desired Training in Leadership & Governance**

Specific training in leadership & governance	Total Responses	1st Priority Responses
Financial management / budget control / costing services / tender preparation	33	10
Governance Issues / board functions / training for board members / working with boards	32	9
Human Resources - staff management issues	31	14
Leadership skills / styles / issues / concepts	29	14
Strategic planning / approaches / implementation	22	5
Leadership development via mentoring / coaching	21	7
Management and operational skills (e.g. time management, business planning)	20	9

Given the diversity of responses and the frequent suggestions from both survey respondents and interviewees it could be surmised that organisations in this sector have a broad range of needs and may value the opportunity to ‘mix n match’ or sample from a range of training options. The areas where respondents tend to be more specific about content (e.g. financial management) appear to be those areas where training specific to the non-profit community sector context is most lacking.



Respondents were clear about the need for ‘sector specific’ training, and it would be very important to ensure a solid understanding of what the nature and content of this specific training needs to include. Given the variations in skills, experience and application across the entire community service sector, the applicability, reliability and accessibility of any future training and its subsequent uptake by those within the sector would be intricately linked to successful outcomes. There is also potentially more scope for working with training providers to encourage consultation with the sector and to assist with identifying patterns of need or demand for training products – particularly those that have been tailored to suit this sector.

Online training options have been suggested as an innovative solution for dealing with distance barriers in regional, rural and remote organisations. However, the isolation that staff can experience working in these areas can be alleviated by regular opportunities to participate in training which involves spending time with peers and having a break from the demands of the community. Furthermore, the content of leadership and governance training is such that working together with fellow ‘students’ provides a relational base upon which to better understand, practise and integrate the key concepts learned rather than in the isolation of a remote e-learning environment.

## Support Opportunities

As a follow up to the question regarding specific training priorities, survey respondents were also asked to identify what other support would help foster the next generation of leaders. More than 70% of respondents identified short courses and mentoring programs as a priority. More than half also identified support to access funding (for education or other training options) would be valuable as well as increased capacity to release staff for study or cross-sector placement. There was also some support for increasing awareness of relevant qualification programs while, residential professional development programs, increased access to post graduate qualification programs as well as study tours and learning journeys across organisations as well as between sectors. More detail is provided in the table below.

Several interview participants suggested that the family and parenting services sector could be supported to develop a program of cross-organisation mentoring and opportunities for staff exchange, placement or secondments. These suggestions were explored a number of times. While such a scheme would be sector-specific and more affordable than commercial mentoring services, there are some significant challenges. Workload pressures on both potential mentors (CEOs and Senior Executives) and potential mentees (Senior Executives and Managers) could prove to be a significant barrier and the capacity to exchange staff with other organisations or government agencies is problematic in an environment of skills shortage and competition for talent.

**Figure 10: Broader Support for Leadership Development**

Other support strategies	Response Count	Response Percent
Mentoring programs	109	74%
Short courses and seminars	107	72%
Support to access funding (for education or other training options)	99	67%
Releasing staff for study or cross-sector placement	77	52%
Increased awareness of relevant qualification programs	72	49%
Residential professional development programs	66	45%
Increased access to post graduate qualification programs	64	43%
Study tours and learning journeys	62	42%



## Analysis and Recommendations

Consultation with the sector has clearly identified that there is strong interest in enhancing the capacity of organisations and the sector overall to foster leadership and continuously strengthen organisational governance.

Strategies that have been broadly endorsed as those most likely to be effective include:

- Increasing access to affordable leadership and governance training
- Cross sector-government training to develop mutual understanding
- Executive mentoring and coaching programs
- Support for organisations to design and implement leadership development programs

The significant diversity of the sector and the career pathways available to 'up and coming leaders' preclude a 'one size fits all' approach. Investment in this area is more likely to be most effective if training and development is tailored to the community (human) services context and modular or flexible to allow organisations and individuals to build on their existing strengths and address disparate areas of need.

A significant challenge in achieving greater engagement in leadership development will be the workload pressures on individuals within this sector and the capacity of organisations to release people to participate in development activities. Another important factor will be cost particularly for smaller organisations and those in rural and remote areas.

While it is important to invest in developing and enhancing leadership we also need to do more to recognise the leaders we have in the sector. The same can be said for governance. There will always be value in strengthening and enhancing governance but there is also scope to build confidence in governance structures that are working well.

This project has also identified the assets within the sector. Current leaders contribute substantially to leadership development through structured approaches within their organisations as well as taking up roles more broadly in the sector – serving on boards, providing training, engaging in collaborative projects and advisory groups. Such activities are clearly an important component of leadership in this sector and also valuable development opportunities for the next generation of leaders. Supporting and growing opportunities for the next generation of leaders to engage in collaborative projects, advisory and consultative processes as well as sector development activities is likely to have a positive impact on the quality of leadership in the Family Support Program into the future.

## Recommendations

1. Invest in leadership and governance development programs that are tailored to the community service context and adaptable to suit different purposes.
2. Engage with training providers to enhance access to affordable leadership and governance training, particularly in rural and remote areas through coordination, planning and support.
3. Develop strategies to enhance the uptake of governance training amongst board members.
4. Recognise leadership and governance strengths within the sector to build confidence attract and retain talent.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey Questions

1. **Which of the following best describes your primary work role?**
  - Paid CEO / Director / Executive Officer (or equivalent - reporting to a board or management committee)
  - Voluntary or honorary CEO (or equivalent - reporting to a board or management committee)
  - Senior Executive (reporting to the CEO or Deputy CEO)
  - Service or Program Manager / Team Leader / Supervisor
  - Other (please specify)
2. **Which of the following BEST describes the organisation you currently work for?**
  - Service delivery organisation
  - Advocacy/representative organisation
  - Government agency
  - Other (please specify)
3. **Approximately how many paid employees work in your organisation? (include full-time and part-time staff)**
  - 0 (Volunteers only)
  - 1-19
  - 20-49
  - 50-99
  - 100+
4. **Apart from your primary work role, do you also have other leadership roles in the community sector, such as:(tick all that apply)**
  - Serve on a community organisation's board or management committee
  - Supervise or mentor people in other organisations
  - Provide education or training within your own organisation
  - Provide education or training to people in other organisations
  - Other (please specify)
5. **Please define 'leadership' in your own words...**
6. **What has helped you achieve leadership roles and/or leadership skills in your career to-date?**
  - Promotion opportunities
  - Good leadership
  - Training/education
  - Mentoring
  - Other (please specify)
7. **Please define 'governance' in your own words...**
8. **Do you have formal qualifications in leadership, governance and/or management?**
  - Yes
  - No
9. **If yes, please indicate the nature of qualifications you have specifically related to leadership / governance / management:**
  - Masters degree or higher
  - Post graduate diploma or certificate
  - Company Directors course graduate
  - Recognised competency based training certificate or diploma



- Other (please specify)

**10. Can you list leadership and/or governance training programs, resources and experts that you have used and recommend?**

**11. What are the most important qualities of leadership?**

	No Value	Little Value	Some Value	High Value
Vision/inspiration				
Strategic thinking				
Analytical skills				
Communication				
General Management				
Financial Management				
Identifying & developing talent in others				
Experience/practice wisdom				
Qualifications				

**12. How does your organisation currently support, mentor, engage and challenge future Leaders?**

- Annual performance management (appraisal) process
- Professional development opportunities
- Study leave / cross sector placement opportunities
- Formal (internal or external) mentoring or supervision program
- 'Informal' mentoring or supervision program
- Temporary 'higher duties' roles
- Involvement in Sector-wide Working Groups / Committees
- Other (please specify)

**13. What are the driving or enabling factors contributing to the development of leaders and potential leaders within your organisation?**

- Organisational culture - leadership is recognised and celebrated in our organisation
- We have a leadership development program
- There is a high calibre of people coming through the ranks
- We work to provide leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders
- The quality of leadership

**14. What are the restraining factors or barriers to leadership development in your organisation?**

- Not sure 'how to' develop future leaders
- Poor access to relevant leadership trainers/programs or expertise
- High cost of leadership training and development opportunities
- Lack of resources and time to develop leadership programs
- Insufficient remuneration
- Lack of interest amongst staff to take on increased 'management' responsibilities
- Workload pressures on staff
- Organisational structure/culture - 'stepping up' not encouraged
- High staff turnover

**15. What specific training in leadership & governance would benefit your organisation's future leaders?**

**16. What other support would help foster the next generation of leaders in your organisation / across the sector?**

- Increased access to post graduate qualification programs
- Increased awareness of relevant qualification programs
- Residential professional development programs, Short courses and seminars
- Study tours and learning journeys



- Mentoring programs / Releasing staff for study or cross-sector placement
- Support to access funding (for education or other training options)
- Other (please specify)

**17. Are there gaps in existing leadership and/or governance training programs and resources to meet the needs of the sector? If so, please list.**

**18. Do you believe there is an adequate understanding among current and future leaders in the government and community sectors of respective processes for good governance?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please comment

**19. What training would assist future leaders in the community sector and government to enhance cross sector partnership, collaboration and advocacy?**

**20. Any other general comments on cross-sector leadership and governance?**



## Appendix 2: Useful Training & Resources

<p><b>University/Post Graduate</b></p> <p>Masters in Management (generic)          Melbourne Business School / Mt Eliza - Executive Development Programs          WA Business School          Queensland University of Technology – Masters in Non-profit Management          University of Technology, Sydney – Masters in Community Organisation Management          Harvard Leadership Programs (USA)          Centre for Social Impact (NSW)</p>
<p><b>Vocational/Professional Training</b></p> <p>Australian Institute of Company Directors (National)          Front line management (TAFE) – generic / Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT) Front line Management Diploma (NSW)          Proteus leadership training (VIC, QLD, NSW, SA)          LEADR (Association of Dispute Resolvers)          Ashridge Leadership school (UK)          Council of Social Services – State COSS organisations          Leadership Victoria          Catholic Commission          Anglicare leadership development program</p>
<p><b>Coaching/Mentoring</b></p> <p>Harvard Executive Coaching Programs (USA)          Novartis Growth Coaching (NSW – National)</p>
<p><b>Memberships</b></p> <p>Australian Institute of Company Directors          Australian Institute of Management</p>
<p><b>Publications</b></p> <p>Company Director, AICD (Aust)          Leader to Leader – US          Stanford Social Innovation Review (online magazine) <a href="http://www.ssireview.org/">http://www.ssireview.org/</a> (US)          McKinsey Quarterly (business journal) <a href="http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/home.aspx">http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/home.aspx</a> (US)</p>
<p><b>Books</b></p> <p>"Good to great: why some companies make the leap and others don't" also "Good to Great: Social Sectors" by Jim Collins          "Leading change" John P Kottor</p>
<p><b>Websites</b></p> <p>Conscious Governance <a href="http://www.conscious-governance.com">www.conscious-governance.com</a>          Social Enterprise Alliance <a href="http://www.se-alliance.org/">http://www.se-alliance.org/</a>          Skoll Foundation – Connecting Social Entrepreneurs <a href="http://www.skollfoundation.org/">http://www.skollfoundation.org/</a>          UK NHS Leadership framework- <a href="http://www.nhsleadershipqualities.nhs.uk/">http://www.nhsleadershipqualities.nhs.uk/</a>          Social Innovation Exchange <a href="http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/">http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/</a>          Free Management Library <a href="http://managementhelp.org/">http://managementhelp.org/</a> (US)</p>
<p><b>Specific to other or Related Sector</b></p> <p>Australian College of Health Service Executives / Family Day Care Australia - PEAK training/Co-ordinator training / Royal Australian College of Nursing - Workplace mentoring / School of volunteer Management / SAAP NGO training</p>
<p><b>Consultants/Experts</b></p> <p>Sally Helgesen / Peter Drucker / Fances Hesselbein / Amanda Sinclair / Ketan Patel / Robert Shaw consultants / Avril Henry (Leadership &amp; HR) (VIC)          Penny Gordon and Associates (Org Psych) (QLD) / Elizabeth Shaw / Noleen Veness Consultancy / Paul Testro Consultancy / Andrew Reimer / MODAL (WA) / Speakmans Management training (? SA or USA) / Seaman and Slattery / Red Frog Consultancy / Ray Bennett / Leader to Leader / Four Quadrants / Yellow edge- APS new horizons leader / Dr Denise Jepsen / FLM / OCI / ISA / DETA leadership program / ACCESS management corporation Human Synergetics / Skill Path / BHP / Pathways / Com Management</p>



## Appendix 3: FRSA Member Organisations

### FULL MEMBERS

#### NEW SOUTH WALES

Anglican Counselling Service  
Anglicare NSW  
Baptist Community Services  
Broken Hill Family Mediation Service  
Centacare Bathurst  
Centacare Broken Bay  
Centacare Maitland-Newcastle  
Centacare New England North West  
Centacare Parramatta  
Catholic Care, Sydney  
Centacare Wagga Wagga  
Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes  
Centacare Wollongong  
Community Connections North Coast  
Community Programs Inc  
Interrelate Family Centres  
Macquarie Legal Centre  
Manning Support Services  
Newcastle Family Support Services  
Relationships Australia NSW  
The Family Centre  
UnitingCare Burnside  
UnitingCare Unifam Counselling & Mediation

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Anglicare Northern Territory - Resolve  
Centacare NT  
Relationships Australia NT

#### QUEENSLAND

Centacare Rockhampton  
Centacare Brisbane  
Centacare Cairns  
Centacare Toowoomba  
Centacare Townsville  
Community Services Australia  
Foundations Child & Family Support  
Kinnections  
Kyabra Community Association  
Lifeline Community Care Queensland  
Lifeline Darling Downs & South West QLD -  
Men & Relationships Program  
Mackay Children's Contact Services  
Men's Information & Support Assoc.  
Mercy Family Services  
Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre  
QPASSTT  
Relationships Australia QLD  
Sunshine Coast Family Contact Centre  
Toowoomba Children's Contact Centre  
Youth and Family Service (Logan City)

#### TASMANIA

Anglicare Tasmania Inc  
Centacare Tasmania  
Positive Solutions  
Relationships Australia Tasmania

#### AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Centacare Canberra & Goulburn  
Marymead Child & Family Centre  
Relationships Australia Canberra & Region

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Anglican Community Care  
Anglicare SA  
Centacare Adelaide  
Centacare Whyalla  
Lutheran Community Care  
Relationships Australia SA  
UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide  
UnitingCare Wesley Bowden  
UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide  
UnitingCare Wesley Port Pirie  
Whyalla Counselling Service

#### VICTORIA

Anglicare Victoria  
Australian Greek Welfare Society  
Berry Street Victoria  
Bethany Community Support  
Brotherhood of St Laurance  
Cairnmillar Institute  
Centacare Ballarat  
Centacare Melbourne  
Centacare Sandhurst - Bendigo  
Child & Family Services Ballarat  
Children's Protection Society  
City of Greater Geelong  
Community Connections  
Community West  
Crisis Support Services  
Drummond Street Relationship Centre  
Eastern Access Community Health  
Family Life  
Family Mediation Centre  
Family Relationships Institute  
GordonCare for Children  
Goulburn Valley Family Care  
LifeWorks Relationship Counselling &  
Education Services  
MacKillop Family Services  
Mallee Family Care  
Relationships Australia Victoria  
South East Migrant Resource Centre  
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre Inc  
Stepfamily Association of Victoria  
Salvation Army Bendigo  
Upper Hume Community Health Service  
Upper Murray Family Care

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Agencies for South West Accommodation  
Anglicare WA  
Catholic Marriage Education Services  
Centacare Geraldton  
Centrecare  
Clan WA  
Men's Outreach Service Broome  
Ngala  
Relationships Australia WA

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Arafemi Victoria Inc  
Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare  
Association  
Central Coast Disability Network  
Challenge Disability Services  
Citizens Advice Bureau of WA (Inc)  
Communities@Work  
Drug Arm Australasia  
Family Action Centre  
Family Drug Support  
First Light Care Association Inc  
FSG Australia  
Halsmith Consulting Pty Ltd  
Karingal Mental Health Support  
Legal Aid ACT  
Legal Aid NSW  
Legal Aid WA  
Lifeline Australia  
Lone Fathers Association Australia  
MAREAA  
Migrant Resource Centre of SA  
Ozframe Inc (Australian Family and Marriage  
Education)  
Parentline ACT Inc  
Parentline Vic  
Pathways Counselling & Family Services  
Relationships Australia - National  
Richmond Fellowship of Western Australia  
Robyn Sexton & Associates  
Southern Youth & Family Services  
Association  
The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family  
Welfare Inc  
The Salvation Army Counselling Service  
Top End Association for Mental Health  
Unitingcare Family Services – Northern  
Tasmania  
Victoria Legal Aid

*Please note that this is a list of organisations  
by trading name rather than legal entity.*