

ACCA Newsletter September 2007

www.campconnect.org.au

Reconnecting
Dads & Kids



Australian Camp Connect
Association



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Presidents Message:

Dear Supporter

It was just over one month ago that we ran the Fathers Day Weekend Dads and Kids Camp. It was a privilege to be involved with the running of such an event. To share the weekend with a very committed group of fathers and their children was special.

Our mission at Camp Connect is to run life impacting programs for fathers and their children through education, information, support and activities. So how do we know if we succeeded over the Fathers Day Weekend?

I had two phone conversations on the Monday following the camp. Chris, one of the attending dads called just to thank us for the opportunity of attending weekend. He was saying how the kids had such a great time then he happened to mention how differently his daughter, Sarah, age 4 yrs was communicating since the camp and that he couldn't believe the change in her.

The second conversation was with Sue from Gateways. She relayed to me how normally she would struggle to have any conversation with Justin, a five year old boy who attended the camp with his dad, but from the brief interaction she had with him that morning she couldn't keep him quiet, he had so much to say about what he did at the camp.

At the camp itself, we witnessed children who gained so much self confidence and in their own sense of self belief and trust. They went beyond the limits that they knew

them selves to operate within, as well as their comfort zones, at times feeling the fear but doing it anyway. This applied equally to the attending fathers.

Life impacting? Definitely! Just maybe that is part of reason as to why seven of the attending families, who keep coming back to our camps year after year have made being part of the Fathers Day Weekend Camp a family tradition.

Brad Mander
Australian Camp Connect Association Inc

Australian Camp Connect Association - Annual General Meeting, 29 October 2007

Date: Monday 29th October, 2007

Time: 7:30PM – 9:00PM. Dinner from 6:30PM is interested.

Venue: The Hawthorn Hotel, 481 Burwood Rd, Glenferrie [meeting room]

All welcome to attend. It is **IMPORTANT** that **FINANCIAL MEMBERS ATTEND** as we will be voting on changes to the constitution and electing new committee. Memberships can be taken out on the night. Please email your intention to attend [info@campconnect.org.au] and an agenda will be emailed to you. If you would like an item added to the agenda please email me the details.

Resources For Dads - Family Law Web Guide <http://www.familylawwebguide.com.au/>



The **Family Law WEB Guide** is a home for numerous groups, associations and organisations who are involved in Family Law and related matters.

To make the world a better place to live, we believe it's important that we benefit the communities we serve. This website devoted to the special concerns of people facing serious and difficult challenges in their relationships.

Our website offers advice, tips and resources to people struggling with having to make important decisions for themselves and about their relationships, their children and their futures.

There are forums on the Family Law Web Guide site that are general in nature as well as those on matters of child support and family law matters.

Resources For Dads - DadsLink

www.victoria.ymca.org.au/dadslink

DadsLink is a new information and activity based parenting network that focuses on fathers and the relationships with their children. It's for all fathers, but in particular hopes to reach separated dads.



We build strong **PEOPLE**
strong **FAMILIES** strong **COMMUNITIES**

DadsLink provides:

- * Activities including 'Dads Day Out' events, family camps and weekend activities.
- * Information and resources on day to day parenting, as well as tackling parent/child issues.
- * A clinic where fathers can discuss personal and parenting issues, or access professional help.
- * A quarterly newsletter to keep you informed.

Equal Parenting Network

<http://www.familylawwebguide.com.au/epm/index.php?page=start>

There is a movement for people who want to be active in reforming the way we handle family separation in Australian society to minimise conflict and maximise the role of both parents in their children's lives.



We call for the implementation of a **Presumption of Equal Parenting Time** in the Family Law Act. This (along with other changes) will allow Family Relationship Centres to do their job in helping to resolve conflict between parents and facilitate negotiation in an informal, inexpensive and friendly environment, so that very few separating couples will need to resort to the Family Court system.

The Equal Parenting Network aims to promote a radically different response to family separation, a response based on **conflict prevention** and **conflict resolution**. We aim to promote local support networks for parents going through separation, and in the years following separation, and to teach the benefits of **equal parenting**.

We have active supporters in cities and towns around Australia. If you would like to find out more about how you can participate, send an email to EqualParenting@optusnet.com.au

Family Law Reform Association www.familylawreform.org.au

We are a non-profit, non-political, non-denominational, self-help organisation working together towards a sensible family law reform in order to assist people with Family Law matters. We are an affiliate of The Shared Parenting Council of Australia.

FAMILYLAWREFORM
Family Law Reform Association
NSW Inc.

What can the association offer you?

Advice and assistance with your particular Family Law problem from those who have been through, or are going through, the system.

Provide information in relation to a wide range of topics involved in Family Law issues including Custody, Access, Property Settlement and Child Support through a variety of qualified guest speakers, videos and literature.

Community Calendar - Secret Men's' Stuff A Nuts & Bolts Guide To Being A Bloke

Featuring: ***Stan Alves** (AFL footballer, coach, media personality & entrepreneur)

***Michael Connell** Comedian & MC)

***Assoc. Prof. Gary Richardson** (Chairman foundation 49)

Full bar will operate, free light snacks PLUS loads of giveaways!

When: Friday 19th October, 2007, 7:30 pm - 10:00pm.

Where: Ferntree Gully Cricket Club, Glenfern Rd, Ferntree Gully 3156.

Phone 8711 8677 or Email: foothills@optusnet.com.au for further information.

Tickets: \$10.00 at the door.



Community Calendar - Stress And The City 2007 A forum about men's health the whole family will enjoy!

Presented by the Casey-Cardinia Men's Health Action Group Inc.

Featuring:

- **Merv Hughes**, Aussie Cricket Legend and Ambassador for Andrology Australia
- **Dave Grant**, Stand Up Comic and Entertainer and ambassador for Mensline Australia
- **Les Twentyman**, Youth Worker, Open Family
- **John Evans**, Relationship Counsellor, Mensline Australia.

When: Wednesday 10th October, 2007, Expo 6:30 pm, program starts at 7:30pm.

Where: Cardinia Cultural Centre, Lakeside Boulevard, Pakenham

Enquires: City of Casey: Rob Koch 9705 5590, Cardinia Council: David Esmore 1300 787 624

Cost: Free



Creative Parenting from Tots to Teens

The Manningham Mental Health Awareness Forum & Expo

Parenting has its joys and challenges. Whether you have teenagers, tots or kids in between, come along to an informative evening, full of inspiration, confirmation and some laughs along the way.

Featuring speakers:

* **Dr Rick Jarman 'Parenting Kids: Overcoming the Challenges'**

Well known paediatrician Rick Jarman will provide you with some strategies to overcome some of the challenges of raising children aged 3 – 12, from managing challenging behaviour to promoting confidence in your children.

* **Andrew Fuller 'Parenting Teens: Creating Resilient Families'**

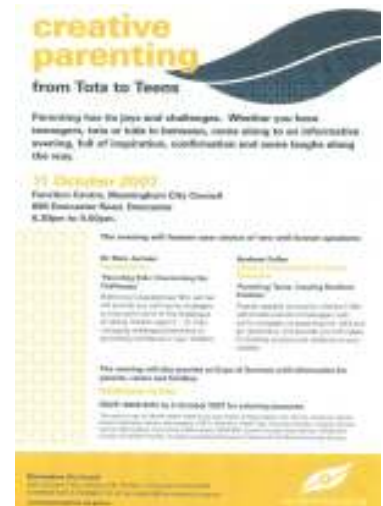
Popular speaker and author Andrew Fuller will provide parents of teenagers with some strategies on parenting the 'click and go' generation, and provide you with ideas on building success and resilience in your children.

When: 11 October 2007

Where: Manningham City Council, Function Room, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster.

Time: 6.30pm - 9.00pm **Admission:** FREE

RSVP: 9840 9315 by 5 October 2007 for catering purposes



Welcome Onboard! We are very fortunate to have three new volunteers keen to do some work for us here at Camp Connect.

John Lui: John will be taking on the role of community liaison, talking to different organizations about Camp Connect and seeing what partnerships can be formed between other service organizations and us.

Dominic Morello & Zaid Siddiqui: Dominic and Zaid will be working together on obtaining charity and DGR status for Camp Connect amongst other things.

The Marital and De facto Separation Study

Urgent Request For Research Participants

AISRAP [Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention], Griffith University is looking at the impact of relationship separation on men's psychological well-being. This research will give us information on the causes of distress for men going through separation (including legal processes, child residence and financial issues), as well as information on the different points during the separation process people feel most distressed. This information is crucial for the development of appropriate support which helps to reduce the stress experienced during the separation.

Who can participate?

- Men and women 18 YEARS + who have experienced a separation (marital or de facto relationship) in the past 12 months
- Must not yet be divorced or must not have finalised de facto relationship separation.

IF YOU ARE NOT SEPARATED, BUT KNOW SOMEONE WHO MEETS THIS CRITERIA, PLEASE FORWARD THESE DETAILS TO THEM!

What is involved for the participants?

- Participants are asked to complete a 30 minute questionnaire (and again in 6 months time).
- Gift voucher is offered for your participation in the study
- This study has ethical clearance from the Griffith University Ethics Committee
- All the information provided will be treated with the highest confidentiality and results will remain anonymous.

Volunteer Small Equipment Grant

The Australian Camp Connect Association has been successful in obtaining a grant through the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants (VSEG) 2007.

With the grant funds we will be purchasing a data projector, screen and stereo which will be invaluable for running multimedia presentations as well as programs such as Pit Stop and Drug Proof your Kids. The grants were made through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Emails Received – Can anyone help?

Hi ,
I have just stumbled on your website in a search for books for Dads of children with a disability. We have just started a support group for them and I am searching for resources for them. Can you help?

If you can help please email Debi at tempcare@bigpond.com

Debi Andrew

Co-ordinator

Newcastle Temporary Care Ltd



Member of the Australian Research Council
Priority Review Scheme
Centre for Research and Training in Social Protection



Urgent Request for Research Participants

Increasing recognitions of the impact of marital and de facto separation on men!

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How to participate in the study?

Please access the study web site: www.griffith.edu.au/marital-study

E-mail your postal address: maritalstudy@griffith.edu.au

Phone: (07) 3735 3338

Marital and de facto separation study team



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maritalstudy@griffith.edu.au

Phone: (07) 3735 3338 Marital and de facto separation study team



Email Received

Can you Blog? Are you a recently separated father and obstructed from seeing your kids?

I am looking for a recently separated father to write a daily blog (4 to 5 paragraphs per day) for the soon to be released Fathers4Equality Single-Father Blog, on his efforts and experiences at trying to continue to play an active and constructive fatherly role for his children's benefit, post separation.

Implicit in these daily descriptions would of course include the obstacles faced by the father in trying to achieve this goal. The true identity of the father or those mentioned in the blog will be concealed for obvious reasons.

I am ideally looking for someone who can write in an honest, compelling and sympathetic manner, without resorting to hate rhetoric, and without portraying the mother or the institutions of family law in this country in an overly simplistic, one dimensional manner.

I think many people would be very interested in reading about the father's inner-most fears, the daily dilemmas experienced, the struggle to avoid conflict with an ex-wife who may be abusing the spirit of the family law system, and the emotional rape that many men experience when being actively excluded (by the ex and the system itself) from the lives of their children, all described in a brutally honest but also balanced approach, as it happens, day by day.

It would also be ideal for the father to be using, or in some way be exposed to some of the arms of the family law industry, including counselling centres, family relationship centres, the Police, the Child Support Agency, DoCS, family law legal practitioners and the court system, and providing an observational insight into how these entities function in terms of their fairness and treatment of this father, and in how they have responded to the government's directive for equal parenting emphasis and fairer treatment for non-custodial fathers.

Please note that I am hopeful that this blog will be read primarily by non-single fathers, and the intent would be to challenge the current pervasive views of some politicians and the media that separated fathers are in general failures, and incompetent, angry and violent dead-beat dads who are less worthy and less capable of being a parent than mothers are. This is obviously not the case, but this is a stigma that all single-fathers are faced with, whether the politicians, media, police or other related institutions care to admit it or not.

Even though the true identities of those in the blog will be changed for legal and privacy reasons, I would imagine that such records would also be quite valuable to the single-father blogger if legal proceedings eventuate, as a record of events, and further to this, it may also serve as a constructive manner for the father to express his frustrations at an imperfect and mis-guided system, without internalising such feelings too much, as most men do, to the detriment of the father's health.

If you wish to volunteer for this role, please submit a test blog entry for one day's events in the following feedback form.

<http://www.fathers4equality-australia.org/equalparenting/f4efeedback.nsf/feedback>

A F4E panel will review all submissions and make an offer to the candidate who submits an entry that best sits within the scope I have provided above.

Ash Patil
fathers4equality - australia
<http://www.fathers4equality-australia.org>
email: president@fathers4equality-australia.org

Melbourne - Dads & Kids Camp, August 31 – September 2, 2007

Well our 5th Fathers Day Weekend Camp has just taken place at the Briars Outdoor Ed. Camp in Mt Martha and what a marvelous weekend it was. Beautiful spring weather was the order of the day and that was what we got. The campsite itself was ideal for a weekend of connecting with our kids.

Again for this camp we had 28 attendees consisting of 11 dads and 17 kids. Four of the attending families were new to Camp Connect, two of these families being referred by Sue, at Gateways, an arm of the Salvation Army.

Darren again made the trek from Perth to attend the camp but this year he brought along his youngest son Daniel to experience what Camp Connect offers. Great effort Darren and Daniel.

On the Saturday morning it was activities time. For the first time we had the opportunity to experience the aptly named 'Leap of Faith'. For those of you who are not familiar with this activity let me explain. Basically you climb a ladder then a telegraph pole like structure [but only taller] up to one of two platforms. Being fully harnessed you stand on the platform from which you have chosen to jump. If you chose the top platform, there is a large plastic ball [like an exercise ball] suspended out of reach from the platform that you can make a jump and either briefly grab hold of or tap. From the bottom platform you just jump from it and drop slightly before being suspended in the air by the rope attached to the harness. It is certainly a leap of faith that you make when you leave the platform, faith in the safety equipment that you wear as well as in the operator who is responsible for running the activity.

Just about everyone had a go at doing it which was great from the four year olds to the dads. Some of kids jumped from the top of the ladder what was a challenge in itself, whilst other did so from the first platform. You could see that for many of us who took that leap of faith, from what ever level we jumped, that we felt the fear and did it anyway. With a lot of encouragement from the others it was great to see kids 'pass' through their fear. At Camp Connect we say that our programs are life impacting. To witness these kids self esteem and confidence improve just by this activity alone was testament of this. Other outdoor activities that were on offer and were well taken up by the group were the flying fox, archery and the low ropes course.

During Saturday afternoon we had Laurence Anderson from Dads in Distress come and run what essentially was a 'DIDS' meeting. This was new experience for us all. There was some very powerful sharing that took place between the dads with each attending dad having the opportunity to vent what they wanted to say without interruption and to feel truly heard. Despite the session going way over time, all the dads were thoroughly engaged right to the end. Whilst the dads were in this session John, one of the new volunteers to Camp Connect, kept the kids busy with a range of camping games.

Saturday night was time for some star gazing, literally. Thanks to the members of the Mornington Peninsula Astronomical Society and clear skies above, we had the opportunity to look through some decent sized, powerful telescopes. We watched a slide show covering a range of astronomical topics then thanks to the enthusiasm of the society members, we were able to view through the telescopes, different star clusters as well as planets like Jupiter for example. The younger kids especially were really excited by whole experience.

On the Sunday morning there was a brief introduction to the Pit Stop parenting course for dads and we looked at why dads are important in their children's lives. Whilst this was taking place the kids were kept occupied making Fathers Day cards.

Liz Bassett, who used to work for Bunnings, running the Kids DIY sessions to the next session. She brought with her boxes of nuts, bolts, washers and other bits and pieces and had the dads and the kids getting creative and making what ever took their imagination. There were robots, helicopters and other works of art being produced. It had both the dads and kids really engaged and interacting.

One of the highlights of the camp was the canoeing on the Sunday afternoon. In beautiful sunshine it was a great opportunity to get out on the dam and have some fun and that's just what happened. We had some canoes that capsized with the occupants creating their own fun by trying to paddle then surf on the upturned canoes. The children involved got thoroughly soaked but that didn't put a dampener on their fun. As my son said as he got back on dry land... 'that was seriously fun!' I wonder where he has heard that expression before.

Memberships

ACCA is like most non-profit organizations, in that it receives no financial support from the government. To be able to continue with the work that we do we rely upon the support of sponsors and of members. Membership of ACCA costs \$55.00 per annum. Current memberships are valid for 12 months from the date that payment has been received. Membership provides you with 15% off all adult program registration costs to any Camp Connect program conducted within the 12-months membership period. To become a member go to: <http://www.campconnect.org.au/membership.shtml>

Resources Available To Purchase Fatherhood CD

\$19.95 + \$2.00 P&h – Financial Members

\$29.50 + \$2.00 P&h – Non Members

We have purchased a supply of the locally produced CD titled Fatherhood. It contains a mixture of songs by celebrated Australian songwriters as well as unknown talent.

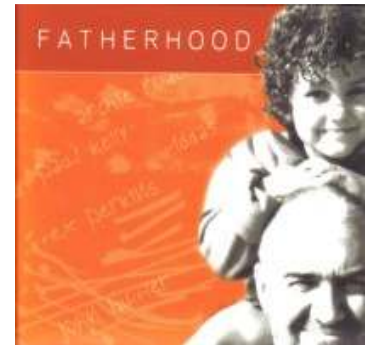
The spoken word segments are so evocative they send you into deep reflection, and with an urge to change your life starting this very second. This is the purpose that music was made for."

Steve Biddulph – Author of Raising Boys

For further details about the CD or to order a copy go to

http://www.campconnect.org.au/fatherhood_cd.shtml

Part of the proceeds of every CD sold goes to support Camp Connect.



Acknowledging Those Who Helped Us To Make A Difference

We sincerely thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions towards making the Melbourne September 2007 Dads & Kids Weekend Camp the success it was:



- * **Eastern Region Anglicare Parentzone** for their Parenting Education Grant Scheme [PEGs] funding.
- * **Sue Bentley of the Salvation Army** for referring and partially funding two families to attend the camp.
- * **Laurence Anderson**, from Dads in Distress giving up his time on the Saturday afternoon for running the workshop for the dads incorporating a DiDS meeting.
- * **Liz Bassett** for running the Nuts & Bolts workshop for the dads & their children.
- * **Vince** for also giving up a large part of his weekend to capture many special moments with his photography. All the attending families will have some wonderful family photos to remember the camp by.
- * **Michael Green QC**, For allowing us to use a chapter from his Fathers After Divorce book on the CD.
- * **Colin George & Soulman** [Fatherhood CD] for allowing us to place their songs on our CD.
- * **John Lui** for his assistance in running the outdoor activities and for keeping the kids busy with camping games whilst the dads were in workshop.