

2005 National Child Day Forum

Keynote Speaker: Fiona Stanley

Complex Pathways to Child Outcomes: Implications for Research Policy and Practice”

Early life experiences influence whole of life chances. Changes in contemporary society such as longer work hours, childcare, divorce, blended families and the family structure itself impact on children and youth. These influences can impact child development and have been shown to be strongly mediated by the nature of the local community and the extent to which it operates to support families and schools in their shared task of child rearing.

Communities cannot be expected to do this on their own. For local initiatives to be sustained they will need the backing of a more integrated policy framework for children which places greater emphasis on desired childhood outcomes and which incorporates the growing knowledge of what can be done to optimize the key processes in children's development.

Professor Fiona Stanley AC

Named Australian of the Year in 2003, Professor Stanley is a vocal advocate for the needs of children and their families.

Born in Sydney in 1946, she moved to Perth with her family in 1956. She studied medicine at the University of Western Australia and practised in hospitals for two years before going to the United Kingdom and USA for further training in epidemiology (the science of describing and explaining the occurrence of disease in populations), biostatistics and public health.

Professor Stanley is the founding Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research that was established in Perth in 1990. The Institute is multi-disciplinary and researches prevention of major childhood illnesses. It currently has nearly 400 employees and students.

Professor Stanley is also the Executive Director of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, a national organisation that was formally constituted in June 2002 with an agenda to improve the health and well-being of young Australians.

In 2004, Professor Stanley was honoured as an Australian “Living National Treasure” by the National Trust. She is married to Professor Geoffrey Shellam. They have two daughters.