



**International
Social Service**
A U S T R A L I A

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Special Edition: Anne Cordner

1. In Memoriam – Anne Cordner (1926 – 2009) by Fionn Skiotis, Executive Director

This March 2010 edition of ISS Australia's newsletter is a special edition dedicated to Mrs Anne Cordner, a longstanding champion of the ISS international network who was the Australian Branch's Executive Director for many years and more recently a Board member. Anne passed away suddenly on 13 December 2009. ISS Australia acknowledges and salutes Anne's dedication and commitment to ISS over decades of involvement. She brought a unique vibrancy, spirit and strength of personality to her work with ISS, and these will of course be sadly missed by all of us at ISS Australia.

Anne was widely known and much loved among members of the ISS international network, something that became evident as messages of condolence and sympathy began to pour in after news of her passing was circulated to network members. Many long-term ISS Directors and staff knew



Anne personally and spoke eloquently of her dedication, her personal charm and sparkling nature at international meetings over the years. It is clear the ISS network lost both a tireless advocate and a dear friend with Anne's passing.

To honour Anne's significant contribution and achievements, ISS Australia will recommit itself to continuing to provide the inter-country social work services that have been the core of our work since the Branch's establishment – services that are as much needed in today's shrinking and diverse world as they ever were in previous decades. Anne was always a passionate supporter of ISS's core casework services, insisting that they continue to be provided in spite of financial and other challenges. ISS Australia will do all it can, with the support of our many members and friends, to honour Anne's passion by strengthening and extending the casework services she valued so highly.

2. Anne Cordner and ISS: *A personal recollection by Kammy Cordner Hunt*

Throughout my University years, Annie (as we mostly knew Mum) was busy at ISS in Church Street, Richmond, most weekdays. It was handy that she had a city locale, as we could go in there to share lunch with her, or get a lift back out to Greensborough. The Office was bustling and friendly, with Mrs Mac and Denise and Barb, and we always felt welcome. There was a pleasant little sitting area at the entrance, and a tiny kitchen out the back. Mum introduced the idea of an outdoor seating area in the backyard, and provided potted plants and outdoor furniture so that the staff could share some quality time in the sunshine during their short breaks. Being a country girl at heart, and somewhat afflicted life-long by claustrophobia, it was important to Mum to make this space so attractive for her spiritual nourishment, so she could be revived from time to time to best serve the needs of ISS's cases.

Mum's ability with languages and her love of travel held ISS in good stead, as she was able to connect with overseas delegates wherever she went, and could communicate ably with afflicted families, and on occasions travelled with them to their destinations to act as interpreter. Her fluent French, spoken almost as a native, was especially useful as so many African nations, whence many ISS cases originated, are francophone. She could fluff by with Spanish on her good French, and her fluent German was also brought into use though less often.

Mum had also raised six children of her own, and her qualities as a mother (and grandmother) have been admired, envied and emulated by thousands, then and since. These

same qualities brought a rare sympathy to her role as ISS Director working with children and bereft parents.

As an international delegate for Australia at ISS conventions she was able to communicate with all whom she met, and indeed created some enduring friendships with other delegates from all over the world. She continued to attend these meetings over a period of almost 30 years – her last few trips overseas were all to attend ISS conferences – and every one of these trips was self-funded, as she did not ever believe in drawing from ISS funds in a way that might jeopardise funds needed for casework. She was concerned that subsequent Directors may not be able to achieve this.

Mum was absolutely committed to her work at ISS, heart and soul. It says much for the size of that heart of hers that all six of us (seven if you count Dad) did not feel in any way deprived of her love and undivided attention, her unalloyed joy at our triumphs and unconditional support for our travails.

I can't imagine what ISS must have been like when she retired; once all that towering energy, fierce loyalty and selfless devotion to task was removed from the picture - not to mention all the global connections she had created. Fortunately ISS has always had her great friend and cousin, Neilma Gantner, to provide continuity, purpose and a belief in its *raison d'être* to ensure its longevity. It has survived all the threats of economic rationalism, financial crises and immigration policy uncertainties thanks to Neilma and others who have undertaken to keep driving it since the Annie days.

3. Messages from the ISS International Network

Anne had been a long time friend, colleague and ally of mine. We had gone through so much together, thick and thin, in advancing the work of ISS, an organisation Anne held dear to her heart. She made a great many contributions to ISS and had certainly touched many lives through her years of dedicated and selfless service. I mourn her passing and celebrate her life, knowing that she will forever be remembered for her generosity, kindness and the love and compassion she had for all. - Stephen Yau – ISS Hong Kong

Anne Cordner made a quite outstanding contribution to the work of ISS for so many years. I doubt if anyone has given more of themselves to a voluntary organisation. Her commitment to ISS both in Australia and internationally was without equal. I had memorable first-hand experience of this during the period when I was directly associated with ISS in Australia... I was greatly saddened to hear of her death.

- John Lawrence – former ISS Australia staff member

I have just been informed of the death of Anne Cordner. It is very sad news to me and certainly to all that have known Anne as Executive Director of ISS Australia and later as a member of ISS's International Council for many years. - Damien Ngabonziza – former ISS Secretary-General

I personally remember with great fondness her charming, friendly spirit and devoted professional presence at the Executive and International Council meetings of ISS around the world in recent years. I regarded her as a person to emulate for my retirement years. She will indeed be sorely missed by the ISS international network. - Yael Kimmelman – ISS Israel



ISS News

4. International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA) in the Media

From time to time, ISS Australia staff are invited to take part in media interviews in relation to aspects of our work. Last November, Helen Freris, the coordinator of ISS Australia's IPCA Service was contacted by a journalist from Radio National's "The World Today" program, and asked to contribute to a story on IPCA. The story highlighted current debate on the criminalisation or otherwise of international parental child abduction. ISS Australia was pleased to take part in this interview and to share our view on the issue. Helen presented ISS Australia's position that a more effective response to IPCA would be the extension and strengthening of the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Parental Child Abduction, and full implementation of

return arrangements encompassed by this international Convention.

Helen suggested that criminal courts might be ill-equipped to deal appropriately with the complex needs and emotions experienced by children and parents in cases of IPCA, and might additionally lead to parents and children going into hiding rather than facing criminal charges, placing children at greater risk. The text and audio of the news item can be accessed on:



<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2009/s2750615.htm>

5. UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children



A resolution "welcoming" the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children was adopted by UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 20 November 2009, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children are intended to enhance implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant provisions of international and regional human rights law, in matters of protection and well-being of children who are in need of alternative care, or who are at risk of being so. It focuses on two main aspects:

1. Ensuring that children do not find themselves placed in alternative care unnecessarily
2. That where out-of-home care is provided, it is provided in appropriate conditions and is of a type that responds to the child's rights, needs and best interests

A major thrust of the *Guidelines* is to prompt and support national authorities to promote

family reintegration and provide a framework for care provision. In the case of informal care arrangements, caregivers are encouraged to notify authorities who in turn are expected to formalise the care arrangement, if it is shown to be in the child's best interests, and provide financial support. National bodies are advised in detail about the need for and nature of policies in alternative care that are, among other things, sensitive to cultural and religious practices.

**Did you know that
ISS is the co-convenor of the
Non-government
Working Group to
the UN General
Assembly for
children in
alternative care?**

The *Guidelines* also recommend that "assessments should be carried out expeditiously, thoroughly and carefully." There is much emphasis on family support, promoting parental care and preventing family separation, obviating the need for children to be placed in alternative care. In line with the spirit of the *Guidelines*, ISS Australia will be responding to the Federal Government's *National Standards for out of Home Care Consultation paper*.

6. A New Look for ISS Australia...

You may have noticed that the New Year brought about some changes for ISS Australia. We would like to introduce you to our new look! Towards the end of 2009, with the help of generous *pro bono* support from PageUp People, ISS Australia developed a new look that is more modern, professional and appropriate to take us into our 50th year.

The new logo, based on the 'ISS' acronym, adds a graphical element of a child being supported. The role of ISS Australia is also emphasised by our new tag line: 'Defending

children • connecting families • across the world', as seen below.

The new logo and tagline have been rolled out in our corporate stationary from January. They will also be used in new brochures, our annual report and a new website that are planned for the next six months...

So keep an eye out for them!



7. Appeal Updates...

ISS Australia would like to sincerely thank all our supporters. We truly could not provide our services without your support!

Christmas Appeal: Though this year's appeal fell short of its target, **\$375** was raised and this helped meet the additional need experienced by many over the Christmas period.

Anne Cordner: As noted earlier in this newsletter and as many of you will be aware, the end of 2009 was a sad time for ISS Australia with the passing of Anne Cordner.

In lieu of flowers the Cordner family kindly asked for donations to be made to ISS

Australia. To date this has raised an impressive **\$1,830** in Anne's name.

ISS Australia has benefited from decades of involvement by Anne as both our Executive Director and a longstanding Board member. Her commitment to both the National Branch and the International Council of ISS was significant. ISS Australia seeks to recognise and pay tribute to Anne's contribution through the continued provision of our much-needed social services into the future. If you would like to contribute to ISS Australia's work, please complete the form on the back page of this newsletter or free call **1300 657 843**.



8. Correspondent Profile: ISS Netherlands by Hans van Hooff, Coordinator

ISS Netherlands was established in 1955 as an independent foundation. In 1999 the ISS Netherlands Foundation merged with Stichting Ambulante Fiom. Stichting Ambulante Fiom is a national social work organisation having its main office at 's-Hertogenbosch as well as branch offices in ten cities throughout the Netherlands. Thus, ISS in the Netherlands has been part of Stichting Ambulante Fiom since the merger of 1999.

Part of the reasons underlying the merger between the two organisations was the idea that the Fiom social work organisation, which is active on a national scale, should be connected to the international organisation of ISS.

Traditionally, the field of Fiom activity has included the decision-making processes regarding fundamental life issues such as abortion, adoption, giving up a child for adoption, (single) parenthood or medical

treatment in order not to remain childless. All these issues show constant change in relation to social developments. Being a professional welfare organisation, Fiom takes the lead in these developments, offering various types of counselling and support that are customised to the issues and questions faced by clients today.

Issues showing ongoing developments have also included search actions to find relatives, as a consequence of adoption or for other reasons. Numerically speaking, most cases dealt with by Fiom/ISS Netherlands have been search actions to find relatives. As foreign children have been adopted in the Netherlands since the 1960s these children have been showing an increasing need for information about their 'roots'. They not only wish to make themselves more familiar with the culture of their country of origin, they also want to know whether their biological parents are still alive

and, if so, how they can get in touch with them. Also, the number of people wishing to find their father is increasing. Situations involved here may be associated with the war years, a holiday romance or working abroad; regardless of their backgrounds, children born from these international relationships increasingly want to know the identity of their (biological) father and to get in touch with him.

In the Netherlands, Fiom and ISS together have made it one of their key tasks to undertake search actions, both nationally and internationally.

International searches are realised with the help of ISS, while national searches are performed by Fiom. One of the major principles in search actions is that, whenever possible, both the searcher and the person sought are assisted and supported by a social worker in carrying out their search, establishing contact and any subsequent actions. Searching itself is executed by a specialised 'search team' at the Fiom/ISS Netherlands main office.

In the Netherlands, the procedures used by Fiom and ISS in searching have now been recognised by the Ministry of the Interior. As a result, the Ministry has granted Fiom / ISS authorisation to have direct computer access to the registry office. Apart from showing appreciation for their work, this authorisation also provides a wealth of opportunities to locate people in the Netherlands quickly. With the help of computerised direct access to the registry office of the Netherlands it is possible to find a person even if relatively few personal details are available. In addition, Fiom and ISS have several alternative methods available to find people in the Netherlands. Many other

countries are less fortunate so it takes them considerably greater efforts to locate people.

Current social developments, more particularly the technical possibilities of the internet, have not failed to have their impact on social work in the Netherlands. Specific groups are not only able to get access to general information on websites or make mutual contact through all sorts of venues, it is also more and more common to open interactive websites for specific groups. Contact between professional and client at these sites is established through email, chat and/or video chat.

Naturally, a personal meeting still remains an option although the younger generation, especially, is making more and more use of the new possibilities. In this regard Fiom has been a pioneer in the Netherlands, especially for young single mothers and their multifaceted problems.

Although the number of ISS staff within Fiom (4 FTE) is limited in proportion to the total number of Fiom staff (65 FTE), collaboration has proved highly productive in more areas than individual casework alone. The international network is used increasingly to obtain information and knowhow from abroad on specific issues in order to assess developments in the Netherlands. The international ISS network has been of great value in this development and our current form of collaboration offers great possibilities for the future; as a result, we face the future of ISS with the greatest confidence.

"...children born from these international relationships increasingly want to know the identity of their (biological) father and to get in touch with him...."

9. Quarterly prize draw



ISS Australia appreciates contributions from all its members. Their valuable support enables us to continue defending children and connecting families across the world! In appreciation and thanks for this support,

we have started a 2010 **quarterly prize draw**. This quarter's lucky winner is *Vanessa Mathews!*

Thank you for your ongoing interest, commitment and support Vanessa! Your prize is currently being posted to you.

Would you like to become a member?

Members receive this quarterly newsletter, go into a quarterly prize draw, have the right to vote at ISS Australia's AGM and stand for election to the Board, and have input into the organisation's future directions. Call ISS Australia today **toll free on 1300 657 843**.

