

# National Coalition Against Bullying Conference 2007

an initiative of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation



2-4 NOVEMBER 2007  
HILTON ON THE PARK  
MELBOURNE

---

## National Centre Against Bullying Third Biennial Conference

Opening Address of Welcome

The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC  
Chair, National Centre Against Bullying

# Hilton Hotel

## Melbourne 3-4 November 2007

I first acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundgeri People and their elders and the Kurnil Nation.

I warmly welcome speakers and delegates to this Conference who come from all over Australia, but also from the USA, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Denmark, Finland, Thailand and Japan.

I particularly welcome our distinguished keynote speakers both from Australia and overseas, who bring great knowledge and skills to our Conference.

This is the third biennial conference of NCAB, an initiative set up by AMF, which in turn owes its beginning as a memorial to the children murdered in the Port Arthur massacre for the purpose of protecting children from violence and ill treatment.

This Conference is of particular significance for a number of reasons.

The first and most important is that at a meeting of the Council of NCAB held yesterday, it was decided to adopt the principles set out in the Kandersteg Declaration against bullying of children and youth as the principles guiding this organisation.

For the last ten years, a group of eminent academics working in the field have met on a regular basis, the last of such meetings having been held in Kandersteg, Switzerland this year.

Over a period, they developed this Declaration which in effect set out in concise terms a set of principles that they consider should guide Governments and others having responsibility for the problem of controlling and eliminating bullying of children and youth.

A list of the signatories to the Declaration appears behind me and it can be seen that they are a geographically widespread and distinguished group that includes two of our keynote speakers at this conference, Prof Christine Salmivalli from Finland and NCAB Council member Prof Donna Cross from Australia. Another signatory, Prof Debra Pepler, was a keynote speaker at our 2005 Conference.

Today is the Australian launch of this very important Declaration and NCAB has not only adopted it but will be urging the Federal Government and State and Territory Governments to do as well.

Professor Cross will elaborate further on the content of the Declaration during her keynote address.

At the conclusion of the Conference I will be asking you to also express your support for the Declaration.

The second important matter is the change of NCAB's name from the National Coalition against Bullying to the National Centre against Bullying.

This change is not merely cosmetic but rather reflects a significant change in the nature and purpose of the organisation as it has evolved.

NCAB has amongst its members the most significant group of experts on bullying in Australia. It has however hitherto operated as a small informal organisation without a separate funding base. The Council have after extensive discussions resolved to set up a more formal structure which while remaining as part of AMF is independent of it, and will develop a separate funding base.

As part of this process it has been decided to open up a category of associate membership of NCAB. Previously, membership of NCAB was by invitation only and was confined to a small expert group who had set it up. That group remains as the Advisory Council, some members of which form an Executive Committee chaired by me.

However at past Conferences many who have attended have expressed a wish to play a more active role and it is with this in mind and because we wish to obtain sources of separate funding that we are now offering associate membership to people who have an interest in NCAB and a desire to advocate and support the principles for which it stands.

We propose three classes of associate membership.

1. Community Membership set at \$255 p/a designed for schools/associations/non profit organisations working in the field.
2. Corporate Membership set at \$425 p/a for businesses and companies working in the relevant field.
3. Individual Associate Memberships set at \$110 p/a

For those of you present who choose to become founding associate members at this conference we are offering 2 year membership for \$200.

As well as assisting our cause, members will receive services as they become available with increased funding such as news letters and regular E-mails as to developments in the field and membership access to our website as it develops, together with conference discounts etc.

Because we remain as part of AMF all subscriptions should be tax deductible. There will be additional discounts for students and seniors.

We see this as an exciting initiative and an opportunity for many more people to become involved with NCAB and we hope that many of you will join us in the promotion of the principles set out in the Declaration and in the creation of safer and more enjoyable schools and protecting more of Australia's children from bullying.