

2010 SNAICC National Conference



FOR OUR CHILDREN

Local Strengths, National Challenges

AMPE ANWERNEKENHEKE

Rlterrke Akwete Aneye¹

¹ Title translated in Arrernte, the language of Mbantua (Alice Springs)

CONFERENCE REPORT



27-29 July 2010

Alice Springs Convention Centre, Mbantua (Alice Springs)

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

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Warning:

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WHAT IS SNAICC

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) is the national non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC role and activities include:

- Policy, advocacy and representation
- Resources, publications and training
- Support for sector development and networking

SNAICC was established in 1981 after being proposed at the first Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar in 1979, and has received funding from the Federal Government since 1983. SNAICC also develops and distributes resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services, having established a Resource Service in 2004.

SNAICC members are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based agencies including family support services, foster care agencies, link-up and family reunification services, family group homes, community groups, services for young people at risk, early childhood education and long day care services, Multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), crèches and pre-schools .

SNAICC also has a network and subscriber base of over 1650 organisations and individuals with an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children. The SNAICC National Executive is drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled child and family services across the nation, with representation from every state and territory.

Our vision:

An Australian society in which our communities are empowered to determine their own future, where the rights of our children, young people and families are protected, our cultural identity and achievements are valued and our children and families have access to culturally appropriate services.

Our mission:

To provide a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through a national body which represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services and promotes the rights, needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The SNAICC office is on the land of the Wurundjeri people, in Melbourne, Victoria. SNAICC pays our respects to the ancestors and Elders of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their warriors, past and present.

SNAICC's activities

Key milestones in SNAICC's commitment to serving the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families have included:

- Bringing to national prominence the story of the 'Stolen Generations' when in 1991 SNAICC was the first national organisation to call for a national inquiry into the 'Stolen Generations'
- Production of *Through Black Eyes - Family Violence Resource Handbook* in 1991 and 1992, which was updated and developed into the *Through Young Black Eyes Handbook* in 2002 and the *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit* in 2008.
- Development of National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) on August 4th each year, as a major annual event celebrated by communities throughout Australia since 1988.
- Representing the rights and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1998 and 2000, and presiding as the Convenor of the Indigenous Sub-Group of the Non-Government Organisations Group for the Convention of the Rights of the Child since 2010.
- Research and production of the 'Proposed Plan of Action for Child Abuse and Neglect in Aboriginal Communities' in 1996
- Convening the second National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Survival conference in June 1997, a National Conference in Adelaide in 2007 and a National Conference for over 950 delegates in Alice Springs in 2010.
- Convening a major national seminar with the Commonwealth, ATSIC and the Victorian Government in 2003, *Our Future Generations - The national Indigenous child welfare & development seminar*.
- Research and publication of a paper on child abuse and neglect in the Northern Territory, State of Denial - the Neglect and Abuse of Indigenous Children in the Northern Territory

SNAICC's recent achievements include:

- The 4th SNAICC National Conference, Alice Springs 27-29 July. Over 950 delegates attended the largest ever national gathering for our children and families
- A national scoping tour with Prof. Joseph Sparling to assess *LearningGames* resources and the Abecedarian training model
- Initiating a project highlighting positive child rearing stories.
- The development and national distribution of *SNAICC's 8 Priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families*, with mounted copies presented to Minister Jenny Macklin and the Governor General, Quentin Bryce.
- Continued celebration of National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) on 4 August each year.
- Commencement of a new project addressing social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the early years.

Developed and distributed several key resources for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family sector, including:

- *Talking Up Our Strengths Cards* in partnership with St Lukes Anglicare
- *Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationships Services to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations* in partnership with Family Relationships Australia
- Children's books highlighting positive child rearing practices, including *I Am Strong In My Culture*; *In My Family We are Proud to Be Nunga*; *Culture Keeps Us Strong*
- *A Running an Aboriginal Children's Self-Publishing Workshop How-to Kit*
- *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit*, supporting communities and organisation to address family violence, child abuse and neglect.



THANK YOU

SNAICC wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the conference.

We would like to start by thanking the Conference Working Group, comprising members of SNAICC National Executive and SNAICC members from Central Australia, who met frequently and actively participated in the planning of the conference.

Lisa Coulson (Convenor), Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Association

Desley Thompson, Cape York/Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Advisory Association (RAATSICC)

Kim Whitburn, Regional and Remote Aboriginal Children and Services Support Unit (RRACSSU) North

Evelyn Schraber, Sonya Laughton, Jan Fleming and **Roxanne Highfold**, RRACSSU Central

Cait Ryan and **Rochelle Fielding**, Tangentyere Council

Sharron Williams, Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS)

Dot Bagshaw, Gurlongga Njininj Association

Geraldine Atkinson, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI)

Christine Armstrong, Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi

Margaret Harrison, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

Catriona Elek, SNAICC

Frank Hytten, SNAICC

Jane Harrison, SNAICC

A special mention to Lisa Coulson for her convening of the Working Group and her exceptional work during the conference.

The conference would not have been such a success without the hard work of Sharyn Low and Ian Sweeney, who planned and organised the conference. Thanks also to all SNAICC staff for their roles in assisting with organising the conference.

Thank you to the traditional owners, the Central Arrernte for welcoming us onto their land. Thanks to Janet and Sabella Turner and the Irrelape-Lyape Dance Group for performing the Welcome to Country.

A huge thank you to the community of Alice Springs for their support and for making us all feel welcome. An event like this conference involves a lot of people, services and businesses from the local community.

Thank you to all the performers who shared their talents with us during the conference. The dancing, music and stories were a highlight for many of the conference delegates. Thanks to the Gillen School Choir, Drum Atweme, InCite Youth Arts and the Acacia Hill School Dancers, Aaron and Samuel Crowe, the Arrernte Men's Dance Group and the Cassandra Williams Band. Thanks also to the individuals and organisations that supported the performances.

Roy Price from EthiCal Nutrition Services worked very hard and with great flexibility in putting on the Bush Wok conference dinner.

Thanks to Tangentyere Council and the Yarrenyty-Arltere Learning Centre and the community at Larapinta Valley for hosting a fantastic film night.

The Akeyulerre Healing Centre also did a fantastic job in running the Healing evening on the Tuesday night. We would like to thank everyone at Akeyulerre for their hard work.

Thank you to all who were involved in the Art Market. Thanks to DesART and all the art centres and artists that took part with their fantastic art works: Ngurratjuta Art Centre, Warlukurlangu Artists from Yuendumu, Tjanpi Weavers, Waltja, Yarrenyty-Arltere Artists, World Vision Epenarra Arts, and Red Shed Arts Centre from Atitjere (Harts Range).

We also express our appreciation to our many guests who spoke at the conference, with a special thank you to our international guest keynote speakers, Cindy Blackstock and Joseph Sparling, and to the Australian keynote speakers, Dorothy Scott, Karen Martin, Grant Sarra and Kerrie Tim. Thank you also to all those who facilitated workshops, gave presentations and held displays, through which we gained so much knowledge and shared so many experiences.

Thank you to Senator Trish Crossin for addressing the conference during the opening plenary and to the Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Minister for Youth, and Minister for Sport, Kate Ellis, for her message.

Thank you also to all the children and young people from across Australia who participated in SNAICC's Children's Artwork Program as part of the conference.

Of course, thank you to all those who traveled to the conference – some great distances – from their homes and communities where they are doing such great work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The conference would not have been possible at all without the participants and their positive energy.

We acknowledge, with thanks, our financial sponsors.

Our government partners were:



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Human Services
Aboriginal Affairs NSW



**Government
of South Australia**

Department of Education
and Children's Services



Queensland Government



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development



Our Community Partners were:



**SCENE
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Our Bronze Sponsors were:



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INTRODUCTION

The 2010 SNAICC National Conference was a great success, attracting a capacity audience of 980 delegates from all states and territories. The large number of delegates made it the biggest ever conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This lent the conference a real sense of occasion and gave significant weight to the issues that were discussed and debated. Importantly, there was still a sense of intimacy where delegates could make personal and professional connections with each other. The venue, location and programming of the conference allowed these two factors to work together.

The topics of the conference were as varied as the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. There was strong content on early childhood development, child protection and healing, as well as child and family health, out of home care, leadership, and working with families and young people. The keynote speakers spoke eloquently and with passion, and challenged delegates, organisations and governments alike to work towards a better and fairer future for our children.

The workshop program was presented by a broad section of those who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It was dominated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations that have a successful history with innovative on-the-ground programs. There was also strong representation from the mainstream non-government sector and from government.

Meeting in Alice Springs also allowed the showcasing of some of the important work and culture that exists in the Centre. SNAICC was proud to host many people from Central Australia who welcomed us, danced, sung, performed, sold and displayed their art, and who presented on the many successful programs that are running in Central Australia, giving the conference its local flavour.

Each day of the conference started with a performance by local children. Not only did this set the scene for the day's activities, but it reminded us of the talents, skills and abilities of the younger generations. It also gave a rare opportunity for these individuals and groups to perform to a large and appreciative audience.

Local participation also extended to a number of satellite events. On the Tuesday night of the conference we were fortunate to have the opportunity of two local services inviting us to spend the evening with them and their community.

One Tuesday night event involved the Yarrenyty-Arltere Learning Centre at Larapinta Valley Town Camp, run by Tangentyere Council, hosting a film night of community-

based films from around the country. A meal of bush tucker inspired food was served as delegates enjoyed the films and talks with the local Larapinta Valley community. This allowed delegates to meet and socialise with the local town camp community and gain insight into life in the town camps.

In the other Tuesday night event, Akeyulerre, the Arrernte Healing Centre, hosted an evening of traditional medicine making, clapstick making, cooking 'roo tails, men's story telling and traditional women's dancing. These activities were dispersed with helpings of roo stew and conversation around campfires on the soft sand. Like the film night, it allowed for an interaction with the local Arrernte community.

It was fitting to have these two events as part of the conference, as they are both important local community controlled services that provide valuable outcomes for their communities. They are both great examples of the power of communities having an active and successful say in their future.

Finally, as one of the beauties of Alice Springs is the ability to hold an event outside, the weather turned on a balmy night for 820 of us to cook, eat and spend time together under the stars and river red gums on the banks of the sandy Todd River bed. It was a unique and beautiful experience, cooking on flour tin drums, and having an alcohol free night – not your usual conference dinner!

This report aims to capture the spirit of the conference, and also provide a reference for the keynote speeches, some workshops and other highlights.

We now look forward to continuing to work with all those who attended and to meet again to share our stories in Cairns in 2013.



A GREAT SUCCESS

Based on evaluation feedback and data, it is clear that the conference achieved its objectives and that the overwhelming majority of delegates enjoyed and benefited from attending the conference. The keynote speakers, the workshops, the entertainment, the local community involvement in the program, and the event organisation were all highly evaluated.

SNAICC was delighted that there was such a strong and significant gathering of people at the conference to share, learn and be inspired. Our conference numbers were much larger than expected, confirming SNAICC's view that people need interaction with others to renew their own ideas and work.

The achievements of the conference were evaluated in a number of ways. SNAICC analysed data from conference registrations to determine from where across the country delegates came and what kinds of organisations they represented. We collated the numerous comments received by email and telephone after the conference, as well as participant feedback sheets (of which 105 were received) and individual workshop feedback sheets (of which 980 were received).

SNAICC also commissioned Success Works, a consultancy company that specialises in social policy, to attend the conference, interview delegates and provide feedback to SNAICC. In addition, we looked at the media coverage the conference received. Together, this information enabled us to assess how well we achieved the conference objectives, as well as being useful feedback in terms of organising the 2013 SNAICC national conference in Cairns.

Overall, the conference met delegates' expectations, with 89 percent of people who filled in the overall evaluation forms saying the conference met their expectations. 83 percent of people said they plan to come to the next SNAICC conference in Cairns in 2013.

Conference Outcomes

Based on this evaluation data, we can confidently say that the conference led to powerful growth in understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the importance of culturally strong services for children and families, as well as developing skills, knowledge and energising the sector. This conference, like the previous SNAICC national conference in 2007, enhanced SNAICC's reputation and its role as a peak body in the child and family welfare sector.

The conference set out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To share stories and celebrate different models of locally successful and culturally strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service in early childhood, child and family welfare sectors.
2. To listen, learn and grow our knowledge of culture, elders, families and communities in raising children and supporting families.
3. To challenge governments and others to act in a way that acknowledges history, respects culture, and provides the services and support families and communities need for bringing up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
4. To foster leadership to support culturally strong and safe communities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

To assess how these objectives were met, we looked not only at the content of the conference proceedings and delegate feedback, but also at a number of ratings given by delegates in the evaluation forms. These give a guide as to how successful the conference was in achieving these objectives.



OBJECTIVE 1

To share stories and celebrate different models of locally successful and culturally strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service in early childhood, child and family welfare sectors.

In the overall evaluation forms we asked people to rate particular aspects of the conference. These ratings are mentioned throughout this section of the report.

'Getting energised/inspired' received an average rating of 4.2 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates pertaining to this issue were:

"I gathered so much useful information and felt so inspired."

"I am energised to go forward – so good to hear positive stories and people doing it for themselves."

"Good mix of inspiring and technical and policy and practice."

'Atmosphere [of the conference]' received an average rating of 4.4 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates pertaining to this issue were:

"I just loved everything about it from the fact that an Aboriginal person designed the bag logo, to the film night, the dinner, the venue – everything and especially how hassle free and relaxed the whole thing seemed. Workshops on engaging communities through collaboration and consultation were also really good to hear about as well as Aboriginal people telling their stories in language."

"Being around so many people in Alice was so powerful. It has uplifted me, motivated me. Feeling that spirit, seeing countrymen, seeing all the kids performing...it was the right place to be. I was really proud to be part of SNAICC for those three days. It felt like a big family gathering."



OBJECTIVE 2

To listen, learn and grow our knowledge of culture, elders, families and communities in raising children and supporting families.

The 'Relevance [of the conference] to my work' category on the overall conference feedback form, received an average rating of 4.1 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates pertaining to this issue were:

"Very informative and relevant to my work. Managed to pick up lots of information and resources that I will be able to use in my work."

"I have a wealth of information and fantastic contacts that will benefit me greatly in my role."

The 'Learning more about issues' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 4.0 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates pertaining to this issue were:

"An incredible gathering of people passionate about caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. I have learnt a lot about other inspiring and knowledgeable projects."

"Wonderful opportunity to hear these wise men and gain an understanding of their work and healing skills."

"Will be taking this back and implementing it at work and in my service."

The 'Getting new ideas that I can use at work' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 3.7 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates about this issue were:

"Learnt something new at each session or was further inspired."

"I enjoyed/gained insight and ideas to use in the remote communities of the Barkly and strengthened my resolve to continue/facilitate all of community approaches to everything."

"Access to lots of ideas, and experience to consider and incorporate into our work."

"Very informative and relevant to my work. Managed to pick up lots of information and resources that I will be able to use in my work. Also heard some very inspiring talks which I hope to take away with me."

OBJECTIVE 3

To challenge governments and others to act in a way that acknowledges history, respects culture, and provides the services and support families and communities need for bringing up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Many of the keynote speakers spoke strongly, challenging governments to give priority to the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Governments were challenged to adhere to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, to adequately fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services, to continue to support the healing process and to acknowledge the history and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Steve Larkins, SNAICC Chairperson said this of Cindy Blackstock's keynote presentation:

"It challenged SNAICC to become more political in the arena for national and Aboriginal child welfare. SNAICC has now followed that up...challenging government to make a stand on child welfare issues."

Sharron Williams, SNAICC Executive member, also said:

"What I will take away is a preparedness to make a difference, to insist that change has to start with us – and must not stop until we can promise a more equitable future of our children."

And, in the words of one conference delegate:

"There were fabulous stories, great examples of good practice, voices of hope and commitment, challenging questions and demonstrations of strength based engagements that were very informative, [and] powerful in terms of my personal and organisational role."

OBJECTIVE 4

To foster leadership to support culturally strong and safe communities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The 'Skill development [received from the conference]' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 3.4 (out of 5). Some comments from delegates discussing this issue were:

"We identified the conference as a staff development and professional learning opportunity. We had a delegation of 10 members; the majority of our staff are Aboriginal. For the new non-Aboriginal staff, they needed to be saturated in our way of thinking, doing and being, and that was achieved so thank you very much. For the Aboriginal staff, one comment; 'she fell in love with early childhood and she can see the importance, the opportunities and the difference our sector makes to families and children's lives.'"

"A good atmosphere, which was positive for learning. Lots of practice discussions – good [to] know what was happening [in] the field to develop culturally-appropriate services."

"Most sessions attended provided some form of strategy to achieve my goal of gaining information to improve on existing strategies in engaging Aboriginal families."

The 'Networking and making contacts' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 4.2 (out of 5).

Alison Wunungmurra from the SNAICC Executive commented:

"It was really exciting and challenging, especially meeting all the other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, with all the new ones coming in, experiencing a conference environment. Just being there, meeting people from different places, the feeling, the learning."

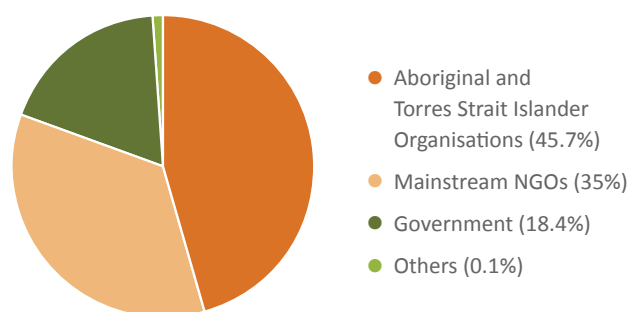


Who was at the conference? A snapshot of the delegates

Leading up to the conference, registrations grew and grew and needed to be capped at 980 places, making it the largest ever conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Overall there were 407 representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations of the 980 delegates that attended. There were also 312 delegates from mainstream non-government organisations, 164 delegates from government and 8 others in attendance.

- 45.7 per cent of the delegates came from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations,
- 35 per cent came from mainstream non-government organisations and
- 18.4 per cent came from government agencies.

Percentage of delegates' organisations



The table below compares participation in the SNAICC conference in 2010 to the 2007 and 2003 conferences. Key features are:

- Large levels of participation from the home states each time
- Very few delegates from Tasmania each time
- Strongest representations from New South Wales and Victoria each time – matched by the host state (NT in 2010, SA in 2007 and Victoria in 2003).

State or Territory of Origin	Number of Participants 2010	% 2010	Number of Participants 2007	% 2007	Number of Participants 2003	% 2003
ACT	20	2.1%	35	4.9%	21	7.1%
New South Wales	194	19.9%	162	22.9%	56	19%
Northern Territory	374	38.0%	85	12.0%	30	10.2%
Queensland	115	11.8%	90	12.7%	36	12.2%
South Australia	71	7.3%	145	20.5%	21	7.1%
Tasmania	7	0.7%	3	0.4%	4	1.4%
Victoria	139	14.2%	131	18.5%	107	36.3%
Western Australia	57	5.8%	54	7.6%	20	6.8%
Total	977	100%	707	100%	295	100%

There was very strong representation from regional and remote communities and children's services from nearly all states and territories.

From the Northern Territory, there were delegates from communities such as Maningrida, Nhulunbuy, Galiwin'ku, Wadeye, Yuendumu, Willowra, Nyirripi, Aputula (Finke), Kaltukatjara (Dockers River), Lajamanu, Walungurru (Kintore), Yuelamu (Mt Allan), Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Warumpi (Papunya), Watiyawanu (Mt Liebig), Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), as well as from Katherine, Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

There were New South Wales delegates from Aboriginal children's and family services in rural and regional areas such as Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Newcastle, Cowra, Dubbo, Kempsey, Albury, Bathurst, Tamworth and Wilcannia, amongst others.

Queensland delegates came from a range of communities, big and small, including Cairns, Townsville, Thursday Island, Cunnamulla, Mackay, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Woorabinda, Kowanyama, Wondai and Wujal Wujal, as well as from Brisbane.

Community workers from the ACT attended, as well as federal government department staff, researchers and academics from Canberra and Wreck Bay community. We also saw delegates from Launceston, Burnie and Hobart in Tasmania.

From Victoria, there were delegates from many rural and regional areas including Geelong, Shepparton, Bendigo, Barmah, Echuca, and Orbost, as well as from Melbourne.

There were delegates from all over Western Australia, including from Jingalong, Punmu, Parnpajinya, and Warburton remote communities. People also came from Karratha, Halls Creek, Meekatharra, South Hedland and Fremantle, amongst other towns, and from Perth.

From South Australia there were also delegates from Kaltjiti (Fregon), Pukatja (Ernabella), Mt Gambier, Minlaton, Port Augusta, Murray Bridge and Berri, as well as Adelaide and other regions.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference

SNAICC feels that it is important to host a conference that is not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled, but also expresses this through its content.

In the evaluation forms we asked people to rate the cultural relevance of the conference. The 'Cultural Relevance of the content of the conference' received an average rating of 4.4 (out of 5). In addition, 'Atmosphere of the conference' received an average rating of 4.4 (out of 5).

The conference is a celebration and recognition of culture and of the younger generations that are our future. There are few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gatherings of this size, so it is vital that the conference keeps its accessibility and strength of culture. As one delegate wrote:

"For the first time I was in a majority and not in a minority at a national conference."

In addition, mainstream organisations and services and government representatives attended the conference to gain a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and how to best work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Two delegates' quotes capture these sentiments:

"I came away with new ideas in how to make generic services more user friendly for Aboriginal kids/families/communities."

"The presentations and workshops were fantastic. It was a joy to participate in such positive and culturally strong workshops. I learnt more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture at this conference than I have ever before."

Workshops and Displays

48 concurrent sessions were held at the conference, as well as two pre-conference workshops. Services with great ideas and programs wanted to share them with others for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families across the country and it was wonderful to see this happening.

The 'Workshops' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 3.8 (out of 5).

The workshops were diverse in not only their topics but also their presentation style. There were presentations with representatives from across the country, — rural, remote and urban. From community members and workers, academics, and government employees, there were

workshops in Arrernte, in Pitjantjatjara, and in English. There were two panels with a cross section of those who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to discuss some of the current issues facing our children and families and service delivery.

There were also hands-on workshops, such as those on children's self publishing (SNAICC) and the traditional basket weaving (Tjanpi Desert Weavers). These workshops were an excellent way to relax, allow your mind to settle away from the more wordy presentations, and absorb cultural information in a different way. The Tjanpi Desert Weavers workshop also served to showcase an Aboriginal way of teaching. In the words of two of the participants:

"What I really learned was how the Elders teach in an Aboriginal way – how watching carefully and encouragement inspires the learner."

"Mrs Armstrong has given me one of the experiences of my life. To simply sit, watch and learn, with a few giggles was just too deadly for words."

A number of interpreters were provided to allow delegates to present in their language. This was important to allow greater participation in the conference by language speakers. Importantly, it also allowed the broader conference to hear Aboriginal language speakers talk about their work in their first language. It showcased some of the strength and beauty of the culture of Central Australia.

Learning was also a two way process, with presenters and delegates interacting during sessions. Fiona Napaljarri Gibson from Nyirripi in the Northern Territory said:

"It was good that people from interstate and overseas were attending. The keynote speakers were really good. I enjoyed the PowerPoint presentations (visuals), not just having people talking. We were able to talk about our language and culture program in Warlpiri schools which is really important for our kids. Lots of people asked questions after the presentation. What was good was that it was all Yapa (Warlpiri) people talking about language and culture."

Another delegate wrote:

"The speakers presented their workshops in a way we could understand."

However, it remains a challenge for a conference that caters for such a wide audience to provide sessions that are universally accessible for such a diverse community. Some language speakers from remote communities commented that sessions were accessible for them, whilst others struggled with the more academic talk of some of the sessions.

The 15 displays and 20 exhibitors also provided opportunities for services to share their research results, and campaign, program and resource ideas, as well as give away or sell resources.

Keynote Speakers

Our six keynote speakers inspired, challenged and moved the delegates with their stories and presentations. Whilst the speakers had diverse expertise, they all spoke of the importance of culture and its role in the work that we do with children and families.

The 'Keynote Speakers' category on the overall conference feedback form received an average rating of 4.5 (out of 5).

Desley Thompson, SNAICC Executive Member, said;

"The keynote speakers were all excellent, got you really thinking."

Another delegate said;

"Great and inspiring keynote speakers. They were very high quality and informative."

You can find out more about the keynote speakers from the 'Conference Highlights' section of this report, which provides snippets of what the speakers shared with the delegates. We have also published a section of keynote speeches in the final section of this report. You can listen to some of the speeches on the SNAICC website.

Media

The conference received very positive media coverage from a diverse range of media outlets, which are covered below. The coverage was a blend of the political and the celebratory aspects from the conference. Throughout the conference there was coverage on the ABC, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) and community radio.

Four media releases (including a joint release with Families Australia and the Child and Family Welfare Association of

Australia) were sent out by SNAICC over the three days of the conference, prompting interviews with ABC local television and radio, National Indigenous Television (NITV), National Radio News, and The Wire community radio network.

The conference and keynote speeches were covered in the Centralian Advocate; The National Indigenous Times; the Koori Mail; the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Newlines radio and magazine, and in Australian Associated Press (AAP) news feeds.

What we learned

Whilst comments from delegates were overwhelmingly positive, some constructive criticism was received.

Importantly, much of the constructive feedback was very similar to that received in 2007, and demonstrates some of the challenges of holding an event this size for such a diverse audience.

In response to such feedback, for the next conference in 2013, we will seek out more interactive workshops, including those which foster practical skills development, and those that are accessible to a range of people with different language skills. We will also try to create more opportunities for conversation and both formal and informal networking and discussion of issues central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Finally, SNAICC will consider the opportunity at the conference to create a series of motions or recommendations from the conference, to be used in talking with government departments and others, and to make statements on behalf of delegates.



CHILDREN'S ART AND STORIES COMPETITION

As part of the Child Rearing Stories project at SNAICC, we encouraged primary and secondary children to contribute on the theme *How I was grown up strong in my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture*. We were thrilled to receive 46 thoughtful and beautiful entries from all over Australia. All entries were prominently displayed at the SNAICC conference, to much admiration.

SNAICC wishes to thank the competition judges: Richard Frankland, writer and filmmaker, and Wayne Quilliam, NAIDOC Artist of the Year.

Conference attendees were also invited to vote for their favourite piece of art through the People's Choice Award, and over 90 votes were received.



Winners were:



Lelly Cooper,
Thornbury Primary School, Vic
(Prep)



Walter Nona (top),
Tagai College Badu Island,
Torres Strait
and
Andrew Vakalasaqele (bottom),
Kingswood Park Public School, NSW
(Joint winners Grade 3 4)



Isobel Maxwell (top),
Challa Gardens Primary School, SA
and
Wazana-May Kabay/Nuga (bottom),
Rasmussen State School, Qld
(Joint winners Grade 5 6)

I grew up with my country.
 Connected to the land
 I'll always love Australia
 With it's wind and dust and sand.



Odetta Maxwell,
 Challa Gardens Primary School, SA
(Essay)

Amanda Goguman,
 Warlayiriti Arts Centre, WA
(Photography)

Wazana-May Kabay/Nuga
(People's Choice winner)



Thornbury Primary School (top),
 Vic
and
Tagai College (bottom),
 Badu Campus, Torres Strait Islands
(Joint winners School's Prize)

Thanks also to the sponsors who donated prizes, allowing us to provide every entrant with a book and a certificate of appreciation, and award category winners with gift vouchers.





AT THE CONFERENCE



TUESDAY 27TH JULY



OPENING PLENARY





WORKSHOPS



TUESDAY 27TH JULY



FILM NIGHT & HEALING CENTRE





PLENARY

WEDNESDAY 28TH JULY



AT THE CONFERENCE



WORKSHOPS

WEDNESDAY 28TH JULY



DINNER



PLENARY



THURSDAY 29TH JULY



PLENARY





STALLS & DISPLAYS



AT THE CONFERENCE



THURSDAY 29TH JULY



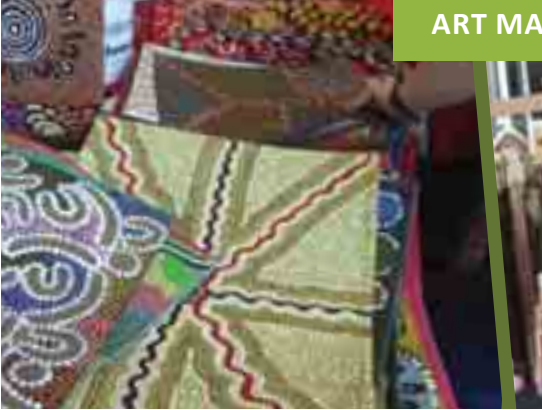
ART COMPETITION



WORKSHOPS



ART MARKET





Is this our Canada?: examining the systemic disadvantage undermining the safety of First Nations children and highlighting strategies to overcome this

BY: CINDY BLACKSTOCK

Keynote presentation by Cindy Blackstock to the

SNAICC National Conference Tuesday 27 July 2010.



What a great honour to be on the lands of the Central Arrernte people; to be here surrounded by the spirits who have guarded our ancestors for thousands of years. I think it was no mistake, as I flew here on Air Canada and out of my window I saw a rainbow as I landed in Sydney. I come from a land far away from here and yet we were bound by the same type of history. I come from a place called Canada which is actually Kanata. It's a First Nations word meaning village. But the reality is in our country, one of the richest countries in the world, is that as I stand here the Government of Canada is on trial, to account for the racial discrimination of First Nation's children. Our spirit's time has come. Our ancestors who died in the residential schools in Canada, who lost their languages because our government thought they had something better to offer, who stopped our children from being raised in their communities, call to us and insist that those tragic times end with this generation. There is no longer any room for racial discrimination of Indigenous children by governments. All of us together around the world are going to make this happen for every Aboriginal child so

that they can grow up safely in their families, in their nations, in their lands, proud of who they are and what they have to give as a unique gift to the rest of the people of the world.

As in your country, our government has apologised; it's pretty good at that. It has a lot to apologise for and in 2008, after residential schools operated in our country from the 1870s to 1996, our Prime Minister stood before the country and he offered these words. He said, "we now recognise that in separating children from their families we undermined the ability of many to parent and we sowed the seeds for generations to follow and we apologise for having done this". These were welcome words for people who had been in residential schools including members of my family. But to Prime Minister Harper, I say this, there are many definitions of reconciliation, but what counts to me is not saying sorry twice. The way that you treat our children today is the biggest marker of whether you understood what you apologised for in the first place. That is the measure.

Canada is a country that I'm proud to come from, the nation is founded on principles of equality, fairness, justice and freedom. When you see the maple leaf flag waving in the wind, that's what our country wants you to think about and that's what I want to believe about the place where I come from too. But when countries fail to stand up for the values that define them the most it is up to us as citizens to make sure they do not stand in hypocrisy. So I have a rating scale for countries that guides when I can criticise them and I start out at the top and I say, you know, it's not fair to criticize Canada about discrimination unless it knows it's racially discriminating against kids, , and it does. It's not fair to talk badly about Canada unless it also has solutions to deal with the racial discrimination and it does. It's not fair to talk badly about Canada unless it has the resources to deal with it and it does. These are difficult financial times but money seems to appear when the government wants to host the richest eight nations in the world and spend 1.2 billion on security, or when the government wants to put signs up everywhere saying how they are spending our tax dollars in hopes that they get more votes; they spent \$43M. They have no money unless - the government of Canada wants to build a fake lake in a convention center so media attending the G-8 media could get a feel for Canadian life by the lake. The fake lake was just blocks away from one of the Great Lakes in Ontario - one of the largest lakes in the world. Well the good people of Canada thought this was a waste of money and some of the people from our communities thought that if the Canadian Government really want to give people from around the world a good sense of what it's like to sit around the lake in Canada, we should all collect up a bunch of black flies and mosquitoes and let them loose in there too! That's the real thing. So our government has the money to deal with racial discrimination against First Nations children just like your government has the money. Canada has simply chosen to use the funds for fake lakes and other expenses instead.

If a country knows it racially discriminates, as Canada does, has solutions and has resources to deal with the problem and chooses not to then it slips into questions of morality. When our government, and I would suggest from my brief visits here, you know better than I would, and your government too has made the conscious choice, not to treat aboriginal children in this country with the level of respect and dignity and equity that they deserve. That is a question of moral conscience. In the case I'm about to tell you about the Canadian government not only is not dealing with the inequality- it is fighting for the right to continue racial discrimination against little kids. It is fighting for the right to do that.

Now how does this all happen, this racial discrimination? Well, in Canada, we have things called Reserves. Provincial/ Territorial child welfare and education laws apply on and off reserve, but the federal government is supposed to pay for services on-Reserve and when they don't or do so to a lesser standard the provinces/territories do not top it up resulting in a two tiered child welfare system where First Nations children get less.

In my own country 27,000 children are spending the night away from their families - three times the number who were in residential schools at the height of their operation. Are they in child welfare care because they are unsafe? Are they better off in foster care? Because that's what the child welfare has been created to think. That when we walk into these families where things are so desperate and we take the children we assume we have a better place for them. Many of you in this audience have done child protection work. I have done it too for over a decade and one thing I understand is that we don't remove children from at-risk situations with their families and put them in good Utopic places. What removal is all about is trying to balance whether the risk they face in their families is worse than the risk that they face growing up in care and my own belief is that there are very, very few children who we should be removing from their families; not 27,000 and not at 6 to 8 times the rate of other children. The reason that First Nations children are over-represented in child welfare care is not abuse. It is neglect, but not neglect in terms of I have all the skills to parent and choose not to it is neglect fueled by poverty, poor housing and caregiver substance misuse linked back to residential schools. It's neglect magnified by inequities in service access across many domains as the government creates a perfect storm of disadvantage. When we walk into poor homes what do we in child welfare often do? We walk in there as child protection and I see that you have a home without any drinking water, without any sewer, without any heat and -45° temperatures (that we have in Canada) and I say to you let's send you the parenting skills. In doing this, we codify government discrimination as an individual deficit for our parents and our parents sadly take

that on board because they have all kinds of messages from society that Aboriginal peoples are failures as parents. It is not true.

Poverty, poor housing and caregiver substance misuse that can be linked back to the ravages of residential schools. That's what drives First Nations children into care. It's not parenting skills, it's not the fact we don't want to parent, it's not the fact that we don't care, it's not the fact that we don't love them, because we love them more than anything. That's why we have fought so hard and so long to ensure they have the same resources to be safe and nurtured as other children enjoy. It's because we love them. It's because our governments have created a perfect storm where it makes it so much more difficult for us to care for them and instead of dealing with those government policies undermining the ability of our children to thrive and succeed child welfare too often pins the responsibility on the parents.

Now the good news is, we know how to deal with these issues. If you're poor and you don't have any food, we can make sure you have food and we can teach you how to prepare food and we can decontaminate the grounds where you live so that you can enjoy your hereditary foods. We know how to deal with these issues. These are solvable problems.

I hate it when the government officials often say to me, well Cindy, Aboriginal issues, (they often call us 'issues'), are complex. That's government code for saying they're not going to do anything about it. This is not rocket science. This is stuff that we've always known. Everybody has a right to a good house, everyone has a right to their culture, everyone has a right to their language, everyone has a right to clean water, everyone has a right to be able to feed their child nutritious food. That is what is needed and none of it is complex or unsolvable.

So what does this storm look like of discrimination against Canada? It is lived out tragically every day in the lives of children. This is particularly the case as Canada and the provinces buck pass when it comes to funding First Nations services otherwise available for other children. Canada calls this buck passing - jurisdictional disputes between the provinces and the federal government. Jordan River Anderson was born in Norway House Cree Nation in 1999 to Ernest and Virginia Anderson. They have other children. This baby had complex medical needs and Mum had to go 500 km to the south to give birth to him. Many of you who live in remote areas know this experience where you have to go away from your family to get that critical medical care that you need and the family sacrificed and they did just that. And Jordan had to stay in the hospital for over two years because it was medically required to do so. So his Mum stayed with him and his Dad went back to Norway House to parent the other eight children. Together the children and the community, rallied so that everything was ready when doctor said Jordan could go to a family home. And just at his second birthday that magic moment arrived.

We have all been there. No matter what culture you are, no matter what race, what religion, we all know that wonderful feeling when a new baby comes back from hospital. And the doctors were thrilled. Everything was ready. The government of Canada said good deal, and even better because we're not paying for it. The government of Manitoba said good deal and we're not paying for it either. If Jordan was non-aboriginal he would've gone home but because he was First Nations, the bureaucrats decided to leave this little baby in the hospital while they argued over each expense related to his at-home care. It was at least twice as expensive to leave Jordan in hospital and I needn't tell you, any of us who have been in a hospital know, that the very best place for all of us is really back home. Well the government kept on saying we're having case conferences, we're doing the very best we can, just be patient with us, it's going to happen- he will go home, maybe the next conference, we just have to get the authority of the person higher up. Meanwhile Jordan saw days turn into weeks and weeks turn into seasons from his hospital room window. Spring came and it went and the glare of the sun from summer came into his window. He heard the stories of other little boys who came into his room and got better and got home. What it felt like, to put your feet in the lake water or what it is to feel the fur of a big dog, or to feel rain on your face as you look up. The people closest to Jordan say he died of a broken heart. He waited over 2½ years in that hospital for the governments of Canada and the governments of Manitoba to do the right thing before he slipped away into a coma and passed away. And what about his family? Well his loving mother had been sober for 11 years and she was sober during the time when Jordan was in hospital, but the stress of it all was too much and she dies from her addictions that she had returned to to escape the pain of seeing her child in the hospital, in a Winnipeg bus shelter six months after her son died. And what became of the family? Ernest Anderson, Jordan's father, reached out behind all that grief and he said this is never to happen to another child in this country or anywhere in the world. Children come first and bureaucrats come second and red tape comes third. Children are always first.

So, in Jordan's memory, we created Jordan's Principle that says where a service is available to every other child and some kind of government red tape is getting in the way of that service, the child's needs get met first and they can argue as much as they like, as long as they like, after.

Well, Ernest Anderson, he worked with us all that time and then the grief overtook him and he too turned back to addictions and his other children were taken into foster care. Now who's neglect is that? Who's neglect is that? And, as Ernest said recently, he said I'm getting stronger now and his greatest wish is that Jordan's legacy of equality be lived out in the lives of indigenous children around the world and so I share with you this story in honour of the Anderson family.

But that isn't the end of the inequalities experienced by our kids. You see Canada short-changes them. No matter what they're doing. First Nations children get approximately 30% less for elementary school education and 70% less for secondary education and then only 1 in 4 graduate from highschool. So instead of dealing with this equality, Canada is spending that money to host the G8 or build fake lakes and they don't want you to see this undercurrent of inequality where they are pulling down the potential of our kids to succeed. And they also feed into a stereotype. Some people say our kids want to grow up to be on welfare. Well, you know one of the things that I've been so honoured to do is to visit with our communities all over the country and I've talked to thousands of children and young people. Not one of them, so far, has said my dream is to grow up to be on welfare! They want to grow up to be grass dancers and artists and doctors and nurses and teachers. They want to grow up to be great mums and dads and uncles and aunties. They want to grow up to be great neighbours. They want to uplift the non-aboriginal people in their country and the peoples who are struggling around the world. They want to soar on the wings of their ancestors to create a future we could all feel proud of, but they can't get there if Canada does not give them the opportunity they need to succeed.

Remember I started out saying that the government of Canada knows about the problem, they should deal with it? What I am showing you now are excerpts from Canada's own documents describing the under funding of child welfare on reserves as "circumstances are dire." What they're talking about here is the under-funding of child welfare services. They provide about 22% less for First Nations kids to live safely in their family homes than all other children enjoy. Canadian government documents describe this funding inequality as legally defensible but go on to say they are worried about claims coming from the children themselves when they get older. You know, there's individual officials within government have good moral character and I uplift them and I thank them. But as a system, I think the government acts more like a sociopath motivated by self-interest versus the public good. It forgets what we're talking about here are little kids and their families, they're real people with real potential. Call me crazy, but I think the first thing they should be concerned about is the fact that their racially discriminating against little kids instead of getting their butts sued by the kids as they grow up damaged and not having an opportunity to contribute to our country.

So. I spent 10 years sitting around the table with government officials trying to make things better, creating not one, but two, solutions and then a third came by. We sat at those tables. I used to be the youth representative at that table. Now some of you are giggling so you know time has passed! I have to wear reading glasses now and my own sense was if I stayed at that table I think I could've been the Honorary Elder, if not the Ancestor, before they did something that was the right thing for kids. We all have

to exercise caution. How long are we going to sit at those tables in those voluntary processes developing solutions with governments that too often go unimplemented. How long are we willing to sit there? Because, as we do, a generation of children is growing up around us and during the time when we sat at that table the percentage of First Nations kids going into foster care increased 71½%.

My organisation is the only national non-profit organisation in our country for aboriginal children and we have four staff. We used to receive about 50% of our funding from the government of Canada and we came to a place where we had to make a decision. Do we continue to sit around the tables and talk to them and put out glossy brochures with the government of Canada at the bottom because if we did that I am sure that we'd have a lot of funding and a lot of staff. Or do we take them on and risk our organisation to ensure that the kids of this generation do not go without being treated with equality. Well, I'm a girl from the bush, and I'd grown up with the ethic that I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees so we filed a Human Rights complaint against Canada and we've lost all of our federal government funding! I would do it again in a minute because that is our job - to put children before our own interests as an organization.

You know the great Dennis Brutus, he's an Elder whose now passed from South Africa. Dennis said the crux of Human Rights work hinges on how much trouble are you prepared to get into to defend the values and the people that you say you care about the most? We must stand up.

So this Tribunal is not one of those things where you can just have a bunch of recommendations that sit on a shelf; we've all been a part of those. This actually has the power to order the government of Canada to treat these kids equitably and that's an important part. And you can see the process here. We filed it in 2007 and one of the things that's really important to understand is that the government of Canada is not fighting this thing on the substantive merits of the case. It's using a legal loopholes to avoid public and legal accountability for its treatment of children. The legal loophole is that Canada contends it only funds First Nations child welfare and others deliver it. If there is any differential treatment between First Nations and other children it is the service delivery people who should be held responsible. Now that's splitting hairs isn't it? you cannot provide equitable services if you are not resourced to an adequate level. The government of Canada has put that case twice to the Federal Court to try to derail a public tribunal hearing on the merits and they've lost both times. In apparent desperation, they filed the another motion to dismiss the public hearing on the merits at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on the funding is not a service issue. That case was argued on June 2nd and 3rd 2010 in Ottawa and we are awaiting the ruling.

You see my goal with Prime Minister Harper is not to change his mind. It's to make him famous for whatever he does. My greatest heroes are all ex-convicts- Nelson Mandela, Muhatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King and many of our Elders

who fought to keep our children at home. People who stand up against racial discrimination times when many others are silent. Prime Minister Harper, this is your moment. Are you going to choose to racially discriminate against this generation of First Nations children or are you going to make the choice to truly breathe life into the apology and ensure this is the first generation ever to be treated with culturally-based equity by the government of Canada? It is a matter of conscience and I don't know which way he will decide, but I am going to make him famous no matter what decision he makes and you are going to help.

We have something called the 'I am a witness' campaign at www.fnwitness.ca We invite caring people from all over the world and organisations to sign up to say you are going to watch the Tribunal, you will listen to what our government says, you will listen to what we say and together as a world we are going to pass judgement on the government of Canada and on governments like Australia on the basis of how they are behaving toward Aboriginal children and their families and their Nations today. So we have over 6,000 people signed up as witnesses making this case is the most formally watched court case in Canadian history. Many caring non-Aboriginal people have also attended at the hearings and here is what some of them had to say Now this is a 14 year old kid, who is non-aboriginal, who comes to the Tribunal and this is what she thought of it. She said, "he, Canada's lawyer, presented himself and his argument very poorly. It almost seemed like he was trying to evade responsibility. To him it may have been just another case, but to some, including the students of Elizabeth Wynwood, it was life. It was the beginning of what could be a real breakthrough in our society."

And here's another student who says "I wanted to say that when I first started the process of being a witness I only heard the First Nations side of the story, but after being there for both days I realised there is NO other side of the story."

And you see those t-shirts, well they were a 14 year old little girl who designed those t-shirts and I'm so thankful my colleague Andree Cazabon(?) is here, you'll see some short films on the I am a witness website where the youth and other witnesses describe their experiences of witnessing the tribunal. You will also hear from a young woman who designed the I am a witness t-shirts. We also invited some of our colleagues in children services to attend the tribunal.

Now this person has never been really concentrated on First Nations peoples before so she came to learn more and she said I felt ashamed by a lack of action on behalf of the federal government and its focus on legal loopholes and she "came to realise that the dynamics of what transpired

in those two days [in the tribunal room] were a microcosm of what has been happening in this country [Canada] for centuries."

I'm happy to tell you that last week, at our Assembly of First Nations, which is our national political organisation, the Chiefs passed a resolution authorizing another Human Rights complaint against the government of Canada for racially discriminating against our children in education. So stay tuned for 'I am a witness Phase 2'.

Because we are not going to give up. Our ancestors have given us a legacy. We have a job to do and that is to ensure that our kids, from this moment forward, are no longer the casualties of society. They are uplifted as valued citizens in a world that embraces Aboriginal peoples as much as they embrace our Aboriginal art. That the dot paintings on the Qantas uniforms are just a symbol of how much they embrace the intelligence, the wisdom, the stories, the richness of the Aboriginal people in this country. That is when I'll feel proud to walk on Australian soil.

I don't think we understood when we filed this complaint how much it would light the candles of hope of our community members. So often we've lost hope. Fighting this case for our children together, I stand here only as one person, but please trust me in knowing that the success I talk about here is because of the thousands of people and the breath of our ancestors and the spirits are guiding us forward. There have been so many times when we could have gone wrong and the right person has stood up to help. So many times when we did not know what to do and the right answer came. I want to bring to you a message of hope as well. On our website there is 7 brief ways you can make a difference for indigenous children in Canada and through the great work of SNAICC there are ways that each of us today can improve the lives of Aboriginal children in Australia and indigenous children around the world.

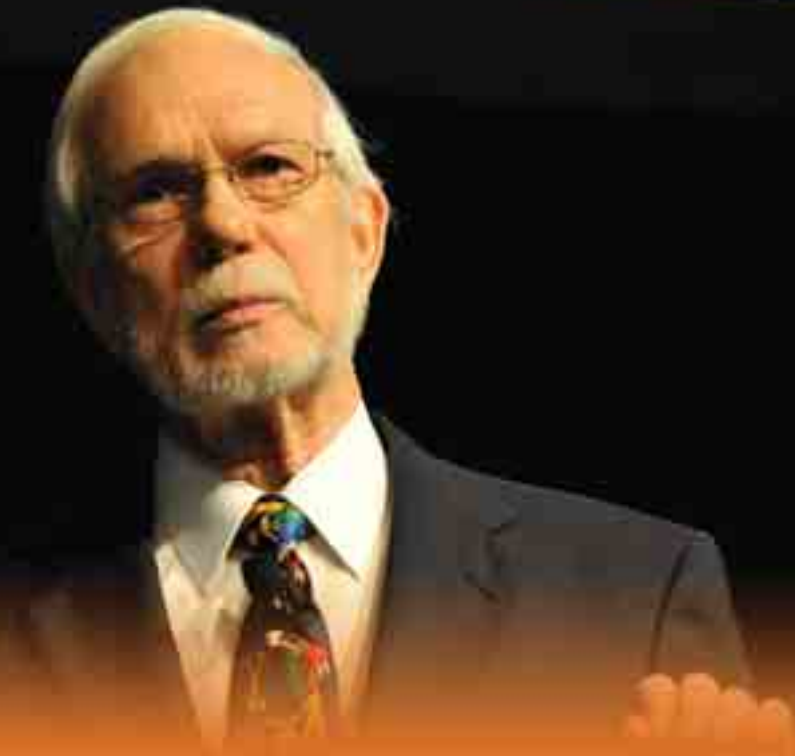
When I get older, when I get stronger, there's little voices all over the world singing that song. Our spirit's time has come. I call to my ancestors. A little 5 year old boy who never knew what it is to be treated equitably called Jordan River Anderson; a 15 year old little girl who died trying to go to school after fighting for education rights for First Nations' children called Shannen Koostachin and to the thousands of ancestors who dreamed of the day that is coming now. This is the moment when laughter replaces sorrow, when peace replaces hardship, when freedom replaces oppression, when equality replaces discrimination. Spirit's time has come. Rise up and get into a lot of trouble for doing the right thing – because the children are counting on all of us.

Thank you so very much.

CINDY BLACKSTOCK, M.M., PhD is the Executive Director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada www.fncaringsociety.com

This national organisation seeks to promote, and support, First Nations child and family service. A member of the Gitksan Nation, she has worked in the field of child and family services for over 20 years. Key interests include exploring the over representation of Aboriginal children in child welfare care, structural drivers of child maltreatment in First Nations communities, and human rights and the role of the voluntary sector in expanding the range of culturally and community based responses to child maltreatment.

Her current professional interests include serving as an Atkinson Economic Justice Fellow, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation Social Innovation Generation Fellow, and a board member of the National Aboriginal Youth Organisation.



The Abecedarian Approach

AND

Highlights of Research Findings from Abecedarian Studies

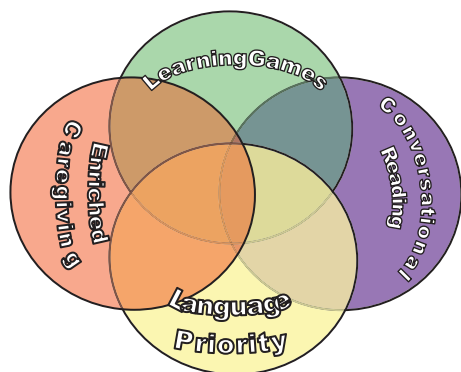
BY: PROF JOSEPH SPARLING

*The keynote speech by Dr Joseph Sparling to the SNAICC National Conference Alice Springs was based around the following two papers. The first, *The Abecedarian Approach*, is based on the practice; the second is based around *Highlights of Research Findings*.*

The Abecedarian Approach

The Abecedarian Approach is a suite of teaching and learning strategies that were developed for and tested in the Abecedarian Studies, three longitudinal investigations to test the power of high quality early childhood services to improve the later academic achievement of children from at-risk and under-resourced families. The long term positive results of these randomised, controlled trials are now known throughout the world and form a major part of the evidence that supports our current belief in the efficacy of high quality early childhood programs.

The Abecedarian Approach is comprised of these elements:



The Abecedarian elements can be used in classrooms, family day care, parent groups, and home visits – and can provide a link between these service components. In the Abecedarian Studies, these elements were used in long day care combined with home visits and/or parent groups.

LearningGames.

LearningGames is a set of 200 individualized, game-like activities that are shared between an adult and 1 or 2 children. Each child experiences at least 1 or 2 *LearningGames* episodes per day. They include many items that are familiar to parents and teachers. They are based on the concepts of Vygotsky and Piaget and can be thought of as “bite-size pieces of curriculum.”

There are 3 types of games:

- Games that are seamlessly integrated into the routines of caregiving
- Games in which the adult joins and enriches in-progress child play
- Games in which the adult initiates an interaction, inviting the child to join in.

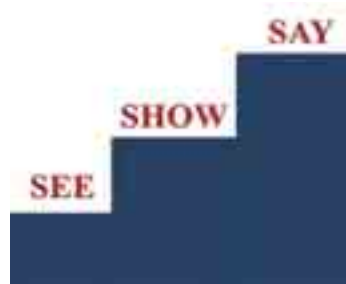
These are basic principles of *LearningGames*:

- Simple but deep
- Focuses on adult-child interaction (mainly 1-on-1 interactions & some small group experiences)
- Made up of individual items (pages) that teachers can use but can also be given to parents – parents and teachers use the same materials
- Flexible – used in different types of programs (including day care and home visiting).

Conversational reading

The second element of the Abecedarian Approach is modelled on the way parents and children read together rather than the way reading typically occurs in the classroom. Conversational reading is based on the concept of “joint attention.” In the Abecedarian Approach every child (age 0-3) is read to individually each day, and pairs of children ages 3-4 are read to each day.

These are basic principles of Conversational Reading:



- Goes back and forth, like a conversation
- Appropriate from infancy through age four (or older)
- Engages one or two children at a time
- Employs an easy and memorable strategy consisting of only three parts (3S is the memory aid for these three parts)
- The 3 S’s are used as stair steps, each a little more advanced than the last
- Can be used by both educators and parents.

Language Priority

In the third element of the Abecedarian Approach, educators and parents emphasise language throughout the day. They respond warmly whenever children make an attempt to “talk” to them. They try to create longer “conversations” with individual children. The 3N Strategy (notice, nudge, narrate) is used to turn any event into an occasion for rich language stimulation.

These are basic principles of Language Priority:



- Emphasise language in every event of the day
- Respond to children’s language overtures

- Extend “conversations” so that they include several turns on the same topic (extended discourse)
- Use a strategy (e.g., 3N) for surrounding spontaneous events with adult language
- Share language priority techniques and explain the importance of language with the child’s family.

Enriched caregiving

The Abecedarian curriculum approach affirms that, in the first five years of life, education and caregiving cannot and should not be thought of as distinctly different activities. The phrase “enriched caregiving” is intended to remind all of us (researchers, parents, caregivers, teachers, and program administrators) that “care” for an infant or young child can and should do several things at once.

Care can meet the vital needs that support life and stimulate growth while also being responsive to the individual child’s own preferences, abilities, and life situation. Further, care frequently can be enriched with educational content.

By highlighting the pivotal role of care in the education of young children, the Abecedarian approach imbues all of the child’s day with educational meaning.

Basic principles of enriched caregiving:

- If possible, divide your group so that each adult has a specific group of children she always cares for (or does most of the care for)
- Respond as quickly as possible, do not wait until the child has cried a lot before going to him or her
- Take educational advantage of the fact that you are in close physical contact with the child during most caregiving routines (speak softly and directly to the child, with eye contact)
- Explain the process of what you are doing and name the objects you touch during care routines (and when the child is ready, invite the child to take the lead in naming the caregiving actions and associated objects)
- Ask questions about what will come next
- Let the child have specific responsibilities during care routines
- Put some appropriate educational materials near the scene of a caregiving event
- Think about the educational content (for example naming colors, textures, or counting) that might fit into a care routine – and include it
- Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Center on Health and Education, Georgetown University, FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Highlights of Research Findings from the Abecedarian Studies

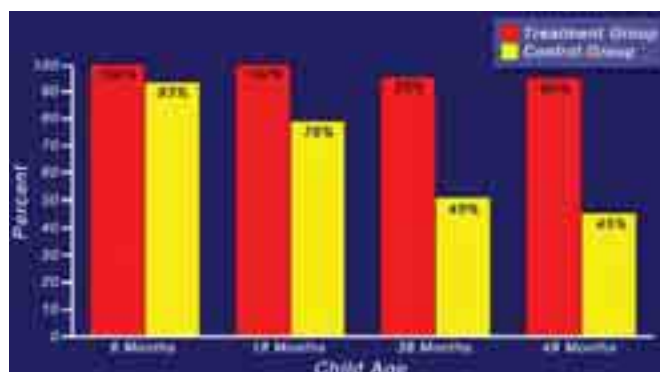
A series of randomised controlled trials (RCT’s) called “the Abecedarian studies” demonstrate the significant benefits of high-quality early childhood education for poor and at-risk children and their families. Children in the studies included those at risk from multiple social conditions such as poverty, young maternal age, or low parental education. Other children in two orphanage studies were at risk because of parental abandonment. Importantly, children in some of the studies came from a wide range of social classes. Many of these children had no additional risk other than being born at low birth weight or with cerebral palsy. Each Abecedarian study used *LearningGames*® as a core component of the

educational program delivered through center and/or home intervention. Abecedarian Study 1 began in 1972, and follow-up data were collected through 2009. These are the RTC's:

Randomized Controlled Trials	Location	Duration of Program	Type of Program	Oldest Age of follow-up	
Abecedarian Study 1 (The Abecedarian Project)	Chapel Hill, NC	Birth to 5 years	Center + social work home visits	30 years	
Abecedarian Study 2 (CARE)	Chapel Hill, NC	Birth to 5 years	Center + educational home visits	20 years	
Infant Health and Development Program	Abecedarian Study 3	Boston, MA	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 4	New Haven, CT	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 5	Bronx, NY	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 6	Philadelphia, PA	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 7	Miami, FL	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 8	Little Rock, AK	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 9	Dallas, TX	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
	Abecedarian Study 10	Seattle, WA	Birth to 3 years	Center + educational home visits	18 years
Abecedarian Study 11 (Cerebral Palsy Study)	Baltimore, MD	Age 1 year to age 2 years	Parent training for home intervention	2 years	
Abecedarian Study 12 (Orphanage Study 1)	Iași, Romania	Age 1 year to age 2 years	Home (small group in orphanage)	2 years	
Abecedarian Study 13 (Orphanage Study 2)	Iași, Romania	Age 2 years to age 3 years	Home (small group in orphanage)	3 years	

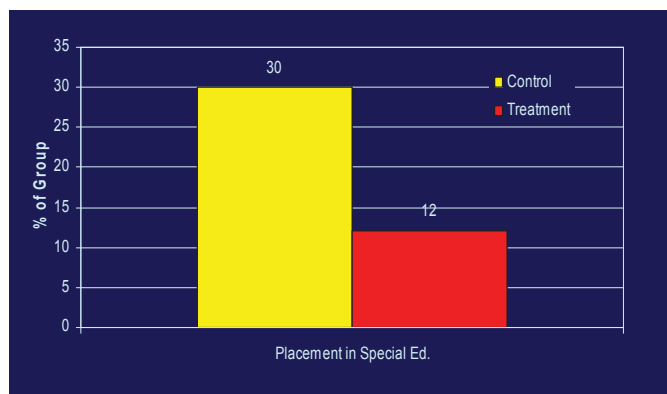
What were some of the outcomes for participants in these scientific investigations?

The following paragraphs and figures highlight some key findings, first in the early years of life, then in the middle and adolescent years, and then in the young adult years. Finally, findings are presented for the parents of the children who were enrolled in the Abecedarian program.



Percentage of child sample in normal IQ range (>84) by age

Almost all of the at risk children in both the experimental and control groups of Abecedarian Study 1 were in the normal IQ range at the beginning of the study. Most of those who received the Abecedarian intervention continued to stay in the normal IQ range, while more than half of those who did not receive the intervention fell out of the normal range by 48 months of age. This decline is seen in the descending yellow bars in the accompanying figure (Martin, Ramey, & Ramey, 1990).



Special education placements by age 15

When the at-risk young children entered public school, those who did not receive the Abecedarian enriched educational child care program in the first 5 years of life were more than twice as likely to be placed in special education for 1 or more years by the time they reached age 15 (Ramey & Ramey, 1999).

Adolescent outcomes for low birth weight babies

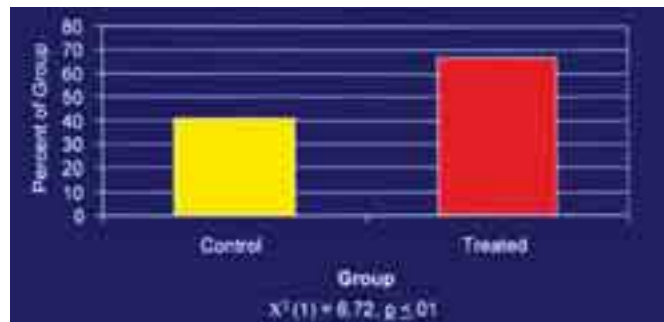
What about the results for low birth weight babies who received the Abecedarian program? When the intervention and control groups (pooled from eight sites in Abecedarian Studies 3-10) were compared at age 18. The intervention group in the 2000–2500 grams birth weight range had these characteristics:

- higher math achievement
- higher receptive vocabulary
- fewer risk taking behaviors (McCormick et al., 2006).

These long term, positive findings are particularly encouraging because they were achieved in a program that lasted from birth to 36 months of age rather than from birth to 60 months of age as in Abecedarian Studies 1 and 2. They underscore the importance of the first 3 years of life. www.TeachingStrategies.com Toll Free: 1.800.637.3652

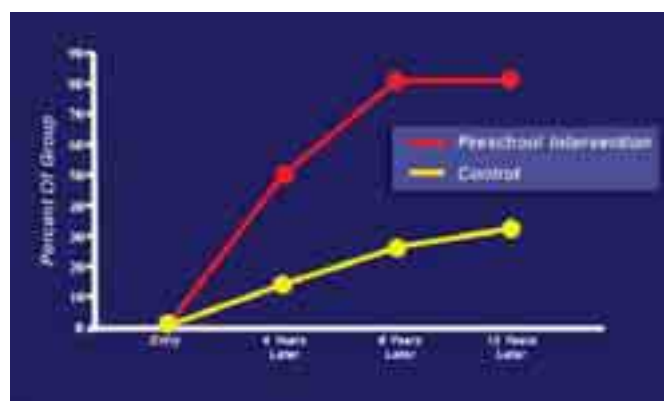
Percentage of young adults in a skilled job or higher education

At age 21, almost 70% of the young adults who had received the Abecedarian intervention in the infancy and preschool years were attending a 4 year college or were employed in a skilled job (such as an electrician or higher), compared to about 40% of those who did not receive the preschool intervention (Campbell, Ramey, et al., 2002).



Post High School Education for Teen Mothers of Children Studied

Not only did the children benefit, but benefits accrued for the mothers of the children who received the Abecedarian program. In Abecedarian Study 1, over a third of the parents of the infants enrolled were teenagers. About 80% of the teen mothers whose infants received the Abecedarian program continued on to get post-secondary education, compared to about 30% of teen mothers whose infants did not receive the Abecedarian program. As seen in the red line in the accompanying figure, the teen mothers continued to get more education for as long as 8 years after their children entered the program (Ramey et al., 2000,).



Behavior of parents who received training in key parts of the Abecedarian approach (*LearningGames* and Conversational Reading)

In addition to the Abecedarian studies, a national study was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences of the use of some of the elements of the Abecedarian curriculum approach in Even Start programs.

This RCT was conducted in 120 sites across the USA and analyzed measurements from 2,430 parents and 2,790 3- and 4-year old children. In randomly selected sites, the parents received a parent education program using *LearningGames*, conversational reading, and enriched caregiving as important program components. Outcome variables for the study included parental responsiveness to child and parental interactive reading skill. Both variables were coded from videotaped parent–child interaction sessions. The study produced these parent findings:

1. An Abecedarian parent education program can increase parental responsiveness to child and parental interactive reading skill (Judkins et al., 2008, p.90).
2. These parent behaviors are increased by a combined classroom plus parent education program (Judkins et al., 2008, Table K-3). www.TeachingStrategies.com Toll Free: 1.800.637.3652 Page 3
3. Adding the parent education element creates parent effects above and beyond providing the classroom element alone (Judkins et al, 2008, Table K4).

These findings are presented in statistical form in the table below.

Of interest, one of the measured parent behaviors (responsiveness to child) is positively and significantly correlated to child literacy outcomes and social outcomes (Judkins et al., 2008, Table 7-1, p. 111).

What curriculum approach produced these multiple, long-term results?

The Abecedarian Approach is comprised of (1) *LearningGames*, (2) conversational reading, (3) enriched caregiving, and (4) a comprehensive conceptual framework such as The Creative Curriculum®. In the various Abecedarian studies, these components have been combined and typically delivered through center-based child care and parent education.

LearningGames is the set of adult-child interaction games originally developed for Abecedarian Study 1, and it has been used consistently in all of the Abecedarian studies, even when the other curriculum components were not used. In the cerebral palsy study, *LearningGames* was the only Abecedarian component used. Beyond these scientific studies, *LearningGames* has been implemented successfully in a variety of service–delivery modalities:

- home visiting
- parent education classes
- family child care homes
- child care centers
- pre-K classes
- family literacy programs.

In home visiting, *LearningGames* can be used as a stand-alone curriculum or in conjunction with other curricula, especially Partners for a Healthy Baby.

Parent Outcomes	Effects of Combined Curricula on Parents (ECE/PE vs. control)			Incremental Effects of Parenting Curriculum on Parents (ECE/PE vs. ECE only)		
	Effect size	95% CI	p-Value	Effect size	95% CI	p-Value
Interactive reading skill	0.50	0.29,0.71	0.000	0.48	0.29,0.67	0.000
Responsiveness to child	0.18	0.01,0.35	0.032	0.23	0.06,0.40	0.006

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JOSEPH SPARLING, PhD, is an early childhood educator and former teacher and principal, is Research Professor at Georgetown University, Fellow of the Frank Porter Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the first author of *LearningGames*®, *Partners for Learning*, and *Conversation Books*, educational resources that have been used widely in the United States. He has also developed curriculum and provided training and intervention services for orphanages in Romania.

Sparling was a co-principal investigator on the Abecedarian studies, three longitudinal research projects conducted over 30 years with at-risk children. Through this research, he demonstrated the efficacy of early childhood education by developing simple tools that doubled children's learning capacity and improved their health, social emotional well-being, employment and other life outcomes.

His landmark Carolina Abecedarian project was a combined early intervention for children of poor and minority families with child care and used an experimental design project involving experiment and comparison groups. Results

indicated that by the age of eight, children who received preschool intervention subsequently performed better academically than those who had no preschool experience. Benefits were gained regardless of disadvantage, family factors and other contextual issues.

In mid-2010, Sparling was an academic visitor for two months at the University of Melbourne, where he conducted research into the potential implementation of the Abecedarian Approach in Australia (titled 'the 3A concept'). His visit raised interest regarding the applicability of the 3A concept to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Sparling is currently on a study trip in Australia with the support of SNAICC to consult further on the 3A concept with relevant government, community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

A recorded interview with Melbourne Graduate School of Education can be heard at www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference or at <http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au/episode/285>.



Reflections on Aboriginal children and child protection: lesson learned both personal and professional

BY: PROFESSOR DOROTHY SCOTT

Keynote presentation by Dorothy Scott to the SNAICC National Conference Wednesday 28 July 2010.

I acknowledge the Central Arrernte people, the traditional owners and custodians for Mparntwe, and I acknowledge their elders past and present. Let us honour the land and its spirits. It is a great privilege to be invited to speak to you and it is with deep humility that I do so.

Let us look at these pictures of Indigenous children on the screen – their beauty and their joy, their creativity and their competence. These are in contrast with the appalling fact that Indigenous children are nine times more likely to be in the care of the State as a result of child protection proceedings than other children. Here at this conference we are finding and sharing with one another a different way to protect and nurture children.

Each of these children will ask themselves the questions that all children, and all humans, ask, Who am I? Where am I going? Do I matter? And how they answer these questions will shape how they grow up, or even whether some grow up and reach adulthood. To answer these questions, each of us needs to ask two other questions first, questions that Aboriginal people have understood for longer than any other culture on earth.

Where do I come from? Who do I belong to? I first came across these two questions in a SA Aboriginal organization for people with alcohol problems. These were the questions each person entering that program was asked to answer:

None of us can answer the questions “Who am I, where am I going and do I matter?” until we know where we come from and who we belong to. In modern society we often think that answering who am I depends on what belongs to us but the wisdom of Aboriginal people tells us that it who we belong to which tells us who we are. It is those who love us and those we love.

The answers to the questions where we come from, and who we belong to, are in our stories. We are our stories. Individual lives are created by stories. Families are created by stories. Communities are created by stories. And the life of our nation is created by stories – big stories.

The little stories of each of our lives fit into the big stories of our nation. The big stories of this country go back a long, long way – to the Dreaming. They are Aboriginal stories up until just two centuries ago since when the stories have involved European people and Aboriginal people, and the relationship between them.

The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples has been a big story, and for many Aboriginal people, a very sad story.

Today I would like to share with you some of my little local stories, true stories that came into my mind when I thought about why we are gathered here. They are connected to the bigger child welfare story which is part of the big story about the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the history of Australia.

There are some lessons that come from these stories, lessons for us in thinking about how we grow the children up strong so that they can have good stories and can give their stories to their children and their children’s children, as Aboriginal people have done in this country for thousands and thousands of years.

As a 14 year old school girl I came to Central Australia with other students from my high school in Melbourne. The colours and the contours of this landscape captivated me and I was in awe of the night sky with its sparkling stars. I could feel the spirits of the land.

I also have memories of my mistakes.

- a. I remember climbing Uluru (I did not know this was the wrong thing to do) and taking this stone away with me (I did not know this was the wrong thing to do). Maybe someone here who is going to Uluru and who knows it is wrong to climb Uluru and who knows it is wrong to take the stones away, will be kind enough to take the stone back to where it belongs.

- b. I also remember near Alice Springs, at a mission I think, taking a photo of an Aboriginal mother and her little girl with a bright red jumper, and when I later looked at the photo I could tell that this mother did not want to be photographed but that she did not have the power to say no. I wish I could say sorry to her and to her little girl who would now be a woman, may be even a grandmother. It makes me think about what it must be like for a parent not to be able to say no, and for their child to see their mother or their father not able to say no to white people. Might this mean a child answers the question ‘who am I, where am I going and do I matter?’ in ways that makes them feel that they are not a strong person, that they do not have control of their future, and that they do not matter. Is there a lesson in this for us today I wonder?

At this same place, as we were leaving and just about to get on the bus, I remember a white man telling us that all the Aboriginal children should be taken from their families and brought up by white people. I was shocked but I did not say anything. I knew what he said was not right but I remained silent. How many of us remain silent when we should speak I wonder?

We must never remain silent again. This week in our national newspaper, The Australian, words have been printed about ‘removing all the children’ that I never thought I would see or hear again in my lifetime again. These are painful words to read but it is important that we realize these views are now part of the national discourse again. As I flew to Alice Springs on Monday, this was what I read.

“I’m outraged by the articles written by Natash Robinson (“One little boys’ anguish as culture put before safety”, 24-25/7) and Tony Koch (“Pathetic excuses perpetuate this fraud on vulnerable children”, 24-25/7) on the plight of children in Aboriginal communities. How can this possibly be tolerated in prosperous Australia.

Why do our indigenous people care so little for their children that they deny them an education and health care, and allow them to be physically and sexually abused, so continuing the cycle of poverty and neglect for generation after generation? Perhaps the adults are beyond help but if the only way out of this appalling mess is to remove all the children and given them a future in mainstream Australia, the let’s do it, and to hell with cultural sensitivities.

If you don’t do this, you condemn these children, and eventually they children, to the miserable lives othat their parents lead. What is so special about Aboriginal culture, anyway, that it must be preserved at the expense of its children?”

MIKE PHILLIPS, WOLLSTONECRAFT, NSW

In this morning’s Australian newspaper, my reply

was published.

“Mike Phillips’ answer to the problem of child abuse and neglect in Indigenous communities (“remove all the children ... and to hell with cultural sensitivities, 26/7) will not work. Indigenous children are already nine times more likely to be in State care than other children.

Some of these children clearly cannot return home because it is unsafe to do so but to remove children on the scale Phillips demands will only compound the problem. Will we remove the traumatized parents’ subsequent children, and again and again and again?

And where will they go – on to the revolving door of multiple foster placements in our overloaded child welfare system or shall we reopen the institutions where we warehoused children in the 1960s? These “solutions” have failed.

Some things are working but there is a long way to go. Improved housing and employment, alcohol control measures and rehabilitation services, child and family health nurses and early childhood education require sustained commitment by governments willing to work in partnership with Indigenous organisations and communities.

This was the first recommendation of The Little Children are Sacred Report. It is time we tried it.”

PROFESSOR DOROTHY SCOTT

In Melbourne when I was 15, I began to help out as a volunteer at an institution for children taken from their parents by the police and child welfare authorities. There were a lot of children and they were sad and frightened. On Sundays sometimes their parents came and the parents also seemed sad and frightened, and sometimes angry. Sometimes children waited up against the fence for the parents who never came. Maybe the parents felt too much shame and too much sadness to come.

I did not notice Aboriginal children there at that time but when I left school at seventeen my first job was as a child care worker at this institution, and I remember two Aboriginal girls and their brother. The boy was about 8 and his older sister was about 10 and his little sister three. They had two surnames – the name of their family and the surname of the foster family they had been with before they came into the institution. I do not remember these children having any visitors. They were very close to one another. The little girl often came up to me and climbed on to my lap for a cuddle. She trusted me. I let her trust me. One day I was asked to go with the children in a van driven by a man and take them far away to a place called Ballarat. There were two children’s homes there – one for children of school age, and a babies home for children under five. The little girl clinged to me and screamed as they tried to take her from me, the person she trusted. Her brother and her sister saw all of

this. It was terrible. It is the worst experience in my life. How many times worse must be for an Aboriginal mother to have her child taken from her or for an Aboriginal man, whose traditional role is the protector of women and children, to be rendered powerless to prevent such an act .

The lesson is that it is important to talk about the painful things that have been done in the name of child welfare. Back then white people did not hear those stories. Many Aboriginal people have now told those stories. Have they been heard? Have the lessons been learned?ave they

My first job after leaving university was in the Social Welfare Department in Victoria. There I learned what had happened to Aboriginal children who were placed in white foster families and adoptive families. There are lessons in these stories.

There were children in foster care, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who had not been seen by anyone in the Department for years as there were few staff and many children. Among the children I was responsible for there were several Aboriginal children living with white foster parents. Other young social workers and I asked the late Auntie Mollie Dyer to come to a meeting one evening to talk with the foster parents of Aboriginal children. The daughter of Aboriginal leader Mrs Margaret Tucker, Auntie Mollie Dyer set up VACCA, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care and led the changes in child welfare for Aboriginal children in Victoria. She worked to prevent Aboriginal children coming into care, and she worked to help foster parents and social workers understand what it was like for Aboriginal children already in foster care.

At the first Adoption Conference in Sydney in 1976, I remember Auntie Mollie Dyer and Aboriginal people from other States speaking out about what it was like for Aboriginal children to be adopted by white families. It was hard for the children because they could not answer the question ‘who am I?’.

Because of what I learned from Auntie Mollie Dyer I got into trouble from the Victorian Ombudsman for what he said was interfering in the privately arranged adoptions of Aboriginal children by white families.

But there is another side to this story. Because of my empathy for Aboriginal families, I sometimes did not want to believe that Aboriginal children could suffer abuse and neglect from their families. I remember one Aboriginal girl in foster care who had been sexually abused by her father when he was drunk, and I denied that this could have happened even though there was strong evidence of this.

My friend Muriel Bamblett, the former Chair of SNAICC and the CEO of VACCA, has often reminded us that white people sometimes do not want to see the suffering of Aboriginal children who are being abused as they were afraid of making the mistakes of the past and afraid of being seen as racist.

The lesson of this story is that we must all face up to the

facts of child abuse and neglect no matter whether it is an Aboriginal child or a non-Aboriginal child, for if we don't it is the child who pays the price.

I have some good stories about what I have seen and learned in recent years. I used to work for an organization in Melbourne that gave money to help Aboriginal organizations and this meant I travelled to many places across Australia and saw Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who trusted each other, working together to create make things good for children and families.

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service, "Mums and Babies" Project

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service is an Indigenous-managed health service and a team of doctors, nurses and Aboriginal health workers developed the Mums and Babies program. Aboriginal and TSI health workers reached out to pregnant women from Aboriginal and TSI communities and encouraged them to use the service. Transport was provided and access was on a walk-in rather than an appointment basis. People were warmly welcome when they came. Photographs of the babies born were taken and displayed, and there were toys and a weekly playgroup for children. The atmosphere felt right. It was successful. The percentage of eligible women almost trebled from 23.8% to 61.2% in a couple of years. The number of antenatal care visits per pregnancy increased from three to seven and there was a significant reduction in pre-term births.

Pal....Napranum, Far North Queensland

In Napranum near Weipa on the on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, an inspiring outreach program was developed called Parents and Learning (PaL). It is a 2-year home based program, using books and activities to promote parents' confidence in themselves as their children's first teachers. PaL has spread to other Aboriginal communities in Victoria and NSW. The PaL program was the result of a collaborative effort between the Napranum preschool staff and Aboriginal parents. The program involves a parent or extended family member working together with their child during school term. Parents undertake to read the story book and work with the educational activities each week. PaL Tutors deliver kits to the home and pick them up each week. They are local Aboriginal women with their own young children and they are trained and supported to teach other parents how to use the kits. It too has had very good results.

These and many, many other good program operating across Australia, as we have heard about here at the conference, which are showing us the way. They are all different but successful program have important common elements:

- They employ Aboriginal people who receive good training and support
- They have a warm and welcoming atmosphere

- They are high quality services which are well evaluated so we know if they work
- They are based on close and equal relationships between those providing a service and those receiving a service (not fly in and fly out!)
- They focus on families' strengths and aspiration – they are not a shame job
- They bring families together and strengthen community
- Last but not least they were developed in close partnership with communities

Communities know what they want if time is taken to listen to them. Aboriginal men and women in some communities in some places are doing wonderful things such as fighting for alcohol control measures in their communities, for alcohol abuse is the single biggest threat to the wellbeing of children. This is true both of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

In 2006 I had the opportunity to visit the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands with a group of Josephite nuns (Mary Mackillop's mob!) and several Aboriginal women, led by Mrs Waniwa Lester or Auntie Lucy Lester, who is with us here today.

Over the next couple of days we listened to the mothers and the grandmothers tell us how they were very concerned about the 'skinny children', especially the very young children who were not getting enough food to eat and were seriously underweight. This concerned us too as malnutrition or 'failure to thrive' is one of the main reasons that Aboriginal children in remote communities are removed by child protection services. It is one of the reasons that young children die and if they don't die, they become sick and later they struggle to learn at school.

But it is heart breaking when these children are taken away. This had happened to some of the grandchildren of the women with whom we spoke. They said that children cannot grow up strong if they are taken away from their family and country. One grandmother spoke with deep sorrow and distress when recounting how her young grandchild, who had been taken far away, had asked her on the telephone "Grandmother, where are you?".

The women said that Anangu children who are taken away "feel like strangers in own country when they return... children taken away call other people 'mum' – wrong way - not true – names of some people who were taken away not true now... we all want to stay in land to learn culture, not learn other people's culture...learn from own people".

Anangu women spoke a lot about hunger. Families cannot afford to buy food due to the very high prices in the stores. Much of the food was unhealthy. "Take away food not good. Take away food killing Anangu ...Need enough food for children to stay on lands."

When asked what should happen when parents cannot care for their children properly and the babies are underweight, for example when parents might be sniffing petrol, the women said that the 'Anangu way' was for grandmothers or aunties to look after the child but many grandparents are raising children without financial support. They said that "Grandmothers need help to buy food".

One very senior woman who has since passed away said she had been "thinking safe place, feeding place...". The women were very positive about 'homemaker services' that were just being developed in some communities on the Lands such as the one in Amata by Brenda Stubbs. She employed the young mothers of 'the skinny children' for a few hours in the morning to make the meals for elderly Anangu and then they fed their children in the centre and enjoyed a lovely meal together.

Services which are based on 'case management' and which single out parents who are not looking after their children properly are a shame job. Services which have an open door and an open heart and which invite parents to be contributors, not clients, are not a shame job. When I listened to Brenda talk about what she did, it was like she was a grandmother to all of the children and a mother to their young mothers. I said this to her and she said "Of course, they are all like my own grandchildren'. She said "In everything I do I am saying 'it does not have to be like this' ". She was sowing the seeds of hope in her community.

Brenda Stubbs and countless other Aboriginal people who work in this way are nurturing hope and putting Kanyini at the heart of what they do. I understand that in the Pitjantjatjara language (and no doubt its equivalent in other Aboriginal languages), the word 'kanyini' has very deep meaning for Indigenous people and is about how relationships within Indigenous society are held and how older people nurture and protect younger people within culture. The concept of 'holding' children within the context of your waltja (family) and ngura (homeland) are concepts based on tjukurpa. These are concepts that Pitjantjatjara and other desert cultures know can protect children and make families and communities strong.

The mothers and the grandmothers said to us that programs had come and gone and failed due to short-term funding, poor co-ordination and loss of key people. They expressed confusion about the many different projects delivered from a great distance. "To tell the truth I don't know what they are doing". Services were not seen as accountable to the community. "Need to sit in front of Anangu and say 'this is what I have done' - do proper report ... start to work with communities. Work out what they want. Work it out."

Anangu women could see how things could work – for example how a program for young people had combined food and making music and reduced petrol sniffing and violence. But there had been many broken promises.

"Government need to talk proper story."

Yet there was still some hope. They said "Today we are talking for first time...we all know what is happening...We like to see these things in place...to be true story...make this a true story...don't know if there are any true stories yet..."

Those words "don't know if there are any true stories yet" ring in my ears and echo in my heart. I believe there are good stories and true stories, and at this conference many of these stories are being shared. But we have to realise that promises have been broken before, over and over again. We must stop breaking promises or we will crush the hope that is still there, in some place, perhaps just still there. Hope is like water in the desert – it is the most precious resource we have as human beings.

That there was still hope in the hearts of these women after so many stories that have not been true stories, moves me very deeply. We all need to nurture hope in the heart of one another, in each family, and in each community, and for then and only then will we have hope in the heart of our nation.

And the source of hope? These pictures you see are the source of our hope – the beauty and the joy, the creativity and the competence, and the courage and the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Let me finish with a story, not my story, but the story of Stephen Nona, a Torres Strait Islander boy who, along with his two sisters, was commended for brave conduct in a ceremony at Government House in Queensland some years ago. You may remember hearing about him. Let me read the official citation for this.

"Master Nona, then aged eleven, assisted two members of his family to swim to seek help and survive being stranded for six days after his family's boat capsized in Torres Strait, Queensland on the afternoon of 6 July 2004...Master Nona encouraged his sisters to swim with him to seek help and managed to reach a small rocky outcrop approximately 400 metres away. The children survived there for three days by eating oysters. At this stage they made a decision to again swim for help in the hope that they and their family would be rescued. They then swam six kilometres to Matu Island. When the girls were tired, Master Nona told them to hang on to him so that he could tow them on his back, or he pushed them along. The children survived on Matu Island by eating native fruits and drinking coconut milk, and Master Nona continued to reassure his sisters that they would be saved. After three more days the children were rescued by their uncle. Tragically the other occupants of the dingy (his mother father and younger brother) were never found."

This is a story about how these children used the ancient knowledge passed on to them about tides and food to survive. The words Stephen Nona said, presumably in the language of his people, to urge his sisters, who were poor

swimmers, to leave the rocky outcrop and go back into the sea, were these:

“We swim with one heart and one mind.”

This is the courage and the wisdom of a child.

The lesson of this story for us is that we too need to work together, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We must swim with one heart and one mind if we are to grow up the children so they are strong, so they can know where they

come from, so they can know who they belong to, so they can know who they are, and where they are going and that they matter. And so they can have lives full of good stories and true stories which they can tell their children and their children’s children, and that these can become part of the big story of our nation.

DOROTHY SCOTT is the Foundation Chair in Child Protection of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia. Before taking up this appointment in 2005, she was the Head of the School of Social Work at the University of Melbourne, and, prior to that, the Executive Director of The Ian Potter Foundation, one of Australia’s largest philanthropic trusts.

Dorothy’s career in child welfare began when she was a 17 year old child care worker at the Allambie Reception Centre in Burwood, Victoria. Moved by the suffering of children who were admitted to State care, she studied social work at the University of Melbourne in the early 1970s and then worked for the then Social Welfare Department in the area of foster care and adoption. She then worked in the field of mental health, becoming Senior Social Worker in the Family Psychiatry Department of the Queen Victoria Medical

Centre in Melbourne. There, she helped establish specialist services for women experiencing post-partum psychiatric disorders, and services for women and children who had been sexually assaulted. In the 1980s she began an academic career, lecturing social work students at the University of Melbourne and conducting research in areas including maternal depression and child welfare. Since then, she has conducted numerous reviews and inquiries in Australia in the field of child protection, and has served on Ministerial advisory bodies in several States and Territories.

This presentation was Dr Scott’s last formal appearance as Foundation Chair of the Australian Centre for Child Protection, as Dorothy is retiring in a few weeks. Dr Scott has been a long standing friend of SNAICC. The SNAICC Executive thanks her for that friendship and hope that it may continue into the future.



Who's growing up whom? Roles, relationships and relatedness within Aboriginal Childhood Law

BY: DR KAREN MARTIN

*Keynote presentation by Dr. Karen Martin to the SNAICC
National Conference Thursday 29 July 2010.*

Acknowledgements:

- Ancestors
- Traditional Owners
- Elders (of past, present, future)
- All who contribute to our individual and collective stories

How do we view and then behave towards our children?

Do you believe young children are:

- helpless, naughty, valuable
- aware, cute, cheeky
- vulnerable, important
- useless
- capable
- annoying

What impact does this have on their identity?

What impact does this have on our identity?

How we behave towards them – uncovers how we see them

The Glass Slippers Syndrome:

The romantic view of young children and our role as adults as 'good' or 'nice' people because we work with young children.

It's about 'being nice' and 'looking good' as adults – like Cinderella, slaving away with no recognition but hoping to be rescued.

This syndrome views children as cute, passive, fun, cuddly. If we can't be rescued, we'll rescue the children from the same fate.

We patronise children and make them visible in 'childish' ways – less valuable than the adults.

The Glass Ceiling Syndrome:

This syndrome refers to setting limits or reaching limits set by others in working with young children.

In this syndrome, adults are always busy – busy making sure they look busy to others.

They've hit the ceiling and:

- don't push anymore, doing something knowing its going nowhere;

or

- push too too hard, doing anything believing its going somewhere.

The Glass Walls Syndrome:

This syndrome refers to adults being visible and to some degree, transparent, but not accountable.

When the glass walls exist, folks tend to have found a comfortable and safe spot working with young children, and they're not going to change it – or challenge it.

In that case, not only have they cut other out, they've locked themselves in. And the young children too.

What the research tells us about our children (and other ways to think about this information)

- Our lifespan is some 20 years shorter than non-Aboriginal Australians
Our physical life is short – but our Ancestral lifelihood is not
- Two-thirds of our population is aged under 25 years
Being 26 years of age is the beginning of 'Old Age'
- Our babies are therefore being born to younger parents
To be a 'parent' has very different meanings in our communities

- A high percentage of our children are still in the Child Protection/Child Safety system
To be 'parented' has very different meanings
- Our youth are over-represented in juvenile detention centres
Their childhood is different and so is their lifelihood)
- Some of our children do not go to school.
Schooling is not natural but being part of a family is
- Some of our children are doing okay or doing well at school
How come we don't hear more about these children?

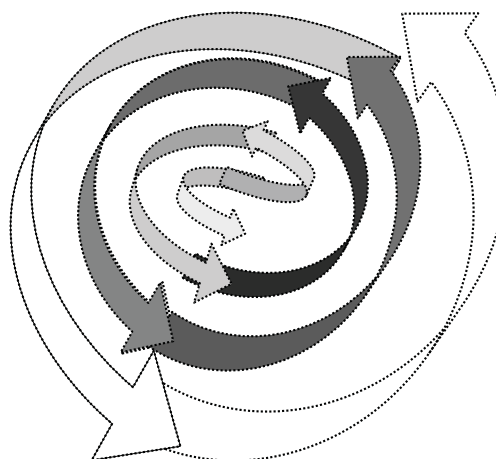
What does it actually mean to be an Aboriginal child?

- Being Aboriginal IS a problem - the solution is to stop being black, or to assimilate – or close the gap;
It's only a problem for 'others' - eg. confidence vs. being cheeky.
- Aboriginal children are even more helpless, hopeless, useless than adults (we need to 'get them young' and 'spare them of a ??? life');
Have you ever tried to argue with a two year old?
- Children don't really understand anything until they reach the age of 8;
Have you ever tried to cheat at cards with a 5 year old?
- Young children in particular, can't make decisions for themselves, they need adults to guide them.
Being growled at by a three year old is a blessing, not an insult.

Childhood , Lifelihood Relatedness

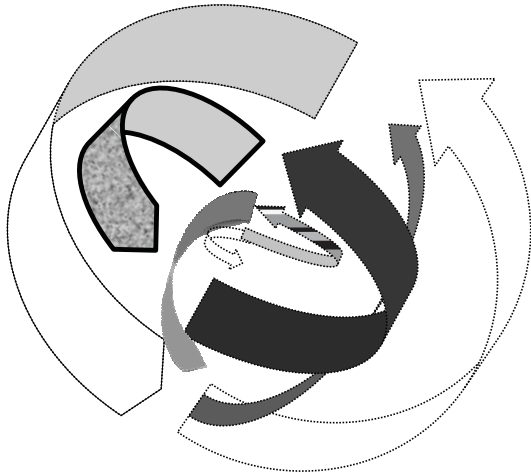
The 'ideal'

- Conception
- Birth
- Childhood
- Young Adulthood
- Adulthood
- Old Age
- Death



The reality...

- Conception
- Birth
- Childhood
- Young Adulthood
- Adulthood
- Old Age
- Death



Here's what some young children have to say about their lives.

The following are responses given by 172 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (aged approximately 5-6 years old) involved in the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (FaHCSIA).

When asked, 'what do you want to be when you grow up', this is what they said:

- 28 want to be policemen/policewomen (1 also wants to be a cheer leader; 1 also wants to be a 'garbage truck man' and 'animal doctor')

KAREN MARTIN is a Noonuccal woman from Minjerripah (North Stradbroke Island - south east Queensland) and also has Bidjara ancestry (central Queensland). She has taught in Aboriginal Community controlled education services in all phases of schooling. She has lectured in Indigenous Australian Studies (James Cook University, Townsville) and teacher education at QUT (Brisbane).

Karen has also published widely and lectured in Aboriginal early childhood education. Karen's PhD was conferred in March 2007 and was awarded the James Cook University Medal. In November 2007, Karen was jointly awarded the Australian Association of Research in Education Dissertation award. Thus, Karen's work is used internationally by First

- 23 want to be a teacher (1 a music teacher; 1 also a Sizzler's manager; 1 also a McDonald's chick)
- 8 want to be a fireman/fire'girl' (2 also want to be police; 1 also wants to be a barber)
- 8 want to be a footballer (1 a soccer player)
- 7 want to be a doctor
- 5 want to be a hairdresser (and 1 also a barber)
- 2 want to be in the army

This is what else they said they wanted to do when they grow up:

- An astronaut and then the Prime Minister of Australia
- Nothing...
- Grandad, like my dad

What I want to do when I grow up:

- Work at McDonalds
- Ride a bike without trainer wheels
- Go on a train by myself
- I want to smoke, grow up my kids and getting into fashion
- Playing with my brother Help mum plant flowers
- Not sure yet

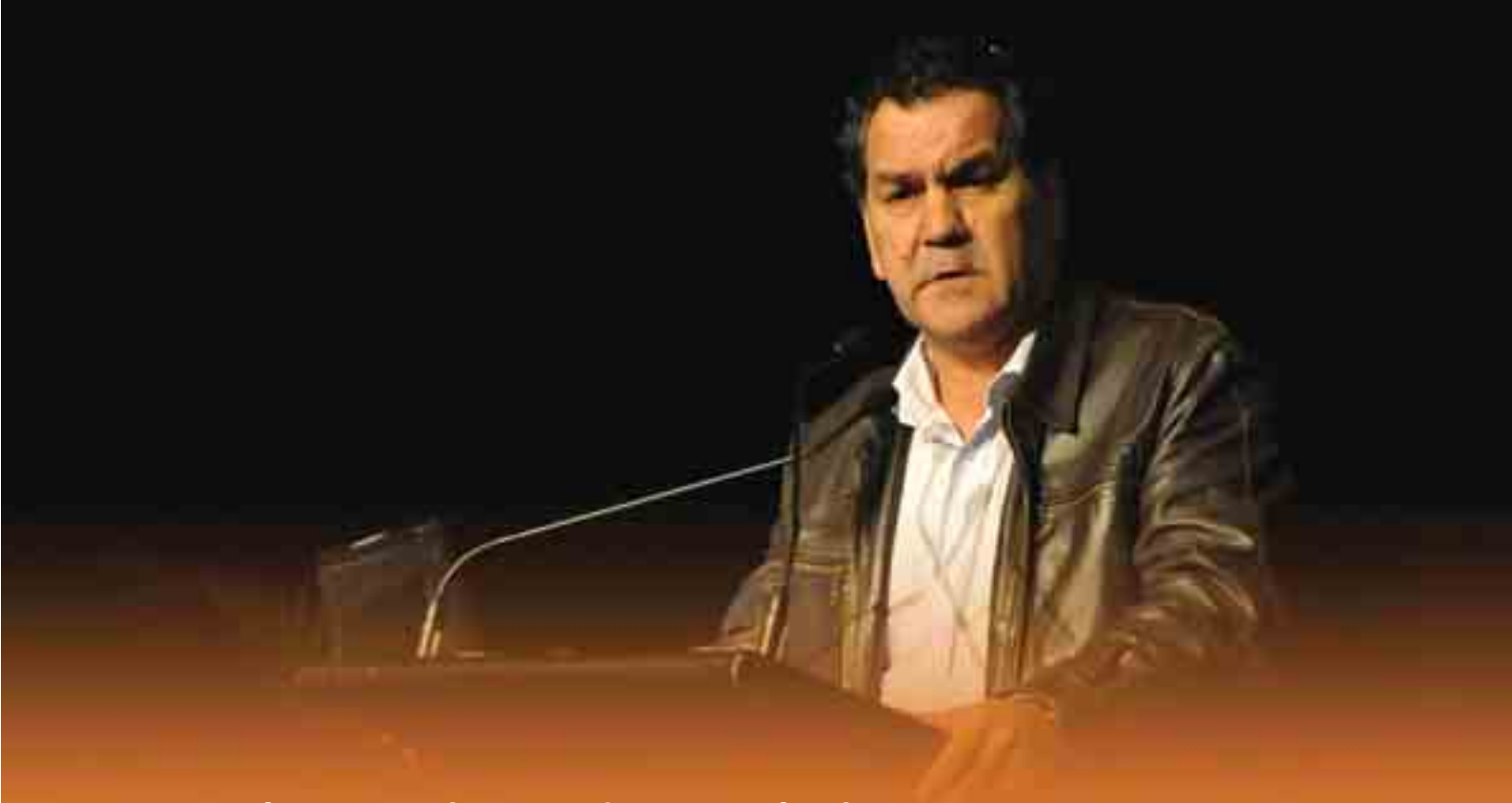
What is it we are learning from young children?

*To our Father's Fathers...the pain the sorrow.
To our Children's Children...the glad tomorrow
(ODGEROO NOONUCCAL 1993)*

Nations and Maori scholars and researchers in the field of education, policy and human services. She was awarded the National NAIDOC Award for Scholar of the Year in 2008.

Karen's more recent publications apply this work in terms of effective changes in the schooling of young Aboriginal children. She is a steering committee member to the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (FaHCSIA) and member to the Expert Advisory Panel: Quality Working Group (Office of Early Childhood).

She is now Associate Professor: Early Childhood, in the newly developed early childhood degree with the School of Education, Southern Cross University (Lismore).



Men's work and men's business in the historical, cultural and modern policy context. Embracing our humility, integrity and dignity as men in society to change the way we think, feel and behave towards women

BY: GRANT SARRA

Keynote presentation by Grant Sarra to the SNAICC National Conference Thursday 29 July 2010.

Introduction

I acknowledge my presence on the land of the Central Arrernte people - the Traditional Owners and Custodians for Mparntwe – Alice Springs. Despite my formal education, career background and humble achievements – I humbly acknowledge that I am just a boy in your presence and on your country!

I also acknowledge our Elders who have past – without their wisdom, strength, determination and leadership – I, and many others, would not be what we are today and our Elders who are present today – without your continued wisdom, strength, determination and leadership – we will continue to struggle in our future!

The title of my presentation is “Men’s work and men’s

business in the historical, cultural and modern day public policy context” so I will of course speak to this throughout the course of my presentation but I will also need to put this into context with a range of other problems and issues that I feel need also to be raised.

I need to say up front that as one Aboriginal person, I do not have the right, or responsibility and nor am I obligated to speak on behalf of all Aboriginal people across this country.

We are an extremely diverse people and this is something that needs to be understood and respected by not only non-Aboriginal people but also those Aboriginal people who espouse to be our leaders – that is the lore.

I have had a troubled time this week trying to prepare myself for the various things of which I have had to participate and I have particularly struggled with trying to get my head around what I wanted to speak about this morning.

The reality for me is that there are so many problems that continue to affect the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal families (Grand Parents, Mothers, Fathers, Uncles, Aunties, Son’s, Daughters, Nephews and Nieces) the current generations of Aboriginal people.

If these problems are not understood in a more dignified and humane context, clearly defined and properly considered in a public policy context of accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, leadership, governance AND in seriously analysed the context of cultural diversity, community relevance, sensitivity and appropriateness - community by community, throughout Australia – we will continue to make the same mistakes, deliver the same ineffective outcomes, waste more and more tax payer money – and sadly continue to destroy the beauty, richness, strength and knowledge of our ancient people and culture.

If we value and or care about the health and well being of our ancient people and culture in this country - we need to change the way we have be going about our business - we need to move beyond ignorance, fear and denial and we need to grow into our own adolescents as a nation.

If we don’t change our current attitude and approach to just taking Aboriginal children away from their families, without a proper cultural analysis and consideration of the environmental factors that influence the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal people living in urban, rural and remote communities throughout Australia - the sad reality for the many young Aboriginal children, through no fault of their own, is that they will continue to be born into a society where they are immediately affected by the ongoing inter-generational oppression, trauma and psychological scarring that stems from the historical through to contemporary impacts of colonisation.

At birth, these children will have already become part of an ongoing cycle of trauma and scarring and this cycle will

become further compounded by inter-generational poverty, family dysfunction, and various forms of abuse, racism, and general historical socio-economic disadvantage - we must change our system, attitude and approach and we must leave our egos behind and we must change the way we think, feel and behave toward each other so that we can get on with the real business at hand – restoring the strength, pride and dignity of Aboriginal communities and families so that they themselves can keep their children safe and free from harm.

Setting the Scene

Today, I would like to try and humanise our understanding in some small way.

In 100 years from now no one person in this room will be around – but hopefully we will still have a healthy land and environment for our future generations to live.

All people here today are unique and special – we all have a brain with which we think, a heart with which we feel and hands, feet and mouths with which we demonstrate our behaviours. We have all become socialised to think, feel and behave based on where we have come from and to be treated poorly in one’s past almost inevitably results in one thinking, feeling and behaving poorly in one’s present.

I want people to take the time to acknowledge that the Aboriginal families and their children that you deal with today have evolved successfully in this country for thousands upon thousands of generations within a subsistence economy. I want people to recognise that our Aboriginal families and their children have only been afforded the opportunity to progress and prosper within a modern day monetary economy over the past 43 years since the 1967 Referendum – which finally counted us as citizens in our own country. You should also recognise that for the best part of these 43 years Aboriginal people have been the subject of ongoing subsidised training and have primarily held subordinate roles within the bureaucracy.

I want people to consider – How we survived for such an extended period of time and why it really is that we, as an ancient people, struggle to survive in a modern day context?

I want people to think about where they have come from as modern day Australians in the bigger picture of humanity - 300 years ago – by skin, by blood, by ancestry.

I want people to put themselves into our shoes to know what is really like to be black in this country.

While I have been here this week I have taken the time to feel the strength and spirit of this land, observe the changes in the winds and the clouds in the sky, the coming an going of the sun, the path of the Emu as it passes through the night sky and the behaviours of the birds as they have come and gone outside my room.

I have also taken the time to observe the beauty and strength of the many Aboriginal women as they have made their way to and from the various workshops. And at times, from a respectful distance, I have also observed the sadness in their eyes and faces and I have felt the pain and frustration in their hearts.

I have noted a high presence of security around this venue in the evenings and I have also noted that local people in this town seem to be treated just like many other Aboriginal people around this country – being slowly marginalised further to the extreme edge of mainstream society – almost out of mind BUT NOT YET OUT OF SIGHT.

I have noticed a lot of our people continuing to live in absolute appalling conditions and I have also noticed a lot of people here not knowing how to respond to this situation.

And I have asked myself again – is this deliberate and if so, why - when we live in such a prosperous country? I have also asked what value do we place on the ancient knowledge, wisdom and culture of our people.

I have also observed the presence of many non-Aboriginal people at this conference who are very genuine, willing to engage in a real way and prepared to listen and learn from the wisdom, knowledge, advice and direction from many of our people as they have presented at various presentations.

I have felt their genuine sincerity and compassion to do the right thing and I also listened to their frustration trying to argue for change within the western system in which we operate.

All said and done, I have observed things that I have been observing over the past thirty years of my career working in Aboriginal affairs – and it has made my heart ache – to tell you otherwise would be telling you a lie.

We need a need a change of system, attitude and approach in this country but I know and most of you here will agree – we are the informed and converted souls who already want to do the right thing. That said, we need to recognise that our greatest challenge in this process, as a partnership of people who care, may well be to better educate the broader mainstream society, who appear to remain ignorant and oblivious, toward the real plight of Aboriginal families and their children.

For our part we need to continue to change the way we think, feel and behave toward each other as black and white Australians so that we can continue to grow and move beyond fear, denial, guilt and blame so that together can get on with the real business at hand – **restoring the strength, pride and dignity of Aboriginal communities and families so that they themselves can keep their children safe and free from harm.**

We need to come together and value each others' contribution if we are truly going to change this appalling state of affairs.

I want non-Aboriginal people to imagine themselves in

this scenario, and in so doing, I want you to think about how you can raise the awareness and understanding among your own people – the people who make up 97.4%. We need you to work with us – because we only make up 2.6% of the population.

To help you understand the plight of our people:

Today, I will take away your wages, I will take ownership of your assets, I will take away your right to make decisions about your life and the lives of your children, I will take away your identity, I will take away your language and from this day forward everyone here in this audience will have to get on with each other – despite your diverse backgrounds, beliefs and views of the world. **I will take away your identity, your language and your privileges.**

You will live like this, under my control for the next week, I will stretch this out for another twelve months, three years, and I will extend this throughout the course of your natural life. When I move on, as I will, someone else of my ilk will replace me and they will continue this process for the next three generations.

During this time - If you need any help in areas of health, education, housing, mental illness, early childhood, family support and any other areas - you will need to come to me for funding and support and if I agree, I will send someone of my ilk out to fix the problems you have created. **I will take away your dignity.**

I will accumulate wealth and prosper from the exploitation and investment of your assets and I will live a comfortable, peaceful, happy and harmonious life.

Out of respect for you as human beings and under the grace of my god, I will establish a Parliament, a Government and a series of Departments to eventually deal with the problems that you now impose upon my society. I will frustrate, infuriate and demoralise you - but you will have limited scope, if any at all, to do anything about your situation because you will remain under my control.

I will not let you participate in my society.

Someone, either of your ilk or mine, will now and then, drop off sly grog and drugs and you will start to take advantage of this situation – as you will have nothing else to do in your community and this will for a short time relieve you of your boredom. **I will intoxicate you and I will addict you. You will become dependent upon me.**

When this occurs, you as people will start to act out animalistic traits and I or someone of your ilk, will provide more grog, drugs and we will add pornography to your shopping list. When this occurs – the women in your society will no longer be safe. This sounds like any mainstream major city on a Friday or Saturday night but that is not relevant – **it is you and your people who have the problem.**

You will start to struggle looking after your children and keeping them grounded in their culture – **so I will take your**

children away. You will be upset and hurt initially but I will help you to understand in time that this was for their own good. With the amount of alcohol and drugs you consume you will eventually move on with your life. **Your children will be much happier this way – at least I think they will be.**

I will promise to produce yet another government report to find out for you. To deal with the growing number of problems that you now present within our civilised society - I will put together a panel of experts who will help me and my government to assimilate you into the new world that presents itself before you. My panel of experts will consist of highly qualified people professors and Doctors from Canada, America and England because **there will be nothing of interest that you could possibly provide to me to help alleviate the problems you face every day of your lives.** My government may however, call upon you from time to time, to consult with you about your problems and issues – but I won't remunerate you – because you are not the experts. **I will however, take it on board.**

We will introduce self determination, economic independence, we will spend lots and lots and lots of our taxpayers dollars on legal experts of my ilk, helping you to come to grips with the fact the waves of time and history have washed away your connections to your traditional lands AND you will do this in the presence of a High Court Judge of my ilk, who himself or herself could not tell you where they actually come from 300 years ago.

I will eventually introduce a process called "Wrecked and Silly Nation" I mean Reconciliation and this will help you to become valued and better accepted into my society.

I will eventually say Sorry for taking your children away, BUT NOT ALL OF THE OTHERS THINGS, and only 33% of my mainstream society will actually get what this is all about.

I want you all to stand up with me now on our National Day – Australia Day, show solidarity and I want you to come together with me and celebrate our great Australian culture!

I could go on and on but I know that many of you know what this is all about – **Aboriginal Australia – this is your life!** I WANT YOU ALL TO MOVE ON NOW – I SAID SORRY NOW YOU NEED TO GET OVER IT!

And I have only scratched the surface in this scenario! But now we are going to Close the Gap – What Gap do we actually need to close is one of a number of important questions for us all to think about. Who are the people who actually write policies for our people and do they actually

know who they are themselves, (where have they come from, where do they belong)? I hope so because they are the ones dramatically changing the lives of our people. Shouldn't they know where they actually come from first before they start dictating to our people what we need and or should be doing in our lives?

Understanding the Environment we are dealing with

Every day in the life of Aboriginal people we are forced to deal with a cocktail of problems that influence our daily thinking, feeling and behaviour within our environment:

Cultural sensitivity, cultural diversity, accountability, deaths in custody, psychological scarring, intergenerational trauma, anger, bitterness, mistrust, apathy, ignorance, fear, insecurity, discrimination, racism, paternalism, fractured kinship systems, government policy, cultural values, identity, dignity, pride, communication barriers, court systems, police, limited resources, western law, customary lore, new technology, wealth generation, geographical isolation, access, equity, participation, unacceptable levels of unemployment, capacity building, stolen wages, welfare, substance abuse, domestic violence, governance, colonisation, dispossession, stolen generations, child abuse, community factions, confusion, Native Title and fighting to protect our ancient cultural heritage and our right to receive equity from developments on our lands.

And we continue to wake up and have to put up with stories on mainstream television and pick up mainstream newspapers that are filled with ignorant opinions and commentary about the status and plight of our people.

I am personally sick to death of hearing middle class Caucasian Australian men, blurting out rubbish about how we need to forget about the current generation of Aboriginal people – the older generations and focus on the younger generations – the young children. I have no problem with focusing on the young children – that after all is our children's natural human right in this country. What annoys me is that it is this generation of middle class Caucasian Australian men that have prospered the most at the expense of those Aboriginal people who they now seem to think will just die off.

How dare they be so inhumane and how dare they look down their noses at our people in our modern-day society.

And our Parliaments and our Governments, under the grace of their God, continue to bury their heads in the sand because in this country we believe in a fair go, freedom of speech, we value the multiculturalism and we have said Sorry to our Aboriginal people.

Moving forward – Dealing with some of the key problems

Have we come far enough under the western system of government? I personally think that we have.

Review our western approach to Aboriginal service delivery.

If we are to continue looking overseas for innovative solutions, programs and ideas perhaps we should take the time to investigate and honestly appraise those other Commonwealth Nations that have been formed under the British Monarchy – and again, under the grace of their God – take a very close look at the real plight of the Indigenous people in each of those places.

We should leave our egos behind and move beyond, fear, ignorance and denial, move beyond us and them and seriously ask ourselves, based on what we discover in these other Commonwealth Nations, ask ourselves this question – IS IT REALLY AN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S PROBLEM OR IS IT MORE A CONSISTENT PROBLEM ASSOCIATED WITH POWER, EGO AND GREED ASSOCIATED WITH THE MONARCIST/WESMINSTER SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

Creating real value for money

We need to stop chopping and changing - we must be prepared to invest in the long term future of our communities by maintaining a consistent partnership approach with our communities and we must establish a real and genuine bi-partisan approach.

To achieve true value for money and sustainable outcomes, governments in addition to considering the financial cost effectiveness of projects also need to be prepared to work in partnership with Aboriginal community leaders so that they can mutually appraise the capacity of individual service providers to deliver sustainable outcomes against their history and background of diverse and complex social, economic, geographical, cultural challenges and circumstances.

At the end of the day, it will be the community who has to work with the service provider - so it stands to reason that they should at least be given a say in who they feel best fits their needs.

For instance, some our remote communities like the Doomadgee in Queensland, Wadeye in the Northern Territory, and Jigalong in Western Australia, to name just a few, will require a concentrated and consistent effort over an extended period of time if real and sustainable change is to be delivered. Government and service providers need to understand and accept that while it might take four years to achieve a specific set of outcomes in some of our urban and rural communities, it could take upwards of ten or more years to deliver the same set of outcomes in some of these remote locations.

It also needs to be recognised that in remote locations it

will take a long time to build the trust and confidence of the community and it will also takes a long time to develop the necessary level of cultural understanding, competency and capacity to be able to work in an effective partnership with the people in these communities.

Showing leadership as men – moving beyond the humbug

Over the past few years I have been told of a number of situations where men, who are seen to be leaders in some of our communities, are allegedly using stand over tactics against women and other men in their communities and claim that this is their right under customary lore.

As men we have had to deal with some very difficult and inhumane situations and we have been confronted with many complex challenges as we have struggled to evolve into the modern day monetary society – but that does not mean we should let go of our lore.

To me, the lore of our people comes from the land and it is deeply entrenched in our knowledge and understanding of our natural world, our physical world and our spiritual world – our dreaming.

Our lore as this relates to our natural, physical and spiritual worlds has been there since our time of creation – it never changes and it should never be exploited.

To me, our lore was, is and always will be about our absolute honour and integrity. As part of our lore we must expect that of others. We must always embrace a holistic outlook for the survival of our families and our people as a whole – **our lore is not about I, me, or my - it has always been about we and therefore we should never become opportunistic in our behaviour.**

As men we are born to a woman – our Mother - and we are reared by our Mothers up to that age when we start to become our man.

Our women will always be the givers of life and they will always be the primary carer and nurturer of our children - be they boys or girls up until that age when boy becomes man and girl becomes woman.

As men, we must never forget and or disrespect our connection to our Mothers and by lore we should never disrespect or abuse our women – to do so is a serious breach of our lore and in this modern world it is signal to other men that it is okay for them to abuse our mothers, our aunties, our sisters, our nieces, our wives and our daughters. **That is not part of our lore.**

Despite the many different and complex challenges we now face - our lore is still strong and whilst it has never changed in the context of our natural, physical and spiritual worlds - we perhaps need to take stock of where we are now at as men in our current society.

Today our lore needs to deal with:

unacceptably high levels of unemployment, which leads to

boredom, which leads to various forms of substance abuse, alcoholism, glue sniffing and petrol sniffing and the appalling mistreatment of ourselves and of our women and children;

- racism and discrimination from mainstream societies;
- the psychological trauma, scarring - the by-product of being removed from our traditional lands and placed, along with many other men, women and children from other tribal groups, on the traditional lands of other Aboriginal people;
- Changing from a subsistence-based economy where it was appropriate to receive a rightful share of food from our young men (who we taught to hunt in the first place) to that of a monetary-based economy where it not really appropriate for us to now expect our young men to hand over the rights to their motor cars when it is they who will be making the repayments to the bank in which they secured their loan.

Our lore needs to take into account the advent of technology and the sociological issues such easy access to other people's land and the problems associated with other people's access and potential exploitation of our land, people, culture and environment.

As men we may also become proud and loving fathers of young girls – our daughters. We will love our daughters unconditionally as we do our sons. But at that time when our daughters become young women – we know, out of respect and sensitivity to the changes in a little girls life, it is at that time when we need to take a polite step back from our beautiful young girls and allow them become beautiful young women – that is women's business and that is part of women's lore.

As men we need to acknowledge that our brother's children are children and our sister's children are our children. They too will look to us for love, care, guidance and direction at various times throughout their lives – we need to act with honour, dignity, and humility and show absolute integrity in their presence. **We are their role models.**

To my audience today, (but also to Aboriginal men in this audience) I want you to think about what it would have meant if we as Aboriginal men were as abusive toward our women and our children and as disrespectful toward our old people as the some sections of government and the media would have us believe.

If that was the case - **HOW DID WE SURVIVE AS A PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY FOR IN EXCESS OF 2000+ GENERATIONS?**

At this point in our history, we perhaps need to consider the bringing together of all our lore men and women so that they can be afforded an opportunity to assess where we have come from in the past 223 years, consider what and how we need to adjust our lore in response to the

sociological changes to our environment and formalise what it is that we as Aboriginal people need to now know about our lore and our customs as we progress into our modern and evolving world – that will continue to be our Constitution! It may also help other Australians to understand what it means to spiritually connect and belong to these lands.

Adopting a commercial business focus

if Aboriginal Affairs in this country was to adopt a commercial business focus and therefore accountable to shareholders, or had to deliver quality outcomes like I have to as a consultant in order to be paid – based on the respective performances of past and present Labor and Liberal governments State and Commonwealth – they would not be in business.

If I were the Prime Minister of this country or Premier of any of our States or Territories and I bought someone like Barrack Obama to visit any of our Aboriginal communities to show how we have, and continue to treat them on their traditional lands – I would be embarrassed and ashamed - **I would hang my head in shame.**

In the context of what this conference has been all about - child care and family support – **will we still be in business in five years.**

Consolidating our approach

When I scanned the conference program I was impressed to see that there are many positive ideas and concepts that are currently being implemented throughout all parts of the country that deal with kinship care and support, healing, out of home care, remote work and traditional rearing practices, child protection partnerships safe connections to kin and culture - we appear to be on the right path.

In this respect, we need to learn from these best practice examples and consolidate this across our country – where they are appropriate and relevant. **Let's get more culturally efficient, cost effective and business focused.**

Moving beyond apathy - value and remunerate local wisdom and knowledge

We need to commit to a future partnership approach that acknowledges the need, and seeks to reduce other social problems such as high unemployment along with child care and family support. Despite our good intentions up until this point - we continue to fail in many of our dealings with Aboriginal people in this country.

We should therefore value and remunerate local Aboriginal people in their communities for their wisdom and knowledge – employ them as the leaders of their future and invest in

their development. This will improve culturally appropriate child care and family support options but also reduce the gap in unemployment. It will build pride, confidence and self esteem and it will also provide young people with their own deadly role models in their own community – **people they can look up to, value and aspire to become.**

Have we come far enough under the western system of government? I personally think that we have.

Conclusion

Archie Roach – *“Our country be dying so have we and people still trying to be free Elders are crying for you and me so why are we trying not to see – time that’s all we ask just a little time for the feeling, time that’s all we need, just a little time for the healing to begin.*

If you just give us one more day to try to find a better way together all who gone astray into our loving arms- its up to no one else you see nobody else but you and me to give us back our liberty and keep us safe from harm”

Treaty

I agree with Archie Roach – a strong, proud and brilliant man who sings of our struggles – I wish I could be Archie Roach – I wish I could sing like him. **All we need is time – just a little time for the healing to begin.**

I think that we have now approached a time in our country’s history where we are almost mature enough to develop a formal Treaty.

A treaty that is based on give and take - a Treaty that is based on meeting each other half way i.e. the Australia that we have all become socialised to think, feel and behave has been around for 223 years - if we were prepared to meet

each other half way it would mean that a Formal Treaty in this country if it were signed here today, would be 111.5 years. The spiritual reality for me is that I believe that this is how long it would actually take to heal the hurt and suffering of our past and lay the foundation for our future.

Perhaps we might also develop an education system and process that teaches the true, honest and accurate history of this country – beyond fear, ignorance and denial – and beyond guilt and blame.

Perhaps we may also recognise our right as people to evolve from a subsistence economy into a modern monetary economic system where our sovereignty and our right to equity from the developments on our lands are is acknowledged and respected.

As part of this Treaty we might also take the time to consolidate a set of universal values which unite all Australians – such as values practiced by our ancestors for thousands upon thousands of generations - **Caring, Sharing and Respect for our land, our people and our environment.**

These are the most ancient values known to humanity – all people come from the land, all people need to acknowledge and respects the lores, customs and practices of neighboring people and all people need to understand and read their environment in order to survive – **these should be the foundation values for all people now living in this country and throughout our world!**

Thank you for your time

GRANT SARRA has thirty years’ experience working in areas that deal exclusively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community aspirations, problems and issues relevant to public and private sector organisations and projects throughout Australia.

Grant says that he is an experienced (but not expert) Indigenous executive, change agent, trainer, workshop facilitator, project manager and report writer. Grant was nominated for the National Human Rights Medal in November 2000 in recognition for the development and delivery of Strategic Indigenous Awareness Program: To understand the present, we must understand the past and for his services

to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Grant is a prolific writer and speaker on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, with an excellent track record for producing tangible results in the process of driving large scale cultural change and building organisational effectiveness, efficiency and capacity to deliver culturally appropriate, community sensitive and business-minded outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and public and private sector organisations throughout Australia.



Accepting the inheritance, building the legacy, and passing it on: Leadership and honouring the Ancestors and our future generations

BY: KERRIE TIM

Keynote presentation by Kerrie Tim to the SNAICC National Conference Thursday 29 July 2010.

Introduction

- The inheritance we receive from those who have gone before us
- The conscious decision to accept that inheritance
- The responsibility that then goes with building that inheritance
- Creating our own legacy, and
- taking action to pass it on to those who follow us.

Baby girl

Have you ever held a baby and looked deeply into her eyes? Have you seen her intelligence, her bright, keen mind eager to engage with yours? Have you talked with her, with kindness, delight, high expectation? Have you welcomed her and told her of her place in the world and how much better off we all are because she was born? Have you listened to her response? Have you heard her talk and laugh and eagerly demonstrate her engagement with bright, intelligent eyes and active hand and arm gestures? Is this not the most awesome, human thing to do – looking for another human, another mind and seek a connection?

Won the prize

We humans won the prize. Of all the life, the species to have lived and died throughout the four billion year history of the Earth we humans are sitting here in this room today. It took life million of years to evolve to us humans. And it took us humans millions of years to evolve. And it has taken us just a couple of hundred thousand years to evolve to the humans we are today - you and me and the rest of us we see and interact with daily.

Even more extraordinary, each and every one of us in this room, along with our fellow sisters and brothers living and breathing across the world, we hit the jack-pot. Do you know just how many millions of times life tries to create itself before just one of us is conceived? We, you and me, made it to conception, we are the one in millions that tried; we are the lucky ones.

Today us humans are the smartest we have ever been. We know more about ourselves, our planet, our universe, than ever before. And we have learnt this relatively quickly, especially when you think about the length of time it has taken to create the earth and how relatively short a time we humans have been around.

If you can imagine a piano and that the first key on the left is the start of life you would almost be at the end before we reach the time of the dinosaurs, and they died out millions of years ago. The last key on the right is where we sit; we would be about the width of a decent fishing line, over on the far right of this last key. Another way to describe it is if the history of the Earth was squashed into a single year, dinosaurs would have shown up in August and disappeared at the end of November. Us humans, who have been around for about two million years, showed up on the last day of December, late in the evening.

For all the knowledge we do possess, for everything we do know and understand about ourselves and this Earth, for all we do know about the universe, there is still so much more to know and we are still using only a small part of our brain. Our capacity to grow our mind may be limitless. There is no human that we know of who has ever used the full capacity of their brain.

Ancestors and the development of the mind

About 40,000 years ago the first humans to take a thought and communicate it as an image, the first of us to take what we were thinking and show it outside our minds, were our Aboriginal ancestors. It was our ancestors who first drew a line in the sand, who first painted the cave wall to express a thought. And this began a revolutionary development of the brain that continued with civilisations across the world.

It was only about 7,000 years ago that at least five civilizations that we know of started writing with symbols, a significant tool that has today given us humans a shorthand to summarise our thoughts – which we all recognise as the development of an alphabet and the written word.

An Aboriginal man we all know, probably more because of his image on our fifty dollar note than for his incredible mind, is David Unaipon. Now this was a man who dedicated his life to developing his mind. David was a Ngarrindjeri man, an inventor, preacher and writer and just in case you don't know he is also known as Australia's Leonardo da Vinci for his mechanical ideas. A couple of those mechanical ideas include his anticipatory drawing for a helicopter based on the principle of a boomerang, and his research into harnessing the secret of perpetual motion. David, like the rest of us, had a fine mind and he spent his life growing it.

Another man I want to mention who spent his life growing his mind is my Dad. He was an extraordinary fellow, thoughtful, always taking the learnings from his life experiences and using them to inform his next thinking and action. Dad was what I would call a lay philosopher. This legacy he gained from a Chinese father and an Aboriginal and Chinese mother. He married my mother, also someone with a fine mind; strong, generous and gutsy, an Aboriginal woman who lived her life modelling the values she held dear, even in the face of extraordinary challenges. She was gutsy and she had grace.

A couple of years back when my father died he left me his papers; they were notes that he wrote, intermittently but over his lifetime. Among Dad's papers were notes on the effects of living under the legislation that governed the lives of Aboriginal people in Queensland, the laws that were the model for South Africa's apartheid laws. He was in the middle of writing about the effects of those laws on my Mum's life when he moved on to what happened afterwards. He wrote, 'after the laws changed we had nothing, no jobs, no education, no roof over our head, no money' ... but I had read enough of his papers to know Dad had paused, and on the next line he wrote, 'but we had our minds'.

I tell you this story because I was incredibly privileged to be born to these two people who had a perspective that no matter what the rest of the world held out for you as the kind of life you deserved, and usually for our people it was to be a life less than others, that you could use your mind to imagine a world good for yourself and others and you could then spend your life using your mind, influence and capacity to act to bring this about.

What they wove into the lives of the rest of us

I thought I might talk a bit about the legacy my parents passed on, what they wove into the lives of the rest of us.

My parents made a conscious decision to raise us as Aboriginal, Kalkadoon, on the lands of the Kalkadoon and the Mitakoodi. They did not make these decisions lightly. They thought through the impact of the racism that we would face, both personal and institutional and as best as they could they prepared us for dealing with it. My parents also placed Aboriginal culture at the heart of our upbringing.

And at the heart of Aboriginal culture is humanness, translated best as 'respect' – for oneself, for others, and for country. The life lessons they taught were aimed at developing our body, our mind, our spirit, and our emotions. The whole of our life experiences were used as a lesson. Up to age five decisions about our growth were led by Mum and supported by Dad and the focus was on ensuring that we were raised healthy and strong – plenty of nourishing food, lots of exercise, and games to keep our body and minds active.

After age five, our Dad became our primary teacher, supported by Mum. We had to go to school to learn to read and write and to speak English. They wanted us to learn how to learn in a world that was set up for others, not for us. They didn't just want us to learn the things they could teach us; they wanted us to also learn the things that they couldn't teach us, to have experiences they didn't have but knew were there. Mum and Dad wanted to grow our minds beyond anything they experienced or could imagine. They wanted us to understand the importance of balancing culture and change, or outside influences.

We had to go bush with Mum and Dad and learn to hunt and collect food; to learn the cycles of the seasons so we would know when to collect the ripest berries, when to hunt the fattest turkeys, and when to fish the waters. We had to know when to do these things and when to let the land and waters replenish.

My parents taught us these skills by games. We had to learn to track each other, to know in whose footsteps we followed and how to make any sign of us disappear. We learnt to fake our tracks and the tracks of the animals we hunted. Through our parents' lessons the land became our friend and provider and we learned to respect its power and all that it offered, and to pay homage to the Ancestors for this gift. I listened to my parents talk up the country as we walked it, pointing out what we needed to know to survive and to just have fun. The sun and sky above and the land around us were guides by day and the stars and moon the guides by night.

Our spiritual growth was always a part of our lives and an extension of us – we didn't know where it began or ended. It was part of an ongoing cycle of our life lessons and always centred on respect. And this was to be a lesson we were to take on for life – each day you learn more about yourself – who you are, where you come from, and where you are going and you learn this by always considering what it means on this day to respect yourself, others and the land.

Many of my early fun memories are of the games we played to learn the skill. I remember having to select the right wood to work a strong, accurate spear and the stories that were told by the fire as we worked the wood to shape and strength. I remember practicing to throw and feeling delighted as my accuracy improved. I remember making my first shanghai, selecting the fork, cutting it, peeling off the bark and heating it to dry it out. Often as a little one my fingers were not strong enough or deft enough to pull and tie the band and my big brother would reach over to help, adding to my learning and encouraging my abilities.

These years laid the foundation for story telling and each night our parents sat outside under the stars and we would eagerly gather around to hear the next tale. I loved the stories about the moon and stars; the tales about our family and our people. I loved the stories about Mum and Dad and their experiences and what that meant for us.

My folks raised us to take responsibility for our life-long journey. They did this by modelling the behaviours they expected of us. They taught us to do this backing each other. They provided guidance and love and caught us when we fell and cheered us when we succeeded and pushed us when we wanted to give up. They created a large and extended family and tied us to our own destiny, to each other, to those around us and to our responsibility for this country. They provided the encouragement for us to lead beyond our comfort zones.

And by blood they tied us to the destiny of all our people whose veins pulse with an ancient connection to each other and this land. This is not something to be taken lightly nor something you can walk away from. A challenge for us, just as it was for them and all our Ancestors, is to figure out who we are, where we come from, and where we are going with the legacy of the Aboriginal world view that we inherited, and to live a life figuring out how to pass on an enriched legacy to those who follow us. Balancing culture and change, and much more, is what Mum and Dad wove into the lives of the rest of us.

Baby girl

Have you ever tried to look into the eyes of a little one traumatised by the violence she was born into? Have you watched her lie quietly, not engaged with the world around her, not expecting a look or a touch or even that she will be changed and bathed when she needs it or to be fed when she is hungry? Occasionally she opens her eyes and looks out and the depth of despair, the lack-lustre in her eyes is inter-mitten with fear as she struggles to find her place.

Have you ever stayed with her through this, looking lovingly at her, with delight and high expectation? Have you spoken quietly and assuredly and told her how much she matters, how delighted you are that she was born and is with us? Have you told her how sorry you are and that for the time you are with her, she can feel what she needs to feel and

that you will stay with her? Have you stayed long enough with her and spoken kindly enough that she can tell you are there, at least for the moment?

Have you noticed that as her safety grows she starts to cry? Occasionally she will look up through her lashes to see if you are still there and if you are, the crying gets more intense. She will struggle, cry hard, push against you but she will also look out to see if you will stay with her through the tears and the feeling of the fear. Have you ever stayed with her long enough that she can cry as long and as hard as she can and then start to shake?

Have you watched her face start to relax as you stay relaxed, loving, kind, encouraging? Have you felt her nestle into you, start to yawn and then fall into a deep sleep. Have you stayed with her through the sleep and seen her wake happy, more aware of the environment and looking for that interaction she had before she slept?

Internalised hurts

One of the most insidious effects of the hurts our people have faced over the years from being treated disrespectfully, demeaned, excluded, and ignored is when we start to believe these messages and begin harming both ourselves and our peoples – we internalise it. An example of what this looks like includes when we criticise and beat our children in misguided efforts to ‘discipline’ them and keep them from openly displaying pride or pleasure in themselves; attempting to make them less vulnerable to the hurts but instead leaving them more beaten down.

Other examples include when we

- think of ourselves or each other as stupid, lazy, unimportant or inferior
- criticise or verbally attack each other
- physically attack or kill each other, playing out our rage
- put our individual well being last – we are unable to think about our physical and emotional health, making us vulnerable to heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, ulcers, and more
- feel hopeless, despairing, and angry which can make us vulnerable to the lure of alcohol and other drugs for ‘relief’ from those feelings, even though we know that this does additional harm to ourselves and our families.

Ending the hurts

From when we are little our peoples have fought as long and as hard as we dare to maintain a sense of ourselves as good, smart, strong, important and powerful. We should not blame ourselves and each other for any of the negative and destructive attitudes or behaviours I just spoke about. But

we can increasingly understand them and take steps to end them and to heal from the damage done to us by these hurts.

We must also make sure we don’t let anyone else blame us for these attitudes or behaviours. Instead of blame we must find intelligent policies and solutions that will actually move us forward.

Any time the media or others focus on us as ‘dysfunctional’ and ‘violent’; any time our communities are labelled as ‘dysfunctional’ and ‘violent’ then I ask that you understand that desperate, destructive acts are done by people who have been terribly hurt by the conditions in which they have had to exist. We know that as long as desperately poor, dangerously unhealthy and oppressive conditions exist for any of our people we will be in danger of someone’s irrational acts of violence. We can lock these people up, and our prisons show a disproportionate number of our young, our men and our women are locked up, but it will not stop more people from the suffering that creates any one of us who harms another.

But no matter how brutal and overpowering any of this ‘dysfunction’ or ‘violence’ is it cannot destroy the longing present in our people and in all Australians for all our young ones to have a life of justice, free from poverty and oppression.

Developing policies good for all of us

We must develop policies that end poverty and oppression for all of us.

The lesson I learnt from my Dad, from many who have gone before me, is that we humans have both the intelligence to develop these policies and the resources to carry them out. We, together, have to develop and pursue policies that will value every person, no matter where they live, no matter their religion or race or background. This is something we are capable of. There is enough food, there are enough resources, there is enough for all of us.

Developing such policies cannot be left to governments alone. Such policies will not develop and be sustained without the active thought and participation of us all. We all have a responsibility to see that good policies are developed in the interest of us all.

I know that sometimes we feel like it should be someone else’s responsibility. I know we sometimes feel that our thinking does not matter. I know we feel like the things we have to handle in our lives already is enough. And I know that sometimes the mistreatment we have received in our lives might get in the way of us feeling like we can contribute.

But no matter what has happened to us, we are still capable. We are capable of understanding ourselves, our circumstances in this country and of our place in the world. We are capable of being courageous, and of contributing our

thoughts and understanding and effort to the development and implementation of good policies, for ourselves and for others.

No more criticism and listen well

To do this, we have to stop criticising each other, no matter how ingrained the habit may have become. We have to support each other's efforts to overcome the disempowering treatment we have received. We have to encourage each other's efforts to play a full role in thought and action.

We must listen to each other, and listen well. We must listen to each other's thoughts about what should happen. We also need times to listen to each other about the mistreatment we have received, mistreatment that has sometimes made thinking and acting difficult for us. Just doing this will make a significant difference to our ability to think and act together.

Summary

Each of those young ones, the baby girl who is completely delighted with life and the baby girl who is despairing but looking for hope, each of them no matter their background or the circumstances into which they were born deserves to have a meaningful life - of opportunity, love, closeness. They both deserve to inherit a world with fresh air to breathe, nourishing food to eat, plenty of exercise and fun and

activity to keep their minds and body active.

It is possible for each of us in this room to join forces with everyone else we know and to build alliances with others and to contribute our thinking and efforts towards building a society that is good for every one of us.

We are capable - of being courageous, of contributing our thoughts and understanding - of contributing our effort towards building a society that is good for every one of us.

What was the legacy, the world view you inherited? In what way have you grown this legacy so far and what will be your next steps? What is the legacy you will pass on?

I want to finish with the words of Robert Coles in his book, *Lives of Moral Leadership*, "We need heroes, people who can inspire us, help shape us morally, spur us on to purposeful action – and from time to time we are called on to be those heroes, leaders for others, either in a small day-to-day way, or on the world's larger stage."

The lesson for us as we accept responsibility for the legacy we inherited, as we grow it and pass it on to those who follow, is that for our children, "For most young people, their heroes are their parents." (Australian Childhood Foundation, *Every Child Needs a Hero* report).

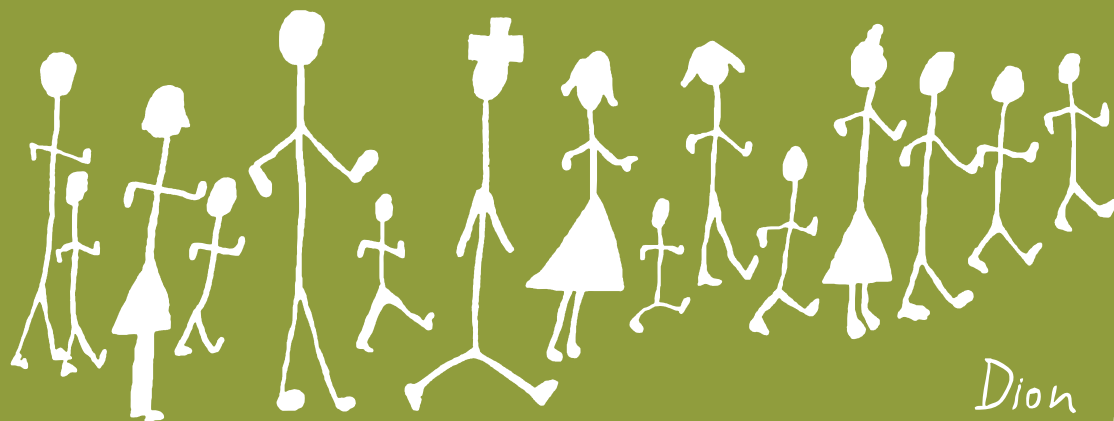
KERRIE TIM is a Senior Executive within the Australian Public Service Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. A graduate of the University of Queensland, Kerrie's extensive experience in the public sector includes the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and its predecessor, ATSIC, the Australian Public Service Commission, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Department of Education.

Kerrie is a former Executive Director to the Queensland Government, having worked within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and, before that, led the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy.

Kerrie is actively committed to social justice and for the past 20 years, in her spare time, has focussed her efforts towards ending racism and developing leaders. Kerrie's international experience includes representing Australian governments in discussions in the Philippines, United States and Canada, and leading peer counselling workshops on ending racism in South Africa, Israel, and New Zealand. Kerrie is a former Director of the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre and the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee.

Raised Kalkadoon on the land of the Mitakoodi, Kerrie's culture is at the heart of her efforts.

2010 SNAICC National Conference



FOR OUR CHILDREN

Local Strengths, National Challenges

AMPE ANWERNEKENHEKE

Rlterrke Akwete Aneye¹

¹ Title translated in *Arrernte*, the language of Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

PROGRAM

AND CONFERENCE INFORMATION

27-29 July 2010

Alice Springs Convention Centre, Mparntwe (Alice Springs)



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

9am to 10.30am

MACDONNELL AUDITORIUM

Opening Plenary:

- **Welcome to Country** and Traditional Dance (Janet Turner and Irrelape-Lyape Dance Group)
- **Welcome – Steve Larkins** - SNAICC
- **Keynote speaker – Rosalie Kunoth-Monks**
Educational success without sacrificing cultural identity
- **International Keynote Speaker – Cindy Blackstock**
Is this our Canada?: examining the systemic disadvantage undermining the safety of First Nations children and highlighting strategies to overcome this

11am to 12.30pm

1 **Healing – traditional healing in Central Australia: Ngangkari work – Anangu way.**

ELLERY B/C

Andy, Toby and Rupert began to learn the skills of the Ngangkari (traditional healer) as young children in the bush. Their grandfathers gave them sacred tools and special powers, and trained them over many years. Andy, Toby and Rupert continue this tradition today with their own grandchildren. Rupert, Andy, and, more recently, Toby, work for NPY Women's Council Ngangkari Project.

Andy, Rupert and Toby provide Ngangkari treatments to Anangu (Indigenous people) in remote communities in this region, as well as those in hospitals, jails, nursing homes and hostels in regional centres. Their work is highly valued and the service is in great demand. The Ngangkari believe that better health outcomes for Indigenous people can be achieved by Ngangkari and western medicine working together and to this end they are committed to educating health workers about traditional healing practices. Andy, Toby and Rupert are authorised to speak publicly about traditional Anangu culture and Ngangkari practices and have received many accolades, the most recent being the Mark Sheldon Prize for 2009 awarded by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry (RANZCP), and the 2009 Dr Margaret Tobin Award for

excellence in the provision of mental health services to those most in need.

Rupert Peters, Andy Tjilari, Toby Ginger NPY Women's Council Ngangkari Project, SA and NT.

2 **Early childhood – Indigenous professional support.**

MACDONNELL A

Growing up strong kids: messages from our services.

Join us in a discussion about some of the themes, insights and challenges involved in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care services to grow up strong kids.

Christine Dimovich, Jacqui Hunt-Smith, Yorganop Indigenous Professional Support Unit Yorganop Association Inc. WA

Yarning Circles – an Innovative Early Years Learning Framework Indigenous Inclusion Support Project.

An interactive professional conversation (Yarning Circle) about an innovative workforce development project recently implemented in Queensland.

Tara Lee Franks, Health & Community Services Workforce Council Inc., Roslyn Von Senden, Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Kerry Moroney Inclusion Support Agency, QLD.

3 **Child protection: cultural best practice and better outcomes.**

MACDONNELL B/C

The Combined Voices Campaign - demanding better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

An overview of the development of a campaign to seek improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in Queensland. Key voices in this campaign include the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human services organisations, the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd (QATSICPP), PeakCare Queensland, and the CREATE Foundation, as well as child and family welfare professionals. This presentation will outline the problems facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland, how the campaign came about, key strategies, and the impacts of the campaign.

Dianne Harvey, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd and William Hayward, Combined Voices, QLD.

Developing better practice for culturally strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statutory kinship care services in Australia.

Presentation discusses the differences between aspects of care (family group conferencing carer assessment/training/support and family contact) in Indigenous and non-Indigenous statutory kinship care. Children coming into statutory care are increasingly being placed in relative/kinship care, which has also long been the preferred placement option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. A recent research study (McHugh 2009) indicates that there are significant differences in aspects of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relative/kinship care and it cannot be assumed that models and tools being developed for non-Indigenous care will be appropriate for Indigenous care. This presentation, based on consultations with Aboriginal caseworkers, stakeholders and carers, will discuss the variation – what is different in some of the aspects, and what might be better practice with Indigenous families caring in the context of statutory kinship or customary care, and how culturally safe Indigenous-specific programs and services for children in kinship placements can be implemented by non-Indigenous agency workers.

Marilyn McHugh, Social Policy Research Centre University of NSW and Paula Hayden, Consultant NSW.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth: frameworks and practices.

This paper will present the work of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) in research and practice development on cultural safety, which is defined as understanding the well-being needs of Aboriginal children and young people from the perspective of their cultural identity. The paper will give some practical examples of how cultural safety applies to service delivery in the out of home care system and in particular VACCA's culturally embedded practices to promote resilience.

Paper Written by Muriel Bamblett, Richard Frankland and Dr Peter Lewis, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency [VACCA] VIC. Presented by Richard Frankland and Dr Peter Lewis.



4

Child and family health – culturally appropriate and early intervention.

ELLERY A

Making it safe: developing culturally appropriate child and adolescent mental health services for the Aboriginal community within a mainstream service.

The presentation describes the development operation and impact of dedicated child and adolescent mental health service for Aboriginal communities in Adelaide and Murray Bridge, with emphasis on the importance of ongoing and responsive consultation with the Aboriginal community in order to overcome barriers to cultural safety.

Stephen Meredith and Helen Wyld, Ngartunna Patpangga (Children in the South) Southern Adelaide Health Service and Bill Wilson, Nanko-walun Porlar Nomawi (Well-being for Children and Families), Southern Adelaide Health Service - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (SAHS-CAMHS) SA.

Childcare and conductive hearing loss.

This paper discusses issues that arise from conductive hearing loss being endemic among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, especially those in childcare where middle ear disease otitis media (OM) is the main cause of hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Early childhood workers are strategically placed to assist and instigate early treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander OM and minimise adverse social outcomes that result from unidentified hearing loss. Being alerted to the connection between social problems and ear disease can significantly enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' and staff's capacity and motivation to support children's engagement with health services and minimise adverse social outcomes from endemic ear disease.

Dr Damien Howard, Lyn Fasoli, Phoenix Consulting and James Cook University, and Alison Wunungumarra, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Education NT.

5

Working with families and young people – safe and strengthened relationships.

CROWNE PLAZA

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Male (Ingkintja Male) Health

Positive work from the Congress Male Health Program and their Stop the Violence education campaign.

John Liddle and colleagues, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, NT

Cultural Synergy – Family Relationship Services engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fathers.

A credible focus on the cultural model and priorities that have created the high level of acceptance of the *Hey, Dad! For Indigenous Dads, Uncles and Pops Program* in urban, regional and remote locations and correctional centres.

Greg Stock, Lynne Slocombe Centacare Broken Bay, NSW

6

Out of home care – appropriate cultural approaches.

ELLERY D

A journey of healing: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency's therapeutic residential care program.

In 2009, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) commenced operation of its therapeutic residential care program, designed to redress the trauma experienced by Aboriginal children placed in out of home care. This evidence-based presentation will provide participants with a clear outline of the consultative process that the organization undertook to develop its healing approach, the challenges VACCA has experienced implementing this new model, the critical program components, and the learnings that have occurred over the period.

Author: Maureen Long, School of Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University.

Presented by Gwen Rogers, Krissie Mayberry Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency [VACCA] and Sean Pie, Berry St. VIC.

Children in Out of home care – Creative approaches in the West.

This presentation will highlight how best to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Yorganop is the main provider for Aboriginal children in out of home care in Western Australia.

Kathleen Pinkerton, Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corporation WA.

Safe Families Program: Opportunities for Growth & Innovative Program Development in Changing Times.

Presentation outlines challenges faced by the Safe Families Program in a changing environment, and opportunities for innovative development and growth.

It will show the developmental path of a unique program model, originally set up to provide a culturally appropriate alternative to statutory intervention for at-risk children, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and challenges to its core commitment in changing political times.

Eleanor Rhines, Rochelle Fielding, Kenny Braun, Tangentyere Council Inc, NT.

Workshop C

Desert Weavers Workshop 1 by Tjanpi Weavers.

MEET IN GHAN FOYER.

Learning from women from the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands. Share some time and learn the skills from the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. Take some grass, get a needle and some raffia and start to coil a basket. Let's talk, teach and learn and make baskets together.

Limited participants at any one time and participants can come and go. Priority for participation will be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants from remote areas.

LUNCH 12.30pm to 1.30pm

SERVED IN PORTE COCHERE OFF THE GHAN FOYER

Short films from 12.45pm in Ellery Room A.

1.30pm to 3pm

7 Remote work – traditional child rearing practices.

MACDONNELL B/C

Importance of grandparents in traditional child rearing practices.

This will be a hands on workshop on the importance of grandparents in traditional child rearing practices – like sand stories, smoking ceremonies, passing on culture through singing, dance and storytelling. Presentation will include what happens during a typical day - going on hunting trips with women and children, community members visiting us at our accommodation, having a cup of tea and yarn, children and parents imitating and repeating things that they have learnt during our visit/s. Presentation will include some of the participants speaking about how playgroup has impacted on the well-being and learning of their children. Waltija provides a range of services and support to remote communities across the Central Australian region.

Christine Armstrong, Waltija Tjutangku Palyapayi, NT.

8 Early childhood – social and emotional well-being.

MACDONNELL A

The strength of stories: sharing knowledge between researchers, families and Tiwi people.

An interactive presentation sharing activities adapted from the Let's Start: Exploring Together Preschool Program (ETPP) to support the implementation of the program on the Tiwi Islands. Delivering effective preventative programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families can be a challenging process. Establishing relationships with the community and engaging families are key elements in making prevention work. Let's Start: Exploring Together Preschool Program is an early intervention therapeutic group program for children aged 3-7 years presenting with challenging social-emotional behaviours.

Yomei Jones, Charles Darwin University and the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, NT.

Social and emotional well-being of children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services.

This presentation will introduce SNAICC's new project, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kids/Matter Early Childhood. Through discussion and information sharing, the workshop will explore the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the early years and the role community-controlled early childhood services and staff, working with families, can play to support and promote the healthy social and emotional wellbeing of children in their care.

Mark Lawrence, Jade Fraser, Samantha Smith, SNAICC, and Carmen Naivalu Australian Psychological Society, VIC.

9 Child protection: partnerships with parents and professionals.

CROWNE PLAZA

The Lakidjeka Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice Support Service (ACSASS) – working in partnership and providing cultural advice to child protection.

This presentation will demonstrate through case examples that by having a respectful and formal partnership between a State Government and an Aboriginal agency, you can achieve positive outcomes for children and young people in statutory child protection. ACSASS is a unique Indigenous specific response to statutory child protection intervention in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. ACSASS caseworkers provide advice on the child's Indigenous family and community, information to promote the child's cultural identity, provide an Indigenous risk assessment, provide a collaborative case focus, and help inform decision making, including placement options.

The main presenters will be workers from the Lakidjeka ACSASS program.

Suzanne Cleary, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), VIC.

Tyerrtye arntarnte-areme : caring for people.

This will present the early learnings and challenges in relation to child rearing and parenting practices in providing the first Targeted Family Support Service in NT. Have we made a difference? To whom and

about what? The newly established Targeted Family Support Service aims to provide support to families referred by child protection with high needs but low immediate risk of harm to children. With a number of stumbling blocks along the way, including some early staff turnover, the service confronted some real challenges in how best to respond to some very complex family situations in a meaningful way. As the service has developed, it has become clearer that there are some critical ingredients to consider in service design when building and delivering relevant and responsive services to children and families in the Alice Springs context.

Caroline Lovell and Sonya Lemson, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, NT.

10 Healing – cultural resources.

ELLERY B/C

Yarning Up on Trauma – healing ourselves – healing our children and families – healing our communities – a guide written for Aboriginal people.

Presentation of this guide developed by Berry Street, Take Two program in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency. Initially developed as a training package, the guide was re-developed as a resource at the request of Aboriginal staff in Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations.

The workshop will be interactive and provide an overview of the Yarning Up on Trauma model and some tools to help participants manage this constructively. The guide will be available to participants.

Shaun Coode and Sandie de Wolf, Berry Street Victoria, VIC.

11 Rights – awareness, compliance and reporting.

ELLERY A

Child rights reporting - Australia's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is clear that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage is the single greatest social justice challenge facing Australia today. Presentation will cover monitoring Australia's performance of its obligation under the Convention, the ongoing Northern Territory Intervention, the Close the Gap Initiative, the work on the development of a National Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children, the development of a



National Framework for Child Protection and the ongoing challenge of the discriminatory impact of youth justice systems throughout the nation as they impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The National Children's and Youth Law Centre is the only Australian national community legal centre working for and with children and young people.

James McDougall, National Children's and Youth Law Centre NSW and Lyndon Ormond Parker, Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne, VIC.

Growing awareness of children's rights.

This workshop will provide a forum for learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's rights, how they are applicable in an everyday situation, and a section on developing teaching and activities on children's rights.

Sandy Barber, Emily Cheesman, SNAICC, VIC.

12

Child and family health – maternal and infant best outcomes.

ELLERY D

Koori Maternity Services in Victoria: Showcasing the growth and journey of 10 years of the Koori Maternity Services.

This presentation will explore: Providing a culturally appropriate service, supporting and advocating service delivery (VACCHO's role), positive working relationships (KMS Staff), training and education and resource development. The audience will learn how the delivery of the Koori Maternity Services in Victoria is helping to address health inequality, closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It showcases the great working relationships and promotes a Victorian good news story.

Simone Andy, Victorian Aboriginal Community Control Health Organisation, VIC.

From America into our Homes – A new program to support young Aboriginal Mums and their children.

This presentation will introduce the structured, intensive home visiting program that originated in the US, and the adapted version for the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context. The program aims to improve pregnancy outcomes by encouraging women to engage in good

preventative health practises; support women to improve the health and developmental outcomes for their child, and support women to develop a vision for their own future.

Leshay Maidment, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Alukura, NT.

3.30pm to 5pm

13

Child and family health – through nutrition.

ELLERY A

Kukumbat gudwan daga – really cooking good food.

Jawoyn women from the Katherine region developed and created their own cookbook to provide healthy nutritious food for the school lunch and aged care programs that operate in their women's centres. The women's centres in Gulin Gulin Wugular and Manyallaluk in the Katherine East Jawoyn region worked with The Fred Hollows Foundation Women's Development project to create a healthy cookbook. The project has contributed to strengthening the women's control over the day to day management of their women's centres.

Alison Lorraine and Gloria Dalywater, The Fred Hollows Foundation, NT.

Strong and healthy – Red Cross and community partnerships.

This presentation is the opportunity to share the story of Red Cross and remote Aboriginal communities working together to improve the health and school readiness of children through nutrition; a journey of community development in Aboriginal communities of the Central Desert Macdonnell and Barkly Shires in the areas of food security and health promotion drawing on prevention education and early intervention strategies.

Gina Smith, Carmel Murtagh-Ralph, Australian Red Cross, Alice Springs, NT.

Nutrition and Alice Springs town camps.

This presentation will look at first experiences of a nutritionist working within Tangentyere Council servicing Alice Springs town camps residents and the importance of linking in with internal programs for individual case work and staff support, and external services to promote healthy food choices through experiential learning within the town camp and home environment. This paper will also briefly look at the initial action research

outcomes conducted on one town camp in relation to food security issues and how these findings will aim to improve food availability access and use for Alice Springs town camp families.

Mel Kean, Tangentyere Council, NT.

14

Early childhood – co-location, collaboration and service integration.

ELLERY B/C

Co-location and integration of Koorie early childhood services.

This presentation will examine the integration and co-location of Koorie early childhood services, the formation of Koorie early childhood hubs, and the elements that make up a high quality service for Koorie children and families. Current State and Federal early childhood policy has identified the co-location and integration of services as a central aim for the future of early childhood services.

Geraldine Atkinson, VAEAI (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated), VIC.

The Little Yarns Project.

An innovative collaboration between the local Awabakal Early Childhood Community and the Firstchance Inc. Early Intervention service in Newcastle NSW to bring prevention and early intervention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, focusing on speech, language and communication through service delivery within the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services.

Ruth Davies, Emma Beckett, Gwendalyn Webb, Awabakal Early Childhood Services and Firstchance Inc., NSW.

15

Child protection – safely connected to kin and culture.

MACDONNELL A

Recognised Entity – a holistic approach: A case study on how the Recognised Entity works to ensure children remain connected to kin and culture.

This discussion group will be led by The Recognised Entity – Child Well-being Program (Wuchopperen Health Service) to explain how we assist families who are at risk or are in the child protection system.

Shannon Keating and Sue Curtis, Wuchopperen Health Service, QLD.

All Children Being Safe.

This early primary school protective behaviours program has been developed to provide early primary school students (ages 5 to 8 years) non-threatening ways to help them feel strong and stay safe in their communities. Messages around safety are explored with the children using bush animals that children may see in their local communities e.g. the Kangaroo, Echidna, Kookaburra, Koala and the King Parrot. This workshop will be an interactive opportunity to experience the All Children Being Safe Train the Trainer package. Each participant will also be provided with a manual.

Angela Walsh, NAPCAN, NSW.

16 Healing – through Elders' expertise and cultural knowledge.

MACDONNELL B/C

Human rights and cultural rights.

A group presentation with language speakers and interpretation in an interactive informal workshop utilising Elders' expertise and cultural knowledge to look at links between and within families, and family strengthening as

a mechanism for family strength, pride and identity with relationships free of violence. The discussion will focus on what is core to family wellbeing and protection of children as an intergenerational presentation of our work.

The presenters are Arrernte Elders co-presenting with young Arrernte women and men who are young leaders, Akeylerre Incorporated, NT.

17 Remote – early childhood work in remote communities.

CROWNE PLAZA

Jarnku warra warra kanjaku manu yulkanjaku - Kids to take care of each other; to love each other.

This case study will focus on sharing ideas and understandings from early childhood programs in the four Warlpiri Communities of the Central Desert. This will be the first time that many of the Warlpiri early childhood workers have been to a conference and shared their ideas and understandings with others. They will present in English and in Warlpiri.

Teresa Hutchins and Early childhood workers from each of the four Warlpiri Communities in the Central Desert region, World Vision Australia, NT.

18 Policy – social change and reconciliation.

ELLERY D

Premier of the documentary film 3rd World Canada through a participatory workshop.

3rd World Canada is a visual testimony of the generational impact of Aboriginal kids in care in a remote fly-in reserve in North-Western Ontario. In the aftermath of three suicides, which leave behind eight orphans, the documentary is a call to action on the reconciliation movement between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

The film has a tremendous emotional impact on viewers and you can preview the first five minutes of the film here:

<http://acazzabon.weebly.com/3rd-world-canada.html>

The film was completed January 14, 2010 and our aim is not just to do traditional film screenings but instead to create social change and reconciliation projects.

Andrée Cazaban, Dr Cindy Blackstock, Canada

6pm – 9.30pm

TUESDAY EVENING OPTIONS: for those who registered and paid the additional fee

Numbers are strictly limited and attendance is only for those who have confirmation on their nametag.

FOR BOTH OPTIONS: Transportation is included and departs from the Convention Centre at 5.45pm sharp for a 6pm start. Remember to dress warmly.

Film Night Larapinta

6pm to 9pm

Join us for a film night and meal under the stars at the Yarrenyty-Arliere Learning Centre at Larapinta Valley town camp. Kungas Can Cook will provide a delicious dinner before a two and a half hour program of local and national Aboriginal and Islander films. Films will include shorts, animations, music clips and documentary.

OR

Healing Centre

6pm to 9pm

A great evening at Akeylerre, the Arrernte Healing Centre in the middle of Alice Springs. Alongside a barbeque dinner will be an introduction to cultural health, strength and healing, as well as a bush medicine demonstration, dance, boomerang making, films and a smoking ceremony.



Photo: James Spiller





9am to 10.30pm

MACDONNELL AUDITORIUM

Plenary:

- **Children's singing performance:**
Margaret James, Yipirinya School Alice Springs
- **Keynote Address: Prof. Dorothy Scott –**
Reflections on Aboriginal children and child protection: Lessons learned both personal and professional.
- **Keynote Address: Dr Joseph Sparling USA -**
Early Childhood Education – resources and new strategies.

11am to 12.30pm

19 Out of home care: culturally appropriate.

ELLERY A

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in care – supporting the family – supporting the child.

This paper provides an overview of a model of care developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in care - a residential facility managed through a community controlled health organisation. Presentation of benefits and challenges - opportunity for a youth service to consider broader outcomes for the young person in care, opportunity to work outside the confines of a Residential model that prioritises the Department's needs over the child's, creating an industry level best practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.

Royden Fagan, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC), QLD.

Aboriginal Case Management in out of home care.

KARI out of home care program has full case management of up to 120 Aboriginal children and young people in care. This presentation shows what makes the experience different for these children to those in a mainstream agency. The presentation will encompass a description of the out of home program at KARI Aboriginal Resources Inc. With a particular emphasis on what makes the service different from mainstream services, it will explore the cultural components of the service and how they were developed. Participants will be

able to take ideas away that will assist in developing cultural programs within their services.

Christine Laurie and Casey Walpole, KARI Aboriginal Resources Incorporated, NSW.

20 Early childhood – frameworks for service development.

MACDONNELL B/C

A reflective journey in creative cultural linking with early childhood and school age care environments.

This presentation will use the National Aboriginal and Islander Childrens' Day celebration as a foundation to share, network, nurture and link traditional contemporary cultures to Early Years Learning Framework and promote inclusive practices. Participants will view hands on activities and receive templates and practical ideas to use in 0-8 years care environments from a cultural perspective.

Janice Rocca and Kylee Wyatt, Inclusion Support Agency Brisbane, QLD.

Strengthening all communities for children: understanding and using Australian Early Development Index results.

This presentation will promote community understanding of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) and how the results can be used in planning local action to benefit families and children. The AEDI is a national progress measure that gathers information about young children across five areas of development: physical health and well-being, emotional maturity, social competence, language and cognitive skills, and communication and general knowledge skills.

Professor Sven Silburn, Anne Hanning, Bonnie Moss from Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin, NT.

21 Child protection – changes in the NT?

CROWNE PLAZA

What is working, why it is working and what can be changed to benefit Aboriginal children and families in contact with the NT child protection system.

This panel of local and national speakers will draw on key issues raised in inquiries and reports on the NT child protection system and

reflect on what is working and what changes are possible.

22 Healing – innovative holistic approaches.

MACDONNELL A

Black Swans' big day out.

Presentation of a successful model for working with 'at risk' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (12-25) that combines culture, touch football and health promotion, currently focusing on sexual health. This presentation will tell the story of the Black Swans - not just a touch football team, but a successful holistic approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Jennifer McClay, Anne Humbert, Chris May, Cultural Healing Program, and Jo Stewart, Family Planning, QLD.

Koori Kids and sea country.

Two Bays (Port Phillip and Western Port Bays, Victoria) is a science research program developed in key partnership with Pelican Expeditions and Parks Victoria, which engages Koori kids from VACCA and local schools in Sea Country by working with Elders, Indigenous Rangers, marine scientists and teachers aboard Pelican 1.

Natalie Davey, Pelican Expeditions, VIC.

Yarrenyty Arlttere Artists: From little things big things grow.

This presentation will look at how an Alice Springs town camp community have established a highly regarded innovative art enterprise - the Yarrenyty-Arlttere Artists. This small art enterprise was developed towards the community goal of establishing an art enterprise in the community. Presentation will outline the key areas for its success and how the program provides economic access and workforce participation to enhance self esteem, social inclusiveness, leadership and improved quality of life.

Leonie Sheedy and Dulcie Sharpe, Yarrenyty Arlttere Learning Centre Tangentyere Council, NT.

23

Policy and resources – self determined and culturally responsive.

ELLERY B

Establishing quality culturally responsive developmental educational and care services which are solely focused on the very best outcomes for all Aboriginal children both now and for their future.

In Victoria there is a whole of government approach to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians set out in the Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development. The Blueprint recognises the fundamental importance learning plays in a child's development and which directly impacts not only on early experiences but on future well-being, and honours the six strategic platforms of the Council Of Australian Governments (COAG) National Reform Agenda, focusing particular attention on early childhood and schooling.

We will present: Victoria's Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development, successful strategies and partnerships, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service case studies on establishing quality culturally responsive, developmental, educational and care services which are solely focused on the very best outcomes for all Aboriginal children.

Veronica (Ronnie) Hunt, Penny Kelly, Children and Youth Services Northern Region Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, VIC.

Culture and self determination in Aboriginal child and family services.

The presentation and workshop will explore the importance of culture and self determination in the provisions of services to Aboriginal children and families and how this can be achieved through strong partnerships between an Aboriginal community controlled sector and government.

The workshop will explore specific case examples from a number of programs in Victoria: Cultural support plans, Aboriginal Cultural Competence, Aboriginal Family Services, ACSASS specialist service to provide cultural advice to child protection, and Aboriginal guardianship.

The workshop aims to strengthen and clarify what cultural connectedness and self

determination can look like in the Aboriginal child and family services sector.

Mary Roberts, Dept. Human Services Victoria Aboriginal Children & Families Unit and Joanne Badke, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative, and Jason King, East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative. VIC.

Developing Cultural Resources.

This paper and accompanying display will showcase the work of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency in the development of cultural resources for the Aboriginal child and family welfare sector. The paper will present reasons for why it is so important for us to develop our own cultural resources and how the development of our own cultural resources should always use a partnership approach.

Bev Murray, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency [VACCA] VIC.

24

Remote work – child nutrition program.

ELLERY C

Delivering health services, individual case management and advocacy services through the Women's Council.

The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) is an Aboriginal community controlled organisation operating in the remote cross border region of central Australia, delivering health and human services to approximately 6000 men, women and children. The NPYWC Child Nutrition Program, as determined by the members, aims to teach young mothers how to cook nutritious meals for their children as a real solution to the numbers of 'skinny kids', frequent hospitalisations and high prevalence of 'welfare' intervention for children failing to thrive resulting in the removal of these children from their families and communities to predominantly non-Aboriginal foster care in major centres away from the NPY communities.

The Child Nutrition Program is now a multifaceted and holistic family-focused approach to failure to thrive in children by working across the disciplines of health promotion, health education, individual case management and advocacy.

Gemma Gray, Liza Balmer and Denise Brady, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Womens Council, NT.

Breakfast: Bringing the Community Together.

This presentation will share stories about our breakfast program and how it has helped link the community with the school. The program was initiated by members of the community council one year ago and has helped improve attendance, give our kids a healthy start to the day, and increase the participation of parents and carers in school activities.

Rosalind Beadle, and women from the communities, Warburton Community Incorporated, NT.

Workshop D

Desert Weavers Workshop 2 by Tjanpi Weavers.

MEET IN GHAN FOYER.

Learning from women from the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands. Share some time and learn the skills from the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. Take some grass, get a needle and some raffia and start to coil a basket. Let's talk, teach and learn and make baskets together.

Limited participants at any one time and participants can come and go. Priority for participation will be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants from remote areas.

Workshop E

NEW

US Learning Games with at-risk children: can they work here?

ELLERY D ROOM

30 years of research in the USA showed that simple learning tools developed through the Abecedarian research have far-reaching benefits for at-risk children, including improved reading and maths abilities, and increased likelihood of graduating from a four-year university course. Could this approach work in Australia's Aboriginal programs? Learn how the positive, long term results of the Abecedarian research studies were achieved. See examples and short videos of the four elements: Learning Games, Conversational Reading, Language Priority, and Enriched Caregiving.

Dr Joseph Sparling, USA.

LUNCH 12.30pm to 1.30pm

SERVED IN PORTE COCHERE OFF THE GHAN FOYER

Short films from 12.45pm in Ellery Room A.



1.30pm to 3pm

25 Discussion circle: healing – cultural resilience and promising healing practices.

CROWNE PLAZA

This discussion group will take the form of an interactive forum, which will explore cultural resilience and promising healing practices for working with trauma, loss and grief experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The discussion theme will be in the form of a question: “What are individuals, services and communities doing to promote cultural resilience and healing?” This is an opportunity to contribute to this knowledge base, and to learn from others’ experiences.

In a world café style discussion, participants will be invited to share their practice and good news stories - information about programs or initiatives that are working in their communities, or that are happening in other communities that they know about. “As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people’s capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims”. www.theworldcafe.com/what.htm.

Participants’ contributions of knowledge will be collated and integrated to identify a range of current practices used by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in different places across Australia. This body of knowledge will be used to distill the characteristics that exemplify practices thought to work with specific target groups such as: children, adolescents, families, women, those who are incarcerated, and members of the Stolen Generations.

Dr Melisah Feeney and Helen Bell-Bnads, Link-Up Qld. Shane Merritt, Elspeth MacDonald, Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma Loss and Grief Network, ANU, ACT.

26 Early childhood – the many roles of stories.

ELLERY A

Strictly limited to 60 participants

Child Rearing Stories project – the learnings so far.

Presentation on what we have learned and what methods we have used to get to this point in the SNAICC project to collect and share child rearing stories. This presentation will report on the project methodologies,

resources developed, and highlight the emergent themes so far.

Jane Harrison, SNAICC, VIC.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Self Publishing Workshop.

A presentation about creating books using words and art combined with available technology, leading to the creation of resources that are localised, meaningful and relevant to the child, family and community. Aboriginal children’s self publishing workshop is aimed at providing an opportunity for participants to learn strategies for creating books with children, families and communities, based on the SNAICC Child Rearing Stories Project. Children’s self publishing leads to the creation of resources with local content such as local languages and stories about the child’s family, community and local environment. Our workshop is a ‘train the trainer’ style, empowering participants to run their own workshops in their services with children, families and community members.

Katharin Bartley, May Kabay, Ros Von Sendon, Lynette Jenkins, Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU), QLD.

27 Child protection – partnerships.

ELLERY B

Building sustainable partnerships: Aboriginal community-controlled and generalist organisations learning together.

Drawing on the learning’s of a VCOSS Uniting Care and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) forum, this presentation will explore the key elements of building sustainable and meaningful partnerships between Aboriginal community-controlled and mainstream community sector organisations. As we focus on ‘Closing the Gap’ as a nation, it is vital that culturally competent human services are delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – a key way of achieving this is through partnerships between Aboriginal community-controlled and mainstream community sector organisations.

Participants will gain a greater understanding of the complexities of partnership, along with practical suggestions about partnership development.

VCOSS is the peak body for the social and community sector in Victoria and advocates

for the development of a sustainable, fair and equitable society.

Lauren Matthews and Carolyn Atkins, Victorian Council of Social Service, VIC.

Building respectful partnerships.

This paper will highlight how the key to building a more culturally competent organisation that delivers more effective services to Aboriginal children and families lies in partnerships with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal organisations. In building partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, the leaders of the organisation will need to be mindful of the history of Aboriginal people, the organisation’s role in this history, and the impact this will have on relationships with Aboriginal organisations today.

Emma Bamblett, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), VIC.

28 Remote: the role of bi-lingual language in culture

MACDONNELL A

Yirrkala School in Arnhem Land: language and culture for children.

Yirrkala school is situated in north east Arnhem land. The school offers education from preschool to year 12 but is also engaged in a strong literacy and numeracy pilot program and activities associated with Families as First Teachers. In this presentation we would like to share our experience in building a family oriented early childhood program from 0-8 focusing on language development in first language, Yolngu Matha, and building oral English for success in schooling. The program is conducted at two communities, Yirrkala and Gunyanbgara and involves community outreach. The program is led by Yolgnu staff and is building the capacity of young women to take on educational leadership in the communities. The session will share video material documenting the development of the program.

Banbapuy Whitehead and team, Yirrkala School NT.

29 Remote healing work: bush adventure therapy - the Santa Teresa horse program.

ELLERY C

A DVD and discussion on using strength based activities nominated by the community to develop intergenerational leadership with men's groups.

Chris Wallace, remote Health Services – Central Australian Aboriginal Congress; William McGregor, BushMob Inc; Charlie Hodgson, Aboriginal Male Health; Cedric Ross, Chris Ryder, Farren Gorey, Malcolm Hayes, Gibson John, Damien Ryder and Shannon Ryder, NT

30 Working with families – supporting through challenges.

MACDONNELL B/C

Remote Area Child Witness of Domestic Violence Counselling Service.

An introduction to RAATSICC's Child Witness of Domestic Violence Counselling Service and overview of current statistics and issues facing children who witness domestic or family violence. The service provides specialist child witness counselling services in remote Cape and Gulf communities and delivers vital support to families in isolated communities who do not have child specific services or support infrastructure.

Desley Thompson, Crystal Ramic, Cape / Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care (RAATSICC) Advisory Association Inc. QLD.

Supporting Parents in the Yarrabah Community through Parentline.

This presentation will report on collaborative work with the Yarrabah/Thursday Island Community Council local services, and Elders

and Parentline (BoysTown) to enable delivery of Parentline services to the Community.

Charmaine Law and Carroll Benson, BoysTown – Parentline, QLD.

Workshop F NEW Child and Family Early Childhood Services Panel

ELLERY D

The implementation of the Children and Family Centres: What's working and what's not?

This facilitated forum brings together representatives from government and from communities who are involved in getting the CFCs up and running. Participants will hear and have a chance to discuss what is working and what is not in the design and delivery of implementing this initiative across the country.

3.30pm to 5pm

31 Discussion circle: early childhood – let's talk about quality child care.

CROWNE PLAZA

Child care workers sharing their ideas and experiences of Child Care Quality Assurance with National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). Showcase of many successful and culturally strong child care services supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

The NCAC's job is to work with children's services to meet the standard for Accreditation and ensure that kids feel safe and have positive experiences in child care. The discussion circle provides a place for

NCAC and child care workers to share their stories and experiences of Quality Assurance and to learn from each other.

Jan McFarlane, Rebecca Gewandt, National Childcare Accreditation Council, NSW.

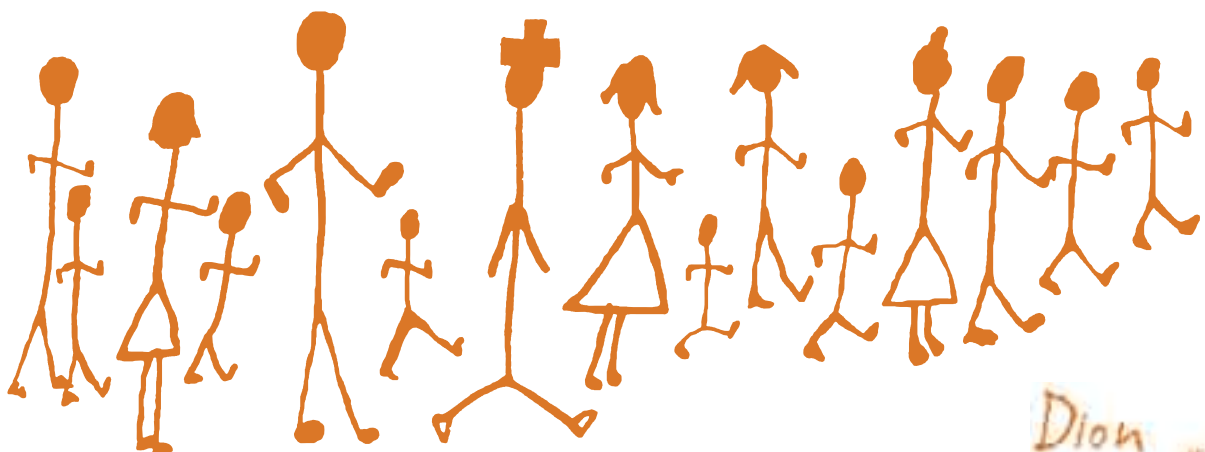
32 Out of home care – culturally appropriate assessment and needs.

MACDONNELL A

Feeling safe – what recent research tells us about the most important needs of Aboriginal children in the care system.

This workshop will look at recent neuroscience findings and how they might apply to understanding the needs of Aboriginal children in care by focusing on the needs of Aboriginal children, mainly those in rural and remote communities across most states and territories of Australia. It explores the developmental impact of the exposure of Aboriginal children to contemporary trauma, in contrast to the historic trauma documented in reports such as 'Bringing them Home' and films/books such as 'Rabbit Proof Fence'. It seeks to draw understanding from the neuroscience research literature about the impact of trauma on the developing child to help us understand and respond to the complex needs, vulnerabilities and behaviours of many Aboriginal children in the care system. The trauma/neuroscience perspective adds a new layer of understanding to the much-explored historical, anthropological and political approaches to understanding the challenges faced by First Australian children and families.

Dr Howard Bath, Office of the Children's Commissioner, NT.





Towards a more culturally appropriate assessment process for Indigenous children in out of home care.

This paper looks at the human rights implications, with particular reference to cultural rights and the ethics of recording personal information about Indigenous children and young people in the Looking after Children assessment record and child welfare records more broadly.

Terri Libesman, Law Faculty University of Technology, Sydney, NSW.

33 Early childhood – ‘Yarnin Circle talkin’ up your service’ NSW services sharing three elements of their services.

ELLERY A

Eight Services from NSW and the ACT will provide a ten minute talk each on three key elements of their service - ‘decide what you want to do’, ‘do it well’ and ‘advocate for it’. This session would allow the services the platform to ‘advocate for it’ as a component of the mantra.

Judith McKay-Tempest, Indigenous Professional Support Unit, NSW and ACT, Lady Gowrie Child Centre and colleagues from Aboriginal children’s services: Shirley Wilson, Allira MACS – Dubbo; Representative, Gudjahgahmiamia MACS - Wreck Bay, Roslynn Webb Noogaleek MACS, Mary Chatfield Oorunga Wandarrah MACS, Diane Fraser Towri MACS, Lavenus Ingram Yalbillinga Boori MACS, Karen Minter Yawarra LDC, Teresa Anderson Cabbage Tree Island Playgroup - Jali LALC, Terry Hawkins Koori Kindermana Aboriginal Playgroup and Preschool, Maxine McGrady Dandaloo Gaynil Aboriginal Playgroup and Preschool. NSW and the ACT.

34 Healing – good stories that make spirits strong: Yia Marra.

MACDONNELL B/C

This presentation will share a collective narrative practice project that has taken place in Ntaria/Hermannsburg. Inspired by stories from Aboriginal communities in South Australia and in Arnhem Land, the residents of Ntaria have been sharing stories and songs that ‘make spirits strong’.

Barbara Wingard and Wally Malbunka, Dulwich Centre, the Division of General Practice (NT) and the Western Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation (WAHAC) and co-led by community members/health workers from Ntaria (Hermannsburg) NT.

35 Policy – government responses.

ELLERY B

Child protection getting its act together for Aboriginal children in Western Australia.

The Department for Child Protection has moved from segregating Aboriginal issues in our service delivery to an environment that promotes integration and ‘Aboriginal Business is Everyone’s Business’. This is backed up with the development of a conceptual Aboriginal Services Framework that is driven by the department’s executive. We will present a Framework that brings together key drivers, leadership, and polices to achieve better and equal services to Aboriginal children and their families.

Jenni Collard, Western Australian Department for Child Protection and Ross Councillor, Manager Consulting Services, WA.

Towards a culturally secure service system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

An outline of Northern Territory Families and Childrens’ policies, projects and activities that have been established or are in the development process to effectively implement cultural security within the division. Topics Covered: Cultural security, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development, remote service delivery issues, cultural maintenance for children in care, differential response framework, and community child protection models.

Dennella Detourbet, Jacqueline McCann, Northern Territory Families and Children, NT.

The process for the whole of government : evaluation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response – aka - ‘The Intervention’.

This presentation will look at the ‘whole of government’ evaluation, focusing in particular on community case studies. Issues that will be covered include the ‘themes’ to be investigated, the case study process, the capacity building opportunity this provides, and how the findings from the evaluation can be used by governments and communities. The presentation will facilitate the evaluation process and encourage local people to be involved in the evaluation.

Sue Sutton and Emma Vanian, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination Department of Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, ACT.

36 Remote work – using traditional means to improve family outcomes.

ELLERY D

Early Child Development and the Play and Learn Support Kit (PALS).

The PALS Kit presentation is an opportunity for women from various communities to have a conversation around child development presented in a culturally appropriate way that uses their own knowledge about hunting and the seasons to develop an understanding of early childhood brain development and the importance of good strong experiences for mothers and their children from ante natal to three years of age.

Leanna Haynes, Naomi Havens and Mandy Mangurra, Anglicare, NT.

Lateral Violence

Lateral Violence is when an oppressed group turn on themselves. It is endemic amongst Indigenous communities around the world. It is a killer of culture, collective voice, families and community. It needs to be stopped.

Richard Frankland, Koorreen Enterprises and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), VIC.

Workshop G NEW Through Young Black Eyes

ELLERY C

This workshop is for people who want to run workshops about the prevention of family violence in their own community or organisation, and are looking for inspiration, ideas and practical strategies. In this workshop, presenters will discuss strategies about how to run a community workshop on Family and community strengths and what we want for our children; Family violence and its effect on children; Child abuse and neglect; Child sexual abuse and/or developing a child safe community.

The presenters will draw from their own experience as well as from the Through Young Black Eyes Workshop kit produced by SNAICC to provide tips and strategies and share success stories about running a successful workshop.

Catriona Elek, SNAICC, VIC.



9am to 10.30pm

MACDONNELL AUDITORIUM

Plenary:

- **Children's Performance**

- **Keynote Address: Karen Martin**

Who's growing up whom? Roles, relationships and relatedness within Aboriginal childhood law.

- **Keynote Address: Grant Sarra**

Men's work and men's business in the historical, cultural, and modern day policy context.

This address will talk about embracing our humility, dignity and integrity as men and within society, to change the way we think, feel and behave towards women.

intervention: the project workers' perspective.

How creating your own stories/books builds community capacity and makes literacy meaningful.

Moreton Bay Region Libraries, Gundoos Playgroup and representative from Murriajabree ATSI Inc., QLD

Certificate III Children's Services Indigenous Training Development Resource Kit.

This presentation will showcase a culturally appropriate resource kit developed for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to improve learning outcomes. It will cover what works and why.

Chris Tayler, Charles Darwin University, NT.

40 Child and family health: Autism Spectrum Disorder.

ELLERY D

Early Days: supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This presentation will look at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and experiences of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by presenting findings of a project undertaken by SNAICC in partnership with the Parenting Research Centre. We will discuss what the stories we've heard from parents and services tell us about how best to provide accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate support for families parenting children with ASD. The presentation will include stories from the ground from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and early childhood workers.

Julie Higgins and Sue Beecher SNAICC, Melissa Polimeni, Parenting Research Centre and ATSI co-presenter Jaki French from the SNAICC Early Days project VIC.

11am to 12.30pm

37 Discussion circle: Early childhood – discussing the answers to who's growing up whom?

CROWNE PLAZA

Roles, relationships and relatedness within Aboriginal childhood law.

An interactive discussion of the roles, relationships and relatedness necessary to restore Aboriginal childhood law, not just for our children, but also for ourselves as adults.

The main ideas of this discussion circle are: child-rearing, parenting, and relatedness and lifehood, as these make up what I call 'Aboriginal Childhood Law'. This is very different to child law, children's rights or child protection because it takes a deeper look at what it is we are learning from the child even though we are parents and adults. Participants will be engaged in some thinking, sharing practical activities as ways to reconceptualise our roles as adults in the lives of children. This can inform their professional roles but also their personal roles.

Dr Karen Martin, School of Education, Southern Cross University, NSW.

38 Early childhood – literacy and training.

ELLERY A

Lifting the sky: capacity building through early language/literacy

39 Working with Families and Young People – engaging in alternative learning.

MACDONNELL B/C

Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre: a community answer.

This presentation will look at how the Yarrenyty-Arltere Learning Centre (YALC) located at Larapinta Valley Town Camp in Alice Springs has worked over the past nine years to address its social problems with local solutions and how it addressed the devastating social issues people were living with, in particular petrol sniffing and the use of solvents amongst the youth. It will look at the YALC intergenerational model of engagement that takes a broad community development approach in addition to supporting individuals.

Leonie Sheedy and Janella Ebatarinja, Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre, Tangentyere Council, NT.

Working with young people – integrated learning program.

A presentation on engaging with young people who are disconnecting from school, families and community, how to empower young people to make informed and positive choices, ideas on equipping young people with coping strategies that can be employed to deal with harmful situations and/or crisis, and using alternative learning in practical real life scenarios. An innovative approach that covers dynamic education through contextualised integrated learning.

Terry Hayek and Lou Single, Youth off the Streets, NSW.

41 Child protection – reconciliation.

MACDONNELL A

Getting into trouble for doing the right thing – a workshop sharing real life examples of how the Caring Society advocates to move entrenched and misinformed national and provincial public policies that disadvantage First Nations children. All the strategies assume groups have almost no money and no prior experience in child welfare.

Cindy Blackstock, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

42 Remote work with children.

ELLERY B/C

Kurdu pirrijirdi nyinanjaku manu yungurlu pina jarri - kids to stay strong and learn well.

This case study will be presented in the Warlpiri Language and simultaneously interpreted into English. It will describe how Warlpiri women got together to use some of their royalty money to develop an early childhood care and development program for their own communities, why Warlpiri women decided to focus on Early Childhood Care and Development, how they went about developing the program and what they

expect the outcomes to be. The presenters are all teachers and respected leaders in their community.

Barbara Napanangka Martin, Cecily Napanangka Granites, Sharon Nambijimba Anderson, Masie Napaljarri Kitson, Fiona Napaljarri Gibson, Marlkirdi Napaljarri Rose, Nancy Napurrurla Oldfield, Warlpiri Education and Training Trust NT.

Workshop H

Strong in My Culture Kids' Publishing mini workshop.

BOARDROOM 1

This workshop will give participants a taste of the train the trainer style children's self publishing workshop, as developed by SNAICC.

Children's self publishing is a process where children create the text and art for their own books and multiple copies are then made so the books can be shared. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, it offers the opportunity to create culturally appropriate books. Come along to this session and create your own book!

Jane Harrison SNAICC, VIC.

Stories produced will also be on display on the walls in the Circulation Hallway.

LUNCH 12.30pm to 1.30pm

SERVED IN PORTE COCHERE OFF THE GHAN FOYER

Short films from 12.45pm in Ellery Room A.

1.30pm to 3pm

MACDONNELL AUDITORIUM

Closing Plenary

- **Keynote Address – Kerrie Tim**
Accepting the inheritance, building the legacy, and passing it on: Leadership and honouring the Ancestors and our future generations.
- **Closing remarks - Frank Hytten,** SNAICC CEO

Art Market in Ghan Foyer 3pm - 5pm

TOURS If you are interested in some post conference tour options and visits to local services, check with registration desk for details.

1 Catholic Care NT

Catholic Care NT - Stronger Families
www.catholicarent.gov.au

2&3 Modern Teaching Aids

Modern Teaching Aids - educational products for children from birth through to early years of school. Inclusive, relevant to all children and focusing on play, outdoor activities and communication.
www.teaching.com.au

4 Life Without Barriers

A not for profit organisation that's committed to providing a supportive and safe environment. www.lwb.org.au

5 One World for Children

One World for Children - online training specialising in children's services. Delivering national training qualifications within the children's sector.

6&7 SNAICC Cultural Safety Space

If you want a space to hang out in – maybe you are feeling overwhelmed by conference content, the crowd or issues – you can seek some time out in this small 'hang out' space staffed by someone from SNAICC. There will also be SNAICC resources and merchandise for sale here - see over page for details.

8 Akeyulerre (Healing Centre)

Akeyulerre (Healing Centre) based in Alice Springs, is a traditional healing place for Arrernte people. It recognises the importance of traditional healers and medicines and supports cultural maintenance of local Arrernte families.

9 Yarn Strong Sista

Yarn Strong Sista - Aboriginal Early Childhood Resources: dolls, books, games, puzzles, toys made from timber, wool and felt. www.yarnstrongsista.com.au

10 Educational Experience

Educational Experience Australia - educational resources for early childhood.
www.edex.com.au

11 World Vision

World Vision - Central Australia

12 National Childcare Accreditation Council

National Childcare Accreditation Council - quality child care and the benefits to

children, particularly in the year before school. www.ncac.gov.au

13 Mereki/The Kangaroo Club

The Kangaroo Club - An Indigenous Culture Program, especially designed for early childhood aged children, includes a CD, a child protection book and other resources.

14 Core of Life

Core of Life Education and Training - showcasing pictures and stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationally and providing information on how the program is to be implemented in communities across Australia. www.coreoflife.org

15 Institute of Koorie Education

The Institute offers University courses and a community based mode of delivery. www.deakin.edu.au/ike

16&17 Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) Press Jukurrpa Books

The only Indigenous Publisher based in the Northern Territory. IAD Press has been producing quality books for more than 30 years and has evolved into a national publishing house known for innovative and award winning books. www.iadpress.com

18 Centacare Broken Bay - Hey Dad

The *Hey, Dad!* For Indigenous Dads, Uncles and Pops Program. Services and products including training available nationally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and communities. www.centacarebrokenbay.org.au

19 Warawara Indigenous Studies Macquarie University

Information on Bachelor in Community Management and Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Services) Indigenous Studies programs as offered by Warawara. www.warawara.mq.edu.au

20 Funtastic Education Pty Ltd

Funtastic's Education Division distributes superior educational resources to early childhood centres and educational institutions across Australia. Our aim is to excite and inspire the developing child with educational toys and resources that are safe, creative and fun. www.funtasticeducation.com.au

The SNAICC Display is located in the main foyer opposite the registration desk: a display of publications, resources, and merchandise produced by SNAICC and an opportunity to view the SNAICC websites.

This display also contains a conference feedback area. SNAICC and conference merchandise is available for sale at this display.

The following items are available - get along and get yourself some warm gear and support SNAICC!

Hoodies \$50 **T-shirts \$25**
Beanies \$15 **Caps \$15**

Also various SNAICC resources for sale.

Many other displays are located in MacDonnell Auditorium and can be visited in all morning and afternoon tea breaks and during lunch.

Presenters will be available for questions and discussion during lunch break on Wednesday 28th July to answer questions.

POSTER DISPLAYS

- 1. Off the shelf and into conversation.** NAPCAN tools to promote children's safety. A display of NAPCAN's new tools to empower families and workers in the Northern Territory, to plan and take action to promote children's safety.
Nadia Albert, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), NT.
- 2. Sizzlin Sistas.** To promote social inclusiveness and provide social environments that support and encourage mothers to care for self and family. To educate and encourage young Indigenous women to make positive lifestyle changes beneficial to their health and well-being.
Wendy Allan, Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre, QLD.
- 3. Jingi Wala Jarjum – Welcome little children.** Education starts at playgroup – linking our jarjum into transition within our school.
Teresa Anderson, Jali Aboriginal Local Land Council, NSW.
- 4. Creating a culturally respectful and culturally safe organisation.** Life Without Barriers will describe our journey towards becoming a culturally safe and respectful organisation in equal partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.
Kerri Clarke, Life Without Barriers, NSW.
- 5. Us through arts – resources for Aboriginal families by Aboriginal families.** A presentation about a project under the Communities for Children initiative engaging Aboriginal families in the design and production of culturally appropriate and locally relevant resources for families with young children.
Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes, NSW.
- 6. Little children and mums learning together at 'Tjilku Kurlunyu Centre' in Warburton remote community, WA.** Women from Warburton community who participate in playgroups with their children talk about the photos and displays that show how they are learning together with their children and preparing their children for school.
Beryl Jennings and colleagues, WA Department for Communities, NT.
- 7. Universal access to preschool and early childhood services in remote settings in the NT.** A display on mobile preschools, mobile early childhood services and family as first teachers.
Department of Education and Training, Northern Territory, NT.
- 8. Kaziw Bayan (children's playhouse) display of activities and services provided to families, carers and community.** Our programs are based on actively engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
Irene Nicholls, Mackay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services (Child and Family Health Unit) (ATSICHS), QLD.
- 9. Financial literacy: support and community education in remote communities.** Display showing outcomes to date of Matrix's financial management support and mobile community education projects.
Ian O'Reilly and Michelle Taylor, Matrix on Board, NT.
- 10. Making Sense of Early Years Learning and Quality Frameworks:** A visual response to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for Family Day Care Providers Guide.
Eileen Buckley and Lee-Anne Leonard, Brotherhood of St Laurence, VIC.
- 11. LOVE BTES: A prevention program for young people on domestic and family violence and sexual assault in high schools and other settings.** NAPCAN has developed a LOVE BiTES TRAIN THE TRAINER package, written for any professional who works in the area of domestic and family violence, and sexual assault, and has an interest in or a responsibility for running violence against women prevention programs.
Trudi Peters, NAPCAN, NSW.
- 12. Healing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families: a research review.** A collaborative project between SNAICC and the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse examined healing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This poster outlines findings from a research review into healing and how it is incorporated into social and emotional well-being services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
Catherine Caruana, Australian Institute of Family Studies
- 13. First Footprints in Time findings. Highlights from Wave 1 of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children.** In 2008 more than 1600 families were interviewed for Wave 1 of Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous children. This presentation will introduce the study and highlight some of the findings in relation to culture, health and well-being, childcare and preschool life stressors, how parents cope and what children do and like to do.
Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), ACT.
- 14. Childcare and conductive hearing loss.** Dr Damien Howard, Lyn Fasoli, Phoenix Consulting and James Cook University and Alison Wunungumarra, BIITE, NT.
- 15. Honey Ant Readers – books and resources to get children reading.**
Margaret James Yipirinya School, NT.