

SNAICC NEWS



4 August: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day was a very happy day for Natasha Laurie and baby son Sharvarion Curtis Laurie, born 14 April 2009. 'My hope for Sharvarion is that when he grows up he becomes a well adjusted young Aboriginal man with great pride in himself, his family and be met with respect from everyone he meets in his life.' Natasha works in admin at Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre.

A very happy National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

There was a lot going on across the nation this 4 August. **Services Australia-wide were running activities big and small to celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and think on the theme 'Good child protection, we do it better together.'**

The official launch was at Awabakal MACS in Newcastle, and there was a real sense this year of many organisations across the nation saving their good announcements for this special day. From sausage sizzle to the opening of new centres like Bubup Wilam in Melbourne and programs like the new Cairns mums and bubs program, to face painting, jumping castles in Darwin's Bagot community to bush tours in Ballina, mini-info expos in Port Augusta, to the launch of new language books at the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the announcements of new child and family centres in NSW, the launch of new political campaign for Queensland kids to the Darwin Bagot celebrations. For more news about these stories, see inside...

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L-R: Shane Duffy (AQTSIHSC), Leanne Knowles (QATSICPP), Gail Slocombe (PeakCare) Nayson Machin, Jill Lang (QCOSS)

Witness the First Nations' challenge the Canadian Government on children's rights - meet Cindy Blackstock

This issue of *SNAICC News* reports on Cindy Blackstock's recent speech in Melbourne about the First Nations challenge to the Canadian government. Cindy Blackstock is a member of the Gitksan Nation and the Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Cindy has worked in child and family services for over 20 years, is co-convenor of the Indigenous Working Group, United Nations NGO Working Group on the Rights of the Child, co-director of the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare and a board member of National Aboriginal Youth Organisation. She is a charismatic and powerful speaker and activist. (See pages 3 & 18.)

Queensland Combined Voices

This National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day six key Queensland groups launched the Combined Voices campaign to better lobby the Queensland government on behalf of our children. They said:

'Queensland's current approach to ensuring the safety and well being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families is not working.'

'Too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are experiencing poor outcomes in terms of their safety, education and health. As a result they are unable to achieve their potential and the cycle of disadvantage continues.'

SNAICC congratulates Queensland organisations and individuals working on this campaign and urges members across Australia to give the campaign their online support. *Continued page 3*



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Contributions and feedback to **SNAICC News** are welcome. All articles are by SNAICC staff except where otherwise indicated.

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First impressions

Frank Hytten is the new SNAICC Executive Officer. Here are his first impressions in the job.

Hi all. I've now been with SNAICC all of eleven weeks. While still mostly bewildered by all the acronyms, reports, departments, policies, people's names, organisations, and the service each provides, I feel pretty good. I have been getting to meetings and visiting services, but will have to do a lot more over the next 9-12 months to get a feel for the sector.

I must say, we do seem to be drowning in reports, 'initiatives' and program responses, committees and consultations. We must hope all this activity will eventually deliver some of what is needed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, not least by acknowledging the many strong people and programs that are already working. Unless there is recognition of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control, adequate long term resourcing and genuine, gradual development, I fear the words may not achieve much.

SNAICC staff and members of our Management Committee have been very welcoming, but I have yet to meet most of the members of the National Executive, thanks to a last minute meeting cancellation due to Swine Flu.

From all the meetings external to SNAICC that I have attended, I have the impression that SNAICC is very well regarded by governments, NGOs and local services and it feels like everyone wants our input.

Indeed, everyone seems to want us involved in their conferences, project committees and research and policy development processes. This is a really good thing and a credit to all those who

have gone before me – National Executive members and staff.

SRS resources are also widely valued as are the *SNAICC News* and *SNAICC e-Bulletin* and other work done by staff. I also think that with a little tweaking, we can do more with our website, without additional cost eg sale of merchandise and using it as a means of communication between SNAICC members, for meetings of sub-committees and working groups located around the country. We could also use web links to network across services, especially about resources available across the nation.

There are also many possible areas in which we could work as resource developers and/or training supporters or deliverers – trauma, loss and grief and the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle are examples that immediately come to mind.

Apart from continuing to get my head around all the above, my next immediate task is to set up the National Executive meeting and SNAICC AGM. Settling in will take awhile yet, but I have no doubt that everything will fall into place soon enough. I look forward to meeting and talking to as many people as possible about government and SNAICC policy directions over the next twelve months.

Frank Hytten

Executive Officer SNAICC

Contact: frank@snaicc.asn.au



SNAICC NEWS – NEXT EDITION DECEMBER 2009

All stories and photos by, about, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family service providers, and by others working with Indigenous children are welcome. Copy deadline next issue 15 November 2009.

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Witness the First Nations challenge the Canadian Government on children's rights

SNAICC encourages you to bear witness as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCFS) challenge the Canadian Government next month on its inequitable funding of First Nations' child and family services before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

First Nations children are drastically over represented in child welfare care, a situation made more dire by the shortfalls in the Canadian Federal Government's child welfare funding. When voluntary government action did not translate into equal funding for all children's welfare services, the FNCFCFS and AFN decided to use involuntary mechanisms. Marshalling evidence and community support, the FNCFCFS and AFN commenced legal action to hold government to account and force equal funding.

Supported by leading researchers, lawyers and child welfare practitioners, the legal challenge began with filing a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission on 23 February 2007.)

Supported by substantial evidence, including reports by the Auditor General of Canada and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the claim has been referred to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

At a Melbourne seminar on 14 August co-hosted by SNAICC and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, the Executive Director of FNCFCFS, Cindy Blackstock recounted the long battle with the Canadian federal government.

'The government has fought this complaint every way they could, but the Human Rights Commission found a *prima facie* case and took the unusual step of providing its own council. Canada continued to fight and exhaust our money, but community members came to our aid.

'Finally, the Canadian government will be held responsible at the Tribunal on 14 September 2009'.

The landmark hearing is likely to be completed by next February. The Tribunal will determine whether there has been any discrimination based on a prohibited ground (such as racial discrimination) under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The Tribunal has the power to order an appropriate remedy, and its decision carries the force of law.

SNAICC has signed up as a witness for this important Tribunal hearing through the FNCFCFS website, and so can you.

See page 18 for more of of Cindy's speech. A podcast will be on the SNAICC website soon.

www.fnwitness.ca



Cindy Blackstock (FNCFCFS)

Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of FNCFCFS, asks to all caring organisations and individuals to 'witness' what takes place at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal next month. She said:

'A year after the Residential School Apology, we want the Canadian government to know that caring Canadians are keeping watch over this generation of First Nations children.

'Being a witness means you agree to follow the case by either attending at the tribunal in person or following it through the media, visiting the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada website.'

Witnessing is free, open to everyone and only takes two minutes to sign up!

Join SNAICC and supporters around the world to witness the hearing beginning



Combined Voices for QLD children

Continued from front page



Murri School Dancers at the Combining Voices launch. NAICD Children's Day.

The Combined Voices campaign Brisbane launch included: QLD Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition (QATSIHSC), QLD Council of Social Services (QCOSS), QLD Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd (QATSICPP), PeakCare Queensland, CREATE Foundation, and child & family welfare professionals.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are six times more likely to come under a formal child protection order or be removed from their home.

Combined Voices asks governments to:

1. Increase funding for child and family support services by \$105M
2. Increase the proportion of total child and family support service funds to Aboriginal & Torres Islander organisations to 19%
3. Develop a child and family service strategy and implement an action plan that acknowledges and addresses the vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
4. Link the child and family service strategy to COAG's commitment to 'Close the Gap'.

Combined Voices asks people to:

TAKE ACTION, spread the word, use the online email links to your Ministers and local members and tell them what you think. Join your organisation up on <http://takeaction.qcoss.org.au/> Organisations can become a formal signatory to the 'Combined Voices' campaign. This means your organisation::

- Supports the objectives of "Stating the Case for Change"
- Supplies its name and logo for use in the campaign; and
- Acts and contributes in some way during the campaign.



Playful Beginnings (Liverpool)



Awabakal MACS Newcastle



NAICD Children's Day - going strong since 1988 Playful Beginnings, Liverpool

SNAICC established National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) in 1988. It has been celebrated on 4 August each year since then. And each year, SNAICC has a theme for Children's Day to highlight a significant issue, concern or hope for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The 2009 theme was *Good Child Protection - We Do It Better Together.*

Lakarri Thomas at Playful Beginnings Early Learning Centre, Liverpool, NSW writes 'NAICD was a significant cultural celebration at our centre, for keeping culture alive and ensuring all our kids stand proud.'



Darwin - Bagot

Hi SNAICC, we had an exhausting but great day on Tuesday. We think maybe 60-70 kids turned up at Bagot Community in Darwin, and lots of the kids had family with them. Sheila White, the After School Hours Care coordinator said they usually don't get parents and family to things, so the fact that so many came was great. About 13 community organisations were involved in providing activities or helping out – definitely a case of 'doing it better together'.

By: Merron Looney & Nicole Butler



Bagot community



Awabakal MACS Newcastle



Bagot - Tyson & Aliyah White

Port Augusta - Early Years Parenting Centre

Port Augusta Early Years Parenting Centre (EYPC) hosted a Mini-Info-Expo and Family Day on NAICD Children's Day.

There was a Healthy Cultural BBQ lunch with kangaroo steaks and kebabs, hot BBQ vegies, fresh fruit and water. The kids painted, made bubbles, played with hula hoops, made playdough animals, had faces painted and made jewellery and a special FRIENDSHIP BANNER was made with the children's paintings.

Participating organisations included the Anangu Bibi Aboriginal Birthing Program, The Flinders and Far North Community Health Services – Child Health Team, Pika Wiya Aboriginal Health Services, Aboriginal Family Support Services, Males In Black, Uniting Care Wesley Port Pirie and wonderful EYPC volunteers, Auntie Elsie Jackson and Auntie Chris Couzner. Parents could chat with the agencies and discuss any concerns about their children and also find out more about the community.

The EYPC is an initiative of the Communities for Children in Port Augusta, established in 2006 in partnership with the Port Augusta Hospital and Pika Wiya Aboriginal Health Services for families with children aged 0 to 5 years.

By: Kim Wright, EYPC Coordinator



Darwin - Bagot community

Some stories from National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day



Playful Beginnings - Liverpool

Awabakal NAICD launch

The theme for NAICD 2009 was *Good Child Protection - We Do It Better Together*, and this was demonstrated in Newcastle, as SNAICC officially launched National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day at Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Cooperative.

Bunjum Aboriginal Co-op

'Nine families, a weaver and a storyteller went on a mystery trip,' said Bunjum child & family services officer Delta Kay.

'When we arrived at the Byron Bay, Arakwal National Park we walked through the rain forest, collected nature and made nature hangings threaded onto some natural twine. Then we had story telling, face painting and some traditional dancing. Then we had a picnic, went to the beach, discovered rock pools, and talked about keeping the rubbish out of the water because it's tied in with the dolphin story. Then the mums did traditional weaving and the kids did more games. The kids went to sleep in the home bus and the mothers were smiling ear to ear. It was the best day.'

'Banjum Aboriginal Corporation runs our playgroup every Tuesday and this year Tuesday was Children's Day! The tattoos in the kit were deadly - the kids put them on their feet, hands, forehead, cheeks. It was gorgeous. Only one problem - we left the camera on the desk.'

Contact: familiesfirst1@bunjum.com

Bubup Wilam kindergarten

Congratulations on the first 'meet the families day' on NAICD Children's day for the soon to open Bubup Wilam kindergarten for 3 and 4 year old Aboriginal children in Lalor (Melbourne)



SNAICC News August 2009



Awabakal MACS (Newcastle)

Seymour East Pre-school

Families planted indigenous plants, we had a sausage sizzle, a local Elder visited, there was face painting, Indigenous music, songs and Dreamtime stories and art activities, all along with the National Tree Planting Day. Togetherness, strengthening knowledge, two-way respect and pride in culture' writes Christie Ekbuberg, Seymour East Pre-School.



Port Augusta - Kailani

Careful preparations at Playful Beginnings (Liverpool) on National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day



Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Agenda & the National Early Childhood Strategy ...

2 July: *The Early Years Learning Framework was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) as a key component of the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.*

The framework is called *Belonging, Being and Becoming*. It describes the principles, practice and outcomes to support young children's learning in children's services from birth to transition to school.

SNAICC and our members gave feedback to DEEWR and many of the Framework's aims support SNAICC's views eg the importance of working holistically with the child, family and community, fostering identity and cultural heritage, respect for diversity and cultural competence of the educators.

The Framework is now the responsibility of MCEECDYA (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs) which proposes to develop a 'document that provides educators with additional guidance of ensuring cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.'

SNAICC looks forward to working with DEEWR to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services to respond to the Framework and we welcome comments about the Framework from all stakeholders.

How do these new terms fit together?

For about a year, MCEETYA (now MCEECDYA) worked on an Indigenous Early Childhood Education Framework. Its focus was on children aged 3–6 years old.

Meanwhile the *National Early Years Learning Framework* was being driven by COAG through a consortium based in

Victoria, focusing children's learning from birth to school entry age. As this national project had the bigger profile and covered all children from birth, the February 2009 MCEEDYA meeting agreed that these two documents should be aligned. This led to the addition of one outcome to the *Early Years Learning Framework* ie 'that children have a strong sense of wellbeing.'

In the June 2009 MCEETYA Early Childhood Satellite meeting, the Ministers said the two frameworks should become one. The subsequent COAG meeting 2 July then endorsed the *National Early Years Learning Framework*.

MCDEECDYA is now developing an educators' guide and considering whether information that focuses on Indigenous children should be separate or be included in one cohesive support guide that applies for all children.

Meanwhile, consultations are under way to develop the *National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care*.

So ...

The *Early Years Learning Framework* seeks to ensure high quality programs in childcare, pre-school and family day care. It will sit under the National Quality Standards (still in consultation phase), which will regulate staff ratios, qualifications, program quality, physical spaces, etc. Both of these initiatives in turn sit under the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (also endorsed by COAG 2 July) which applies to ALL kids, whether or not they got to pre-school or childcare – outlining six priority areas to help families support their children. (Ed.)

**See: www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood
Contact: frank@snaicc.asn.au for feedback**

Consultation on national standards in early childhood services: feedback needed NOW

SNAICC urges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services to tell government their concerns and hopes on the National Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS).

Family, community and early childhood service providers at mainstream services (many of which have many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) **only have until 31 August to give their feedback.**

The RIS discusses:

- Staff to child ratios & staff qualifications
- Enhanced regulatory requirements
- A quality rating system.

While the National Quality Agenda will initially focus on long day care, family day care, outside-school-hours care and preschools, it is intended to eventually include all service types. The consultation RIS says that there will be future work to consider 'non-mainstream services' (also called 'budget-based' service), including:

- Flexible/innovative services
- Mobile child care services
- MACS (Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services)
- Indigenous playgroups
- Indigenous OSHC & enrichment programs
- Crèches, including JET crèches
- Neighbourhood occasional care.

How to give your feedback:

Your submission can be of any length, on any aspect of the RIS and forwarded by email, fax or mail.

Submission details online www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/

- * Online survey for parents and families
- * Online survey for service providers and other stakeholders
- * Written submission.

Feedback closes 31 August 2009, However budget based services will have ongoing consultations if you miss this initial feedback stage.

Contact:

DEEWR: ECECQuality@deewr.gov.au

SNAICC: julie@snaicc.asn.au

What about budget-based early childhood services?

SNAICC's response to the consultation on the *National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care reforms* will be posted online soon, however, the following notes reflect on some initial concerns that have been raised to us.

It appears that over the next few years the emphasis for resource allocation will be on mainstream children's services. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families use these services, and encourages those involved in these services to provide feedback to the government via its website, or alternatively, contact SNAICC and help contribute to its submission.

However, rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families tend not to use mainstream children's services, but they do use budget based, community controlled services. In addition, for many working in federally funded rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander budget based services, there are concerns that the implementation process could overwhelm local initiatives or indeed widen

the gap between budget based and other services.

Some fairly representative questions from member services include:

- Will resources be provided to ensure that remote crèches and outside school hours care services and other services can meet the standards – most services have been for years trying to find funds to upgrade facilities and service delivery?
- When will budget-based services be upgraded to meet the national standards in both facilities and services offered?
- How will child care qualifications reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices for our children, particularly in remote areas?
- Given the considerable need for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, how will the recruitment and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff be supported, particularly in remote areas?
- How will Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander current staff be supported to reach the standard of qualification level required?
- How will communities be supported

to understand what happens at an early childhood service and why they should use it?

- How will new remote early childhood centres be funded? e.g. a number of people report being informed that there will be no more budget-based services established beside the child and family services already planned. What viable alternate model is being proposed? Will there be community consultation in regard to model options, prior to the policy being finalised?
 - There is also concern that inequalities may be exaggerated in a national roll-out for those regions with a high proportion of children. How an equitable share of early childhood funding will be assured for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially in remote areas?
- SNAICC is keen to hear from you to assist us with our ongoing representations to government on this and other issues (see articles on the previous page.

Contact: frank@snaicc.asn.au

The Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms and Budget Based Funded Services

By: Joan ten Brummelaar National Early Childhood Development Steering Committee Secretariat, DEEWR

18 August 2009: The Australian Government is committed to ensuring high quality in all early childhood services regardless of the care setting or location. Within the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Framework there is a strong emphasis on the need to achieve quality outcomes for Indigenous children in early childhood settings.

It is proposed that the scope for the *National Quality Agenda* reforms will include preschool and settings addressed by the current quality assurance system - Long Day Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care.

Non-mainstream services are not covered by the *Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms* (3 July 09). However, it proposes the new National Quality Agenda will eventually encompass all service types, while acknowledging that this will take a number of years to achieve.

Further work, including cost-benefit analyses and consideration of the impact of any proposed regulations, would be undertaken in the future to look at how other settings such as Budget Based Funded

Services and In Home Care and Occasional Care settings will be incorporated in the National Quality Agenda.

There are a range of issues to be resolved to ensure that both Indigenous specific services and mainstream services participate in the National Quality Agenda and deliver quality early childhood services for Indigenous children and families. These include ensuring that the proposed national quality standard and the quality ratings system are effective in ensuring quality outcomes for all children and that supports are available for the early childhood workforce to implement the new standards and ratings system.

By taking a staged approach to the reforms, governments will be able to learn from the first phase of implementation and address any issues before extending to other settings over time. It will be important to understand the impacts of the changes and

supports required before extending the scope so that unintended consequences are avoided.

It is important to emphasise that the options outlined in the Regulation Impact Statement are only proposals for consideration at this stage. No final decisions have been made yet and the feedback provided during the consultation period will be taken into account in developing a proposal for consideration and decision by COAG later in the year.

Contact: ECECQuality@deewr.gov.au



Shayla from Port Augusta Early Years Parenting Centre on National Aboriginal and Islander Childrens Day

SNAICC submission to the Healing Foundation Development Team

The Healing Foundation Development Team is undertaking national consultations on how to best support the healing process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These consultations follow the National Apology and recent federal funding of \$26.6M over four years nation-wide for a Healing Foundation.

As a peak body concerned with the well being of children and families, SNAICC has forwarded the following edited submission to the Development Team.

Avenues towards healing need to be available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and resources are needed to meet this challenge. The process of healing will require both an understanding of the impacts of history and a respect for the resilience and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Healing is a 'restoration of wholeness'. At its core this means cultural renewal – re-connection to culture and country, and where possible, to family. Healing is usually necessary for both the individual and the communities to which they belong and needs to be understood holistically as a series of social, emotional, cultural and spiritual processes.

The primary issue is not medical and/



Port Augusta – Rebecca & Brayden celebrating National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Day 4 August

or psychiatric health; and the process will be different for each individual or community.

Healing will be most possible when services are supported by adequate housing, child care, health services, opportunities for good education and employment and where racism is utterly unacceptable.

Healing needs to address trauma across generations and across families, extended families and whole communities and should not be confined to any specified process or time line.

The Foundation should not itself operate any services, but could have a research capacity and a government advisory and advocacy role based on evidence of what works best, including in terms of funding, diversity of models and flexible reporting processes and could develop a 'good healing process' database.

Service models should respond to local needs and be designed, supported and run by local people, or by organisations or individuals selected by local people.

They should be properly resourced and part of a network of community controlled support programs and processes for healing. Such services would also work towards building capacity in individuals and communities across many issues, including assisting individuals to 'walk in two worlds' where this is wanted.

The Foundation must report and be accountable to its membership and funding bodies in a simple and direct process. The Foundation must be independent from the funding body and build partnerships with other service providers, researchers, government departments and NGOs to develop a knowledge and expertise database.

Non-indigenous people also want and need to be informed about their part in changing the government policy and community attitudes that continue to impact negatively on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A selection process for the Board could be considered, with a selection panel consisting predominantly of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perhaps from Stolen Generations and other healing organisations. Board membership will require people who demonstrate leadership, remain objective and focused on the Foundation's work and can contribute to the individual and collective healing.

Focus groups may ensure community participation in the Foundation's work, being responsible to a management structure through the Board. Focus group membership would include people with personal experience, practitioner skills, and key local people, with expertise in designing and delivering healing services.

Focus groups could vary from client-based consultation with a particular target group e.g. Elders, women, men and/or children; groups to access traditional knowledge/language to teach children and encourage their connection to culture; to practitioners with a specialist knowledge to assist the Foundation or to benefit from research opportunities (including international models). Focus group memberships need to combine community members, practitioners and outside 'experts' as needed, and policy makers and funders as necessary.

The Healing Foundation has \$26.6M over four years Australia-wide – not a great deal if a national office and state/territory services are to be adequately resourced.

Like other government funded essential services, it is unlikely the Foundation would ever be self-sustaining, nor should it need to be, as other government savings will arise from the program e.g. savings in the justice, health care system, social and emotional health and child protection.

SNAICC strongly supports the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, and urges government to take responsibility for adequate funding.

SNAICC was the first national Indigenous organisation to call for a national inquiry into the 'Stolen Generations' in 1991. As a peak body concerned with the well being of children and families, SNAICC believes that it should participate and contribute to the development of the Healing Foundation.

To discuss SNAICC's position on these matters, do not hesitate to contact me.

Frank Hytten, EO SNAICC
Ph: 03 9489 8099 E: frank@snaicc.asn.au

Billard community - WA community summit on Indigenous suicide communique

In July 2009 in the remote NW Kimberley Aboriginal community of Billard, 147 people from across the country with the will and capacity to effect fundamental and immediate change gathered on country to stop the epidemic of suicide by Indigenous people. The Blank Page Summit Communique, Billard Aboriginal Community writes:

‘The Blank Page Summit was devised by community leaders, Stephen Victor Snr and his family including his daughter Mary Victor O’Reeri. Mr Victor Snr lost two sons to the preventable tragedy of suicide.

‘The Summit was designed to unearth what isn’t readily talked about, that is at the heart of renewal and repair of people’s wellbeing.

‘People spoke about grog and ganja, family breakdown and community decay. They described ‘humbug’ in its various forms including violence and feuding. The epidemic of Aboriginal suicide requires removal by zero tolerance of triggers contributing to suicide.

‘Communities currently experiencing horrific youth suicide rates such as Balgo in East Kimberley were central drivers of the call to action which guided the Summit.’

Call for action

Stephen Victor Snr, Mary Victor O’Reeri and members of the Billard Aboriginal Community invite others to join them in the call for action arising from the Summit.

The key messages are to:

1. Create suicide-proof communities
2. Train families to be families
3. Encourage self-care with staged support

1. Create suicide-proof communities

Zero tolerance of those things that are killing people, either by slow suicide or self-destruction on the spot.

Create communities according to the following self-imposed conditions:

- No grog
- No illegal drugs
- No child neglect and abuse

- No pornography
- Adhere to a Community Code of Conduct
- Use of a formal dispute resolution process

Build communities based on:

- Effective internal problem solving
- Strong sense of civic virtue
- Shared recreational and cultural activities open to all

The critical distinction here is ‘self-imposed’ – individuals deciding in a collective setting to act in a lifesaving manner. Dispute resolution is included because of the impact of feuding in triggering suicide. In this context, adequate housing is of particular relevance. Governments can resolve how communities willing to self-impose and benchmark protective behaviours are figured within the roll-out of new housing.

2. Train families to be families

This is a message about first principles. What is a family? How is a family created? What does it mean to be a member of a family? How do families plan their lives. How do families interact with each other to make communities?

3. Healing and self-care

When we know people are suicidal, we must have the means and capacity to act. We need to develop self-care based on staged support and the tools to engage families in their own self-care. ‘Healing’ includes early counseling through to therapeutic treatment, to healing processes based on Aboriginal spirituality.

Summit conveners said:

‘If we save just one life through the Summit, it was worth all our hard work.’

Stephen Victor Snr (Main Person-in-Charge)

‘We broke new ground – people concentrated on the future. We found out how to stop people dying from suicide.’

Lendal Victor (Young Person-in-Charge)

Edited from the Blank Page Summit Communique, Billard Community
See: www.blankpagesummit.com.au



Mary Victor O’Reeri, Billard community, gave a special presentation at the address by UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous people 17 August. She said:

‘We can change many things for our people if we have the will and wisdom to do it. It’s time for a new conversation about what matters most for our people now.’

‘Friends and countrymen, when we lost two boys — our brothers and my parents’ beautiful sons — we could have become the walking dead ourselves. But our resolution was not to get stranded. This Summit is about more than hope — it is about recasting the die at the highest level within ourselves. Today has come about because we decided as a family to move out of the shadows and trust our instinct’.

SNAICC Executive Officer, Frank Hytten, who has both practice and policy experience in this area reflects on the Summit saying:

‘I was privileged to attend this summit. Other people in attendance were a cross-section of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, in terms of experience, culture and expertise, but were all focused around the issues of suicide. It was clear a lot of very good work was already being done around the country, but equally, that much more needs to be done everywhere. My only concern was that there was not more time to drill into the deeper causes of the context in which suicide amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people becomes an acceptable option – dispossession, poverty, loss of opportunity and eventually, hope for a different future. Perhaps, having got to know each other better, small groups of the same people could get together to take this step, focused not on the past, but on how macro policy and community practice change today can shape a different tomorrow.’

Become a member, ACATLGN
The Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network
ACATLGN links people across Australia concerned with the trauma, loss and grief experiences of children and adolescents.
www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au

First CAARS meeting - the national Common Approach to Assessment, Referral & Support taskforce

23 June 2009: The CAARS Taskforce came about through the recent new Australian Government framework Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020.

CAARS first met 18 June, Canberra. It is made of government, non-government and research sector representatives to promote a shared responsibility for the prevention of child abuse and neglect and help develop.

- A common approach to assessment and referral
 - Improved method of information sharing.
- Participants come from both government and non-government sectors, and including medical, nursing, teaching, family relationships, mental health, psychology, social work, disability, Indigenous children's services, school guidance and counselling, homelessness, child welfare agencies, alcohol and drug services, domestic violence, research and state and territory government representatives.

The taskforce is convened by ARACY and the Federal Minister for Families,

Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. An interim report will be submitted to Minister Macklin by the end of this year.

Steve Larkins, SNAICC Chair and EO of Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services, is a member of the CAARS Taskforce and was involved in the inaugural meeting.

Steve reports: "It was a fabulous experience, with a lot of knowledgeable people all there for the betterment of children. It is a three-year process building up to continue to 2020 and I really think it is off to a good start. It was especially pleasing to see that in all aspects of their discussion, everyone was aware of cultural implications of the proposed assessment tool.

"Participating in the taskforce is great opportunity to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child welfare nationwide by looking at the good and the not-so-good that exists and building up to a national framework. The taskforce will be meeting three times before middle of next year and we should have consultants



to work on by the time this article goes to press."

The CAARS Terms of Reference are that CAARS role is to:

- Decide on a process for the development of a tool/s to be used as a national approach to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, supported by common assessment and referral;
- Agree on development of the tool/s to specifically target services most likely to encounter first warning signs of risk of child abuse and neglect;
- Consider and recommend possible tool/s trial options; and
- Agree on future work.

The full terms of reference and taskforce membership can be found on the ARACY website.

For more details about the new framework see *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*

Early intervention & prevention is the 'decisive' approach

The gap in disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people has widened in recent years.

The new report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009* shows there has been no improvement in 80% of the 50 social, economic, health and welfare indicators used to assess disadvantage. PM Kevin Rudd said the report is 'devastating and 'unacceptable,' and 'it requires decisive action'.

SNAICC says 'decisive action' is to invest in community controlled early intervention and prevention.

SNAICC calls on all governments to invest in improving access to Indigenous community based early childhood, childcare, family support and child welfare programs to assist families access help early as a key step in tackling disadvantage.

Neglect is the main reason for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be placed in care. Early intervention and prevention programs run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services are effective in

supporting families struggling with the care of their children.

Holistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early childhood services are the best place to support parents and carers. They offer early childhood education programs, family support services, access to preventative health care, and promote culture and community connection as a source of strength and resilience,

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) first commissioned the Productivity Commission in 2002 to produce a regular report against key indicators of disadvantage amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The fourth *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009* was launched by Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin on 2 July 2009.

SNAICC congratulates the Productivity Commissioners and staff, who have worked for the last seven years to develop this data based evidence tool.

See: www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/indigenous/keyindicators2009

The Family Action Centre and SNAICC invite you to attend

**The 2nd National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family & Community Strengths Conference
1 – 3 December 2009**

The University of Newcastle

- Nurturing cultural identity in children
- Promoting family wellbeing
- Land, spirit & culture
- Strengthening partnerships between families & communities
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander approaches to family decision-making
- Stories of success
- Learning from the strength of our Elders

www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac

Early bird registration closes: 30 September 2009

The SNAICC e-Bulletin –
fortnightly in your email –
register free online

www.snaicc.asn.au

Blekbala Fathawan Helth Summit 2009 Sunrise, Katherine East



Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation has recently held an Aboriginal Male Health Summit at Banatjarl near Katherine NT.

Over 100 Aboriginal males from the region spent three days and nights to talk about issues affecting on their lives and the future. Sunrise President, David Lane said 'Key recommendations arising from the Summit reflect the wisdom of those involved. The voices of Aboriginal males must be expressed, heard and listened to, to enable the steps to be taken, to move forward towards reconciliation, heal and build positive futures.'

The Summit was a big event for the region, building on a strong history and marks the twenty first anniversary of the Barunga Statement.

Warren Camfoo and Justin Miller composed and read the central theme of the Blekbela Fathawan Helth Summit

statement, which read:

'We are proud Aboriginal men, proud of our culture and to achieve our vision we call on the Australian Government and the NT Government to reform the intervention, reinstate *The Racial Discrimination Act* and reduce the barrage of complex and contradictory changes that are disempowering Aboriginal males, resulting in 'widening the gap' in Aboriginal male health and severely impacting on the lives of our children, families and the communities in which we live.

'We resent that the government has allowed the media to portray all Aboriginal men as paedophiles, and subjected us to unwarranted suspicion – we love our children and our families – we are human. We call on the Australian and NT Government to join us in the outright rejection of this practice. We feel fearful that we are misunderstood in our natural loving actions, and this stops us fulfilling our roles as fathers, uncles,



Above L-R: Michael Paterson, Gavin Greenoff, George Peckham, F. Spry, Albert Torrens, 5 of 20 volunteer specialist facilitators from around Australia Top left: Warren Camfoo, Justin Miller, David Lane

brothers, grandfathers and carers.

'We have developed strategies, networks and recommendations to ensure our future roles as men in caring for children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer and healthier life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.'

Photo/text from Colin Cowell

Contact: shane.wing@sunrise.org.au

Full report: www.sunrise.org.au

The SNAICC e-Bulletin – fortnightly in your email

Register free online or send us your news to upload at www.snaicc.asn.au

National inquiry into national family violence laws

27 July 2009: The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) has been commissioned to make an inquiry into violence against women and their children to support making consistent family violence and child protection laws across all jurisdictions. The ALRC will focus on a number of matters, including:

1. The interaction in practice of state and territory family violence and child protection laws with the *Family Law Act 1975* and relevant Commonwealth, state and territory criminal laws;

2. The impact of inconsistent interpretation or application of laws in cases of sexual assault occurring in a family violence context, including rules of evidence, on victims of such violence.

The ALRC will consult with the law reform commissions of the states and territories and seek public input through an online *Talk to Us* community engagement program. The ALRC is to consider what, if any, improvements

could be made to relevant legal frameworks to protect the safety of women and their children; and to ensure recommendations are consistent with other reforms being considered in relation to the development of a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children or the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children ((as approved by the Council of Australian Governments.)

The ALRC President, Emeritus Professor David Weisbrot, said: "The ALRC will explore whether the complexity of Australia's federal system causes problems, such as inconsistent or incompatible protective orders; duplication of effort by federal, state and territory courts; or gaps or inadequacies in the cooperation between those courts and state and territory agencies. We also want to ensure that the law enables women and children to report family violence, participate in legal processes, and access appropriate remedies; as well as facilitating the rehabilitation of perpetrators

and, of course, the prevention of family violence in the first place.'

SNAICC has long called for a national approach to preventing child abuse and neglect and welcomed the COAG National Child Protection Framework as a first step towards a coordinated national approach to preventing child abuse and neglect. SNAICC sees this ALRC inquiry as another step towards national consistency in tackling child abuse and family violence.

SNAICC encourages its members, subscribers and readers to contribute to the ALRC's public consultation process toward ensuring that the Inquiry's recommendations meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. SNAICC will continue to follow the progress of the ALRC's Inquiry.

The final report is due to the Attorney-General by 31 July 2010.

See: www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/current/family-violence/index.html



Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters HIPPY program in La Perouse NSW

HIPPY stands for Home Interaction Program for Parents & Youngsters – a two-year home tutoring program for 4 and 5 year olds that focuses on the parent as educator and helping to prepare the child for school.

Sherri Longbottom coordinates HIPPY in La Perouse. Sherri began with her HIPPY program training in 2002 in Israel, where the program originated in the late 1960s.

HIPPY La Perouse started with 28 families and three tutors, all Indigenous, all mums and all members of the local community. In the first year, ten children graduated and in the second year eleven graduated, in spite of a lot of trauma within the community during that time. Since then the program has grown from strength to strength, with up to 20 – 30 graduates each year.

This year Hippy La Perouse has four home tutors, 44 children began the program with 69 children involved altogether.

HIPPY is a conduit between the parents and the schools. It helps parents build their skills and confidence, paving the way for them to go into the school to discuss with teachers their children's needs. HIPPY has also helped to pick up children's health issues such as hearing problems. The program also has a secondary spin off in starting the tutors along the path of further education, with some tutors subsequently undertaking business management and other courses and finding employment.

The early graduates of HIPPY (now in grade six), are all doing fine and the parents are still using their skills to enhance their children's learning. The teachers say they can tell the HIPPY kids – they are concentrating in class and 'know what to do'.



Contact: hippy02@bigpond.com

HIPPY program expression of interest now open

Expressions of interest are now open for the 2010 Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) locations. The \$32.5M program is being rolled out nationally and in 50 communities, supporting up to 3,000 families.

The HIPPY program offers home tutoring and educational resources to disadvantaged preschool aged children. The program already operates in 22 communities across Australia and will start in an additional 14 locations in 2010 and 2011. The Australian Government and Brotherhood of St Laurence seek expressions of interest from organisations to deliver the 2010 program in:

Bidwell (Sydney) NSW,	Braybrook VIC
Pioneer (Mt Isa) QLD	Cabramatta NSW
Long Gully/California Gully VIC	Robinvale VIC
Mansfield Park (Adelaide) SA	Whyalla Stuart SA
Warrawong (Port Kembla) NSW	North Dubbo NSW
Mount Morgan QLD	Katherine NT
Bowenfels (Lithgow) NSW	Logan Central QLD

See: www.hippyaustralia.org.au/

A QLD family violence strategy?

10 July: Queensland Government released *For Our Sons and Daughters: A Queensland Government strategy to reduce domestic & family violence 2009–2014*

According to the government's web site 'The goal of the strategy is to better protect victims, particularly women and children, by breaking the cycle of violence as early as possible. The strategy's reforms are aimed at improving the service system and reducing demand. The strategy will ensure there is a coordinated approach between agencies to improve the safety of victims and families and to hold perpetrators more accountable.'

The document notes that 'Indigenous females are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than any other Australian females.' This stark statistic surely demands a specific strategy to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander women and communities. However, SNAICC thinks this policy is very light on such a strategy. The Ministers' introduction does not mention Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all; and no specific strategy can be found anywhere except in a most cursory way.

For Our Sons and Daughters advocates 'best practice services' without indicating what best practice may be. SNAICC says Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled child and family services are the 'best practice' way of meeting the needs of the child. Signatory Ministers were: Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, Neil Roberts, Minister for Police, and Phil Reeves, Minister for Child Safety.

Contact: the Ministers, QATSICPP or SNAICC

**Call for abstracts for the
AbSec Conference 2009
Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care
State Secretariat
40,000 years of caring for our kids
www.absec.org.au
A conference about Aboriginal child
protection and foster/kinship caring.
19 – 21 November 2009
www.absec.org.au**

**The National Indigenous Young People,
Crime and Justice Conference
31 Aug – 1 Sept 2009
Parramatta NSW
Hosted by the Australian Institute for
Criminology (AIC), the SW Commission
for Children and Young People, the NSW
Attorney General's Department and the
Australian Human Rights Commission.
www.aic.gov.au/events**

3 of 9 NSW sites for new child and family centres announced on NAICD Childrens Day

Campbelltown, Blacktown and Ballina have been announced as 3 of the 9 new integrated Indigenous NSW Children and Family Centre sites.

The Centres will offer early learning and care programs to assist parents and families. They will be funded under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement with joint funding of \$564M over six years to help address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This includes \$293M to establish at least 35 Indigenous Children and Family Centres Australia-wide by early 2011.

The first three NSW sites were announced 4 August by Linda Burney MP, NSW Minister for Community Services and Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth. Their press release notes: 'The decision to establish the first of the new centres in Campbelltown, Blacktown and Ballina was based on the communities' high level of need. These communities also have a significant proportion of Indigenous

children under five years old.

'The centres will offer programs and services tailored to Indigenous children and families, and are designed to assist all Australian children and families. The next step is to talk to local communities about the specific sites for centres and the types of services the community want to see.'

SNAICC welcomes this developing initiative but would want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled services supported to develop expressions of interest in the tenders. Further there are issues being raised to SNAICC about the extent of the consultation process for site determination.

The Campbelltown Tharawal Cooperation auspices the Ooranga Wandarrah MACS. Tharawal EO, Darryl Wright said: 'When time comes for the expressions of interest, we'll be knocking on the door. We want to develop up our MACS from 0-2 years olds, increase the number of kids, ensure our staff are well trained, run parenting programs and work in with our medical service.' Other groups are lobbying for different high need areas in the region, such as in Macquarie Fields.

Because, indeed, the needs are great.

Ballina region is also just waiting for such an initiative. Ballina has a number of Aboriginal playgroup and family services and such as the Cabbage Tree Island Jali Playgroup sponsored through the Jali Land Council, the Bullinah Jarjums at the Ballina Public School and the Bunjam Playgroup. Nita Roberts EO of the Bunjam Aboriginal Co-operative said: 'Our community has been waiting for an opportunity like this, because we know the importance of early childhood and that it needs to be done in a collaborative way. We all need to be directed by community. It's a great opportunity.'

Only careful consultation can overcome the difficulties in allocating such precious resources. Training support funding for the centres is also an issue, as they are a joint state and federal initiative. Unlike other jurisdictions, NSW already has the basis for training cooperation in their IPSU NSW & ACT (for federally funded community controlled services) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Sector Advisory Group, ATSI ECSAG (for state funded pre-schools). (Ed)

Communities For Children (CfC) funding extended

23 June: The Australian Government has announced over \$100M over another three years to June 2012 to continue the Communities for Children (CfC) early intervention programs for children and families in 46 communities across Australia.

The decision to expand CfC follows the 2004–2008 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy program evaluation. The C4C program now comes under the new Family Support Program, and will target families with children newborn to 12 years at risk of disadvantage. This renews previous funding body arrangements from the Howard government. Despite the fact that many CfC sites have a big Indigenous population, most facilitators are non-indigenous NGOs. Many of these organisations are very engaged in building partnerships with local organisations, however SNAICC argues that a proportion of such funding needs to go to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations. The funding for some of the 45 sites has been increased and a new CfC site will be established soon. For details of communities see the FaHCSIA web site.

NSW

Blacktown: Mission Australia \$875,000
Campbelltown: The Benevolent Society \$650,000
Dubbo: Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes \$875,000
Fairfield: The Smith Family \$800,000
Lismore: YWCA NSW \$800,000
Miller: Mission Australia \$800,000
Murwillumbah: YWCA NSW \$500,000
Raymond Terrace: The Smith Family \$550,000
Shellharbour: Barnados Australia \$800,000
Taree Greater: Mission Australia \$800,000
Wyong: The Benevolent Society \$750,000

NT

Alice Springs TBA \$1,000,000
East Arnhem: Anglicare NT \$699,000
Katherine region: The Smith Family \$1,108,000
Palmerston/Tiwi: Aus Red Cross NT Division \$825,000

QLD

Cairns: Mission Australia \$750,000
Deception Bay: Boys Town \$550,000
Gladstone: Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited \$200,000
Inala to Goodna: Mission Australia \$550,000
Kingston/Loganlea: The Salvation Army (Qld.) \$800,000
Mt Isa: Centacare Townsville \$750,000
N. Gold Coast, Lifeline Community Care Qld. \$750,000
Townsville West: The Smith Family \$650,000

SA

Murray Bridge: Anglican Community Care \$650,000
NW Adelaide: Uniting Care Wesley Port Adelaide \$900,000
Onkaparinga: Anglicare SA Inc \$800,000
Port Augusta: Uniting Care Wesley Port Pirie \$650,000
Salisbury: Salvation Army (SA) \$800,000

VIC

Salisbury: The Salvation Army (SA) \$800,000
Bendigo: St Luke's Anglicare \$500,000
Brimbank: The Smith Family \$800,000
Cranbourne: Windermere Child/Family Services \$825,000
East Gippsland: Kilmany UnitingCare \$825,000
Frankston North: Anglicare Victoria \$800,000
Greater Dandenong: (Mission Australia) \$800,000
Hume: Broadmeadows Uniting Care \$875,000
Swan Hill: St Luke's Anglicare \$550,000
Armadale: Communicare (Inc) \$875,000

WA

E. Kimberley: Lingiari Foundation Inc/ Save the Children Australia \$741,500
Kwinana: The Smith Family \$500,000
Lower Great Southern: Great Southern GP Network Ltd. \$925,000
Mirrabooka: The Smith Family \$925,000
W.Pilbara: Pilbara Community Council \$945,000

TAS

Burnie LGA: Centacare Tasmania \$500,000
Launceston: Anglicare Tasmania Inc. \$800,000
SE TAS. Derwent Valley: Salvation Army (Tas) \$825,000

2009 NAIDOC Award winners

Person of Year: Larissa Behrendt NSW

Lifetime Achievement:
Lowitja O'Donoghue, AC, CBE, SA

Female Elder of Year joint winners: Doris Eaton WA, Elsie Heiss NSW

Male Elder of Year joint winners: Frank H Lampard (SA) Reginald Roy Knox QLD

Youth of Year: Gemma Benn NT

Scholar of Year: Chelsea Bond QLD

Apprentice of Year: Danny Sebasio TSI

Artist of Year: Wayne Quilliam VIC

Sportsperson of Year: Andrew McLeod SA

Some SA and WA NAIDOC & government awards to people working with children and families included:

Sharon Gollan, a Ngarrindjeri woman who worked over 25 years to improve the lives of Aboriginal children and families. She is program director at the Unaipon School at the Uni. of SA College of Indigenous Education & Research.

Margie Long-Alleyn designed a 20-week program around Mount Gambier, teaching Aboriginal mothers to make lifestyle changes so they can be reunited with their children under guardianship, and taking women out into the bush so they can be reunited with their children under guardianship.

Liz Tongerie who assembled Aboriginal Life Story Books for children and youth, about cultural heritage, codes of behaviour & understanding of kinship.

Dianne Ryder (WA NAIDOC Outstanding Achievement Award) a volunteer with at-risk and disadvantaged children with the REAL program, the PCYC Girls Taking Charge Program and the Middle Swan Primary FAST program.



Edward Chubb & Donna Klein

Lavene Ngatokorua & Davenport Tjutjiwiru Youth Centre



Lavene Ngatokorua & son Dre

Lavene Ngatokorua works and lives in the Davenport Community just outside Port Augusta town. Lavene said: 'The Tjutjiwiru Youth Centre has been going about 20 years and I've been here since 2005. We do the Outside School Hours Care and school holiday program. Most days we have around 24 kids which doubles on Friday activity nights with disco and karaoke.'

'I'm full time, doing the office work, plus some time in the centre. I work very long days. We also have three casual staff, and so permanency is a big issue for us. I've had brilliant support from ARMSU and DEEWR, but for us to give the kids the best we need three full time staff, and we need different premises, as we just have an annex of the Council building – it's pretty rough

and our playground is the bush.

'We have about 300 people living here, about 75% under 25 years old. So there were a lot of young mums wanting something - but they just weren't accessing Port Augusta even though the bus comes out, so we introduced the Playgroup.

'So last year we also worked with the The Early Years Parenting Group, who started a fortnightly Playgroup but it stopped in December. People have really missed it, because they were good at fitting in with the mums and children. They bought in Aboriginal Elders and we could pay them, and we had two child care workers. Everyone is really looking forward to it starting up again soon

'My main thing is that every child has the right to a good start in life and our centre is a stepping stone to help them on their journey. *Our children are our heritage*' that's our motto.

'I was born and raised in this community, Umeewarra Children's Home, where I had many brothers and sisters and people give me a good start. So it's like payback for me ... I find it easy to work in this environment with lots of kids.'

Contact: tjiwiru@bigpond.com

Pika Wiya - Port Augusta



'Our programs include a child health team, an Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Care Program and a Healthy for Life Program,' said Cephas

Stanley, EO Pika Wiya Health. 'But we say Pika Wiya is the gateway to everywhere as our health service tends to be first stop for many of our people coming into town. All the programs in town need to be a bit more coordinated now the Aboriginal Community Affairs Panel (ACAP) has been defunded. But things are changing, as we are moving from a government entity to a community controlled organisation – this should be finalised by 2011.'

Glenise Coulthard - Nth Flinders



Whilst in Port Augusta, SNAICC News spoke with Glenise Coulthard for our Child Rearing Stories project. Glenise

grew up in the Flinders Ranges speaking Adnyamathanha language. She shared her reflections on spirituality, connection to country, birthing practices, breast feeding and the importance of cultural awareness for both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal children growing up. It was informative – and special – and themes will be shared as part of the Child Rearing Stories project. Glenise is Coordinator of Aboriginal Health Services, Port Augusta Hospital.

NAIDOC in Rocky - opening of Juwarki Kapu-Lug

6 July 2009: NAIDOC week in Rockhampton saw the official opening of Juwarki Kapu-Lug. The opening was a huge success with over 100 people turning out to witness and take part in the celebrations. Juwarki provides a diversion from custody program, a cell-watch visitors' program and a diversion from alcohol program. All of these programs provide support and advocacy for children and families (Juwarki means Spirit Bird) and Kapu-Lug means Safe Home.) Congratulations to Edward Chubb, corporate manager and the directors Donna Klein – secretary, Patricia Liesha, Rob Roy, Mona Kelly. Contact: edward.juwarki@gmail.com

Port Augusta stories

Port Augusta – 310k north of Adelaide, population around 14,000. Aboriginal people comprise Over 20% of the total population and 30% of the school population. Many people move through the town from WA, NT, NSW and other parts of SA. With its old, pretty sandstone settler buildings and strong sense of Aboriginal culture, Port Augusta is like no-where else. There are a few service providers in Port Augusta but with its high transit population, services can be very crisis driven. But *SNAICC News* visited Port Augusta for one day in June, it was gently raining, the wheat fields were green and everyone looked very happy, jumping puddles. Here's some stories from the Port...

Aboriginal Family Support Services Pt Augusta Office

Haydn Stuart has recently started work at the Port Augusta office of Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS) on the Strong Males, Strong Families program.

He's one of seven staff under Regional Manager Katie Coulthard, working across the alternate care services, recruiting foster carers, family preservation, reunification, gambling, Strong Males Strong Families, and Stronger Families, Safe Children.

'Katie's been with AFSS over 11 years,' said Sharron Williams CEO AFSS. 'The



staff in our northern regions consistently open up new areas for service delivery. They work so hard, all the time, and you have to be very innovative to deliver services in our more regional and remote communities where conditions can be difficult and the needs are so high.'

My experience as an Aboriginal Family Support Worker at the Early Years Parenting Centre

My name is Margaret Stuart and I am an Aboriginal woman from the Adnyamanthanha group from the Flinders Ranges area. I am a mother, a grandmother and have over 20 years experience working with children.

In July 2007 I won the position as the Aboriginal Family Support Worker at the Early Years Parenting Centre. I work with:

- Children 0 – 5 years
- Grandparents up to 70 years with grand children 0 – 5 years on the Ikamanakha program (come and sit down).

There had been some myths from some Aboriginal families within the community saying that the Aboriginal families:

- Won't use the centre as it's on a sacred site.
- See the centre for white families, and wouldn't feel comfortable using it.

I didn't believe these stories and was determined to change these opinions by creating a happy, safe caring, inclusive and educational environment for all families.

1. Kim and I met to discuss the Aboriginal playgroup as there were no Aboriginal programs and we saw a great need to develop an Aboriginal program for Aboriginal children 0 – 5.
2. We come up with the word *Nunga*, which in Adnyamanthanha means hello, and *Yakarti* which means children. We decided this program will be called *Nunga Yakarti* which means Hello Children.
3. Even though there are over 35 different Aboriginal language groups in Port Augusta, we knew people could identify with these words as Aboriginal meaning and participate in the Aboriginal playgroup and having ownership to this program.
4. Coming up with this name Nunga Yakarti, and getting support from Elders such as Auntie Elsie meant a lot to us, and getting support from the Parent Advisory Group and Management Committee helped the program become successful.
5. This program is an interactive parent/child playgroup based around music and

movement, art and craft, story reading, healthy eating, promoting cultural activities and Elders support

through stories and songs (Auntie Elsie).
6. Partnerships with Pika Wiya Health Service and Flinders Health with other activities extended from playgroup such as health checks caring for yourself program. This program has become successful because we promoted it by doing home visits, flyers and word of mouth and it is programmed for every Wednesday.

This first Aboriginal program lead the way for other programs to follow such as:

- *Warla Time* – means tummy-time for (babies 0 – 12 months).

- *Ikamanakha* – means come and sit down for Elders with their grandchildren 0 – 5 years old

- Outreach to Davenport *Tji Tji Wiru Tiny Tots playgroup* (0 – 5 yo)

- I work with Family Day Carers *Little Ones Playgroup*, promoting reconciliation.

A brand new program I recently developed is MOLLY THE TROLLY – a parent/interactive art and craft activity trolley which promotes one-on-one child and parent activity, fine motor skills, creativity, cognitive development, colours and sensory awareness for all families to use any time between 9 – 5pm.

My reward is seeing children develop and come out of their shells. I really enjoy being part of the Early Years Parenting Centre and working with the families. I believe

that I have grown within myself and developed a wider respect for both my own culture and those from different countries and from different cultures.

By: Margaret Stuart
Contact: stuart.margie@nfwrhs.sa.gov.au



New IPSU performance audit - recommendations

14 August 2009: A new Performance Audit of Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSU) by the Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) in the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

IPSUs provide professional development for eligible Indigenous child care services. They are managed under the Professional Support Program, which in turn, is under a larger Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP).

The audit found that IPSUs have been effective in assessing and addressing Indigenous child care services' needs. It recommends DEEWR should review program planning, design and performance monitoring and reporting to strengthen program management. DEEWR agrees with the audit recommendations.

SNAICC is pleased to see the work of the IPSUs being recognised and will be discussing the report with IPSUs to look at the implications. The four OEA recommendations were:

1. That DEEWR better articulate the relationship between the desired Council of Australian Governments early childhood outcomes and the work of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

2. That DEEWR review IPSU funding, to take into consideration the varying professional support needs of the different Indigenous child care service models and the location of services. These considerations should also be recognised in the funding methodology for Professional Support Coordinators (PSC) and Inclusion Support Agencies (ISA), who are also responsible for supporting Indigenous child care services.

3. That DEEWR do a needs analysis of Indigenous child care services to inform planning for the IPSU initiative and the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, as well as any new funding methodology. Similarly, a needs assessment for mainstream childcare services should include an analysis of the needs of Indigenous children attending these services, to inform the development of cultural inclusion practices and strategies.

4. That simplified reporting and performance measures be developed to measure individual performance of IPSUs, PSCs and ISAs in relation to improving Indigenous children's access to quality and culturally inclusive services

Media release and links to report: www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2009/mr_462009.html



Top trip to the Top End

Two SNAICC Resource Service workers, Catriona Elek and Jane Harrison, spent two June days in Darwin, at the national IPSU conference and the C4C Anglicare We Grow Them Up Conference. Jane reports:

First, the weather – 30° and sunny. We were like lizards in the sun, soaking it up after cold Melbourne.

On day one we were guests at the Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) national meeting. We bused down to Batchelor's Yera MACS, which caters for children from 0–5 years old, and were impressed by the fantastic facilities – shade trees, spacious, with sand pits in abundance.

The whole group then went to Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), where Indigenous Early Childhood researcher Lyn Fasoli, presented on an array of early childhood area research projects - transitioning to school, web literacy, parenting/child development and workforce development.

I then presented to the IPSU mob on the SNAICC Child Rearing Stories project. SNAICC is collecting positive stories of how children are grown up strong in culture through arts-based community workshops using digital storytelling and with children's



self-published books. IPSU representatives also discussed the relationship between their services and SNAICC.

We then toured the BIITE Library and were impressed by their user friendly opening hours, signage and community outreach. The bus trip back into Darwin took us tantalisingly close to the Litchfield Park turnoff, for those of us who hadn't been to the Top End before (me).

On day 2, Catriona and I visited the *We Grow Them Up* early childhood conference.

Anglicare NT has been the facilitating partner for the East Arnhem Communities For Children funding and their conference had everything – singing, guitars, language, drumming, raffle tickets, jokes, great scones, a conference bag complete with a hand-knitted beanie.

Firstly we enjoyed a **beautiful Welcome to Country** by June and Kathy Mills who harmonised *The Arafura Pearl* their own song about their connection to Darwin.

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services presenters talked about communicating health messages through two way learning, contextualising the story, diagrams and the need to tap into the knowledge that Aboriginal families have on health and child development.



Author Maggie Dent spoke about resilience and the building blocks for growing strong kids; about ancient child rearing knowledge that modern society has forgotten and how we are over-pathologising children. She reminded us to identify the gifts that children have and to enhance their meaningful involvement with adults. Maggie was energetic and inspiring.

The FAST project (Families and Schools Together) helps build relationships between families and schools, incorporating singing, dancing, raffle tickets and with community role models to deliver the program.

The Anglicare NT **Pandanans Project Mums with Drums** drummed through their presentation on post-natal depression, accompanied by a Power Point made poignant by photos of their beautiful babies.

Anglicare NT demonstrated their new Play and Learn Support Kit for working with children with disabilities, using local Knowledges of plants and tracks to create metaphors for describing how the brain develops and works. The kit helps to facilitate discussion on a difficult topic.

And then it was back on the plane for the trip south to cold Melbourne ...

Contact: jane@snaicc.asn.au

The 10 Creche Project

The 10 Creche Project was implemented in the NT by the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Charles Darwin University. The DEEWR funded project provided basic early childhood skills training in health, hygiene, safety, child development, play, nutrition and food preparation in communities receiving a creche under the NT Emergency Response.

Workshops were held in Lajamanu, Docker River, Papunya, Areyonga, Robinson River, Peppimenarti and Milikapiti. Although initially identified to participate, training in Numbulwar, Timber Creek and Ampilatwatja was postponed. Over 56,000k were travelled between Sept.

'08 and April '09 to deliver the training.

The project produced *The Creche Kit* to stay with each community after the training. The Kit contains information and resources to help new creche workers get started and introduces them to:

- Creche work
- Helping little kids learn
- Creche workers roles & responsibilities
- Ideas for a healthy creche
- Ideas for food for kids
- Ideas for planning activities and play
- Keeping kids safe and happy

The kit contains:

- *The Creche Kit – Working Together For Our Kids* publication
 - *The Creche Kit – Working Together For Our Kids* DVD and resource templates
 - Indigenous specific support resources.
- The project involved training for 82



participants from 7 communities, 19 of whom expressed an interest in undertaking study in Children's Services. Contact BIITE Early Childhood Research and Projects Unit 08 8946 3867.

May IPSU Alliance Forum in Darwin

26–29 May 2009: RRACSSU North hosted the National IPSU Alliance Forum in Darwin on Larrakia Country

The Larrakia Welcome: 'He spoke from the heart and re-enforced to us the importance we place on our Aboriginal children everywhere.'

Twenty two representatives from the eight IPSUs across Australia attended and our activities and discussions included:

- We welcomed the new IPSUs for Tasmania and Victoria who are already doing the work to support the professional development needs of the Indigenous children's services in their regions.
- We reiterated the importance of facilitating and maintaining strong networks and connections, particularly with the services we work with.
- We affirmed that visual resources and two way learning is so valuable to how the IPSUs work with services.
- The Queensland IPSU shared their new book Look ere! Look ere! A Deadly Book of Activities and what a deadly book it is.
- We heard that ARMSU in South Australia will this year celebrate 20 years of operation. Well done!
- We shared stories about information technology and how this is a concern in regions where service staff don't have the IT equipment or knowledge and then other cases where staff are looking at how they can talk and train online through the website.
- Yorganop the WA IPSU shared information about their very successful

Mobile Muster they ran last year and the NSW IPSU talked about the training they have been doing with services in maths, science and reflective practice.

- We determined ways to measure success against reporting requirements – this resulted in a working group being set up to work with the National DEEWR office.
- We talked about IPSUs 'being pushed' to have more of a brokerage role and not as much of a hands on role.
- We talked about being a voice for local, state and national issues. Currently the IPSUs don't have a combined and recognised voice, we want to establish this, beginning with 'discussions' with SNAICC.
- We shared a great BBQ with friends from DEEWR and SNAICC and with song and dance also. Our final activity together included sitting on the floor in a circle and singing Tabá Naba and doing the actions.

Tabá Naba

Taba naba naba norem
Tugi penai siri
Dinghy e naba we
Miko keimi
Sere re naba we
Taba naba norem
(repeated 3 times)

Translation:

Come on let's go to the Reef
Get into the dinghy when the morning
tide is low

By Veronica Johns, RRACSSU North
Contact: veronica.johns@batchelor.edu.au



Cheryl Barber from Woorabinda Child Care enjoying the 2008 SNAICC AGM, Great Lakes NSW - a good photo!

Taking good photos:

based on IPSU News March 2009

Yorganop WA

What is the photo for? Why you are taking the photo? Is it an observation of a child, the setting or the program, what do you want to say or see?

Photos of active children say more about the child, programs and setting, than just taking snaps of smiling faces.

Get as close as you can to the action.

Cropping can focus your photo so that it really says what you want

Shots of natural objects/shadows/seasonal changes can engage children & staff in new discoveries

Take all photos on Best Quality settings on your camera (don't use your cell-phone if you want to publish a copy of your picture)

Keep a high-resolution copy as a backup before you make any changes to it,

Always get consent from carers before you use the photos in public.



Story continued from pages 1 & 3 - notes taken from

Cindy Blackstock's speech to SNAICC & friends 14 August 2009

when the child is removed but there is no actual abuse happening. Clearly substance abuse training should be our core business, far more so than parenting classes, yet most Canadian social workers only get a half-day of substance abuse training. USA social workers assess substance abuse in about 30% of cases, but I have parents who use and are good parents. It's not a reason on its own. If we are removing kids for substance abuse, then why aren't we trained in how it affects parenting? The same goes for mental health issues which account for 11% of removals. Yet how many of us can assess an undiagnosed mental disorder and its effects on parenting?

The one question you can ask to determine the likelihood of someone having a child removed is: 'How much money did you make last year?' In Canada, 95% of kids removed had family incomes of under \$25,000. Whilst 71% of Canadians own their own homes, only 3% of kids removed came from places the families owned. Yet people insist on saying 'We are not removing you because you are poor.' Well, yes we are. It's like a patient having a heart attack and we put a bandaid on their knee, and then blame them for not responding. Income is a huge risk factor for children but few of us have poverty reduction resources.

We are just not reflecting on the service we are giving. For instance, parenting courses have almost no effect. You can find 'neglectful' families have better parenting skills in a test scores than others, because they go to all the programs. Another example is government obsession with glossy posters – they make a new food chart with a picture of a moose on top of the chart (or maybe a kangaroo in Australia). But you can't shop using the food guide when you are on food assistance.

So we do nothing about the structural drivers. What we have is the predictable outcome of a badly designed system. This system is 'succeeding' – succeeding in penalising poor families! So why hasn't child welfare marshalled its resources to deal with this? Instead, there's emphasis of making mainstream culturally appropriate, on educating non-Aboriginal staff and on recruiting Aboriginal staff. We tried this and failed, because it is the basis of child welfare that is not appropriate! We are dealing with poor people, bad housing and poor resources. Further, non-Aboriginal kids get \$3 for every \$1 for Aboriginal people – there's 22% less

funding for Indigenous child welfare.

Getting these things right is more important than making the occasional culturally inappropriate mistake. All the mechanics of the big mistake are still here, even when it is delivered by Aboriginal people (and when Aboriginal people don't deliver it, it's an even bigger mistake).

The Canadian First Nations agencies get most of the awards, as although they are less well funded, they have a community level base with community authority and can walk into family if they see a risk. But can the parent actually change the risk? We assume they can, and if they can't, then we assume it's their fault. Where has the 'social' gone from 'social work'? We have forgotten the words poverty and discrimination. The changes we need are simple: record family income as a key indicator; study substance abuse, mental health and the impact on parenting; and think about what risks people can actually change.

The First Nations agencies created our organisation to deal with structural discrimination, to be ready to take a hit, to take on government, maybe die as an organisation. So we had support from the agencies, we are big on being guided by the spirits and we created Jordan's Principle, that the needs of the child have first priority. Instead of meeting bureaucrats, we created a website and issued a certificate of support for Jordan's Principle. These certificates began to appear all over Canada – the campaign gave Canadians a chance to step up and the Parliament took notice, passed the legislation and the campaign only cost \$2000. The first time I told this story was at the Adelaide 2007 SNAICC Conference. SNAICC then sent a package to Jordan's family, and when they opened the package, Jordan's father said: 'I'm so honoured my son's voice and message was heard half way around the world.'

There are so many good non-Aboriginal organisations that collectively do very little. We can sit down and develop joint solutions with bureaucrats, and they say to us: 'Give me a chance to work with you,' and 'give us some time' and you go along with them. But behind them, there are countless others saying the same thing. So we decided not to rely on voluntary government action, but use involuntary mechanisms. We worked with 25 leading researchers, documented the

Canada apologised last year for the Christian residential school era 1870-1996. Many children died in these homes. Forcible removals stopped in the 1960s, when we became 'people' under the law, but the schools stayed open another 36 years as there were none others available.

Child protection never intervened in child deaths on the residential schools. So where were the social workers when Aboriginal people wanted them most? They did nothing and were active agents in events. People now act as if those days were over, but there never has been a time when more of our children have been in state care. It exceeds by a factor of three the number taken in residential schools. Some say child welfare is worse now, because now we can keep children until they are 18, not 15 years as before; the children are often separated from other Aboriginal kids; we take them at birth, not at the age five like before; and now the parents are judged, whilst before all the children were taken at age five.

So now we have done the research. We have found First Nation kids are less likely to experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse and are more likely to experience neglect. But what is neglect? We never studied it at school. Most people think it means while the parents have the resources to look after the child, they don't. But neglect usually means the parent has few resources to care for the kids - it's poverty, housing and caregiver substance abuse, which is often linked to the residential schools.

We just miss all the reasons people come into child protection. We found over 50% had nothing to do with maltreatment, but with substance abuse and 'anticipatory abuse'

The impact of incarceration on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children & services

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee of the Australian National Council on Drugs (NIDAC) has released a report titled *Bridges and Barriers - Addressing Indigenous Incarceration and Health* describing the rates of, and consequences of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment.

As Associate Professor Ted Wilkes, a Nyungar man from WA and Chair of the NIDAC says: 'It is clear current initiatives simply aren't enough. A major re-think is needed.'

SNAICC broadly supports the report's recommendations, in particular the relaxation of requirements to enter juvenile diversion programs and the development of an individual education support fund to assist their participation within the education system. SNAICC argues however, that government response to incarcerations need to be far more preventative, culturally appropriated and child focused, because working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family based organisations through early intervention strategies, is the proven way to break the cycles of violence and incarceration and achieve the best long-term outcomes for individual and communities.

What high incarceration rates mean

1. For our out-of-home-care services

When a parent is jailed, children invariably suffer. Often authorities remove the child (in some states more frequently than others) and the kids are placed in the

out-of-home-care system, often away from their cultural context with non-Indigenous carers. Whatever the situation prior to removal, evidence suggests that this option for placement is generally not productive.

SNAICC has long argued that the best place for a child is with their mum or dad and the better option for the parent is out of prison and doing alternative family based programs. The effort to reunify our families places huge burdens on our families and organisations, especially given the scale of incarcerations. Governments must recognise that community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family organisations are the best placed to provide services to the children and ideally parents too, as is appropriate.

2. For our early childhood services

Where family separations, violence and incarceration are common, early childhood staff members need to follow difficult duty of care obligations (e.g. abiding by statutory declarations and court orders relating to violent family members and respecting confidentiality at all times).

In situations where intoxicated family members or parents arrive to collect children, staff cannot physically prevent collection however, they have a duty of care to inform the parents that the police will be notified. If the child is collected the call to police must be made.

Further, children with a violence and jail fractured family background often have additional support needs. However, early childhood centres are not resourced for additional staff to meet these needs.

Overstressed early childhood staff can burn out and cannot supply the care the children need. The very children that need the early preventative interventions are then less likely to get the extra support they need, to strengthen their resilience and especially, to avoid repeating the pattern. These children need support to continue schooling, often with intensive remedial attention. The proposal to develop an individual education support fund recognizes this need, but it needs to be extended to meet the needs of early years children.

A new national drug action plan

The National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Complementary Action Plan 2003 – 2009 expires this year. This evaluation of this action plan will be released shortly. Presumably there will be a new action plan developed.

The current NIDAC committee is heavily weighted to the health and drug and alcohol sector, but preventative work is not only a physical or psychiatric health issue. Representation needs to include spokespersons more clearly identified with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled child and family sector and other relevant departments and NGOs.

The NIDAC report was launched on 25 June 09 by Warren Snowdon, Federal Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery and Brendon O'Connor, Federal Minister for Home Affairs.

Download from www.nidac.org.au

Continued from previous page

Cindy Blackstock speech to SNAICC & friends 14 August 2009

inequality, developed a funding formula and identified our funding shortfall. Academics were keen to work with us and excited to work across disciplines. (See online *Wen:de: We are Coming to the Light of Day.*)

We said, if you do not provide equal funding, we will take you to court. In 2007 we filed a Human Rights Complaint alleging lesser child welfare support and discrimination (see page 3 in this issue). Our government will be held responsible at the Tribunal on 14 September 2009 and we have top experts and economists as witnesses, whilst government can only call its own staff and has no experts to testify for them. Our

organisation then lost all our government funding when we began these actions. We are the only national organisation working for children, but losing this funding was like a freedom. What could they do to us now? They had lost control.

We need to unmask child welfare. We need to put aside your own needs of being seen as 'good people' at the core. It's not about you, or your feeling good. If you are doing the business right you will be able to measure it by looking at the children. Only 4% of children have physical harm at removal. The average child removed before five years of age is removed 17 times over

ten years as they are moved between carers. We are removing them because it makes us feel good. But 20 years from now you will be asked 'Did you know what was happening in 2009?' you will have to say you knew .

We have not been prepared to do what we know. But with strength and courage, we can do something about it. There is a lot at stake, but I think we will win it. So, be a witness to the Tribunal, everyone.

www.fncfcs.ca



The long road home...

31 Aug – 6 Sept

Retta Dixon reunion

Former residents of the Retta Dixon Home in Darwin
1946 – 1980

Contact Valerie Day on 08 8927 0527 or Debbie on 08 8927 0203
SNAICC wishes all the Retta Dixon mob the very best of reunions



Veronica Johns, manager of the NT IPSU (RRACSSU) and former resident of Retta Dixon, has just returned from two weeks holiday to the West Kimberley to catch up with family and country. She writes

We spent each evening watching the sun set in the west leaving a red orange wash across the closing day. Connecting back to country and family maintains the meaning of our lives and being. Most days were spent lazing around the community and enjoying the chatter and 'humbug' of the young children as they, like the dogs and puppies, demanded attention, food and special treats. 'Just take two' one of the brothers would repeat as the children reached into the sunshine milk tin full of lollies searching for their favourites.

It was all before our eyes

Tracks in the red earth leaving a story of children's trails and meanderings as they moved through community with dogs at their side
The naked child undaunted by cool early morning breezes and the fiercely hot afternoon sun
The blades and balls of glistening grasses and spinifex and panoramic views
Wild untamed horses galloping through the community
Stinking seeping sewerage causing worry and concern
Campfires welcoming and loud music blaring
Anxious children's voices beckoning at windows and at doors
Proud Aboriginal colours vibrant and loud
Chirpy flitty birds and kangaroos standing guard
Elusive cherimbah and cattle station gates
Maintenance nightmares and half done jobs
Bush foods and medicine and language words to learn
Majestic gnarly boabs and little people's homes
And all with the hopes and dreams for a better, fairer and just future for ourselves and our children.

Over 30 years of VAEAI - our achievements

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) held their Koori Early Years Resource conference this June. Activities included a panel with elders and VAEAI legends Laura Bell, Vera Briggs, Rose Bamblett and Melva Johnson who spoke about over 30 years of VAEAI promoting Aboriginal education.

Vera Briggs said about her Gippsland home: 'We are all celebrating our Year 10-12 students. Last year we had 80, and most of them started with the MACS. We have got this far over the years with the support of VAEAI.'

Melva Johnson said: 'We had no kids completing their VCE before our MACS started in Echuca. Now 67 have completed their VCE. That's big for a small town. We are proud.'

Rose Bamblett said: 'I never really learnt school work too well and I always thought, if I can't do it, my heart's desire is for our children to go right through school and on, that's my dream.'

Laura Bell said, 'Seeing our VAEAI babies grow up and take on that challenge is wonderful. Just look at all our young people here today working on for their own children.' Contact www.vaeai.org.au



Two 'VAEAI babies': Alfred & Georgia Bamblett, Best Start



Lulla Children and Family Centre and VAEAI Chair Geraldine Atkinson (centre) with staff Kia Giles and VAEAI baby (daughter & staff member) Kristen Atkinson



L-R: Melva Johnson, Vera Briggs, Roland Finette, Rose Bamblett, Laura Bell of VAEAI

The new Lulla Children and Family Centre (Shepparton, Victoria) opened this July, merging Lidji MACS, which has been at Rumbalara over 28 years, and Badja preschool which has been running for 16 years. The new centre officially opens this September.

Long Walk cultural exchange

Seven artists from the NT Wadeye Palngun Wurnangat (Women's) Centre travelled to Melbourne with three students from Our Lady of Christ School as part of a cultural exchange between the Dandenong and Wadeye communities in the lead up to The Long Walk.

The exchange shares knowledge between urban and remote communities and hopes to inspire young people to value their culture. It builds on Essendon Football Club's relationship with the Wadeye and rewards students who do well at school and listen to their Elders with a visit to Melbourne to participate in The Long Walk and Dreamtime at the G.

The exchange was also an economic development opportunity with the Koorie Heritage Trust becoming a Melbourne outlet for the Wadeye Palngun Wurnangat, dillybags, screenprints and baskets.



May 2000: Women from Wadeye Palngun Wurnangat Centre with Essendon Football Club's Heath Hocking & Courtney Dempsey during the Cultural Exchange with Dandenong

'It meant a lot when the Wadeye women came to visit Dandenong for the hip-hop workshop,' said Patricia Harrison, Artist, Dandenong Women's Group. 'The young ones were wrapped to show their skills to the mob and the time with them was very special. I am keen to extend my knowledge by visiting Wadeye and working with the

women to collect, prepare materials to make string and dillybags,"

Patricia Harrison will weave the centrepieces for **The Long Walk Women's Luncheon on 9 October.**

See www.thelongwalk.com.au



Judy Kirby & a kinship tree

The new Victorian IPSU project officer Judy Kirby ran a Kinship Tree activity at the recent Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporation (VAEAI) conference. Judy said:

'I ran a kinship tree activity based on an activity from Morwell MACS. This activity is a great culturally inclusive warm-up exercise. Each participant takes one clapstick from the coolaman. They then find the other person with the matching clapstick as one clapstick alone is no good. When the pair is made they then sit together and write information about themselves on a cut-out paper gumleaf. One side about

who they are, e.g. mum, sister, daughter, teacher, dancer, painter, gardener, worker. On the other side write names of their family members. Each pair then share this information by introducing their partner to the group. When the sharing is complete all the leaves are placed on the kinship tree. A great way to build connections. Mums and children can do it but use outline of their hands.

As IPSU Project Office under the Yappera Children's Service MACS I support and deliver training, advice, referral and resources to community staff in MACS, playgroups and Innovative In-Venue Family Day Care to provide the high educational outcomes in a culturally supported setting. It's a fantastic job.

'I am a Murray women and have lived in Echuca Victoria for over 20 years where I worked as a primary school teacher. I recently moved to Melbourne for a chance to further study and use my experience and passion for education. I hope to complete a Masters in Education in the not too distant future.'

Contact: judykirbyart@gmail.com

Indigenous Kids Read - great new web site

Indigenous Kids Read— a free resource for early childhood courses and activities. It's user-friendly and useful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander families with young children to help their young children with literacy and language development. The website was developed by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous early childhood educators and was trialled in a number of sites including remote communities, If you would like us to include a link to a site that you recommend, let us know. The website is a collaboration between Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and University of Canberra.

www.batchelor.edu.au/ikr/index.php

Wuchopperen's Mums and Bubs program

Cairns-based Wuchopperen Health Service launched a new home visit program for first-time mums and their children this National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

Gwalwa Gai, CRC for Aboriginal Health e-bulletin (Ed. 20) writes that: 'The home visit program is part of the pilot Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program (ANFPP). The principal focus is the mother, but the home visits also help families to develop skills to give babies the very best start in life. Wuchopperen home visits are nurse-led, supported by either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Family Partnership Workers (depending on the cultural background of the mother.)

'Wuchopperen program coordinator Margaret Stewart said 'Our home visits start in early pregnancy and continue through until the baby reaches two years of age. We now have four Family Partnership Workers and four babies have already been delivered to our mothers. The idea is to establish a trusting relationship with the mother and the extended family over the early years of a child's life.

'The ANFPP is modelled on David Old's USA Nurse-Family Partnership which has been operating for 30 years. The program is also being piloted at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and Alice Springs Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. The pilot is funded for three years, more sites are being rolled out and it is likely to become a permanent service for all first-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers around Australia.

Gwalwa Gai: www.crcah.org.au



L-R: Victoria Ryle – Kids' Own Publishing, Tessa Atto – TACCA, James Stubbs – SNAICC, Terry Watson – IPSU Brisbane, Emma Bamblett – VACCA, Judy Kirby – IPSU Victoria, May Kabay – IPSU Townsville, Katharine Bartley – IPSU Townsville, Sharon Berry – IPSU Victoria, Bev Murray – VACCA, Judith McKay Tempest – IPSU NSW & ACT, Jane Harrison – SNAICC, Teresa Anderson – Jali Playgroup.

Creating books in early childhood services

10 – 11 August: Ten Aboriginal participants from Early Childhood Services gathered at Maya Healing Centre in Thornbury (Melbourne) for a workshop on Aboriginal Children's Self Publishing.

The workshop was delivered by Jane Harrison (SNAICC Child Rearing Stories Project Officer) and James Stubbs (student on placement) and co-facilitated by Victoria Ryle from Kids' Own Publishing Partnership who has a wealth of knowledge on children's self publishing.

What is children's self publishing?

Kids create the art and words for their own books, and then using technology such as photocopiers, make multiple copies. Children's self publishing can lead to the creation of resources with local content such as local languages and stories about the children's own families, communities and environments. Books that children create give them an investment in the reading

process, which leads to increased literacy.

Our workshop was a 'train the trainer' style, empowering participants to run workshops in their own services with children, families and community members. Over the two days the group learnt the methodology while developing a number of resources.

On the first day they created a beautifully illustrated and moving collective book I am strong in culture, and on the second day they made individual books on a range of child rearing themes. The process was lots of fun with one participant being heard to say 'And I'm being paid for this!'

While this workshop was a pilot, SNAICC aims to roll the workshops out across the states and territories over the next 18 months. So look out for a range of extraordinary, local, culturally relevant books, created for and by children, at an Aboriginal service near you!

Contact: janeh@snaicc.asn.au



Star student, James Stubbs

James Stubbs writes:
I am a fourth year RMIT social work student doing my final placement at SNAICC, working with Jane Harrison's child rearing stories project.

I chose to complete my final placement with SNAICC because I want to increase my learning and understanding of Aboriginal culture and to find out if I have a place working in the community. As a non-Aboriginal person I have had an incredible

learning experience over the last two months and have felt warmly welcomed into the Aboriginal community. SNAICC has provided a supportive environment that has allowed me to undertake my work independently, use my strengths, develop my weaknesses. I am passionate about working with young people and I look forward to finishing my degree and entering into the world of social work.

Cultural inclusion manual

SNAICC is finalising a cultural inclusion manual to support non-Indigenous Family Relationship Services to build cultural competence.

The manual provides information, tools and practical tips to assist non-Indigenous staff and organisations strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. It also supports organisations to develop culturally appropriate professional practice approaches, including action research evaluation methods. This manual will be printed and distributed by FAHCSIA soon.

Contact: mark@snaicc.asn.au

Talking Up Our Strengths

Talking Up Our Strengths is a set of 22 theme-based strengths cards celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Each set of images illustrate a strength theme, such as 'Our Country', 'Our Music', etc. The cards are designed to promote discussion, build self-esteem, help connect community and provide a cross-cultural educational and conversation building tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family welfare services and groups.

Produced by SNAICC and St Luke's Innovative Resources and available Nov. 09.

Contact: rosie@snaicc.asn.au

SNAICC does students too

SNAICC is developing a student unit which takes on both Indigenous and non-indigenous students from a variety of academic disciplines.

We are searching for students from universities and TAFEs who are looking to complete a placement as part of their course and support them through their placements. To date James Stubbs is our second student and we have three more planned to come on board during the remainder of this year. Our first student (Chris Dunk) is an Aboriginal man of Tasmanian decent. After completing his student placement he is now working here as a project officer.

We are keen to have more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are completing tertiary studies, so contact me, Sue Beecher, if you know of any who would like to do a stint as a student with us.

Contact: sbeecher@snaicc.asn.au

SNAICC News August 2009



Since producing Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit in 2008, SNAICC has looked for ways to support its use in communities and member organisations, given that we do not have training capacity to deliver workshops directly.

The Workshop Kit contains a set of resources to assist communities to run workshops about family violence and propose six steps to develop a child-safe community. The kit includes information and activity sheets, posters, pamphlets, short films and documents in electronic format to adapt to suit local community needs.

SNAICC micro-grants for *Through Young Black Eyes* workshops

In May 2008, SNAICC received a one-off funding agreement to provide support for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to run workshops on addressing family violence or the development of child safe communities using the Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit (workshops funded by the Australian Government under the Parenting Appropriation – Invest to Grow Program.)

SNAICC has now engaged 11 organisations to run 19 workshops around Australia, reaching an estimated 355 people. Participants will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood workers, community members, Link-Up service staff, child protection workers, school students, family support workers, women's shelter staff and drug and alcohol workers. Workshops will be held in:

- WA (3 workshops, 60 people)
- NT (1 workshop, 60 people)
- SA (2 workshops, 80 people)
- VIC (2 workshops, 30 people)

- NSW (2 workshops, 45 people)
- QLD (9 workshops, 110 people)

Organisations include:

- Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA in partnership with Aboriginal Family Support Services
- Kamarah Aboriginal Corp. in partnership with Port Stephens Family Support Services & Worimi Land Council)
- Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
- Bargumar Aboriginal & Islander Corp.
- Central Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Child Agency (CQAICCA)
- Wuchopperen Health Services
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Darwin Aboriginal & Islander Women's Shelter
- Foundation of Rehabilitation With Aboriginal Alcohol Related Difficulties (FORWAARD)
- Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Programs Services (CAAPS)
- Mullewa Indigenous Women's Group.

See www.snaicc.asn.au/publications/

Chris Dunk - making enquiries

'Hi' to you all, my name is Chris Dunk, a new SNAICC resource development officer. Part of my role includes evaluating SNAICC resources and services.

I try to make meaningful enquiries (the right questions to get the right answers) to help improve what we do – to make better policy and products to suit our clients in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Much of what I do depends on you as the key players, the service providers. I can try to act as your eyes and ears and can help SNAICC put into practice your recommendations for things you need to strengthen families and culture.

So a big thanks to all of you children, sisters, mothers, nanas, brothers, dads, pop, aunts, uncles and others of our shared nationwide community in all that you do and for your feedback, because what we all do is all in your hands, far from this office.

We know that you have lots to do with everyday matters and filling in our evaluation forms can be a bit of a chore. But remember we are a part of your community across the land and we need you speaking up about the SNAICC kits, posters, booklets and CDs as to how useful it is to you. We are very

interested in what you all do with kids and families, and how you use the stuff we send out, and how you would like it to be.

On top of using your returned evaluation forms in the publications we send you, we are also sending out a team of people to see what you think about SNAICC Resource Service products (including our SNAICC website). Over the next 1–3 years some communities will get a visit from Success Works, our external evaluators. Telling them what you think of our stuff is important and we will take note of what you say, you mob are the doing the work and we are here to design materials that suit your needs.

But whether you are visited by Success Works or not, we really enjoy knowing where you come from are across the land and your ideas as to what you need. I hope to meet some of you at next year's conference. If you want yarn me up of things give me a call (03 9489 8099) or email me.

PS. Please keep those evaluation forms coming in – we put them into database to tell us how to do it better for you all.

Contact: chris@snaicc.asn.au

SNAICC Resource Service

develops and distributes resources for the
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander family &
children's services sector



2009 SNAICC Annual General Meeting Adelaide

12 - 13 November 2009

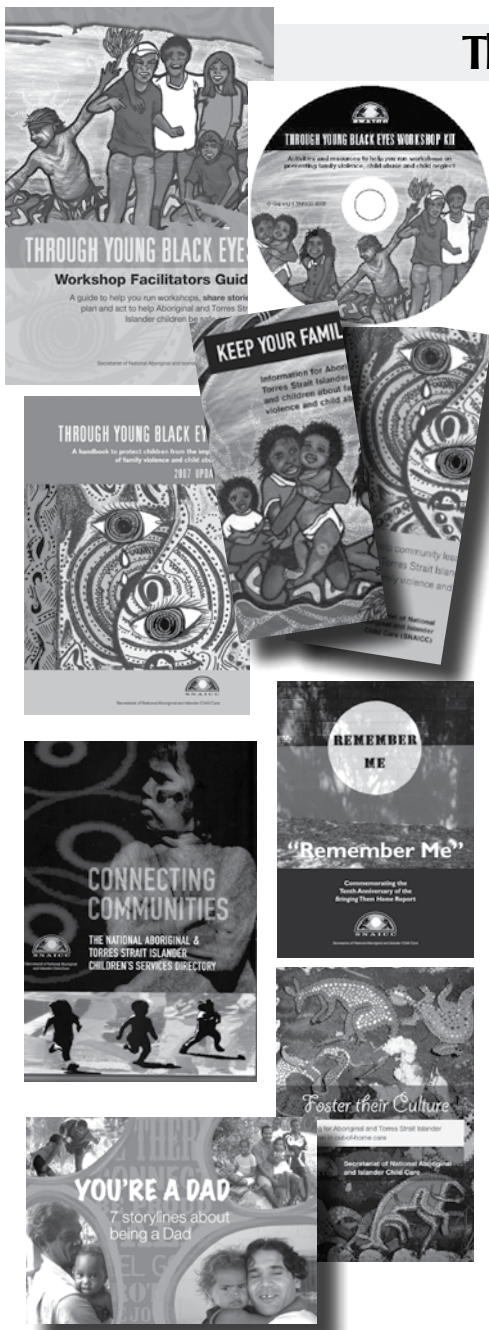
All SNAICC member organisations are warmly encouraged to attend. This is a good opportunity to discuss matters affecting your community, and service.

SNAICC does provides some subsidy to members to assist in the costs of travel and accommodation.

Information about the SNAICC AGM will be posted to members by late September 2009.

Ask about joining SNAICC on
admin@snaicc.asn.au

The SNAICC Resource Service develops and distributes resources for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander family & children's services sector



The SNAICC e-Bulletin - fortnightly in your email
Register free online at www.snaicc.asn.au

Support and Management

Over the past two years, SNAICC has hosted a *Support and Management Online* web portal in partnership with Management Support Online. A project evaluation found that while people liked the information and training, the usage rates were too low to justify continuing this service. The trial therefore ended on 15 July. SNAICC has now developed other links and resources on our *Support and Management* web page to help community controlled early childhood and child and family welfare services in governance, management and capacity development. It also provides some cultural awareness and cultural competency resources for mainstream organisations.

Visit: www.snaicc.asn.au & click the *Support and Management* button on the right hand side of the home page
Contact: catriona@snaicc.asn.au

The Exchange - Child Rearing Stories online interest group

SNAICC has set up an on-line information exchange system – like an email-list, but where documents can be shared and uploaded more easily. SNAICC has established an interest group for our Child Rearing Stories project. Please email us if you would like to join in. Other interest groups will also be established using this technology. SNAICC thanks our website partners, Fraynetwork, for their assistance.

Contact: janeh@snaicc.asn.au

2009 National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day activity kit

Poster, pamphlets and activities distributed nationally for 2009 celebrations, but good any day of the week.



Order online www.snaicc.asn.au

- Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit – growing child safe communities
- You're A Dad
- Connecting Communities – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Services Directory
- Foster Their Culture – Caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in Out-of-Home Care
- Dreaming Stories – 6 DVDs
- Dreaming stories – springboard to learning
- Keep your children safe (pamphlet)
- Through Young Black Eyes Community Leaders' Guide
- Men's poster series
- Promising practices in out-of-home-care

Coming soon See pages 22-23 inside

- Talking Up Our Strengths
- Cultural inclusion manual
- Child rearing stories

Order www.snaicc.asn.au

Some SNAICC publications are free to order online. Other are free for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community controlled services only but may be purchased at cost price by all.

National SNAICC Conference

Alice Springs

27 – 29 July 2010

For Our Children

Ampe Anwernekenheke

Local Strengths, National Challenges

Rlterrke Akwete Aneye



The 2007 SNAICC national conference in Adelaide was a big success, so don't miss the next one, next year, 2010. The call for conference papers will be out soon on www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference or request a copy via email sweeney@snaicc.asn.au or ring 03 9489 8099
Join the conference mail list via sharynlow@pacific.net.au with 'SNAICC Conference mailing list' in the subject line.