

SNAICC NEWS



**SNAICC
National Conference
Alice Springs
27 – 29 July
Registrations open
mid March**

All your friends will be there

See keynote speakers page 3

Photo: Agnes Abbott and Nikita Palmer-Sharpe from Alice Springs. Photo courtesy Arltere Learning Centre



Don't blame child protection system failures on the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

'The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle – a policy to protect Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children's connections to their family and culture – should not be blamed for the failures of child protection systems to keep children safe in foster care,' says Steve Larkins, SNAICC Chairperson.

'An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's involvement with their family and community is highly important,' he continued, 'but it is never more important than their safety – the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is very clear about this. It is wrong to blame the Principle for poor decision making by under-resourced and poorly trained child protection departments in the Northern Territory or elsewhere.'

'SNAICC thinks that the recent criticisms in the media of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, particularly concerning child protection failures in the Northern Territory, are misinformed because they fail to acknowledge that the principle never condones an unsafe foster placement for a child.'

'Maintaining connections to family and community is not a justification for leaving a child at risk of harm or making a placement that puts them at risk of harm and well-trained child protection staff should know this.'

'It has been poor decision making by an under-resourced and poorly trained Northern Territory child protection department that compromises children's safety through poor placement planning and support – not the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.'

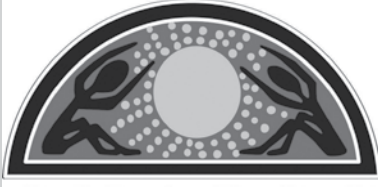
'We have seen numerous reports into the child protection system in the Northern Territory and we know what is needed to protect children –

Story continues page 3

**SNAICC Chair
selected for
international human
rights post** *Story inside page 2*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- SNAICC's 8 Priorities 2
- SCAICC Chair for International post 2
- SNAICC National Conference 3
- National out of home care standards 4
- Glenda Kickett from Djorraminda 5
- Canada – *I Am A Witness* 5
- *Through Young Black Eyes* workshops 6
- Promising Practices in Healing 7
- The Troopie 8
- Child Rearing Stories 9
- AbSec conference 9
- Authentic consultation 10
- Rose Nowers & other services 10
- Darrell Henry community & healing 12
- LSIC Wave 1 14
- *You're A Dad* stories 15
- NT Inquiry into CP system 17
- Autism Spectrum Disorder project 17
- Action Research Evaluation 18
- Working & Walking Together 19
- SNAICC AGM 2009 report 20
- Calendar of events 22
- Prizes for children's stories 23
- SNAICC Resources 24
- NAICD Childrens Day theme 2010 24



SNAICC News is the quarterly newsletter of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Inc.

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Fees (incl GST & postage):	
Government	\$110
Non-government	\$65
Individuals	\$33

Subscriptions are paid annually, based on the calendar year. Members and affiliate members receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

For *SNAICC News* inquiries contact:
The Editor: Rosie Elliott
publicatons@snaicc.asn.au
Tel: 03 9489 8099
SNAICC, PO Box 1445
Fitzroy North, Victoria 3068

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8 Priorities for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children & Families

A poster of SNAICC's 8 Priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families has been included with this issue of SNAICC News. Hang it on your wall proudly. We hope you find it helpful as you develop your policy directions.

SNAICC is committed to pursuing the following eight priorities, each of equal importance, on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. We will work in partnership with local services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies, governments and non-government organisations.

The 2009 *SNAICC 8 Priorities* were developed following a review of the previous SNAICC 7 Priorities. The priorities will guide SNAICC's policy, project work, resource development and strategic planning over the next several years. SNAICC welcomes your views on these priorities.

SNAICC's *8 Priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families*, were launched at the Adelaide SNAICC Members' Forum on 11 November 2009.

Mounted copies of the 8 Priorities poster have been presented to Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Governor-General Quentin Bryce AC.

SNAICC's 8 Priorities are:

- Support families to care for children
- Value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Healing and reparations for the Stolen Generations
- Self determination in child protection
- Thrive by five with culture alive
- Real results take real planning
- Building capacity builds communities
- Hope, wealth & prosperity for our children

Contact: frank@snaicc.asn.au



SNAICC Chairperson for international human rights post

SNAICC is honoured to announce that Steve Larkins, as Chair of SNAICC, has been selected as the next Co-convenor of the Indigenous Sub Group of the NGO Group for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'This is an important time for SNAICC to move into human rights' said Steve Larkins, 'and a wonderful opportunity to represent our children's interests at an international level.'

The Indigenous Sub Group is a sub-group of the NGO Group (a body of international NGOs) of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CROC). The NGO Group was established to assist the monitoring body of the CROC (the Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child) by facilitating

NGO voices. This Sub-Group is primarily a knowledge sharing and networking avenue, not a representative body.



SNAICC seeks volunteers, funding & partnerships for Indigenous children's rights work

SNAICC's new role as Co-Convenor of the Indigenous Sub Group of the NGO Group on the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* has begun, which, as a starting point includes looking for volunteers and funding to build SNAICC's human rights knowledge base and the means to send National Executive to international forums and training workshops.

SNAICC is currently looking for suggestions on possible funding sources or partnerships for this new but important aspect of SNAICC's work.

Contact emily@snaicc.asn.au

**See Page 22 in this issue
2010 significant dates for services working with & for our children & families**

SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

27-29 July 2010, Alice Springs



FOR OUR CHILDREN

Local Strengths,
National Challenges

AMPE ANWERNEKENHEKE

Rltterrke Akwete
Aneye

The 2010 SNAICC National Conference is only four months away. It's shaping up to be an exciting three days in the balmy Red Centre. Originally we had planned for a two and half day conference but have expanded it to a full three days to fit in even more great workshops and speakers.

Conference registration opens mid March. Registration costs, accommodation and venue details are on the conference website.

Keynote speakers are:

Dr Cindy Blackstock – our international guest from the Gitksan Nation in Canada. Cindy is the Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Much of her work is dedicated to dealing with the over representation of Aboriginal children in child welfare care.

Rosie Kunnoth-Monks – an Arrernte/Anmatjere woman from Utopia and the Barkly Shire President. Throughout her life

Rosalie has remained passionately involved in traditional and contemporary Aboriginal issues including law and justice, education and childcare.

Professor Dorothy Scott – Foundation Chair in Child Protection and Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia.

Dr Karen Martin – Dr Karen Martin is a Noonuccal woman from Minjerripah with Bidjara ancestry. Karen has published and presented widely in the areas of Aboriginal early childhood, Aboriginal knowledges and Aboriginal research

Grant Sarra – a consultant who deals exclusively with Indigenous community aspirations, problems and issues relevant to public and private sector organisations and projects throughout Australia.

Kerrie Tim – manager of the Indigenous Leadership Development Group in the Department of Families, Community

Services and Indigenous Affairs. This leadership group takes an active role in engaging Indigenous people through delivering innovative leadership programs and facilitating effective community engagement

SNAICC will be announcing the conference program this March. There will be major streams on Early Childhood Education, Child Protection, Healing, Remote Community Work and Policy. There will be minor streams on Out of Home Care, Working with Families and Young People and Child and Family Health.

There are still some sponsorship opportunities for the conference. If you are interested in supporting the SNAICC conference you can download our sponsorship prospectus from the website.

For all your conference needs please visit www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference If you have questions that the website can't answer please call Ian on 03 9489 8099



Nikita Palmer-Sharpe from Alice Springs

2010 SNAICC National Conference

Ampe Anwwernekenheke – For Our Children

SNAICC invites all those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander children – early childhood and child welfare leaders, practitioners,

policy makers, researchers and government representatives to this

important conference in Alice Springs 27 – 29 July 2010

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle *(cont'd from page 1)*

they have all called for better resources and training for child protection workers and the department. Even allowing that the complexities of many communities makes the job of protection children's safety very difficult, more can be done and done better.

'SNAICC advocates for greater involvement of Aboriginal communities in designing and managing – and being responsible for – the child protections systems developed in their communities.

'Aboriginal community-controlled child welfare agencies successfully provide safe and culturally strong foster care across the country. From our perspective, foster placements within the Aboriginal community are the most stable and successful, provided these are carefully chosen and well resourced and supported.

'The National Child Protection Framework recently endorsed by COAG identified strengthening compliance

with the Aboriginal Child Protection System in all jurisdictions as a priority. Governments must step up and put resources behind this priority so that child protection departments are well resourced to implement the principle properly and safeguard children's safety and wellbeing in foster care,' Steve Larkins said.

SNAICC policy papers are all on line www.snaicc.asn.au/policy

Contact: frank@snaicc.asn.au



National Standards for Out of Home Care consultation underway

SNAICC has called for national standards since its inaugural Statement of Purpose in 1981. A National Standards for Out of Home Care consultation is now underway. Your comments are needed.

National Standards for Out of Home Care are being developed under the Australian Government's National Child Protection Framework, and will be finalised this year. The Federal Government is now seeking your thoughts on how to make sure that children in Out of Home Care receive the same opportunities to develop and become healthy children like those children not living in Out of Home Care.

According to Child Protection Australia 2008-09, there were 10,512 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care at 30 June 2009. This represented a placement rate of 44.8 per 1,000 children, compared to the 4.9 per 1,000 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

A KPMG consultation paper on the national standards is available online. SNAICC will be preparing a submission and welcomes any feedback or comments by 19 March 2010. The deadline for feedback to FaHCSIA is 5pm 26 March 2010.

Principles for these standards are outlined in the online SNAICC document, *Achieving stable and culturally strong out of home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.*

Contact: emily@snaicc.asn.au

Image copyright Astri Baker

National standards for child care and early childhood education services

The Council of Australian Governments meeting (10 Dec.2009) agreed on new compulsory national standards for child care and early childhood education services. The new framework will initially cover long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool, but will eventually be rolled out to include all types of services.

'The focus on improving the early childhood sector is vital for the future of all our children', said Frank Hytten, SNAICC Executive Officer. 'However it will not be an improvement if these changes mean that these services' programs, particularly the community driven, culturally appropriate programs, will suffer.'

The framework will be phased in from 1 July 2010, with staff to child ratio and qualification changes being progressively implemented from 1 January 2012. The framework will include requirements for:

- Lower staff-to-child ratios
- New qualifications requirements for all early childhood education workers
- A transparent quality ratings system, which will allow parents to compare the quality of different child care services
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements, involving less paperwork for services
- A new national jointly-governed body between Commonwealth and States and Territories to oversee the new standards.

SNAICC and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Training Network gave a submission on the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms (see online.)

Because Children & Families Matter: Delivering on the National Reform Agenda

UnitingCare Australia and the Social Policy Research Centre have partnered to produce a paper that maps the core components and strengths of the key reform agendas announced in 2009 relevant to children and families:

Because Children and Families Matter: Delivering on the National Reform Agenda November 2009 covers the key reform agendas in our sector:

- *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*
- *Investing in the Early Years-A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*
- *Australian Government Compact with Young Australians: National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions*
- *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women: Immediate Government Actions*
- *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness.*



The Early Years Learning Framework made easy for your service

Yorganop Indigenous Professional Support Unit has made a 4 page colourful and clear description of the early years learning framework for our early childhood services. Download www.ipsuwa.org.au

A National Framework for information on government expenditure on services

An Indigenous Expenditure Report Steering Committee is developing a National Framework for collecting and reporting information on government expenditure on services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This report will cross the six *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Outcomes* ie early childhood, education and training, healthy lives, economic participation, home environment, and safe and supportive communities.

The first information bulletin (Dec 2009) of The Indigenous Expenditure Report Steering Committee notes they: 'will consult widely with Indigenous organisations, governments and researchers in developing the report framework and methodology. Interested parties, including Indigenous people and their representatives in particular, are invited to contact the Steering Committee Secretariat if they have any questions or would like to contribute views to the project.'

Contact: The Indigenous Expenditure Report Secretariat at <http://pc.gov.au/>

A Framework of Practice for Implementing a Kinship Care Program

A Framework of Practice for Implementing a Kinship Care Program was launched Dec 2009. The framework is to guide the implementation of statutory kinship services. and was prepared for the Benevolent Society by Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW.



Glenda Kickett from Djooraminda, Perth

Djooraminda in suburban Perth, provides residential care for Aboriginal children who are not able to live within their own family environment due to either abuse, neglect or other difficulties. They also run a number of support services for Aboriginal families. Djooraminda is built on a big old church block converted into an office building, with lots of trees and a community garden next door.

About 30 years ago Djooraminda was called Centrecare Cottages. In the 1980s it became known as Djooraminda, coming under the Catholic Archbishop of Perth with a board of management (included some Aboriginal members.) In 2002 the Archbishop decided it should go back under Centacare, an independent body from the Catholic Church with a Centrecare board. Manager Glenda Kickett told SNAICC News:

'I am a Noongar woman through both my mother and father lines. The Warjak side is connected to Perth, the Balardon to the Wheatbelt, so I have a big extended family group on both sides.

'I first came to Djooraminda as a qualified Social Worker ten years ago and became manager in 2003.

'I think our service is unique. We keep sibling groups together in our houses with Aboriginal carers looking after them, keeping the culture and families together. Each cottage tries to work as a normal family, and the carers are supported by our Social Workers and Children's Counsellor.

'We currently have 19 kids, but we are funded for 25. We have 13 carers (full and part time), two admin, an out-of-home care team with three social workers, a counsellor and a team leader. The majority of our staff is Aboriginal.

'It may not be an ideal model as the kids are in long term care and we have a carer roster system, so there is an issue with continuity of care, but it's a good model. We do work to maintain culture, identity,

contact with family and we mediate strongly for reunification. When I started here we only had the out-of-home care program, now we have four different family support programs with outreach, early intervention, prevention, reunification and are in the process of opening several new cottages placing up to ten more children as the government will be outsourcing more services to non-government.

'Our hope is to grow the organisation and develop a Link Up Program, a Leaving Care Program and a Return To Country program as part of our therapeutic healing model. We are developing that healing support service across all our programs.

'I am working on developing the Centrecare Indigenous and Diverse Policy and cultural awareness program for staff. We also want to develop our own Life Story model for our kids and case workers, getting kids to develop their family tree, their relationships, their strengths. We try not to have a welfare model, more a strength based, enabling model, giving families the opportunity to make choices. We are looking at it all from a cultural perspective

and that's the most important thing. We are open with our funding bodies and we have our policies and guidelines in place.

'I was a child in care with my brother and sister in the 1960s-70s. It was hard being in a non-Aboriginal placement and suffer the loss of culture and family and identity. I now use my personal experience to influence decisions but I am also a Social Worker by profession and I use that as well. If you can use your own experience to make it better for our kids that's rewarding.

'We have a special relationship with the kids here - the kids call us all Auntie or Nan, we all know how we are all related, they know how they need to act with us and we know we have a responsibility to them. So we work to make sure we do the right thing.

'My son is 26 now and I am doing a PhD on Indigenous Life Story, using my story as a model and looking at how it can enhance social work practice if social workers are willing to work in that way. It all feels as if it is happening for me right now.'

Contact: glendak@centrecare.com.au

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal - another hold up in hearings

SNAICC has been closely following the complaint filed by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCFS) before the Chair of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) last September. In this ground breaking case, the FNCFCFS argues that by providing less government funding for child welfare services to First Nations children on reserves compared to non-Indigenous children, the government violates the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

After several delays caused by the insistence of the government to create as many procedural obstacles as possible, it seemed like the actual hearing of the witnesses would start in January 2010. However, on the 8 January 2010, in a disappointing letter to the parties, the Chair of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, Shirish Chotalia (a recent appointee of the conservative government), announced that all hearing dates for January and February 2010 would be vacated. Apparently, the Chair decided to hear the

government's motion to dismiss the Tribunal.

This decision to further delay proceedings is both disappointing and surprising, since the Federal Court has already previously dismissed a similar motion by the Canadian government to dismiss the Tribunal.

Given this decision by the Chair and the earlier decision to adjourn the hearing set to take place in November 2009, not a single witness statement has been entered into the record. This has caused great concern to First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, who are currently reviewing their options to respond to this development. We understand that the Tribunal has recommenced the proceedings, and send our support the FNCFCFS. We will update you as information becomes available.

SNAICC encourages everyone to follow this ground breaking case by signing up for the *I am a Witness Campaign* at www.fnwitness.ca





Through Young Black Eyes workshops Many success stories...

In 2009, SNAICC received one-off FaHCSIA funding to support Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to run workshops about family violence or developing child safe communities. SNAICC then engaged organisations Australia-wide to run workshops using the SNAICC's *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit*. Overall, 26 workshops were held, reaching over 300 people.

This workshop kit proved useful to spark discussion and action around family violence, child abuse and child neglect. All the workshops described below are the beginning of something bigger – one led to the development a community action plan, another to the formation of a new men's group, many assisted with individual and community healing, and some led to spin-off workshops and may lead to more. All appear to have increased people's confidence to go on tackling these hard issues. Read on for some stories about these workshops:

The 26 *Through Young Black Eyes* workshops have demonstrated that the *Workshop Kit* is a useful way to spark discussion and action on the difficult issues of family violence, child abuse and neglect. All the workshops described below are the beginning of something bigger. One workshop led to the development a community action plan, one led to the formation of a new men's group, many assisted with individual and community healing, and some have to led spin-off workshops and may lead to many more. All appear to have increased people's confidence to go on tackling these hard issues.

Some 2009 workshop stories

Mullewa, WA

Two workshops were held by **Mullewa Indigenous Women's Group** with young and older women in the community. The workshops were embraced as a very positive way in making Mullewa a safer place for everyone, especially the children. The workshops were emotionally charged and some of the participants wanted to share more real life experience and stories and have suggested this for a future workshop. The *Workshop Kit* was used in setting the outline, and a number of the kit's activities

were used. Arising out of the workshop, the women have created a Mullewa Community Violence Action Plan and Healing Plan. Their Action Plan outlines measures and actions to be taken in order to make Mullewa a safer place to live for everyone, especially the children and young people. The Healing Plan will provide the Mullewa Indigenous Women's Group with direction on how to implement activities and program to help the community heal.

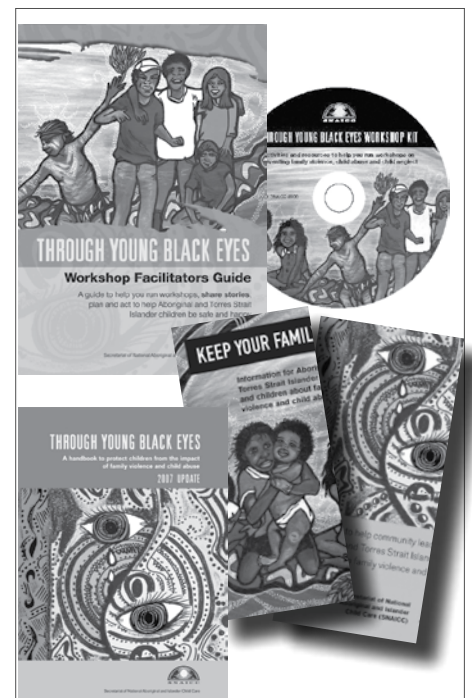
Darwin, NT

Three organisations in Darwin worked together to run four workshops, The **Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Programs Services Inc. (CAAPS)**, **Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter (DAIWS)** and **Foundation of Rehabilitation with Aboriginal Alcohol Related Difficulties (FORWARD)**. The facilitators first increased their own confidence through several planning meetings, then hosted a 2-day train-the-trainer forum for 22 key staff and other invited participants which included many activities and guest speakers. Overall it was felt that the two day forum included all relevant stakeholders. In particular, it was noted that men were not left out of discussions. One participant commented

that "the best thing I liked was the reference made to having safe houses available for men". The Maningrida participants said that this was the best workshop they had attended! As a result of this forum, follow up workshops were held by each organisation, including the establishment of a monthly men's group which aims to tackle some of these issues.

Adelaide, SA

Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA and **Aboriginal Family Support Services** held 3 train-the-trainer workshops for 22 staff in total. The first workshop explored the *Workshop Kit*, while the second and third workshops focused on exploring specific priority topics of the two organisations and making plans for the progressive rollout of training across the organisations. Since then, the kit has been used in a range of ways. Participants felt that while the kit was very 'dense' and it takes time to feel confident and safe to engage with some of the issues, it raises critical issues for their organisations and is a good starting point in a longer journey to become a 'child safe organisation'.



The *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit* was produced by SNAICC in 2008 and contains 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, all of which can be adapted to suit local needs. To order www.snaicc.asn.au

Yarramundi, NSW

Link-Up NSW hosted an art based workshop using the Workshop Kit, as part of a healing weekend gathering for 70 Link-Up clients. The workshop was led by artist Chris Edwards-Haines, along with artist Uncle Brian Marshal and counsellor Peter Hawkins. Together, they facilitated an activity inspired by Activity 5 in the *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Facilitator's Guide*, 'Paint on a big canvas what a strong family and child safe community could look like'. Chris began the workshop with a demonstration of his own work and the telling of his own stories.

Participants then spent time reflecting and working individually or in groups using art as a means of expression and healing – some staying up very late to keep painting. The principles of the workshop drew from a strong evidence base of art therapy. Participants evaluated the workshop highly - they felt a sense of community was built, and some shared meanings developed on which the group could act. The leadership and commitment that was demonstrated was seen as an important part of community-based processes for change.



Lola Edwards, Leila Penrith at Yarramundi workshop

Morayfield, QLD

Bargumar Aboriginal and Islander Corporation held 2 workshops with 18 men, women, carers and child protection staff. The workshop included art activities and lots of discussion.

Some things participants said about the workshop:
"I have better insight into child abuse and how it affects them in the future"
"Hopefully I will become a better carer"
"[The kit will be] handy in my profession when out visiting families"
"[I liked best the] friendly language and the canvas activity"

"I enjoyed the training continually challenging me about looking at each concept and activity from the perspective of an Indigenous person"

"Very well presented. Fantastic facilitators"

Many people, across the country, echoed the view that they would have liked more time to digest the kit and the information included.

Melbourne, Victoria

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) facilitated four workshops for Aboriginal women experiencing family violence at home, and one VACCA staff workshop, including case workers working directly with families experiencing family violence.

In addition to using handouts from the *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit* VACCA added to and designed some additional activities, such as altering the 'Generations of Family Violence' handout to suit their participants.

Ken Johnson, Morayfield workshop



Karuah Community, NSW

Kamarah Aboriginal Corporation in partnership with Port Stephens Family Support Services and Worimi Lands Council held a workshop with 15 adults and 9 children. They enjoyed offering the workshop as an engagement with the community on tough issues, but felt there is so much more work to be done that could not be attempted in one workshop. Facilitators hope that the workshop will spark continued discussion about the challenges in their community.

Other workshops

Central Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Child Agency and Wuchopperen Health Services also hosted workshops, and both DAIWS and FORWAARD have run follow up workshops in Darwin as part of the micro-grant program. Kit workshops have been held by SNAICC at a SA IPSU network meeting, the Perth APCCAN conference and the 2nd Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander National Family & Community Strengths Conference.

Collecting promising practices in healing

SNAICC has recently begun a new resource project to document how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing practices, approaches and philosophies are being used in child and family wellbeing programs offered by community-controlled services.

Some of the practices and approaches SNAICC is keen to document include cultural reconnection and strengthening activities, initiatives connecting children with Elders, traditional healing practices, cultural and bush camps, healing and yarning circles, parenting and family strengthening programs, counselling and social and emotional wellbeing programs and therapeutic interventions for children and their families.

SNAICC will publish 'Promising Practice Profiles' on the services and practices identified, including on our website.

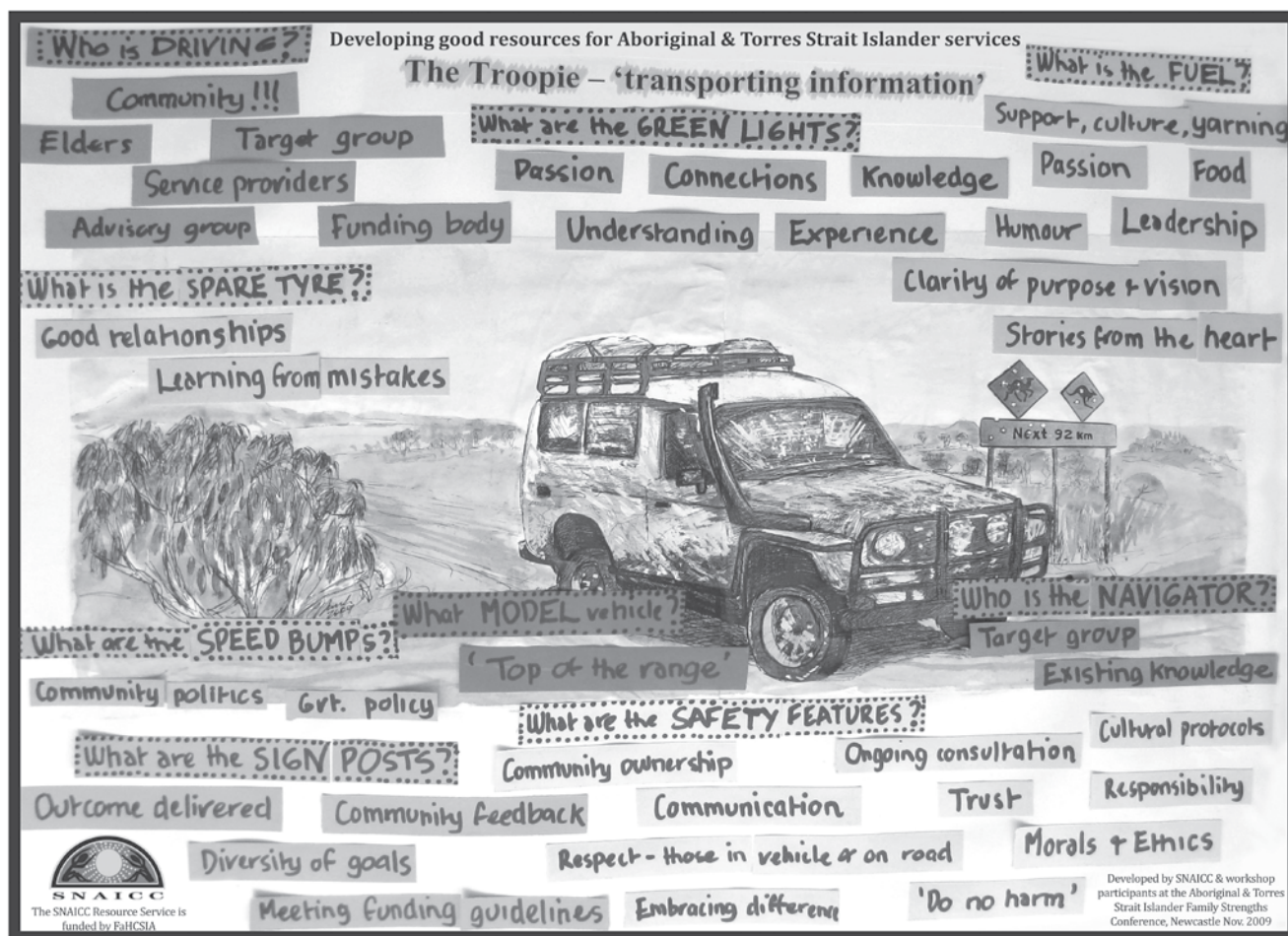
SNAICC is working in partnership with the Australian

Family Relationships Clearinghouse on this project. SNAICC is also exploring other potential collaborations, such as with the recently established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, which has also identified documenting healing services as an early priority.

This project will be guided by a Reference Group comprising both non-indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including SNAICC National Executive members, the AFRC Reference Group and other practitioners and leaders in the field.

If your program or practitioner network is keen to participate in this project, or for further information, please contact Mark Lawrence:

Email: mark@snaicc.asn.au



The 'Troopie' – a tool for exploring resource development

The 'Troopie' methodology was developed by Jane Harrison at SNAICC for gathering and displaying the collective wisdom of a group. Jane originally developed this process for a conference workshop titled 'Developing Good Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services.'

The 'Troopie' grew out of narrative methodology, based on the 'Tree of Life' (Dulwich Centre, 2006), and building on SNAICC's 'Tree of Culture' activity run with the SNAICC National Executive.

Narrative methodologies offer an opportunity to capture the collective wisdom of the participants through an interactive and often creative process, with the end result as a collective 'document'. In this example the metaphor of a 4WD 'Troopie' was used as 'a vehicle that transports information'.

In one hour our participants developed a resource about creating culturally appropriate resources – a colourful, creative collective document, which was photographed, printed on A3 paper, laminated, and made available almost immediately to participants for them to take back and display in their workplaces.

The visual depiction of a troopie helped to spark discussion, along with presentations from several people who had developed innovative resources.

Small groups documented key words to describe good resource development, in response to a sequence of questions, and then selected their key points in each of the domains. After the workshop, those key words and concepts were combined onto one large poster incorporating the a Troopie that had earlier been traced and re-drawn by SNAICC staff member Chris Dunk.

This Troopie Poster now represents the collective values of the workshop participants.

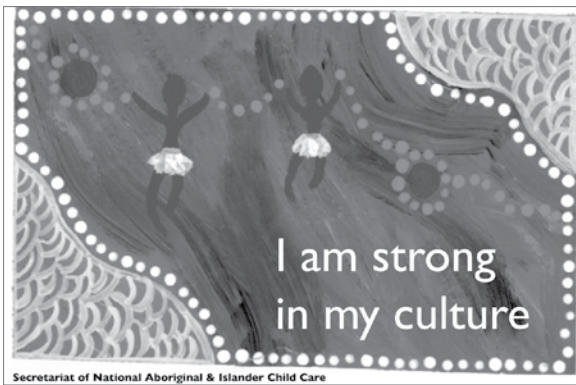
Questions asked included:

- Who is driving the resource? (Project leader, lead agency)
- Who is the navigator? (Guiding, advising or assisting)
- Who are your passengers? Who is travelling with you? (Partners, staff, community members, focus groups, funders)
- What is the best kind of map? (Project plan, evidence-base)
- What's your fuel and where does it come from? (Funding, resources, ideas)
- What vehicle model is better? (eg high or low product values)
- What kind of safety features do you want, eg seat belts? (Cultural protocols, ethics, guidance by Elders etc)
- What is the ideal environment? (Context for developing your resource, enabling factors)
- What kinds of speedbumps do you face? (Impediments, challenges, barriers)
- What kind of spare parts do you need? (Equipment, back up plans, contingencies)
- What kind of sign posts do you want? (Feedback, evaluation)

Using the Troopie as a starting point, can your service/group adapt the questions for your purposes? What other visual metaphors can you use to document collective knowledge?

Thank you to the co-presenters of this workshop who presented their innovative resources to spark discussion. They were: Craig Hammond, Family Action Centre, Newcastle, Rebecca Galea, Bankstown Community Resource Group, Nita Dowel, NSW Department of Corrective Service, Pamela Hansford, NSW Dept of Corrective Services.

Contact: janeh@snaicc.asn.au



I am strong in my culture

I am strong in my culture, a colourful, strengths based booklet created by participants in a children's self publishing workshop, held as part of the Child Rearing Stories project. The book was officially launched at the APCCAN Conference in Perth in November, 2009. One copy of the book has been sent out with this newsletter to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services and selected family services. Additional copies for all the children in your service are available through the SNAICC website 10 copies for \$17 (plus postage.)

Child Rearing Stories project report, one year on

One and a bit years into the child rearing stories project, and there have been a number of highlights. Highlights include developing a project flyer, forming an Advisory Group, and conducting a very successful Children's Self Publishing train the trainer workshop with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants from Qld, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania who work in Early Childhood services. A book, *I am strong in my culture*, was developed from the Children's Self Publishing workshop and is being distributed to SNAICC early childhood services.

Due to great interest, there are plans to roll out the Children's Self Publishing workshops in WA, SA, Alice Springs and possibly Darwin this year. Also on children's

self publishing, a 'how to kit' is being developed and will be available soon.

SNAICC hosted a special themed Koori Toastmasters event in Redfern in August, 2009, with 11 participants from youth to Elders speaking on growing up strong in culture. This was recorded by SBS Radio and will be edited into a CD format that will be available on our website this year.

Our Internet Interest Group now has around 45 members, and is growing, and we have had a number of interesting posts on child rearing themes. Throughout the year I have supervised two social work students who have contributed to the project. One has developed a 16 page matrix on child rearing practices and themes from selected literature and we also hope to expand upon that this year.

Four child rearing interviews have been conducted and more are planned this year.

I have presented on the project at the Perth APCCAN Conference, the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family & Community Strengths Conference and the Darwin IPSU annual meeting.

I have recently enrolled in a PhD at RMIT with the child rearing stories project as the topic, ensuring that the final report of the child rearing stories project has academic rigor as a 'research' project.

Best of all are the beautiful stories which are emerging and will be shared widely through the SNAICC website.

To find out more or to join the Child Rearing Stories Interest Group contact project manager Jane Harrison.

Contact: jane@snaicc.asn.au.

AbSec's 40,000+ years of Caring for our Kids Conference – just great!

Nov 2009: The mid 40^o heat did not detract from the success of Aboriginal Child, Family & Community Care State Secretariat's 40,000+ Years of Caring for our Kids Conference at Penrith Panthers Leagues Club.

Aunty Esther Carroll gave the Welcome to Country and Minister Linda Burney formally opened the event. As the peak NSW Aboriginal organisation for child protection and out-of-home care the conference brought together almost 300 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal carers and caseworkers from across NSW. Participants came from afar afield as Brewarrina, Dubbo, Lismore, Wagga Wagga and LaPerouse while guest presenters travelled from Victoria and Darwin .

AbSec received much positive feedback from participants who enjoyed the opportunity to share information and experiences. The great food was also appreciated.

"The high caliber of the keynote speakers and other presenters is testimony to the importance of the issues raised at this conference" said Bill Pritchard AbSec's CEO.

Keynote speakers were Aunty Lorraine Peeters, Aboriginal Elder and NSW Senior Australian of the Year, 2009; Aunty Bev Manton, Chairperson NSW Aboriginal Land Council; Aunty Lola Edwards, Aboriginal Elder and Secretary Stolen Generation Council of NSW/ACT; Dr Howard Bath, NT Children's Commissioner; Professor Peter Read, Historian; Bruce Barbour, NSW Ombudsman; Steve Kinmond, Deputy NSW Ombudsman, Julian Pocock, Ex SNAICC EO; Dale Tolliday, Director, New Street Adolescent Service; Jody

Broun, Director General, NSW Dept Aboriginal Affairs and His Honour Judge Mark Marien, President Children's Court of NSW. Aboriginal artist Christopher Edwards-Haines was commissioned to create a special artwork for the conference. The theme of his beautiful creation was the centrality and priority of children within the Aboriginal family and Community.

ABSEC thanks their generous sponsors, including ACWA, Life without Barriers, Community Services, The Children's Guardian, Ageing, Disability & Home Care, Barnardos, Benevolent Society, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Legal Aid NSW, Anglicare.



AbSec CEO Bill Pritchard & Jenny Mason, Director General Stadium, Dept. Human Services presenting award to Foster Carer Ruby Blakeney

Authentic consultation – like a raindrop, not a tsunami

A wonderful presentation by Alison Wunungmurra from Gapuwiyak, NE Arnhem Land and Dr. Lyn Fasoli at the Centre for Equity & Innovation in Early Childhood Conference November 2009



Authentic consultation is when people explain their points of view to each other. It is when they find a new place where they can agree.

A lot of consultation with communities has not been authentic, they don't leave enough time for people to think about what was said, or how the ideas fit into people's lives.

Yolngu people don't like it if they're expected to make a decision too quick ... and people in communities need

to talk to the people in outstations to find out what they think... It could take weeks or even months. They need that time to think about it really hard and then, they'll come together and have a community meeting.

Traditional leaders need to speak from each tribe, to listen to what the others think. They like people who can talk to the mainstream to be the spokesperson.

So a better way would be to make 3 or 4 visits to give people time to identify important issues and think together about what is important. Sometimes visitors will just talk to the people they know and that work for them, but they find it hard to tell you something you don't want to hear.

When consultation is 'one off' and 'too much information', people's minds are listening but they can't think about it at the same time. Only later they reflect on what they've heard and think about what that means.

We do full-bodied listening – to absorb new ideas totally. We nod and agree but it doesn't mean agreement overall. We are open-minded people. It's easy to misunderstand that the Yolngu person is nodding to show that she respects your ideas and your right to say them.

A good consultation is when you consult traditional and educated leaders together. If they are consulted and work together with consultants, everything will run smoothly. They need to argue about new ideas until they can come to a new place where they can agree.

Educated people still take a strong role in maintaining culture, singing, dancing, funerals, taking care of relatives. But they can also speak to and communicate with the outside world. They are rich in knowledge because they have both worlds. They know where they stand and know they need those traditional leaders. It's a good way to get consultation done properly, authentically.

I think that the consultation that is happening is like a tsunami. People come into communities with new ideas and just scrape the community clean of the old ideas. People in communities already have good ideas about how to fix problems. But this tsunami consultation doesn't listen to those good ideas.

Consultation should be like a raindrop... a new idea drops into the community and spreads out. These ripples are the good idea spreading out through the people through to the outstations and then coming back again to the centre, making a new space for thinking about the new ideas, combined with the old ideas. So both community and government ideas are working together.

Rose Nowers Early Learning Centre, Port Hedland MACS WA

Our Multifunctional Aboriginal Child Care Service (MACS) service is named after Rose Nowers, a remarkable Aboriginal lady, daughter of Laurie and Catherine Clark. Rose was a South Hedland nurse during the 2nd World War. She later married Tom and her passion for Aboriginal children is why she is so important to our service.

Rose Nowers officially opened on 8 September 1989 and was given MACS status soon after. As one of only two MACS centres left in WA, Rose Nowers offers first priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. We are in the process of undergoing a major re-development in terms of our building and backyard



with the aim of increasing the available childcare places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait families in the Pilbara as well as providing a new, stimulating environment for our existing children. Rose Nowers is also heavily involved with Child Care Links – linking child related services to communities. This provides our working

staff the chance to broaden their experience and get out to remote parts of the Pilbara educating and provide playgroups to young children and families.

By: Louise Horton & Amy-Lea Wilkins
Acting on behalf of Hedland Child Care Links
Contact: adminsUPPORTRN@westnet.com.au



Some of the SNAICC Management Committee visit Kurna Plains Child Care Centre following the 2009 SNAICC AGM

Update on 35 Children & Family Centres

SNAICC News is happy to report that we are already started linking up with some of the new children and family services as they begin to take shape. Congratulations to all those community members across Australia who have been participating in development of these services, seeking to ensure they remain in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled hands.

Most of the 35+ Children and Family Centre sites being established under the Indigenous Early Childhood National Partnership have now been announced. They are all to be established by June 2014 to deliver early learning, child care and family support programs. The pace of development varies between states and territories, with the ACT site having gone to tender for construction. The speed with which some communities are being required to put forward their tenders for brand new services is placing considerable strain on their resources. The following locations will host centres:

- **NT:** Yuendumu, Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Palmerston & Ngukurr
- **QLD:** Mt Isa, Cairns, Mareeba, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton, Doomadgee, Marsden, Palm Is., Mornington Is.
- **SA:** Christies Beach/Noarlunga, Whyalla & Ceduna (a fourth site under development at the Ernabella/ Pukatja was negotiated outside the National Partnership)
- **WA:** Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Roebourne, Swan region
- **TAS:** Bridgewater (Geeveston outreach)
- **ACT:** West Belconnen
- **NSW:** Campbelltown, Blacktown, Ballina, with six more to be announced

A visit to three early childhood services in Adelaide

13 November 2009. The last session of the Members Forum was, as always, dedicated to local service visits. The three Adelaide early childhood services were Kura Yerlo, Minya Bunhii and Kalaya Children's Centre. SNAICC thanks all three service directors and their staff for giving their time and energy to make these visits enjoyable and informative conclusion to the SNAICC AGM and Members Forum.

Kurna Plains Child Care Centre

Leona Smith, CEO of the Kurna Plains Child Care Centre, an Aboriginal community-controlled MACS child care centre. Leona welcomed us, and with grandson Jacob at her side, gave us a centre tour, including some well maintained and welcoming play areas and community facilities. Kurna Plains MACS is located together with a state-run preschool and junior school in the northern suburbs with the highest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Adelaide.

Kalaya Child Care Centre

Kalaya Child Care Centre director Lynette Callaghan showed us around the pre school and child care areas of this state-run service, which is managed by an Aboriginal

committee and run like a community child care service. The service provides long day care plus other services such as immunisation program, a community liaison worker, a 'let's-read' program and is hoping to re-start a parent literacy group.

Kura Yerlo Children's Centre

For our last stop, SNAICC visited Kura Yerlo Children's Centre in Largs Bay. This MACS service also provides youth programs and aged care services, and SNAICC talked with a several staff members who spoke passionately about their programs supporting whole-community links with children's service, including elders' involvement in centre activities.

Where is the NUNGA sheep?

All around Kalaya Child Care Centre we saw the children's preparations for their participation in the Port Adelaide Twilight Christmas Parade on 21 November. In honour of their favourite book *Where is the Green Sheep?* by Mem Fox, children were dressing up as NUNGA sheep, providing a Kalaya twist on the tale. The children had made their own parade costumes by picking their favourite sheep from the book.

2nd Close the Gap statement & new mums & bubs funds

11 Feb 2010: Kevin Rudd PM gave the second Closing the Gap statement in Parliament. He said that evidence suggests some progress may have been made but the progress is too slow. He said that the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and other Australians is less than thought, but that this is due to having more reliable data, rather than a real improvement. This gap is now believed to be 11.5 years for men and 9.7 for women compared to the 17-year gap thought to have existed.)

In the statement, Kevin Rudd PM announced funding for 17 new school-based sports academies and \$9.1M over

three years for 10 new mothers and babies services in addition to the 43 already funded under the 2008 New Directions program. The program will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies and mothers better pre and post pregnancy care, monitoring of developmental milestones, immunisation, health checks and referrals for children before starting school.

The 10 new service providers are:

- **NT:** Laynhapuy Homelands Assoc. Inc., Pintubi Homelands Health Service, Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corp., Western Arrente Health Aboriginal Corp.
- **SA:** Country Health, Tullawon Health
- **TAS:** Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

- **WA:** Ngunytju Tjitji Pirni Aboriginal Corp., Wirraka Maya Health Service
- **QLD:** Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan.

Nicola Roxon, Minister for Health & Ageing said 'the Commonwealth has committed \$90.3M for the New Directions, with an additional \$75M from states and territories. Across the Health and Ageing portfolio, almost \$1B has been allocated in 2009-10 for health programs specific to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.' Warren Snowdon, Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health said: 'These investments are a 57% increase in Indigenous health funding since 2007-08 Budget.'



You are all aware of the dire situation for many Aboriginal communities. I want to talk about the courage, strength, innovation, sense of humour, cultural inventiveness of our peoples around the country. After 20 years of working on child sexual abuse, racism, cultural destruction, I now think talking of spirit and from spirit is the most effective way to deal with these things.

Our people are a wide range of peoples and cultures. There are such diverse beliefs and cultural systems, from those who keep their connection with land and spirit, who dance and sing and keep their language strong, right through to very modern people, philosophers, psychologists, doctors who may or may not have any tangible connection to traditional culture, to people for whom those practices are not meaningful or are relegated to a heathen past.

I find the most effective means for myself and as a psychologist is to honour and take discipline from our ancestors and senior people.

I work with community people, because community is the most powerful place to do child protection. Child protection, healing, therapeutic change, mental health are all part of the same work up close in community.

We are in a situation together with an unending sense of damage and change without integration, massive trauma, the deprivation, housing crisis, the rolling wheel of hurt that can revolve in our community around family violence and sexual abuse. And it is a wheel that can begin in the womb. But when we get disturbed around the immense, pervasive social malaise; we need to draw on some extraordinary human courage – and our people have got that. I can go to any community in Australia and find them. They are more like statesmen/women - with that social, intellectual and emotional strength. **Yet a lot of the debate now is very much an outside debate, the intervention and**

Darrell Henry works as a clinician in Narrogin and Warmun, training lay Aboriginal community people in working with chronic trauma, working with family violence and traditional & modern ways of healing. Darrell Henry is of Wunmulla descent, his grandmother's country is the desert region of WA. His preferred title is Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counselor. He is a co-founder of Yorgum Counseling

Child abuse prevention and healing - some possible solutions by Darrell Henry, Psychologist Consultant, WA

engineering approach which has always been destructive for our people. Or there's the lesser demon that wastes resources and carries too much hope, the monster dream of 'Coordination of Services'. Often this hope is empty in the centre, lacking principled vision or new service vehicles. Colonial engineering is still a lived reality for our people.

We need to reject that social engineering approach, to cross that cultural barrier of understanding of a disparate and hurt people, to cut things down to a human scale. **I come from the backwaters, sitting down, scratching my head with people, just wondering what we are going to do, working closely.** A personal engagement, not looking at our men and women as failed parents, dysfunctional people or victims. It is a modern social malaise to attempt to resolve massive social weals from the top by a powerful committee or fashionable ideology inflated with a notions of collective heroism.

These dialogues need to be had in a small local way and we need vehicles for that. When we leave it for social engineers, or even very smart people, the result is always pain for our people. Look at the current plans for blanket income management. Without a representative Aboriginal vehicle to work with, it is more dangerous social engineering. Where is the closeness of relationship to make sense of this new impetus, to allow this work to have meaning, connection and community owned intelligence gathered in?

I've shifted from the idea of 'culturally appropriate' to 'culturally effective' practice based on common understanding. Checking the congruency between what's actually happening and what you think is happening. I have researched prison programs where the evaluation reports are all positive but when I asked how it was, they said 'Oh, a whole lot of white fella stuff'. **My sense is that a lot of what passes as research, consultation and evaluation is based on shallow, poorly funded but repeated consultations with loud voices within limited choices.**

Even as a psychologist and friend, we

Service (established 1994 with a group of Aboriginal grandmothers). He has held some key positions in the area, including as one of three panel members on the 2002 WA Gordon Inquiry and as a former Deputy Chair of the WA Ministerial Council on Child Protection. The following article is a speech given by Darrell Henry to the 2009 Perth APCCAN Conference, based on notes by SNAICC News, updated by Darrell.

can't really appreciate the spiritual malaise which leads to so many young people to suicide and use drugs. We need a deep questioning – you can't just do a heroic Closing of the Gap, a grand intervention, to stop a child or youth being affected by an internal or external raging monster. **Such social heroism is dangerous fantasy and wasteful, driven by oratory and a lack of closeness with people.**

We must engage at the spiritual level – where the ordinary lived reality meets aspiration, heart, mind in the connections of inner meaning. A deep and personal inwardness and essential humanity. Homeland communities are not museums of Aboriginal culture – that is such a misguided thought from mainstreamed people who do not connect to the deeper layers of life. My intention is for you to question your own cultural biases. It is fundamentally hard to understand someone bought up another cultural way without some ongoing learning relationship and a suspension of disbelief. This is especially true of child protection and mental health.

We need a profound respect, a continual questioning process that keeps us alert to power differentials, to misunderstandings. There is so much to do together, so I like it when people outside approach with humility. People read your integrity. It's direct. Our people will see it in you in micro-seconds. It happens that quickly. Outwardly, a respectful acknowledgement with senior people is a first port of call. Experience the vivacity of our youth, trust and laugh – you will enjoy it and see the sheer creativity and struggle.

This group of people is so easily judged, and child protection systems embedded in mainstream culture are often overburdened in powerful statutory responsibilities. They mostly do just not see or accept the essential common sense and intelligence of people who try to strengthen our cultural base. This is a work of child protection, mental health, healing and restoration. Even some Aboriginal commentators seem to regard

culture as a choice, as static object or a naive dream of return, rather than a foundation of consciousness itself that itself is in transition. Our cultural base is our strength.

There is, at least in WA, too much focus on mining jobs and too little on the social developments that enable such gainful work for Aboriginal people. Of course we need inputs in physical infrastructure and jobs but also in social and cultural infrastructures – supported community controlled social entrepreneurship, social businesses generating the community that people have been striving for many years. Many of the social services can be partnered or outsourced to Aboriginal community people.

I want to interest you in Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and allied developments in Bangladesh, in enterprise micro-credit banking. It is based on the idea that poor people can be wise and have integrity, industry and innovativeness, with an altruistic social moral purpose. Micro-credit facilities based on ethics and underpinning talents, combined with profit making businesses and drawing on an innate community, family and individual responsibility and support have become vehicles for seemingly helpless people to breakthrough cycles of poverty and despair. In Australia, corporate and public entities could be motivated by Aboriginal people to invest in social oriented work for community people and to strengthen the social fabric, to provide vehicles for change.

For instance, in child protection, childcare, youth and family support, a small group of grandmothers, aunts and uncles in clan groups would be funded as a co-operative trust to deliver services. This is real, essential work. Profit from this trust would be directed towards other small businesses.

This would replace the costly and sporadically funded services that have mostly been superficially engaged with our key strong people, sparsely spread and where existent, reliant on the dedication of individual staff working at unsustainable levels of demand for short periods, without effective support. Aboriginal people can do this work, we just have to shift our point of view, but I see so many people not believing in our community child protection systems, which are neither supported nor funded.

Aboriginal child protection systems fit within the mainstream system, but there is overall a lack of relationship and understanding. We need a suite of formally established social businesses, a community led and controlled child protection system,

based on people having experience, skills and wisdom who can - if they are given a chance, deliver early intervention and authoritative, community backed actions. There are already excellent vehicles for this, through the national Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies like those in Queensland and Victoria. In Victoria VACCA is an evolving solid sectoral point with a whole suite of child and family service responses. We need to take this work further and deeper into community with generative funding and means for self-financing of multi-layered social, paid work initiatives.

If Muhammad Yunus could loan a tiny bit of money to a Bangladeshi poor woman with a moral base and common sense to support their family then we can follow. This model is being used in New York and can apply to child protection here. We shouldn't have to fight for this State by State based on misery, unskillfulness and injustices, mainstream inefficiency, poor government governance and memory loss. **We need to build on our Aboriginal and Islander Child Care service system, as we have with our Aboriginal medical health community controlled service system, These systems have their own autonomy** – where Aboriginal child protection workers, Aboriginal community counsellors, child advocates, police and health authorities in small communities work next to that core group of people, and allow that skills transfer to build both ways.

We have come through genocidal times. The fact Aboriginal people survive is testimony to their child protection system, their compassion, care, strength, courage, the wise people, the aunts and uncles. The people of Balgo, particularly the senior women in the east Kimberly at the top of the Tanami Desert, have expressed a massive vision about the whole of family, community and life, an Aboriginal effective use of cultural knowledge, an ongoing learning paradigm with traditional healers as part of child protection system and cultural teaching together with state and Aboriginal medical services.

We are looking at whole of generational cohorts for the protection of children. It is a mind twist to look at this whole vision if we see it through funnel eyes. Trying to focus on just one area of that wholeness leads to a confusion, that it is not child protection. But that is our limitation.

A service that can secure outcomes across social, economic and health indicators is achievable in small steps with community. My hope is that community child protection

is more partnership, more ownership by the wise people. A lot of this work is already going on, but there has to also be vehicles for change and work roles are a foundation of this. You can't have effective child protection systems without a powerful range of services behind you. A healing process conjoint with micro project learning that has a direct line to over arching Aboriginal clinical governance and innovative funding would grow with the veracity of a European weed, but have an Aboriginal spirit

In Narrogin in WA, we got together a powerful therapeutic change model in response to many suicides. They have looked everywhere, yet one year later still have no ongoing money to support the plan. Oxfam has been supportive and so have many senior government officers. But we have been met by a slowness and paralysis that is inhuman. State services have not effectively responded to the ongoing crisis and perhaps can't. They now are self-defensive, springing back to their original shape. Sounds familiar? What is the role of statutory child protection?

How can any child be safe when people are getting out guns, bricks and star pickets? Where everyone is loaded with grief, despair and anger. The power of therapeutic change, of healing and community led child protection as a social generator in communities in crisis is overlooked because outside people are locked to a reactive and limited service mind and the big picture items become blinkers.

It remains a shining truism despite avoidance, lassitude and detractors, that without intelligent and creative social therapeutic and building responses from within communities, no house, job nor well managed diabetic will stop the wheel, nor will even grog bans be more than temporary alleviations. Mainstream services cannot achieve the change necessary unless they are backed by strong Aboriginal controlled healing services, are lead by Aboriginal sector leaders responsible for quality control, independent bodies in contact with communities through continual social based work creation.

These are the views of a son of a real mechanic. A man who rebuilt truck gearboxes. I know if you pick up a spanner you'd better know how to use it or you'll bugger things up. Listen to our women over the past 20 years and our men. These vehicles are necessary but they have to be able to drive to the shops, sometimes on a backroad. Then they will have meaning and last a long time.

Contact: darrellhenry@mac.com



Imogen, Kerry, George, Makayla & Rhiana

A letter to SNAICC about Being a Dad

When your heart is full of love, you're nine feet tall. Our children need to believe in us as dads and role models. We need to show them how to believe in themselves, in life and in their dreams,
writes George Laughton.

For traditional Aboriginal people in the past, the most protected people within the tribe were our children, who are our future, our culture, our Laws, our connection to our ancestors and our past.

The role of a Father to me is understanding that I do not own my children. My children are like gifts, given to me and my wife to protect, respect, trust, love, help, assist, show, teach, guide, and believe in, so they can believe in themselves. Together we can believe in each other, to make our children dream and our dreams come true.

Children do not grow on trees and neither does money, children are born and grow up in life and if left unsupported and out in the cold, anything could, and will, happen to our most precise resource. All around us, children are growing up to fast, having to become little adults too soon and, having children of their own before they have been children themselves. It's not fair for the children. Real happy endings need hard work and commitment.

I could not think of a time in my life where my children were not a part of my life or me. I grow with my children, and

without my children I am nothing, because my children are me, starting over again, but they are who they want to be, with our respect, trust, love, support, development and protection.

Our children seeing us, hear us, feel and copying us to much. So we men need to be extra careful with our children and all the other children, whether related or not. We are their role models, they look up to us all, good and bad. So please be careful – it might be my children or your children seeing us, hearing us, feeling us and copying us too much. We need to be extra especially careful my brothers.

The children need us all brothers to stand up for the children until they can do it for themselves. The children are SACRED. As they say, Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift that is why it is called present.

George Laughton
Training Facilitator, Targeted Early Intervention & Reunification Programs, Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc (AFSS SA)
George.Laughton@afss.com.au

Notes from *Footprints in Time, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children: Key Summary Report from Wave 1*

***Footprints in Time* has now released data and a summary report from the interviews conducted in 2008 with the families of more than 1600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We plan to interview families annually for at least four years.**

The study is designed to better understand the developmental pathways and what helps improve wellbeing and support good outcomes as they grow up. The study covers health, culture, education, housing and family relationships.

Data is collected from families in 11 areas across all states and territories, except Tasmania and the ACT with roughly even numbers across remote, regional and urban localities.

More than 80% of Wave 1 interviews were done by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewers. Where possible interviewers live and work in their own community.

Two groups of children are being followed: more than 900 babies aged approximately 6-18 months and more than 700 children aged approximately 3½-4½ years. Most of the information is collected

through face-to-face interviews with a parent or carer and child assessments.

Data snippets

Over one-quarter of LSIC parents and carers had taken the study child to playgroup (29%) in the month before their interview and nearly one-quarter of study children (23%) attended child care or family day care. Over half (53%) of the older group of children, were attending pre-school, kindergarten or school.

In the week they were interviewed, most children (77%) had a book read to them, mostly by their mother (82%) but also by their father (29%), sister (23%), grandmother (17%) and brother (14%). Having more than 30 children's books in the home was highly associated with whether the children were read to in the previous week.

Accessing the data

LSIC data is publicly available from FaHCSIA. Prospective users will be required

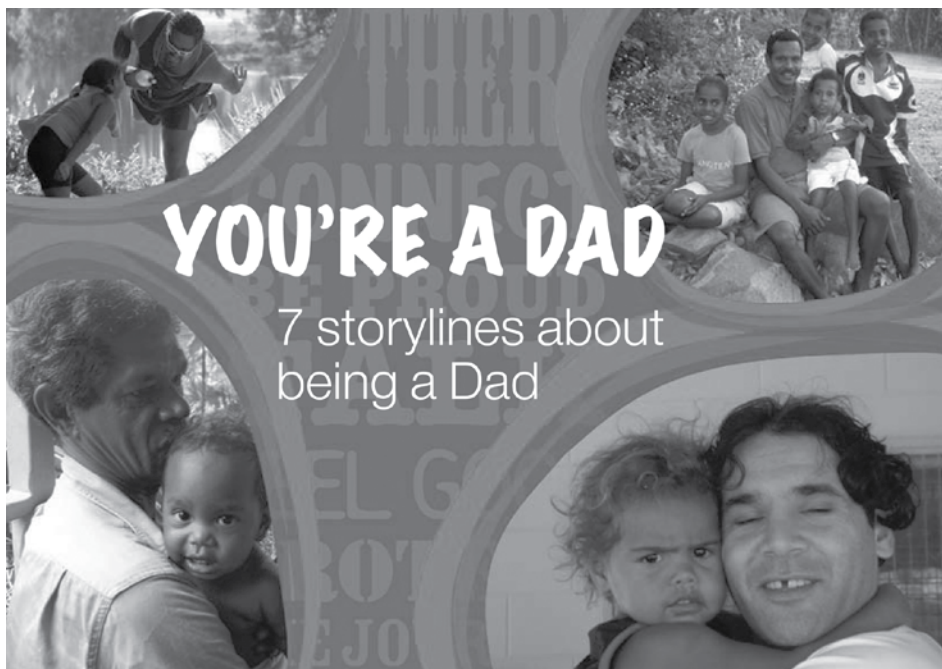
to complete a dataset application form and sign a deed of license. Three specific protocols have been developed for LSIC data users relating to cultural competency, a declaration of standpoint (the context in which the data will be used) and making research findings available.

To apply for access to data or get a copy of the Wave 1 report: *Footprints in Time, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children: Key Summary Report from Wave 1*, please see www.fahcsia.gov.au/lisic

Contact: LSIC@fahcsia.gov.au

Some of the 2008 interviewers or research administration officers. *Back row: Josh Atkinson, Stephen Smith, Tanya Carney, Karla Thompson; Middle row: Rebecca Hinton, Geraldine Saunders, Sandra Hooper, Lee-Anne Parsons; Front row: Thelma Quartey, Cyndi O'Loughlin, Leanne Kum Sing.*





You've probably already seen it – *You're A Dad*: Seven Storylines about Being a Dad is a 20-page A5 full colour booklet about, for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers and young men.

Each story is told through photos and storylines using quotes from the men themselves. The resource could be used by home visiting maternity/paternity services, parenting programs, men's groups, for early childhood, youth and health services, for jail and offender programs and more. Like SNAICC's Parenting and Men Posters (2007) series, *You're a Dad* celebrates fatherhood as a foundation of kids' lives.

SNAICC launched *You're A Dad* in March 2009. The images are diverse - featuring rural remote, and urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dads spending time with their families.

Feedback forms were returned from a range of organisations around the country telling us that, overwhelmingly, *You're a Dad* was well received, has filled a gap, is well presented, positive, friendly and accessible.

People say they liked the 'heart tugging messages' such as: 'When I saw him born I just cried', and 'It's hard but I need to work with the kid's mum, to be there for them when I am needed'.

The feedback form asked how people would use the booklet, and their suggestions included to use it:

- in men's groups
- in parenting groups
- with clients in jail
- at playgroups
- in staff development exercises
- to start discussions with kids and mums about their partners/fathers.

Other ideas included to:

- give away at post-natal home visits
- display it in waiting areas
- put it in event info bags

The resource also stimulated ideas for events where men could learn 'Dad's skills for the first time' from more experienced fathers. The booklet could be the first in a series of resources around healthy, happy families. One suggestion is that a *You're a Mum* booklet be produced. An example of use of the booklet comes from Gujaga MACS service (see below).

Congratulations to all the Deadly Dads who contributed and cheer on those men who strive to improve their parenting skills. Sometimes men need support with bringing up their kids and developing into the men they would like to be for their kids. SNAICC also thanks those who made time to fill in the feedback form.

You're a Dad was developed in an excellent partnership between the SNAICC Resource Service (Rosie Elliott) and the University of Newcastle's Family Action Centre (Craig Hammond.)

Contact: publications@snaicc.asn.au

You're A Dad **A story from Gujaga MACS, La Perouse**

Gujaga Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service La Perouse, NSW uses *You're A Dad*. Recently, the Gujaga Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service (MACS) held two Men's Day. Gujaga MACS is a 39-place long day care centre catering to, and run by, the Aboriginal community of La Perouse.

The aim of the Men's Days was to create a day where men could come to the centre, play with and hang out with the kids. The invited men included dads, pops, uncles, brothers and any male who was important to the children. The events featured a range of activities including golf, cricket, football, goal-kicking, woodwork, making didgeridoos and other cultural experiences. The men helped with the BBQ, and lots of photos were taken of the kids with their 'men' and then displayed all over the centre alongside the *You're a Dad* pages and the Parenting and Men posters.

Donna Daly, the Gujaga MACS Administrator, said that the visual display is to encourage the men to talk to their children when they brought them to the centre. Everyone had a fantastic time on and it meant a great deal to the kids in having a significant male in their lives spend 'special' time with them.

SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

27-29 July 2010, Alice Springs



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander family & community strengths conference

The 2nd National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family and Community Strengths Conference in Newcastle 1–3 December 2009 was convened by the Family Action Centre and SNAICC. SNAICC Chairperson, Steve Larkins, chaired the first day and SNAICC staff Jane Harrison co-chaired the last day. Previous SNAICC EO Julian Pocock and former Chair Muriel Bamblett were honoured as co-recipients of the Family Action Centre Award for Contribution to the Australian Community, and SNAICC Secretary Desley Thomson was also there, waving the SNAICC flag, with SNAICC National Conference organiser, Ian Sweeney, tending to the SNAICC display.

SNAICC Resources Manager, Catriona Elek joined forces with Anthony Ah Kit from Menzies School of Health Research in a workshop on the *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit*, and Jane Harrison ran a well received workshop on her three year Child Rearing Stories project. Jane also facilitated an interactive workshop

on creating good resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (see 'the Troopie' article in this issue). The conference was well run, with comprehensive content and some inspirational keynote speakers who really walked (and sometimes sang) the talk of the conference theme – *Strong stories, strong mob, strong kids, growing up together*.



L–R: Family & Community Strengths conference. SNAICC Executive Members Desley Thomson & Steve Larkins presented the Governor-General Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC a mounted copy of SNAICC's Eight Priorities poster. Also pleased to meet and greet the Governor General were SNAICC staff Ian Sweeney, Jane Harrison & Catriona Elek.

IPSCAN conference 2009 – Child abuse & neglect prevention

The 2009 Perth IPSAN conference had a strong focus on frameworks for prevention, but two highlights for SNAICC staff were the presentation by Darrell Henry on *Child abuse and child abuse prevention in Indigenous communities* (see speech in this issue) and the excellent Young Participant's Program.

The Young Participant's Program, saw a group of bright young people providing responses to all keynote addresses. This ensured the voice of youth was dominant and on the way themselves received an incredible induction into the profession,

It was a challenge to attend each of the sessions with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander focus, as they were often interspersed amongst the concurrent sessions, which meant dashing from one side of the convention centre to the other. But the run was usually well worth it, with so many people running such interesting programs across the nation.

Rosie Elliott (SNAICC) & Lesley Taylor (NT NAPCAN) delivered a workshop on the *Through Young Black Eyes Workshop Kit*, while Jane Harrison presented her Child Rearing Stories project.

A website report – www.snaicc.asn.au

SNAICC web stats show our website has remained steady in popularity over the last six months. The NAICD Children's Day pages have been very popular and top of the hit list in the lead up to NAICD, with the NAICD Activity Kit our most downloaded file.

We also now have Paypal in place so you can easily order publications online. (NOTE: you don't need to create a Paypal account to use your credit card.)

Our E-Bulletin subscriptions reached a whopping 2345 subscribers in mid February 2010. We appreciate all the kind feedback that comes back to us about the e-bulletin and website, which we have gathered to help us take the site into its next phase.

As readers may know, the SNAICC website underwent an upgrade in early 2008, which brought it up to speed with developments in web design and

technology. We also developed a large and entirely new section: the SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) sub-domain which included many resource clearinghouse pages. Its rapid growth saw it soon superseding its initial ambitions.

As part of a website's normal course of development, it is now ready to be fine-tuned based on solid feedback from users/services.

The best way to do this is to ask people whom the site was built to discuss and test the website in a friendly and thoughtful way. We are therefore holding a focus group lead by the great team at Fraynetwork multimedia, our site designers and hosts. This website planning workshop day hopes to determine a broad picture of the needs associated with SNAICC web communications, including a look at audience profiles, business and customer goals.

Contact: tatiana@snaicc.asn.au

New Clearinghouse *Closing the Gap Collection*

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap>

New Clearinghouse *Closing the Gap Collection* for evidence-based research on overcoming disadvantage for Indigenous Australians with a focus on the six COAG Closing the Gap targets. The collection comprises:

The Quality-Assessed Collection—a focused collection of material with individual quality assessments; and *The General Collection*—a broad collection of material related to the COAG building blocks. Search the collection on:

- Early childhood
- Economic participation
- Governance and leadership
- Health
- Healthy homes
- Safe communities
- Schooling

The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse Board first met in November 2009. The Hon. Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, has appointed Professor Meredith Edwards AM as chairperson with Dr Karen Martin and Dr John Taylor as its academic advisers. The Board has five other members including two Commonwealth representatives, two state/territory representatives and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Subscribe on line (Free) to the SNAICC e-bulletin, excellent news, 2–3 weekly in your email

Autism Spectrum Disorder information & support for parents & families

SNAICC is starting a project about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families parenting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

As part of the project SNAICC and the Parenting Research Centre are interested in running information workshops about autism for staff, parents and other community members at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services such as MACS.

SNAICC is also interested in talking to parents of children with autism and professionals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families parenting a child with autism as part of learning about Aboriginal and Islander perspectives on autism and the issues facing families as they try to access services and support.

If you are a family member parenting a child with autism, a MACS service or other Aboriginal child care service who would be interested in an information session for staff or know or work with families or carers of children with autism, SNAICC would like to hear from you as we embark on this new area of work.

SNAICC's work in this area involves a collaboration with the Parenting Research Centre's 'Early Days' project. Early Days is

a national program of free workshops that provide information and support carers of children six years and under who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or who are undergoing assessment. The program has been developed by the Early Days Collaboration, a partnership of organisations with expertise in the field. SNAICC is part of this national collaboration. Early Days is part of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package and the Parenting Research Centre is national coordinator.

The workshops are delivered by Early Days Providers – selected organisations that provide early childhood intervention services to children with developmental delays or disabilities, including ASDs. Workshops are available throughout Australia. These Early Days workshops are conducted in small groups and are led by experienced facilitators providing evidence-based information about ASDs and practical strategies to help parents support their child's development at home.

They also provide details about local early intervention services and community support for families of children with ASD. The Early Days workshops also give family carers a chance to get together with other families to share ideas and experiences.

Get involved in 'Early Days'

Are you interested in becoming involved in delivering Early Days workshops in your local community? Are you working with families who would be interested in attending a workshop or, have ideas about other ways to provide support to families?

Contact: Julie Higgins or Sue Beecher
julie@snaicc.asn.au



NT government launches inquiry into child protection system

13 Nov 2009: The NT Minister for Child Protection, Malarndirri McCarthy launched an Inquiry into the NT child protection system after significant concerns were raised about the government's handling of child protection cases and investigation procedures, including concerns raised by the NT Children's Commissioner, the NT branch of the Australian Medical Association and NAPCAN NT. The Inquiry will report to the Territory Government by 25 April 2010.

Minister McCarthy said: 'the Inquiry will be conducted publicly unless contributors request to remain confidential. I encourage all concerned people to have their say by making a submission.'

Frank Hytten, SNAICC EO said: 'SNAICC has long called for an inquiry into the child protection system. However, it is clear that investing at the community level should be the highest priority, as there is overwhelming need to prevent neglect and abuse.'

'We need to stem the flow of kids from communities into child protection. Supporting Aboriginal organisations in communities as the first line of defence against the abuse of children and should be the cornerstone of any approach to Aboriginal child protection.'

The Inquiry is to report on:

- The functioning of the current child protection system including the roles and responsibilities of NT Families and Children and other service providers involved in child protection;
- Specific approaches to address the needs of Territory children in the child protection system, including the delivery of child

protection services in regional and remote areas as part of the development of *A Working Future*;

- Support systems and operational procedures for all workers in child protection, in particular staff retention and training;
- Quality, sustainability and strategic directions of out of home care programs including support for foster parents, carers and families;
- The interaction between government departments and agencies involved in child protection, care and safety and non-Government organisations and other groups involved in the protection, care and safety of children.

SNAICC will be making a submission to the Board of Inquiry.

The NT Board of Inquiry members are:

Dr Howard Bath, NT Children's Commissioner.

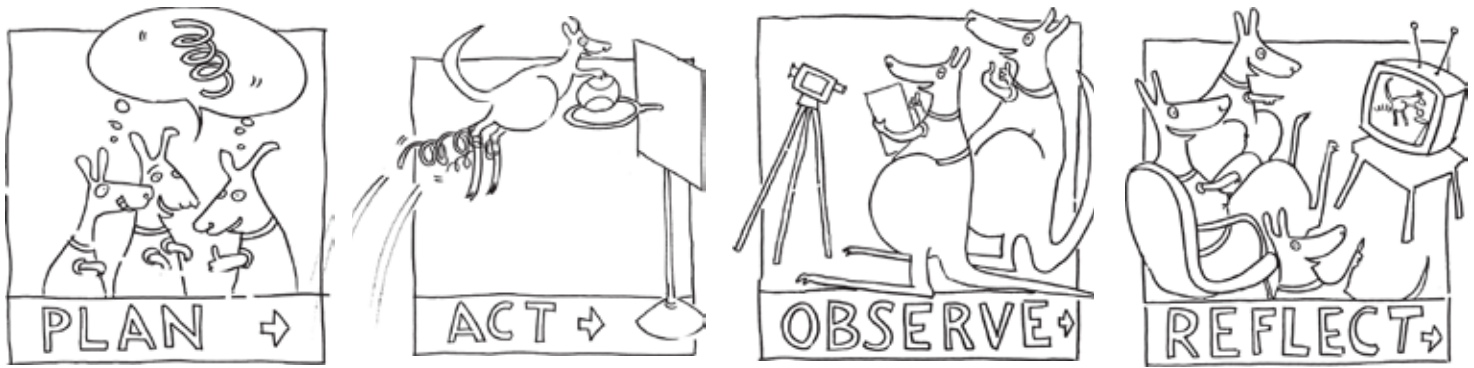
Muriel Bamblett AM, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and former SNAICC Chairperson 1997-2008.

Dr Rob Roseby, Dep. Dir. Adolescent Health at Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital, former Head of Paediatrics Alice Springs Hospital.

Recent reports on the NT child protection system are: *State of Denial: The Neglect and Abuse of Indigenous Children in the Northern Territory* (2003) by former SNAICC EO Julian Pocock.

Little Children are Sacred Report by the NT Board of Inquiry into child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities, led by Pat Anderson and Rex Wild QC (2007).

Contact: Frank Hytten CEO SNAICC



Action research evaluation to improve, record & report your work

Based on work by Liz Orr, former SNAICC Evaluation Manager with graphics by Astri Baker

Action Research Evaluation can assist services to develop, document, reflect and report on their work, as well as help improve outcomes along the way. SNAICC has a new resource called *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations* which includes a chapter on using action research evaluation

In this article, we describe elements of action research evaluation which may be useful for SNAICC members and subscribers. More information about action research evaluation can be found on SNAICC's website, or by ordering a copy of *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations* from SNAICC.

Why use Action Research Evaluation?

You do not have to be a trained researcher to adopt an action research evaluation approach. In fact, if you are asking yourselves 'What would it take to do this better?', gathering feedback as you go along, and making adjustments to your work based on this feedback, you are already using parts of this approach.

Action research can help you to:

- document and identify service delivery barriers, gaps and good practice
- contribute to policy development by governments and agencies
- contribute to improved service delivery and enhance client outcomes
- clarify local early intervention strategies
- evaluate your work and programs
- learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and incorporate their approaches to family support and child rearing into your practice.

What is Action Research?

Action research involves cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, then planning again for a new action.

The cycles start with small questions, and when the planning stage comes around

again, project teams can take account of what has been learned in previous cycles. The aim is for understanding of the local situation to increase over time. The later cycles are used to challenge and refine the results of the earlier cycles. The reflection is used to review the previous action and plan the next one. This process is commonly done by a group of people.

Core aspects of Action Research: participation, research and action

The participation aim

... is to involve as many different people from the target group and other stakeholders as possible using a broad range of techniques.

"It is essential that Indigenous peoples be participants in any research project that concerns them, sharing an understanding of the aims and methods of the research and sharing the results of this work." (The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies, 2000, p. 2.)

Action Research: 'Nothing about us without us'

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have for generations lobbied and advocated to be involved in the research and decisions that affect their families, lives and livelihoods. 'Nothing about us without us' is an important principle for non-Indigenous people to understand and embrace in their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

It is important to remember that action research is not about researching Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people, but about researching your services, with and for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be seen as partners or leaders in this process, not as the 'subjects' of research.

The 'research' aim

... is to increase knowledge and understanding on the part of the researcher or the client or both.

'Research' simply means 'to find out'. Action research aims to find out the answer to key questions you develop and refine during your action research cycles.

A culture of inquiry, learning and change is essential to improving. Action research is a continuous process that builds knowledge about practice. Changes and modifications are made in response to new insights and new questions as they arise. Stakeholders can share their experiences of what is happening, as it unfolds, and this can help you to find out the answer to your action research questions.

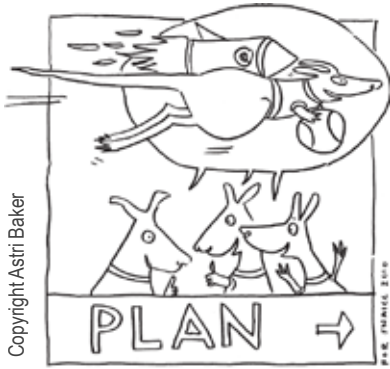
The 'action' aim

... is to bring about change in some community, organisation, program or intervention.

Action research is about doing things differently.

"Informed by understanding, the action provides change. Out of the attempt to produce change, a greater understanding emerges." (Dick, 1999, Issues of rigour in qualitative research, 1999, p.5)

An action oriented approach invites responsiveness to issues that emerge in your



Copyright Astri Baker

Action research evaluation (contd.)

everyday practice. It is highly likely that it will be necessary to change the way you are working because something occurs that was not expected. It is important to be reflective without getting bogged down in talking and thinking. Instead, after careful reflection and planning try out something and learn from it.

How to find out more

For more ideas on implementing your action research cycle and making action research part of everyday practice:

- Order a complete copy of *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations*
- Visit the Support and Management Section on SNAICC's website, where you can find this article, including references for further reading and many sample tools and resources about actions research
- Download SNAICC's *Participatory Action Research Evaluation Training Guides* from SNAICC's website

SNAICC acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness resource material produced by RMIT University that we drew on in the development of *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations*.



Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationships Services to Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations

SNAICC's latest resource supporting Family Relationship Services to work in culturally appropriate ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their communities is now available to pre-order. SNAICC is taking pre-orders to gauge the level of demand for this publication to assist us in printing it.

The publication, *Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationships Services to Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations* will initially be available electronically as a PDF to download from SNAICC's website. Based on pre-orders and the level of interest, a limited number will be printed and sold on a cost-recovery basis.

The resource provides information and guiding principles to develop culturally appropriate services and professional practice that are respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and communities. Structured chapters provide a general introduction to and practical tips on:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and families;
- The social and historical context of contemporary issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- The importance of personal professional reflection and tips on cross-cultural communication approaches;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols;
- Approaches for all organisations to develop their cultural competence in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations;
- Developing culturally appropriate programs and professional practice;
- Using Action Research Evaluation methodologies for organisations to

document, reflect on, evaluate and report on their initiatives to engage more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and develop partnerships with their community organisations.

It also features four case studies highlighting Family Relationship Services having successes in engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and providing culturally appropriate services, offering practical examples and ideas.

Targeted at Family Relationships Services, the resource is for all staff and practitioners, from admin, frontline and intake staff, to counsellors, mediators and dispute resolution practitioners, to relationship and parenting educators, to managers. The resource will also be useful to other non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations working with our people in family and community services.

Full colour print copies of *Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationships Services to Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations* will be \$45 (including postage and GST.)

Mark Lawrence, the SNAICC staff member involved in developing this project, seeks your pre-order advice.

Please pre-order copies ASAP:

Contact: mark@snaicc.asn.au

Join the SNAICC team students, interns and volunteers

Thanks to a clever renovation of our office space here at SNAICC, we have more desk space for students, interns and volunteers. Given the success of previous students, our staff are taking on these great voluntary additions to our office. The diversity of these new team members has been fantastic – including an international lawyer from the Netherlands and a commerce graduate from Sri Lanka.

We are keenly seeking more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or interns. If you know a graduate who would like to get a bit of work experience and can find accommodation in Melbourne, let us know.

Contact: sbeecher@snaicc.asn.au



L-R: Sarah – filmmaker, Luella – anthropologist, Diana – social policy, Piumi – commerce, Jelmer – lawyer

26th SNAICC AGM 2009 and Members' Forum 10 – 13 Nov. 2009

It was very, very hot in Adelaide, but cool heads prevailed at the 26th AGM and Members' Forum 11 – 13 November 2009. The three day long meeting program included a day-long SNAICC Members Forum, the 2009 AGM, followed by the election of the new management committee at the National Executive meeting and three site visits to local children's services. For some, this big program was preceded by a two day long Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) meeting.

'For me, this AGM and Members Forum were important milestones' said Frank Hytten, SNAICC Executive Officer. 'Watching the processes, hearing members' views, visiting the early childhood services and attending the national IPSU meeting preceding our AGM, I really feel part of the whole process now. I am proud of how clear and consistent our members are about their work and ideas.'

SNAICC Chair, Steve Larkins said: 'I was honoured to retain my position as SNAICC Chair, and I ask all full members to note that next year the AGM is a Executive Committee election year. I encourage all SNAICC members to attend our next SNAICC AGM in Melbourne, November 2010. I hope all our eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services consider becoming SNAICC members, and remind you that SNAICC provides a subsidy to member organisations who apply to attend our AGM.'

(Pre-AGM) SNAICC Members Forum

A highlight of the day-long Members Forum was the launch of the new *SNAICC 8 Priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*. An 8 Priorities poster will be mailed to all SNAICC subscribers early next year. The forum also discussed the implications of being selected as Co-convenor of the Indigenous Sub Group of the NGO Group for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A number of guest speakers were invited, with both whole group and policy forum breakout sessions covering:

- The 35+ Children and Family Centres
 - National Quality Agenda and the Early Years Learning Framework
 - National Out of Home Care Standards
- These discussions are covered in more detail below:

Discussion – The 35+ Children and Family Centres

Kathryn Shugg, DEEWR Acting Group Manager Indigenous Pathways and Early Learning, was invited to discuss with the Members Forum a number of issues, the most critical for SNAICC members being the Children and Family Centres (CFCs). The members expressed their concern about:

- Inadequate consultation about both about the location of the 35+ CFCs and management of centres
- The management process if no suitable Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander agency applies to manage an identified site
- Funding after the first six years
- Relationship between the Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) and the CFCs
- Whether the IPSUs will be funded to support the CFCs
- Varying use of the descriptor 'Indigenous' to describe the service type.

SNAICC pointed out that FaHCSIA refers to the CFCs as 'Indigenous' as part of the Closing the Gap strategy but DEEWR does not. Kathryn Shugg said DEEWR has never referred to the centres as 'Indigenous' child and family centres and that 'there is no requirement for Indigenous control of the centres.' Further, she said that the management structure depends on community wishes and capacity, which may require looking at a partnership over time building capacity of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander service. In response, SNAICC Executive Member Donna Klein asked 'How can we build our workforce and capacity? In what century are we as a people going to be permitted to be responsible for the future of our children?'

The meeting agreed that DEEWR and SNAICC meet with representatives from each state and territory responsible for the roll-out of the centres. SNAICC looks forward to developing constructive relationship with state and territory departments involved in development of these centres.

Discussion – The National Quality Agenda & Early Years Learning Framework

This breakout session began with a brief overview of SNAICC's work. Members then heard from Vicki Moss and Robyn Cooper from DEEWR about

the National Quality Agenda and the possibilities for the Early Years Learning Framework professional development guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in rural and remote locations. A brief, but useful, discussion followed, with members raising concerns regarded the time frame, resourcing, workforce development, flexibility, IT concerns and the need for suitable professional development materials required to improve services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. As was pointed out to the DEEWR representatives, these matters have all been documented in SNAICC's submission on the National Quality Agenda (RIS) – see www.snaicc.asn.au/policy

Discussion – The National Out of Home Care Standards

FaHCSIA has appointed KPMG to run the Australia wide consultations on the National Out of Home Care Standards (see page 4 in this issue). SNAICC members discussed their key concerns prior to the arrival of Tracy Mackey from FaHCSIA and KPMG consultants Martin Joyce and Christine Roughhead. Whilst SNAICC members appreciated this initial brief meeting, we look forward to a full consultation with KPMG in the coming months, where questions and answers can be fully canvassed. SNAICC is seeking genuine dialogue in the many issues concerning provision of culturally strong out of home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and is currently preparing a submission for the consultations.

SNAICC 2009 AGM

Minutes of the 2008 AGM were accepted unanimously. The financial statements and auditors report for 2008/2009 were accepted unanimously and Morris, Cohen, Glen and Co were reappointed as SNAICC auditors for 2009/2010.

SNAICC Chairperson annual report

SNAICC Chairperson Steve Larkins reflected on the challenges of taking on the role of Chair after more than ten years under Muriel Bamblett, and the resignation of Julian Pocock, also a ten year veteran of SNAICC. He spoke of his great confidence in new SNAICC EO, Frank Hytten and thanked Deputy Chairs Geraldine Atkinson

and Garry Matthews for their tireless support, and said that: 'My desire is that when any National Executive member attends a meeting with others, that those present recognise that SNAICC is at the meeting.' Other matters raised included:

- The breadth of policy initiatives SNAICC is addressing at a national level
- That SNAICC having been recently named as Co-convenor of the Indigenous Sub Group of the NGO Group for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- To facilitate SNAICC's growing engagements and reduce costs, SNAICC intends to develop stronger online meeting processes.

SNAICC EO annual report

In the SNAICC Executive Officer's annual report, Frank Hytten covered some of the key challenges for SNAICC's work in the next year, in particular:

- Maintaining and building on SNAICC's reputation
- SNAICC's ever increasing workload in terms of responsibilities and expectations, building on successes over recent years of SNAICC and reflecting the number of policy initiatives in play in our sector
- The failure of Commonwealth funding to either reflect the growth in demands on SNAICC, or be indexed for inflation following on from the first funding term of the Resource Service
- Issues relating to working with two federal departments (DEEWR and FaHCSIA)
- Dealing with the lack of congruence between the new federal government's agreement in substance with many SNAICC policies and how bureaucracy translates these policies into action.

Management committee election

The SNAICC Executive is elected every two years and the 2009 AGM was not an election year. The SNAICC National Executive meeting following the AGM saw only one change to the Management Committee membership, with Desley Thompson of Cape York/Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care Advisory Association Inc. (RAATSICC) becoming SNAICC Secretary, replacing Sharron Williams of Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc.

Current SNAICC office bearers

SNAICC Chairperson – Steve Larkins (Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services & NSW Aboriginal Child, Family & Community Care State Secretariat Inc - NSW)

Deputy Chair (Child Welfare) – Garry Matthews (Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc. – NSW)

Deputy Chair (Early Childhood) – Geraldine Atkinson (Victorian Aboriginal Education Assoc. Inc. – VIC)

Treasurer – Dawn Wallam (Yorganop Association Inc - WA)

Secretary – Desley Thompson (Cape York/Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care Advisory Assoc. Inc.

SNAICC Executive Members

NSW: Aboriginal Child, Family & Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) – Steve Larkins
Noogaleek Children's Centre – Roslyn Webb

NT: Regional & Remote Aboriginal Children Services Support Unit – Lesley Hoskings

QLD: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd
QATSICPP Dianne Harvey

Gundoo Day Care Centre – Ray Burrows
SA: Aboriginal Family Support Services – Sharron Williams

Aboriginal Resource Management Support Unit (ARMSU), Debbie Bond
TAS: Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Assoc. Inc. Lisa Coulson

VIC: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) Emma Bamblett
Victorian Aboriginal Education Assoc. Incorporated (VAEAI) Geraldine Atkinson

WA: Yorganop Assoc. Inc. Dawn Wallam
Gurlongga Njininj Assoc. Inc. MACS Child Care, Dot Bagshaw

Local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Early Learning and Preschool Services
Cape York & Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care (RRATSICC) Desley Thompson

Batdja Preschool; Rose Bamblett
Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Welfare Services

Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre – Garry Matthews

Central Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Agency (CQAICCA) – Roderick Wright

SNAICC staff goodbye, hello and thanks

SNAICC staff celebration! Congratulations to SNAICC finance staff member Bethalia Tabuai Dingley and her husband Steve on the birth of their beautiful baby son, Angus Kenneth Zay Dingley on 17 February.

SNAICC Executive changes: NT Executive member Kim Whitburn is about to have her first child, and SNAICC wishes her well. We welcome Lesley Hoskins as the NT RRACSSU representative in her place. Goodbye and thanks also to Donna Klein whose executive position is now filled by Dianne Harvey.



Future SNAICC Exec members? Nicole Lonesborough, Gabrielle Lee, Mandy Wilkie, Katie Butler at the Yarramundi, NSW Link Up Through Young Black Eyes Workshop (see page 6 in this issue)



2010 significant dates for services working with & for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander children & families

January

26 Jan: Australia Day/Day of Mourning / Invasion Day/ Survival Day.

February

13 Feb: National Apology Day celebrating the act of the apology to the Stolen Generations by the Australian Parliament in 2008.

21 Feb: International Mother Language Day. Promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. Declared by UNESCO in 1999.

March

8 Mar: International Women's Day Theme of *Empowering Women to End Poverty by 2015*

21 Mar: Harmony Day. Theme of *Everyone Belongs* Respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. Declared by the UN in 1999. Coincides with UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

April

2 Apr: National Close The Gap Day Show support for closing the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

15 Apr: The 19th anniversary of Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody – signing of the final report examining all deaths in custody Jan 1980 to May 1989, commencing 16 Nov 1987.

25 Apr: Anzac Day Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people risked their lives for their home countries and the land now called Australia and on this day we should pause to remember them.

30 Apr: National NAIDOC Award nominations close.

May

9 May: International Day of World's Indigenous People Declared by UN 1994.

13-19 May: National Families Week. Theme: *The impact of migration on families around the world* An initiative of Families Australia. Register your event online.

15 May: International Day of Families – promoting awareness of issues relating to families and appropriate action. Declared by the UN in 1993.

26 May: Sorry Day – anniversary of tabling of the 1997 HREOC *Bringing Them Home Report*. Come together and share the steps towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families and communities.

27 May–3 June: 14th National Reconciliation Week – theme *Reconciliation: Let's see it through!* The week began in 1993. First day of the week is the anniversary of the 1967 referendum and the last day is Mabo Day.

June

3 June: Mabo Day The anniversary of the 1992 High Court decision in the case brought by Eddie Mabo and others that recognised native title rights.

11–14 June: The Dreaming Festival on the Woodford Land of the traditional custodians, the Jinibara people.

July

1 Jul: Coming of the Light Festival – anniversary of the date the London Missionary Society brought Christianity to the Torres Strait on 1 July 1871.

5–12 Jul: NAIDOC Week: Theme of *Unsung Heroes – Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way*. Celebrate the survival and contributions to the nation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

27–29 Jul: The SNAICC National Conference Ampe Anwwernekenheke – *For Our Children*. Alice Springs. Not to be missed!

August

4 Aug: National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) Theme: *Value Me – Value My Culture*. A SNAICC initiative since 1988. Contact SNAICC to receive resources to help you organise and register your events.

6-10 Aug: 12th Garma Festival Gulkula, NE Arnhem Land – a celebration of cultural traditions and practices - dance, song and art with forum on Indigenous Education and Training.

9 Aug: International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Declared 1994 by the UN for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and extended in 2004 through a 2nd International Decade.

September

5–11 Sept: National Child Protection Week – How we can keep our children safe from abuse and neglect. Register your event with NAPCAN.

November

20 Nov: Universal Children's Day – the day on which the UN adopted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959, and the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Nov 25: White Ribbon Day: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.

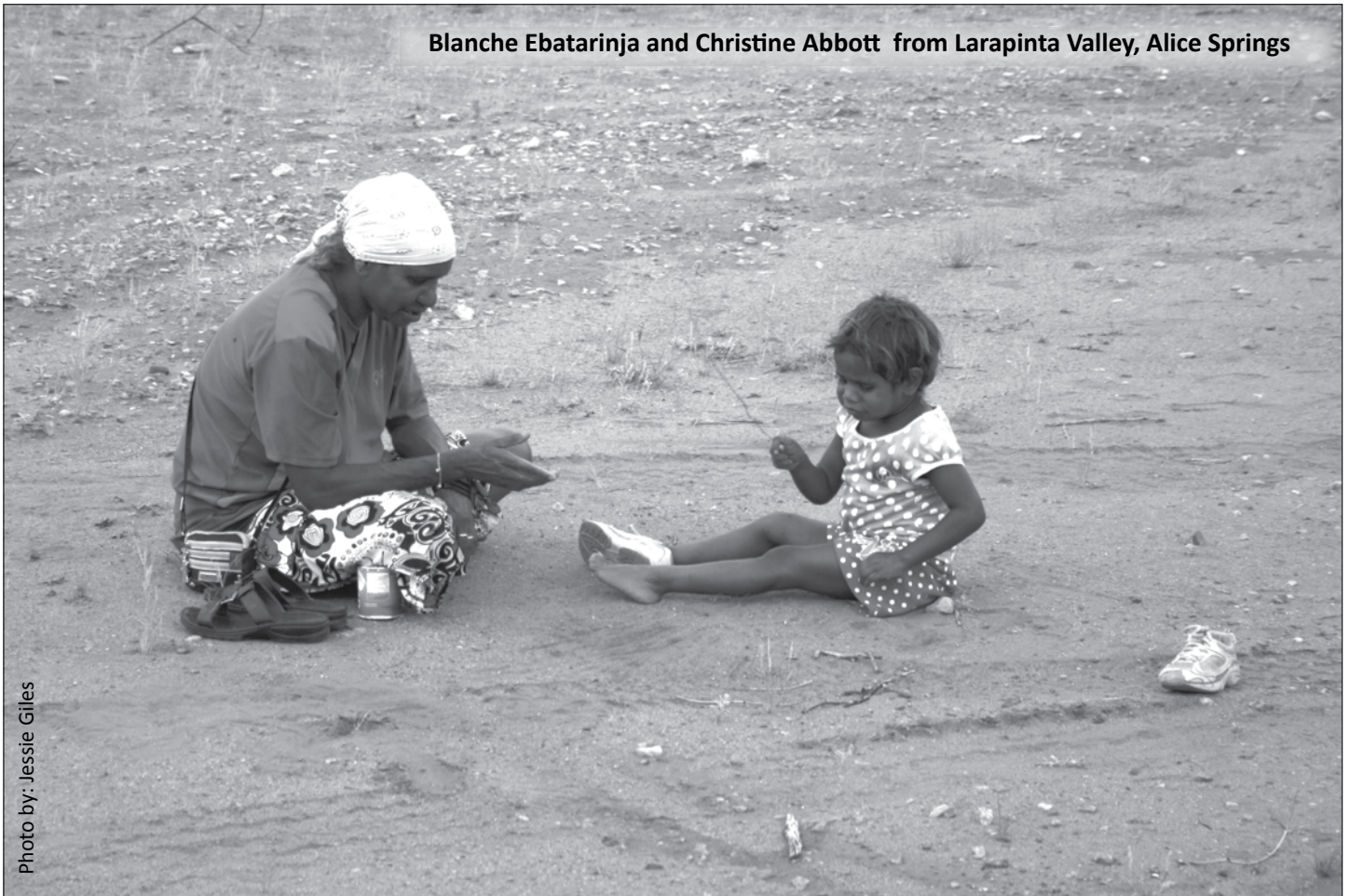
December

10 Dec: International Human Rights Day – celebrates the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the UN in 1948.

SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

27-29 July 2010, Alice Springs





Prizes for ‘Stories of growing up strong in culture’

SNAICC needs your young fellas’ stories – in essays, photographs and art – for display at the SNAICC conference. Please help us by encouraging schools and students to enter. The stories, in the form of art, photographs and essays, will be displayed at the SNAICC National Conference at the Alice Springs Convention Centre 27-29 July 2010.

Prizes will be awarded to the winning schools and individual students and all participants will receive a certificate. An additional prize will be awarded for the *People’s Choice* to be judged by the conference participants.

Competition winners will also be included in publications and online as part of the SNAICC *Child Rearing Stories* Project.

What the stories will be used for:

SNAICC needs positive stories about growing up strong in culture as part of a three year *Child Rearing Stories* project. The stories will be drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities across Australia.

The stories will cover many themes like ‘how our children learn by watching and listening’ or ‘how young ones learn respect from their Elders’.

The aim is to build value and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and help people who work with Aboriginal children to understand the many ways young fellas grow up strong in culture.

Theme: ‘How I was grown up strong in my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture’

Students can choose to enter in three different ways:

1. 1000 word essay competition

Category 1. (Years 9 & 10)

Category 2. (Years 11 & 12)

2. Photography competition

Category 1. (Years 7- 9)

Category 2. (Years 10 -12)

3. Art competition prize

Category 1. (Prep – year 2) for group & individual

Category 2. (Years 3 - 4)

Category 3. (Years 5 -6)

Judges:

Richard Frankland, Author and Filmmaker

Wayne Quilliam, Aboriginal Artist of the Year

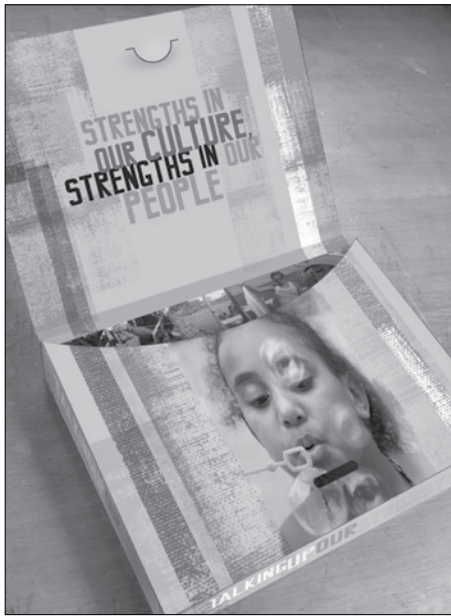
Jane Harrison, SNAICC

Submission dates:

Opening date: 1 March 2010 Closing date: 18 June 2010

For more information see www.snaicc.asn.au/policy

Contact: Jane Harrison (03) 9489 8099 jane@snaicc.asn.au.

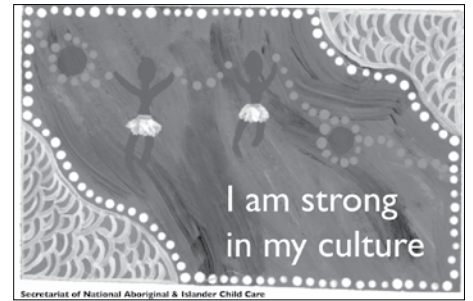


Talking Up Our Strengths 24 sets of image sets to start conversation

A stunning new resource to use as a conversation building tool about keeping strong in culture and cross cultural dialogue. SNAICC members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisational subscribers have been mailed an offer of one free copy, so make sure you have returned your free offer!

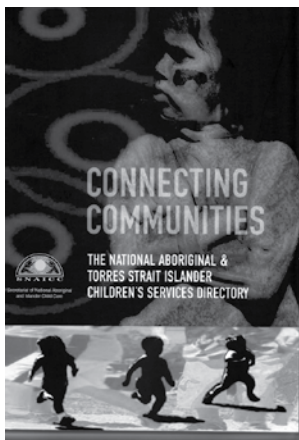
Other non-government SNAICC subscribers will be offered a half-price copy this month. Available for \$49 online for all other services.

Developed in a partnership between SNAICC and St Lukes Innovative Resources. Just beautiful...



I am Strong In My Culture

This new 16 page story book was developed out of a Children's Self Publishing workshop, as part of the Child Rearing Stories project. Ten clever participants from Aboriginal Early Childhood services developed the beautiful artwork and words over a mere two hours to create a resource which is suitable for families, communities and services working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.



Connecting Communities A Children's Services Directory

Contacts of over 5500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and children's services, health and legal services, government departments, peak bodies and resource agencies from across Australia.

Ideal for those seeking to network with other services and for those who cannot easily access material online. The fully indexed entries are ordered by state/territory and service type. The directory is also online: <http://services.snaicc.asn.au/> You can add or update your service details on <http://services.snaicc.asn.au/add/>



Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationships Services to Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations

Pre-orders are requested (see inside this issue.)



National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day 4 August NAICD theme is

Value My Culture, Value Me

The 2010 theme, *Value My Culture, Value Me* is about the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to know they are loved and valued, and to have every opportunity to nurture and explore a healthy and strong sense of self and community

Value My Culture, Value Me is also about promoting new attitudes and forging new pathways of understanding for the benefit of all Australians. Building and improving relationships based on mutual respect, ending disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families creates equality for all in the broader Australian community.

SNAICC will produce promotional materials for national distribution and encourages all services and programs invested with the care and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to celebrate NAICD on or around 04 August 2010. For further information see SNAICC website, subscribe to the SNAICC E-bulletin, or register your details via email.

Contact Angelique Davis at snaicc@vicnet.net.au



Tristram Malbunka at Ellery Ck NT

Call for movies for the 2010 SNAICC national conference

SNAICC seeks short digital stories, animations and other motion picture productions made by our children, from your schools, from digital stories projects...wherever you find them. The movies will be screened throughout our national conference and be a celebration of and the voice of children and young people. Please advise us if you are thinking of presenting a movie. We will accept submissions until late May 2010.

Contact: tatiana@snaicc.asn.au

Order online www.snaicc.asn.au
Resources for our child & family services
from across the nation

