



## **SNAICC NEWS**

Secretariat National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Newsletter Spring 2004 Edition

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### **New \$4 Million National Indigenous Family & Children's Resource Service Announced:**

The Australian Government has announced that it will provide SNAICC with \$4m over four years to establish a National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service.

This service will provide direct assistance to communities, service providers, family-centred organisations and other stakeholders involved in the delivery of early childhood, child welfare and family support programs for Indigenous children.

SNAICC aims to enhance the capacity of communities and organisations to deliver programs that strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, enhance the lives of children and promote family stability. In making the announcement the Minister for Children and Youth, Larry Anthony MP said, "As the peak organisation supporting and representing Indigenous early childhood workers, SNAICC has a fine record and brings a high

level of skill and enthusiasm to this project."

SNAICC anticipates having the service established in early 2005 and is working with Department on the development of the service which will focus on developing resources focussed on early childhood, child and family welfare and Indigenous parenting/ child rearing.

The service will produce resources that local services can use in their programs, establish systems to strengthen networking between local services and document and promote the good work of Indigenous children's services.

Muriel Cadd, SNAICC Chairperson, said "it is pleasing that the Minister Larry Anthony has recognised the importance of strengthening cultural identity in children as a key component of developing strong, healthy and happy children."

### **Election Commitments Needed for Indigenous Children**

In the lead up to the 2004 Federal Election all parties have been asked to demonstrate their commitment to turning things around for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia by supporting Indigenous families with children.

Muriel Cadd, Chairperson of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) said: "all sides of politics have started to recognise that a child's early experiences in life have a profound impact on their future life chances and have indicated that early childhood programs are an important priority. Ms Cadd said, "The current Minister for Children and Youth, Larry Anthony MP, had succeeded in putting childcare and early childhood on the national agenda but Indigenous families still had the worst access to these important services."

*(More over.....)*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are: 3 times less likely to have access to an early childhood or childcare service but are nearly 7 times more likely to be removed from their families for child protection or poverty related reasons and are twice as likely to leave school early.

She added, "Parties must respond to the poverty, ill health, violence and trauma that is blighting the lives of so many Indigenous children, damaging their growth and development and destroying their chance for a good education and a happy childhood."

Ms Cadd said, "With both the ALP and Coalition agreeing to abolish ATSIC it was time to hear in detail how they will ensure mainstream agencies deliver a better outcome for our children. We have made it clear to the parties the priorities for children they need to address." She said, "these include a national apology for past stolen generations policies, support for families affected by family violence and child abuse, child protection reforms including national standards for children in out-of-home care and a major expansion early childhood and Indigenous child care services."

SNAICC's policy priorities paper is available at <http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/index.html>.

Specific budget initiatives SNAICC is looking to see included in the election policies of all parties include the need for:

- Expanded **Indigenous family support and parenting programs** to provide

assistance and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families where early intervention is likely to minimise the occurrence of child abuse or neglect and prevent family breakdown or poor developmental outcomes in children;

- A **National Strategy to combat Child Neglect and Child Abuse** including national standards legislation for child protection, a focus on child poverty and improved support for foster carers, kinship carers and grandparents raising their grandchildren.
- A **National Indigenous Child Care Strategy** including additional childcare services to improve access to Commonwealth funded child care for Indigenous families and assist families to meet the developmental needs of their young children;
- An **Indigenous family healing and family well being program** to assist Indigenous families affected by family violence, child abuse and child removal practices in previous generations to restore their health, emotional well being and family functioning;
- **Facilitated playgroups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** to build supportive networks and interactions between Indigenous families with young children and provide a

mechanism to link families to parenting support and a range of children's services;

- An **Indigenous Children's Services National Workforce Development Strategy** to overcome shortages of trained Indigenous childcare and early childhood workers and address the workforce needs of Indigenous child and family welfare and early learning and care services,
- A **National Indigenous Child Welfare and Development Council** to bring together all levels of government and the non-government sector to plan and implement reforms relating to Indigenous child and family welfare policy, and
- Retaining support previously provided through ATSIC for the important **National Cultural Events** including NAIDOC week and National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, NAICD.

SNAICC will be assessing the merit of all election policies as they are released against these priorities and will be available for comment throughout the election campaign

*Media Interviews:*

*Muriel Cadd,  
SNAICC Chairperson  
0407 802 026*

*More Information:  
Julian Pocock,  
SNAICC Coordinator  
0419 379 764*

# ARACY Project

## RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SNAICC has been commissioned by Curtin University (Curtin) to prepare a report to identify research priorities for Indigenous children and young people. This project is very short term and is anticipated to be completed by the end of September.

The report we produce will contribute to a broader list of priorities, which Curtin will present to the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (the Alliance) to assist them in identifying research priorities for all Australian children and young people. The Alliance is seeking to establish a set of action and research priorities to guide its future work. One of the key considerations for the Alliance is to facilitate the dissemination and use of existing youth research, to inform both youth policy development, and youth service delivery.

### Who is the Alliance?

The Alliance is a new venture: a national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines who are together building a better future for Australia's children and young people.

Leaders in early childhood and adolescent development, paediatrics, epidemiology, education, youth justice, the social sciences, population statistics, and economics have joined forces with top-level policy makers, service providers and others to form this Alliance. Through this collaboration the nation's considerable expertise, talent and resources is being harnessed to generate and translate knowledge to enhance the well-being and life chances of children and young people.

Planning is underway for a national clearing house and an integrated data network. The network will enable data to be shared across a range of primary research bodies. A key feature of the Alliance will be its emphasis on translating research into an accessible form so that it can more easily be used by policy makers and service providers.

### Why are SNAICC involved?

Curtin felt there has already been a great deal of research conducted in regards to Indigenous children and youth issues. Curtin felt SNAICC held particular expertise and knowledge in this area and are therefore in the best position to advise them on what the priorities for research should be.

### What will SNAICC be doing?

SNAICC will be conducting a review of existing national research studies that have been based on a methodology that has included consultations with Indigenous children, youth and families, as well as people working in the field.

We have also sent out surveys to over 400 Indigenous organisations whose focus is children and young people to seek feedback and opinion from the field. The deadline for survey return has now passed and we have an excellent response rate of 10%, and a lot of valuable feedback to cipher through.

We are now in the process of drafting the report for Curtin and the Alliance. The report will focus on different areas including early childhood, late childhood, adolescence, health, education, juvenile justice, homelessness, and employment opportunity.

More information about this project and the Alliance can be obtained from their website at [www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au) OR contact Tracey Borg at SNAICC Mons- Weds Ph: 03 9482 9380

# Permanency Planning

At the SNAICC Executive Meeting held 2-3 September 2004 in Melbourne, the Executive discussed the issue of permanency planning for children in out of home care.

The context for this discussion was that SNAICC wants to ensure that new child protection legislation and policy frameworks being developed across Australia (particularly where these incorporate greater and earlier permanency planning) reflect the rights and best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and incorporate the requirements of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

## What is Permanency?

Permanency for children in out of home care generally means:

- Family reunification (when issues that led to the child being removed have been resolved),
- Placement with extended family
- Placement with non-relative carers
- Adoption
- Placement in permanent residential care
- Guardianship
- Independent Living

## What is Permanency Planning?

“Permanency planning requires the setting of casework goals designed to achieve a stable and safe long term placement for a child within a reasonable time-frame”<sup>1</sup>

## What is the Permanency Movement?

The ‘permanency movement’ is a response to gathering consensus around the world, based on early childhood development research, that security is a vital part of healthy childhood development.

Governments, particularly in the USA and UK, have responded to this research by introducing earlier and swifter permanency planning, with set limits on assessment and decision making for children in out of home care.

Both the UK and the US have focussed on adoption as an under-utilised option as a permanent care arrangement and set targets to increase the number of children adopted.

## Overview of recent developments in USA and UK

### USA

In the United States, national legislation (*The Adoption and Safe Families Act*) was introduced in 1997 with the aim of providing added safety and permanency for children in foster placement.

The legislation reflects a shift in philosophy away from the family preservation/ family reunification theme that had been prevalent since 1980 and towards a focus on achieving permanency through adoption.

The US Congress felt that the existing system had become too biased in favour of keeping children with their biological parents, even where this may be harmful, and that the child’s health and safety must be paramount.<sup>2</sup>

Note: The *Adoption and Safe Families Act* has never been interpreted as modifying the provisions of the *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)*.<sup>3</sup>

Under the ICWA, parental rights may only be terminated where there is evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, including the testimony of expert witnesses, that the continued custody of the child by the parent (or Indian custodian) is likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child.<sup>4</sup>

### UK

A White Paper was released in 2000 titled *Adoption: a New Approach* setting out a series of reforms to adoption policy and practice.

The White Paper is underpinned by the British Government’s belief that “more can and should be done to promote the wider use of adoption.”<sup>5</sup>

The White Paper included a new national target to increase by 40% by 2004-05 the number of ‘looked after children’ (known in Australia as children in out-of-home care) adopted, and aim to exceed this by achieving if possible, a 50% increase<sup>6</sup>.

### Australia

SNAICC noted these developments overseas and wondered what commentators and policy makers in Australia were saying and thinking about permanency planning.

A sample of recent views that we’ve identified is listed below:

*Children who have suffered significant harm are further harmed by frequent changes of foster care and failed attempts at reunification with their parents. They can be harmed again by too much attention from too many professionals. Disturbed children don’t require endless counselling. They need a stable, loving home environment, where they are taught the rules of normal behaviour.*<sup>7</sup>

*Our mantra needs to be “structure and stability” in our out of home care system as this is a precondition of children achieving a sense of security. Continuity of place as well as people in their lives is therefore critical.*<sup>8</sup>

*Stability is “feeling like a member of a family, not having to move continually, staying at the same school, being able to keep the same friends, and living in the same community”<sup>9</sup>*

*Children not only have a right to permanence, they also have a right to identity – and sometimes these rights conflict. The issue of identity is also a reality that sometimes confronts those who seek to impose permanence.*<sup>10</sup>

There is no traditional practice akin to western adoption in Aboriginal communities.<sup>11</sup> This, and the history of the stolen generations, means that Aboriginal people have particular views on adoption and permanency planning. These views have not yet had a high profile in the permanency debate.

*More than any other form of substitute care, adoption is perhaps the most alien to Aboriginal thinking because, in its present form, it can totally and permanently separate an Aboriginal child from his family and potentially all Aboriginal people... Aboriginal children are not regarded in Aboriginal society as in the same way, property of the parents as they are in Anglo-Australian society.*<sup>12</sup>

Most Australian State and Territory Governments are currently reviewing their child protection policy or legislation. Permanency planning issues are likely to be considered, to a greater or lesser extent, by all of these reviews.

In considering permanency planning and out of home care generally, SNAICC believes its important to discuss the following issues:

- Are instability and frequent moves a problem for A&TSI children in out of home care?
- If so, are the frequent moves mainly caused by placement breakdown (causing children to move between one foster carer and another), or are they caused by children moving back and forth between their natural family and different foster carers due to failed re-unification attempts?
- What can be done to improve stability for A&TSI children in out of home care;
- What should the permanency planning process be for A&TSI children in out of home care?
- Should adoption be an option for A&TSI children?
- What are the elements that make up the rights and best interests of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child in out of home care?
- What should SNAICC do to make sure these are protected and advanced as part of the current round of child protection policy and legislation reviews in Australia?

The Executive meeting in September resolved that SNAICC would:

- develop a position paper on permanency planning for A&TSI children, which includes a discussion of under what circumstances, if any, adoption could be an option of Aboriginal children.

- develop a statement on the rights and 'best interests' of A&TSI children in out of home care covering the importance of taking a planned approach to meeting all a child's needs, and exploring the importance of safety; identity; family; community; stability and security; participation; health and development; education; spirituality; and culture for A&TSI children, including those in out of home care.
- pursue a research project on Australian and international models of Indigenous decision making about Indigenous children in out of home care (with a focus on models operating in New Zealand and the United States).

SNAICC will undertake these projects in consultation with our member agencies and in discussion with other peak bodies in the welfare field to share our thinking and seek support.

**If, at this early stage you would like to share your perspective on these issues with SNAICC or suggest sources of information that would be useful for our projects, please contact Julie Sleight, SNAICC Policy Officer on (03) 9482 9380, fax(03)94829157 or e-mail julie@snaicc.asn.au.**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Community Services New South Wales.(2001) Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Permanency Planning) Bill 2000 Issues Paper. Page 9

<sup>2</sup> Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, Issues for Tribes and States Serving Indian Children. David Simmons and Jack Trope, The National Indian Child Welfare Association Inc..Pg 6

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*.Pg 10

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*.Pg 13

<sup>5</sup> Adoption: A New Approach. A White Paper December 2000 page 4

<sup>6</sup> *ibid* page 5

<sup>7</sup> Some People Just Are Bad Parents (September 18, 2003) Pamela Bone The Age, Melbourne

<sup>8</sup> "When Care is Not Enough", September 26 2003, Dorothy Scott CAFWAA Symposium Opening Comments, Canberra.

<sup>9</sup> Quote from young people consulted by the CREATE Foundation quoted in The Report of the Panel to Oversee the Consultation on Protecting Children: The Child Protection Outcomes Project. Victorian Department of Human Services (2004).

<sup>10</sup> Rights and Realities in the Permanency Debate. (2000) Dr Howard Bath. Children Australia Vol 25 Number 4.

<sup>11</sup> New South Wales Law Reform Commission Research Report 7 (1997) The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

<sup>12</sup> Aboriginal Children's Service Submission to New South Wales Law Reform Commission Discussion Paper 34 (12 July 1993 )

# Parenting Project Report

The SNAICC Parenting Information Project was completed in June. The project developed recommendations for the government on parenting information and programs for Indigenous families.

Its main recommendations were that information and programs need to be developed at the local level with support and assistance from SNAICC and other national bodies. Parenting programs need to be informal, run by existing services including child care and work with the whole family not just birth parents.

The Government has agreed to set aside more than 25% of their total funding for parenting information and programs for Indigenous projects.

Feedback from FaCS to date indicates they are very happy with our work, particularly with the Recommendations and are keen to follow through.

We have included below an overview of the research process and the main project findings:

## **Background to Parenting Project**

- Research project funded by FaCS
- Informs development and roll out of FaCS parenting initiatives under National Agenda for Early Childhood
- Project carried out in partnership with Swinburne University

Focus of the research on the parenting information, support and programs that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families find useful

## **Research Process**

- Research process included focus groups, literature review, program audit, stakeholder survey and national workshop to confirm findings
- Parent, Family and Worker Focus Groups conducted in Melbourne, Coffs Harbour, Perth, Woorabinda, Bathurst Island, Port Lincoln, Hobart and Townsville. These were typically half day with parents/families and half day with workers from a mix of local services
- Literature Review and Program Audit was carried out by Swinburne covering all recent literature and review of any Indigenous specific parenting information products and parenting support programs funded at State, Territory or Commonwealth level
- Stakeholder Survey distributed to over 350 Indigenous agencies and 100 academics,

government officials and mainstream agencies. Responses received from all states and territories and a mix of urban, rural and remote communities

National Stakeholder Workshop convened to allow stakeholders to comment on draft findings prior to SNAICC finalising recommendations. Participants included a mix from all states and territories and a mix of urban, rural and remote communities

## **Parenting Project – Findings**

### **Parenting Information**

#### **Issues parents want information on;**

- Knowledge about child development
- Communication, interactions and relationships with infants and children
- Building children's self esteem
- Family violence
- Positive parenting
- Parenting support for teenage parents, new parents, fathers, grandparents
- Positive guidance and discipline
- Sex, pregnancy and babies including pre and post natal care
- Babies and children's care, health and nutrition
- Alcohol and drug use
- Child abuse and neglect
- Child sexual abuse
- Early learning, literacy and education
- Budgeting
- Access to networks and services
- Grief and loss
- Cultural information

**All responses indicated that cultural relevance was important in everything about parenting**

#### **How parents want information provided;**

- Informal discussions, yarning circles
- Formal discussions (topic based)
- Through networks and relationships
- Videos and brochures, visual materials, culturally appropriate – people, images
- Posters and brochures only if culturally relevant, key messages, brief text
- Use of Elders, grandmothers, local Indigenous services and workers

- Dance, music, story telling

### Through locally made and produced resources – Indigenous ownership of resources

#### Parenting Support and Programs

#### What parents and communities value most

- Parenting programs should focus on family strengths not weaknesses.
- Mainstream programs need to be adapted to be culturally appropriate otherwise they are not useful.
- Need to include more outreach services – parents state that mainstream don't seem to do this as well as Indigenous services.
- Programs that include group work need to be informal and flexible, and be facilitated by a trusted (and preferably local) Indigenous person.
- There is not enough formal evaluation of programs.
- Pilot projects that work well to be funded longer term
- Elders should be included in the development and delivery of programs
- There needs to be more recognition of the number of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.
- More programs based on Action Research models of community development.
- Indigenous people want a choice between Indigenous and mainstream services. But people still want to access culturally appropriate programs and information, and prefer to see Indigenous people working in mainstream.

#### How parents and communities want support and programs delivered

- Through existing local services by adding value and resources to their current programs
- By building it in to the work of agencies that already have strong working relationships with families

If you would like any further information about the Parenting Project or want to talk about the findings, please call the Project Worker, Tracey Borg, at SNAICC on (03) 9482 9380. Tracey works part time is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

## SNAICC Membership and AGM

The SNAICC National Executive met in September and are reviewing SNAICC membership to make it more affordable for small services and to broaden our membership. SNAICC is also looking at developing a system of postal voting for agencies that can't attend the AGM.

This years AGM is set for November 11th and 12th in Melbourne.

## Pre-election lobbying

SNAICC has been lobbying all the major political parties in the lead up to the Federal Election to pressure them to develop and release policies which address the needs of Indigenous children. Specifically we have provided them with a detailed outline of *Seven key priorities* for children. These priorities are outlined on a poster SNAICC has distributed on all children's services across Australia and are also on our website. (See article on front page)

## Inclusion Support

The Department of Family and Community Services have asked SNAICC to work on a report on the role of SUPS workers and the inclusion of Indigenous children in childcare services and programs. SNAICC has agreed to work on the project in partnership and will be seeing input from services and communities over the coming months.

More Information: Julian Pocock (03) 94829380 julian@snaicc.asn.au)



# SNAICC - Capacity Building Project

The SNAICC Capacity Building Project is a 12 month project and has been in progress for the past 8 months.

The Project is working on the development and distribution of three resources to assist Indigenous family and children's services in their work.

The three resources are:

1. A National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Service Directory
2. A National Children's Services Resources Manual
3. An Indigenous Manual on "Good Governance" for children's services.

The project has been involved in collecting information and resources to assess what materials are currently available to services and the gaps to fill through the project. This has involved liaison with services through attending state based meetings and building partnerships with community, government and non-government agencies and departments.

The National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Service Directory will be presented in an electronic version linked to the SNAICC website and a hard copy version distributed (free) to local services. It will include a;

- list of contacts from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Sector Child and Family Welfare, Health Services (Maternal and Child Health), Resource Agencies, Community Organisations, Government & Non Government Agencies & Departments.

SNAICC is working on the services directory with Infochange Australia, a not-for-profit organisation focused on community development using Information Technology.

We are in the process of gathering all contacts for children's services in each of the state's & territories.

**The National Resource Manual will include information and case studies focussed on two fields;**

Child & Family Welfare and Early Childhood Development

The Child & Family Welfare section will include information on services models and programs covering

- Early Intervention & Family Support
- Foster Care, Placement & Support
- Family reunification

Child Protection

The Early Childhood Development section will include information on services models and programs covering;

- Current theoretical understandings and debate around early childhood development.
- Families
- Child Development

Information on child development is being developed in partnership with the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH).

Each of the sections in the Resource Manual will include case studies and examples of the work of local Indigenous services. If your service or centre have a program that you would like to have included as a case study, please contact the SNAICC office.

The third resource the project is producing is a publication on Good Governance for Indigenous children's services. SNAICC is looking at the option of providing services with access to some of the existing manuals and publications that have been published.

Where possible we aim to provide services with copies of existing manuals used in their state or territory to assist in policy development, good management, financial management and the role of, boards and committees.

If you would like additional information about any aspect of the project please contact:

Cecilia Gore-Birch,  
Capacity Building Project Officer  
Ph: 03 9482 9238 or e-mail: [Cecilia@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:Cecilia@snaicc.asn.au)



# National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day 4th August 2004

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day was a great success this year with lots of activities in schools, child care services, family welfare agencies, government departments and community groups. The Australian Senate in Federal Parliament passed a motion on the day in support of SNAICC and Children's Day whilst most State and Territory Governments formally recognised the day with functions and activities.

SNAICC started National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day in 1988 to provide an opportunity for the whole nation to reflect on the importance of nurturing, supporting and caring for Indigenous children.

The theme for 2004 was *One Childhood - One Chance: Let's not take a chance in our future - Invest in our future leaders.*

SNAICC has been encouraged by the response to children's day with communities across the country celebrating the day.

In Kalgoorlie the health service held a family fun day, in Alice Springs Indigenous art and craft activities were organised in schools, preschools and childcare, in Cairns kids in care held an Indigenous fashion show, in the Torres Strait communities organised a bamboo festival with Elders teaching children traditional techniques for building spears, rafts and using bamboo for traditional games whilst in Hobart the children's centre held an open day and launched a new kit on protection kids from family violence

## Indigenous Child Care Accreditation

The Fed Government has agreed to work with SNAICC, resource agencies and local Indigenous services to explore the development Indigenous childcare accreditation system. This will take a few years to develop and implement but it would mean Indigenous services will be recognised as equal to all other services but specialist in caring for the needs of Indigenous children consistent with local culture and family needs.

SNAICC expects that over the next few years all services will be involved in discussions about this new system. More Information contact Julian Pocock on (03) 94829380 [julian@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:julian@snaicc.asn.au)

## Secretariat National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Annual General Meeting

11 & 12 November 2004

Melbourne, Victoria.

For further information please contact SNAICC office on:

Ph: 03 9482 9380

Email: [snaicc@vicnet.net.au](mailto:snaicc@vicnet.net.au)

Dear members/friends of SNAICC

This is to tell you about the ACOSS Annual Conference 2004, which this year, for the first time, is being held in Alice Springs.

The conference is on 28/29 October (AGM 27 October) with the theme *From the Margins to the Centre*, reflecting our aim to bring issues that affect marginalised and disadvantaged people to the centre of economic and social policy and Indigenous policy issues into the mainstream agenda.



We have a great program with a strong Indigenous theme –plenaries with high profile speakers, seminars with presenters who have expertise in specific issues and workshops providing opportunities to work through issues with a facilitator. One of the workshops will be run by SNAICC on what community controlled services offer, there should be some positives in there.

The key speakers include Alison Anderson, ATSIC Commissioner NT Central; Marion Scrymgour, the first Indigenous Minister in an Australian Parliament, Justice Marcus Einfeld, former President of HREOC who has been outspoken on social issues; Rev Tim Costello, now CEO of World Vision and many more. One of our plenary sessions will focus on the challenges presented by the proposed abolition of ATSIC and the speakers are Jackie Huggins, a member of the ATSIC Review Board and Josie Karanga, a Maori activist who will tell us how similar problems have been tackled in New Zealand.

We have a group of Indigenous school children entertaining us with their drumming at the start of the conference and we are especially pleased to be able to bring to the conference a performance of kNOT@Home by young people from Big hART. Big hART is a non-profit organisation piloting art-based projects for marginalised young people to help them re-engage in the community.

We hope to have at least 250 people there including ACOSS national member organisations and many other community groups, government departments and agencies, university and research institutes and individuals concerned with social justice. Lots of opportunities for networking, a conference dinner under the stars, and if you arrive on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>, the Chief Minister is hosting a welcome reception which is free to all conference participants.

Have a look at the full program on [www.hotelnetwork.com.au](http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au) and you can register on-line through them or download the registration forms. You can also book accommodation and travel using their link. Or you can contact them by phone 02 9411 4666 and ask for a hard copy of the program which has the registration form attached.

**SNAICC is a member of ACOSS and if you are a member of SNAICC we are pleased to make a special offer to you to pay only the member registration fee for the conference. We will also extend the early bird fee because you will be receiving this information too late to meet the original deadline.**

ACOSS has some funding to support people with disabilities to attend conference and a limited amount to assist those disadvantaged in other ways, eg by distance or low income, with registration costs. Please contact Gill Whan at the ACOSS office for an application form or with any queries about the program – [gill@acoss.org.au](mailto:gill@acoss.org.au) or Phone 02 9310 4844, fax 9310 4822.

**Hope to see you there!**

# The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Families are Forever **BUILD THEM STRONG!**

Conference 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> October 2004



### The conference theme:

Families Are Forever, Build Them Strong!

### Conference Aims:

- To put children on the continuing agenda
- To promote a holistic service response to Aboriginal children and families
- To build strong cultural identity to ensure Aboriginal child and family well-being

### The conference theme will be explored in the following streams:

- Child protection and out-of-home care
  - Early intervention
  - Aboriginal parenting
  - Youth

All streams will have a strong focus on Indigenous culture. There will be presentations of papers, panel discussions and workshops.

### Keynote speakers:

Opening Address by the Minister for Community Services - Honourable Sheryl Garbutt

Mr. Alf Dierckx, CEO, VACCA, and community leader, will be speaking on the current issues affecting Aboriginal children and families and a holistic blueprint for the way forward.

Ms. Annette Jackson, Bendigo, Victoria, will present findings from national and international research on trauma and child abuse and its implications for Indigenous communities today.

### Proudly Sponsored by

The Department of Human Services

The conference will be held:

Date: 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

Venue: Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre,

Registration of interest being taken by:

Ernie Bamblett or Maria Bamblett  
Phone: 0457 5810 Fax: 0457 5810  
Email: [ernie\\_ba@hotmail.com](mailto:ernie_ba@hotmail.com)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Conferences

### **ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect**

19-22 September 2004

Brisbane, QLD

For full instructions log onto

[www.congress2004.com](http://www.congress2004.com)

### **Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency**

“Families and Forever

BUILD THEM STRONG!”

6-8 October 2004

Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre

For further information please contact:

Esme Bamblett or Merle Bamblett

Ph: 03 9467 5810 Fax: 03 9467 5810

Email: [merle\\_s@hotmail.com](mailto:merle_s@hotmail.com)

### **NSW Aboriginal Early Childhood Annual Education Conference**

12 - 14 October 2004

Murrabung Resort

Bateman's Bay

For more information telephone or email

NSW Aboriginal Early Childhood Services

Support Unit on Ph: 02 9319 4800

Email: [director@aecssu.org.au](mailto:director@aecssu.org.au)

### **Family Services Australia 10th Annual National Conference “Pursuing Excellence in Family Services”**

Sydney

20 - 22 October 2004

For further information please contact:

FSA Ph: 02 6281 1788

Website: [www.fsa.org.au](http://www.fsa.org.au)

### **Early Childhood Conference “Re-discover the Magic”**

Sunshine Coast

29 - 31 October 2004

For further information contact:

Janet Ryan Ph: 07 5450 0880

Email: [ryanj@maroochy.qld.gov.au](mailto:ryanj@maroochy.qld.gov.au)

### **ACOSS National Congress 2004**

28 - 29 October 2004

Alice Springs - Convention Centre

Enquiries: [gill@acoss.org.au](mailto:gill@acoss.org.au)

### **Addressing the needs of Urban Indigenous Communities - Improving access to programs and services through policy reform.**

19 & 20 October 2004

Novotel Hotel, Sydney Olympic Park

For more information please:

Ph: 02 9223 2660 Fax: 02 9223 2622

Website: [www.igpc.com.au](http://www.igpc.com.au)

### **2004 QCOSS Conference “Enabling Communities - Engaging Future”**

15 & 16 November 2004

Brisbane Convention Centre

Enquiries to QCOSS Ph: 07 3832 1266

Website: [www.qcoss.org.au](http://www.qcoss.org.au)

### **National Rural Health Conference**

10 -13 March 2005

Alice Springs

For further information:

Ph: 02 6285 4660 Fax: 02 6285 4670

Website: [ww.ruralhealth.org.au](http://ww.ruralhealth.org.au)

Email: [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)

### **4th Biennial Conference “ Working with Boys Building Fine Men”**

3 - 5 April 2005

Grand Hyatt, Melbourne

For further information please visit

Conference Website:

[www.pco.com.au/boys2005](http://www.pco.com.au/boys2005)

### **5th National Family Day Care Con- ference “Messages from the Heart”**

17-20 May 2006

Alice Springs

For further information please visit

Conference Website:

[www.fdc2006.com.au](http://www.fdc2006.com.au)