



# SNAICC NEWS

## EDITORIAL

# We would like to believe you, Prime Minister

SNAICC would like to believe the Prime Minister's intervention in the Northern Territory is motivated by a genuine concern, but we have been calling for concerted national action on child abuse and neglect for many years, says **Muriel Bamblett, SNAICC Chairperson.**

The Prime Minister's national emergency response to protect Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory is a belated recognition that the situation of Aboriginal children today requires urgent action.

The Prime Minister says that his government's national emergency measures arise out of a genuine concern for Aboriginal children.

We would like to believe you, Prime Minister. After all Aboriginal and Islander leaders, particularly in the fields of children's

services, health and education, have been calling for action for decades. In fact four years ago SNAICC produced a report on neglect and child abuse in the Northern Territory called *State of Denial*, which called for a comprehensive framework and service response for Aboriginal child protection and family services. Unfortunately both the Territory and the federal governments failed to respond.

And now, instead of implementing the recommendations of the recent *Little Children are Sacred* in co-operation with the Indigenous community and the NT Government, your Government has announced measures which run rough-shod over the work of the inquiry.

The Prime Minister says that the 'old ways' have failed and the time for talk is over.

We would like to believe you, Prime

Minister, but your own 'old way' of dealing with Aboriginal people is to disregard our voices. We have been trying to talk with you for years about the lack of services for health, education and child protection. We have been giving you examples of Aboriginal communities who have begun to turn around drug and alcohol abuse and poor

“We have been trying to talk with you for years about the lack of services for health, education and child protection.”

health outcomes; communities who have succeeded because they were empowered and resourced to take action. We have been talking about a human rights based and culturally respectful social investment approach.

But the current approach by the federal government is a policy of disinvestment. It promotes mainstreaming and denies community control. It has no evidence base. The evidence from overseas and here in Australia points to the fact that when there is properly resourced Indigenous community control and effective culturally based programs, social dysfunction indicators, such as poor health outcomes and youth suicide rates, decrease.



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Contributions, feedback and suggestions to *SNAICC News* are welcome. Copy deadline for our **October** edition is **27 August 2007**.

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In this special extended edition of *SNAICC News*, we have a Special Focus on the upcoming federal election, and report on what SNAICC has been doing to respond to the federal government's intervention in the Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

For our **Special Focus on Election 2007**, SNAICC Executive Officer Julian Pocock looks at some of the themes emerging for this election in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and outlines some of the priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (page 7).

From page 8, we have four-page coverage of the policies and priorities of the four main political parties in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Drawing on what the parties have published or publically stated, especially online, we hope this can assist our readers to obtain the information necessary to inform their decisions about what the parties offer for our children.

On page 16 is a list the websites of a

number of other community sector and Indigenous organisation where readers may find information on what these organisations think are the priorities for the upcoming election. Please note that this is only a small selection.

In this edition's 'SNAICC Update' (starting on page 4), we report on the range of responses that SNAICC has made in relation to the **federal government's emergency measures** to stop child abuse in the Northern Territory.

Besides information on what SNAICC has been doing, and our perspective on the way forward, we also outline some things that SNAICC's members, subscribers and the general public can do. Find out 'what you can do' on page 5.

On page 15, you will find SNAICC's proposed **10 Point National Action Plan to Prevent Child Abuse in Neglect**, which we are asking all state, territory and federal governments to adopt, and which we've asked the federal government to lead on.

Please enjoy this edition of *SNAICC News*, and share your feedback with us. ●

**Deadlines and themes for SNAICC News 2007-2008**

**Next edition (October) theme: Education and literacy**

Do you have a case study, story, or perspective on initiatives in and priorities for improving educationa and literacy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-schoolers, childrenz and young people? We would love to hear it!

Send us your story or perspective for the next edition of SNAICC News **before 27 August 2007**.

In 2007-08, each newsletter edition will have a theme, with a key article on the theme's issues and a list of resources and services offering more information or support. We welcome readers' contributions, suggestions and articles addressing the theme. The general themes are in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

All contributions of announcements, articles, reviews or news to SNAICC's quarterly newsletter should be sent to us no later than the deadlines listed below.

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Copy Deadline</b>	<b>Theme</b>
October 2007	27 August	Education and literacy
January 2008	5 November	Health and nutrition
April 2008	TBC	Focus on Torres Strait Islander communities

Each edition will generally be mailed out the first week of the month the edition is named for (except January's, which goes out mid-December).

Contact Mark at SNAICC for details:  
telephone (03) 9489 8099; email: [publications@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:publications@snaicc.asn.au)

# Ngadluko Ngartunnaitya

## FOR OUR CHILDREN

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Adelaide Convention Centre

**19 – 21 September 2007**

**SNAICC National Conference**

**Registrations Filling Fast!**

### **Artwork Programme**

SNAICC invites schools and children's services to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in their school or service to participate in this year's SNAICC National Conference Children's Artwork Program.

The Artwork Program aims to provide children with an opportunity to participate in the conference and express their ideas about their culture and family, and/or express their hopes for the future.

We encourage you to work with children in your school or service to develop the children's artwork – this could be drawings, paintings, poems, sketches, photos, videos or mosaics – and submit them for display at the conference.

All entries will receive a certificate of appreciation and a DVD of 13 animated Dreaming stories. The SNAICC conference coordinators will also select one piece of artwork from each state and territory and an additional prize will be awarded to those selected.

If schools/services are interested, they should submit an Expression of Interest to the SNAICC office as soon as possible and obtain a copy of the permission form (each child / young person needs to submit a permission form with their art for it to be shown at the conference) and the Artwork

#### Program Guidelines.

Both forms and guidelines can be downloaded from the SNAICC website or obtained by contacting Carmen Isherwood or Julie Higgins on (03) 94898099 or [carmen@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:carmen@snaicc.asn.au).

**All artwork must be received by 18 August 2007.**

### **Displays**

#### **Tables still available!**

Opportunities still exists to submit an application to have a display at the conference. This could involve relevant resources produced by your service; information about your service include contact details, project and program ideas that your service is running or has run, and resources the your service may wish to sell.

A small table and display board will be provided by the Adelaide Convention Centre within the conference budget.

To submit an application download the submission form from the snaicc website ([www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au)) or contact Carmen Isherwood, [carmen@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:carmen@snaicc.asn.au) or Julie Higgins, [julie@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:julie@snaicc.asn.au) or by phone on (03) 9489 8099 to obtain a copy of the submission form.

**The deadline to apply for a display is 31 July 2007.**

### **Registration Brochures**

#### **Early bird closes 31 July**

Conference registration brochures have been mailed to all SNAICC members and subscribers. It can also be downloaded in PDF from SNAICC's web site:

[www.snaicc.asn.au/news/RegistrationOpen.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/RegistrationOpen.html)

The Full Registration Form contains details of all plenary sessions and workshops, and information about the Keynote Speakers.

All conference participants **must pre-register for workshops** they wish to attend **at the time of** registering for the Conference. This can be done in the registration brochure, or you can also register online (at the web address above).

If you have previously registered without registering for workshops, you must now provide details of you workshop preferences using the Full Registration Form.

Numbers of participants for all workshops are limited. If you don't register early for workshops, you may find your first preferences for workshops are full.

Registration is filling fast, and we expect the SNAICC National Conference to sell out early. **To avoid disappointment, please register early!**

**Registration inquiries to Sharyn Low:**

**Tel: (02) 4572 3079**

**Email: [sharynlow@pacific.net.au](mailto:sharynlow@pacific.net.au)**

# SNAICC Update

## Northern Territory Update

SNAICC continues to respond to the federal government's emergency measures to stop to child abuse in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

SNAICC has long advocated that the child protection system in the Northern Territory has failed to respond adequately and protect children from all forms of child abuse – including sexual abuse. In doing so we have not sought to blame, but to propose evidence based, culturally safe solutions.

**It is paramount that now, as always, we place the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children first.** Children rely on others to protect and nurture them. SNAICC trusts and recognises that this is what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have always sought to do.

Sadly, as we know, many children have not been protected from abuse. This is true in all communities – not just Aboriginal communities.

It is likely that at this time young children may be feeling anxious about the current media stories and what they are hearing about abuse and violence. It is important that we re-assure children, keep them close and safe, minimise their exposure to the media and talk with them about what is currently happening.

Children's services and programs have a critical role at this time in supporting children and being on the look out for children who may be distressed.

### Overview of SNAICC's response

SNAICC's immediate concerns are that the NT emergency measures developed by the federal government lack expert guidance in the area of child protection, are too short term in focus, and fail to provide a way for stakeholders to contribute their expertise so the measures can have a lasting effect on the safety and welfare of children.

Since 1995 SNAICC has advocated for a national action plan to prevent child abuse and neglect. As recently as May 2006 SNAICC wrote to every Premier and Chief Minister from each state and territory government and to the Prime Minister calling for a national action plan to prevent child abuse. All responded that they had the current issues of abuse and neglect 'in-hand'. Clearly they haven't and a national action plan is overdue.



### In relation to the current emergency measures for the NT:

#### SNAICC supports:

1. provision of additional policing, child protection services and resources for Aboriginal non-government agencies across the NT to prevent abuse, respond to abuse where it has occurred, support victims and families, prosecute perpetrators and refer perpetrators to appropriate healing and rehabilitation programs
2. voluntary health checks for children facilitated by existing health services, where necessary with additional short-term staff, with parental consent and involvement
3. appropriate follow up and comprehensive response to the identified health needs of children
4. developing child protection systems at the local community level so that children at risk of abuse can receive immediate support and protection when abuse is reported
5. establishing a statutory Aboriginal Child and Family Services authority within the Northern Territory to monitor and enforce standards for the care and protection of children
6. the development of full and comprehensive responses by the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to the *Little Children are Sacred Report*
7. federal government leadership in responding to child abuse and neglect within all states and territories – not just the Northern Territory

“SNAICC has long advocated that the child protection system in the Northern Territory has failed to respond adequately and protect children from all forms of child abuse – including sexual abuse.”

#### SNAICC does *not* support:

1. issues of land tenure and the NT permit system (currently used to authorise entry onto Aboriginal land) being changed or removed as part of an emergency child protection response
2. short-term interventions developed with inadequate planning and little or no local input
3. Unilateral federal government intervention with no clear commitment to funding long term programs and services

### SNAICC NT Update online

SNAICC has created a dedicated NT Update webpage on our website with all our media statements, some of our chairperson Muriel Bamblett's media comments, our published reports and briefings on child abuse, links to the ACOSS open letter to Minister Brough and the *Little Children are Sacred Report*.

It also links to SNAICC's '10 Point National Action Plan to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect' and other responses.

This is the best way to keep up to date with what we are doing on this issue.

**SNAICC NT Update webpage:**  
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/SNAICCresponseNTJune07.html>

# SNAICC Update

## NT Aboriginal organisations respond to the federal government's intervention

Aboriginal organisations in the Northern Territory, in conjunction with other community sector organisations such as SNAICC, have announced proposals to keep children in Aboriginal communities safe from harm. It is a response to the federal government's intervention in the NT.

The document, *A proposed Emergency Response and Development Plan to protect Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory – A preliminary response to the Australian Government's proposals*, was developed by the Combined Aboriginal Organisations (representing Aboriginal organisations in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine) and community sector organisations from across the country.

Many organizations from across Australia, including SNAICC, contributed to its development and we support its recommendations. You can find out more about this initiative, and download the *Emergency Response and Development Plan* from SNAICC's website here:

<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/NTAboriginalOrgsResponse.html>

## What You Can Do

SNAICC is asking people and organisations express their views directly to the relevant federal, state and territory ministers, as well as speak to local federal members of parliament, outlining your concerns in relation to child abuse and neglect. You should also write to the Federal ALP requesting that they commit to a full and



## National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD) – 4 August 2007

**Raise Children Strong in Culture: pathways to healing and revival**

**Children's Day poster and other material now available**



This year, SNAICC has used positive images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for our annual NAICD poster and leaflet. They show our children proud, happy and confident about who they are – children from the oldest living cultures on earth. They illustrate this year's theme wonderfully.

This material has already been distributed free by SNAICC to our members and subscribers throughout the country.

## Children's Activity Kit

SNAICC has produced another Children's Activity Kit for this year's NAICD. These were distributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services across the country.

A limited number of printed kits are still available, but only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services. Please contact the NAICD Project Officer to request a copy.

Alternatively, you can download a PDF of the 2007 Activity Kit from our website.

You can also order extra copies of posters and leaflets (free) online.

For other information about NAICD, or to order this year's material go to:

[www.snaicc.asn.au/children](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/children)

Or call SNAICC on (03) 9489 8099.

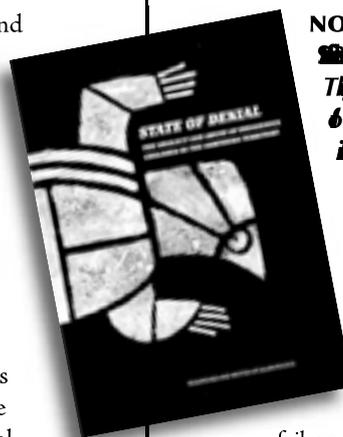
– **Carmen Isherwood**  
SNAICC Children's Day Project Officer

proper response to child abuse and neglect.

You may wish to express support for the position taken by SNAICC and for the recently released detailed response from the Coalition of Aboriginal Organisations of the NT.

We suggest you write, fax or email the relevant state, territory and federal government ministers and federal opposition, and make direct representation to your local members of federal parliament, calling for them to sign up to a National Response.

SNAICC has developed a sample letter that you can use for writing to the federal minister, and has outlined some points to consider if you wish to write your own letter. You can use these to write letters to state and territory governments or to



## NOW AVAILABLE

**State of Denial: The Neglect and Abuse of Indigenous Children in the Northern Territory (2003)**

**Researched and Written by Julian Pocock**

**Published by SNAICC**

First published in 2003, this ground-breaking report provides an analysis of the systemic

failure of the child protection system in the Northern Territory to meet the needs of Indigenous children and families. Includes interviews with key non-government agencies, statistical overview of the child protection system, discussion and reform proposals.

Now a limited number have recently been reprinted, and can now be ordered online (free).

Go to [www.snaicc.asn.au/publications/](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/publications/)

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# SNAICC Update

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your local member of parliament.

SNAICC's sample letter to Minister Brough, background information, and contact details for the minister, the federal opposition, federal parliamentarians and state and territory ministers are on our website:

[http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/NT\\_WhatYouCanDo.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/NT_WhatYouCanDo.html)

## 10 Point National Plan to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

The way forward from here is for the federal government to lead the development of a National Action Plan to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect within all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the support and involvement of states and territories, SNAICC and other representative Indigenous organisations.

This Action Plan must fund both short and long term measures and programs to reverse the over representation of Indigenous children in child protection and their under representation in early

childhood services and education. This will require investment from all states and territories as well as the federal government.

SNAICC has outlined a '10 Point National Action Plan to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect' and has written to all the federal Indigenous Affairs Minister to ask the government to implement it. You can read the plan on page 15. It is also published on our website:

<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/10PointNationalPlan.html>

## National Indigenous Child Care Plan

SNAICC has been advocating since 2002 that the federal government should develop a National Indigenous Child Care Plan to address the poor level of access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to Commonwealth funded child care services. Currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are about four times less likely than other children to attend child care.

With increasing recognition of the life long positive impact high quality child care can have on children's development

SNAICC sees improved access to child care as an important priority for children. Having said that it is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have access to the right kind of child care. Child care that is culturally relevant, affordable, flexible and able to help and support families with the breadth of challenges they face in raising their children.

After much research, consultation, talking and writing it seems that we will soon have a National Indigenous Child Care Plan. SNAICC is confident that following our discussions with the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister Mal Brough that the plan will be worth the wait.

We remain hopeful that the plan will recognise the need to invest more in developing Indigenous specific services (services that target Indigenous children), support existing services to expand and develop and support mainstream services to develop culturally relevant programs. Look out for the release of the plan in the coming months and an update in the next edition of *SNAICC News*.

– Julian Pocock,  
SNAICC Executive Officer

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**EDITORIAL – continued from page 1**

## We would like to believe you, Prime Minister

The Prime Minister says that the measures he has announced will stabilise and protect communities.

We would like to believe you Prime Minister, but your measures are disempowering and punitive. If we had been consulted we would have given the federal government our professional advice that behaviour only changes when people are empowered and given positive encouragement. This punitive approach will only have a short term impact – it doesn't address the underlying issues. Worse, you are taking control away from our communities. When you take people's rights away you also take away their ability to act on their responsibilities. Such paternalism reinforces dependency and isn't dependency the problem?

The Prime Minister says that compulsory health checks for our children will stop the trauma. But as Indigenous Associate Professor of child and adolescent psychiatry, Helen Milroy, who herself has been working in the field of sexual abuse and has had experience of conducting health checks warns, "forcing children to submit

to an intrusive examination without good evidence or parental consent is akin to abuse." If the health checks are conducted with insensitivity you will only further abuse children.

The Prime Minister says that education is critical and school attendance should be tied to welfare payments.

We would like to believe you, but where are the schools, where are the quality teachers and education facilities. The vast majority of our communities don't have secondary schools so how are our parents to comply?

We would like to believe you Prime Minister so could you please consider working with us. How many Indigenous child and family welfare service professionals are on your Taskforce? Is there any process in mind to talk to the Indigenous professionals who have been calling for action for years? If you want to really stop child abuse please consider the following idea.

There are many examples of successful Aboriginal child and family services practice which are based on investing in

cultural ways which strengthen, not weaken families. Overseas aid and community development organisations talk about the importance of investing in 'village wells' to support children. The development of locally-based Aboriginal controlled child and family centres are just such a culturally embedded 'village well' which will enable the redevelopment of communities of care for Aboriginal families. If they work for World Vision and Oxfam, they may work for Aboriginal communities.

SNAICC is willing to co-operate with the work of the Task Force but we would suggest that it is time for you to work with us, something your government has neglected to do up until now. Perhaps, Prime Minister, if you are serious that your concern is for children and not politics you could start listening to us. Then we may start believing you.

**Muriel Bamblett, AM** is the Chairperson of SNAICC and CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).



A version of this article was published as an Opinion piece in *The Age* on 27 June 2007. Republished with permission from Ms Bamblett. © Muriel Bamblett 2007

# SPECIAL FOCUS Election 2007

## 'Tampa'ring with the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

With the federal election looming and the dramatic intervention of the federal government in the Northern Territory, SNAICC has developed a brief summary of what the major political parties are saying in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Much of the early reaction to the Northern Territory emergency measures announced by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has centred on the government's political motivations. Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be the 'Tampa' of the 2007 election? Will our collective failure to protect children be used to divide the political parties and electorate for the political gain of the government?

SNAICC does not question that Mal Brough, MP, the Minister for Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, has real, genuine and heartfelt concern for children who have been victims of abuse and violence – we do however question his strategy and approach. Unlike some of his predecessors and the Prime Minister, he has seen the value in spending considerable time visiting communities.

SNAICC hopes he pauses, reflects on what he has seen and comes to realise that a better life for children won't come by doing things *to* Aboriginal communities but by doing things *with* Aboriginal communities.

At the last election the key focus was on the demise of ATSIC with both the ALP and the Coalition government promising to dismantle ATSIC. Having dismantled ATSIC, the federal government has continued to blame ATSIC for policy and program failures in areas such as health, education and employment – none of which ATSIC had core responsibility for.

In this election campaign SNAICC believes all the parties need to focus on what they will do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities – not what they will do to them. It's insulting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are so often portrayed as helpless and hopeless with governments seeing themselves as the saviours of communities. Sadly this attitude still permeates through much of Australia's policy – particularly in the child welfare and protection field, where communities confront ongoing mistrust and institutional racism.

Most parties have released, or will release, some Indigenous policy in the lead up to the election. The Federal ALP released *New Directions: An equal start in life for Indigenous children* on the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. In the May Federal Budget the Coalition government announced a range of new initiatives in the Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio, providing some indication of their policy directions.

It is not part of SNAICC's role to rate or compare the various policy platforms of the parties or to give advice to people or organisations on how they may wish to vote in elections. Our role, as a national organisation advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, is firstly to spell out clearly to all parties what they should be supporting and secondly to provide organisations with access to information on what the parties are promising.

In October last year SNAICC published a paper on 'Priorities for the next term of government', which outlined what all the parties should be supporting and committing to do should they win the federal election. The paper (available at <http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/briefing-papers.html>) focused on SNAICC's established priorities such as:

- expansion of early childhood services and programs,
- a national response to child abuse and neglect,
- measures to tackle poverty and disadvantage,
- improved access to healing, family and parenting support, and
- a new approach to formulating Indigenous policy that has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations play a central rather than marginal role.

Thus far both the federal ALP and the Coalition government have failed to indicate that they will invest sufficiently in early childhood programs and services to provide children with a good start in life. Further more neither has made commitments to establish new policy structures at the national level which would see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as central to determining more effective policy directions.

SNAICC encourages readers of *SNAICC News* to look at what the parties are saying and doing and has produced a summary of their commitments to date and where you can find more information. There is no doubt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will feature in further policy documents that the parties will release. We call upon all the parties to commit to working respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the benefit of their children.

– Julian Pocock  
SNAICC Executive Officer

**What do the parties promise for our children? See page 8**



# A review of the what the main parties promise for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

Following are key policy points relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from the four main political parties. Note that these are only excerpts and summaries. Full policy statements are available on the party's websites or from their Indigenous Affairs spokespersons. This information is based on what was publically available prior to

publication. Subsequent policy announcements may be made closer to the federal election.

We are making this information available to our members and subscribers to assist you to find out as much as you can to make informed decisions.

## Australian Democrats

**Note:** The Australian Democrats' policy published on their website does not identify initiatives specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. However, their Children's Policy is intended to cover all children in Australia. Below are some key points from that policy where it applies to the areas of child welfare, early childhood and children's well being.

As part of the Democrats' children's policy, they would establish a National Office for Children to monitor legislation and new policy proposals for impact on children and report directly to the Federal Parliament, establish a National Agenda for children, and oversee the implementation of the National Agenda within the Commonwealth, states and territories.

The Democrats would move to establish a National Legal Task Force on Children to develop and oversee:

- a. the implementation into domestic law of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- b. the establishment and on going funding of specialist children's units within State and Territory Legal Aid commissions to deal specifically with children's legal issues
- c. an adequate level of funding is made available and maintained for a reasonable number of children's legal advocates in specialist children's legal centres
- d. the establishment of appropriate training programs for those who represent the interests of children within the Family Court."

The Australian Democrats also have a focus on children's early years that recognises "the long-term impact of children's early life experiences on outcomes affecting development, education, health and behaviour."

- They want a National Office for Children, which they propose, to
- "co-ordinate the development and implementation of universally available community capacity building programs that enhance the development of effective parenting skills,"
  - "highlight the effects of abuse and ways in which it can be prevented,"
  - "ensure that all programs working with families with young children recognise the family's cultural heritage and take into account their previous life experience in crafting responses designed to enhance the child's development", and
  - "ensure that adequately resourced accountable and transparent services are available for those children whose situations will be demonstrably improved by substitute care".

The Australian Democrats would also:

- "call for a Royal Commission into sexual abuse of children in Australia.
- recognise the need for a national review of child protection legislation, policies and practices with the goal of achieving a national unified child protection system.
- will ensure that there is targeted resourcing to respond promptly to all reported cases of child abuse."

The Australian Democrats have policy on Reconciliation, which state: "to advance Reconciliation we acknowledge the "unfinished business" identified by Indigenous leaders, and are committed to:

- (a) the need for a framework for negotiation;
- (b) the need for constitutional change;
- (c) increased political representation;
- (d) greater recognition and promotion of the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;
- (e) greater recognition and protection of Native Title rights;

- (f) greater social justice measures ensuring the provision of basic citizenship rights that are required if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are to enjoy the same living standard and opportunities as other Australians."

One of the principles of their policy states that:

"The Australian Democrats are committed to educational activities in formal schooling, the training of professionals, and community awareness programs that are based on an honest and deep understanding of the truth of our shared history and respect for each other."

The Democrats' Health Policy also lists a range of initiatives that would apply to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. For instance, they want a health care system that "recognises the diverse health care needs of the Australian community, including people in rural areas, and people of diverse cultural backgrounds, and develops and facilitates targeted services as appropriate". More information is on their website.

Australian Democrats policy (including Children's Policy, Reconciliation Policy, and Health Policy) is on the website:

<http://www.democrats.org.au/policies/>

## Contact

**Senator Andrew Bartlett** (Senator for Queensland) is the Australian Democrats' spokesperson on Indigenous Affairs:

### Electorate Office:

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web: <http://www.andrewbartlett.com/>

Senator Bartlett's Press Releases under his Indigenous Affairs Portfolio can be found online:

<http://www.democrats.org.au/news/index.htm>

## The Australian Greens

The Australian Greens policy regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people includes the principle that: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a right to self determination and political representation, and must be partners in the development and implementation of public policies, programs and services that affect them."

The Australian Greens' goals include:

- "equality of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on all major indicators of health, education, training, housing, employment and living standards within a generation, within a framework which acknowledges the diverse aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- the establishment of appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative bodies elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- culturally appropriate services and resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on local language, cultural aspects and community priorities.
- full implementation of the recommendations of a number of reports and inquiries, including:
  - + *Bringing Them Home Report* (1997);
  - + The Gordon inquiry into Family Violence and Child Abuse in WA (2002);
  - + The HREOC Social Justice Report (2005) into achieving equality of outcomes within a generation."

Some of the measures the Australian Greens will pursue include:

- "making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's health a funding priority, with a focus on community-controlled health services and additional community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-care services.
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community initiatives and networks to address family violence and abuse, resource Aboriginal Women's Legal Services, establish safe houses in communities, and support initiatives to

reduce substance abuse.

- ensuring that there is effective policing in remote communities negotiated with community elders, including infrastructure to ensure a live-in police presence, and ongoing funding for successful community night-patrol programs.
- resourcing youth programs as essential services in remote communities.
- increasing support for the development of language and cultural curricula in schools."

The full range of Greens policies relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' issues is available on their website:

<http://greens.org.au/about/policy/>

## Contacts

**Senator Rachel Siewert** (Senator for Western Australia) is the Greens spokesperson on Indigenous issues.

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Web: <http://www.rachelsiewert.org.au/>

## Australian Labor Party

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) calls for a bi-partisan approach to Indigenous Affairs, especially in tackling what they describe as the "shocking difference in life expectancy, a 17 year difference between the life expectancy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians", and in improving economic development in remote communities to reduce Indigenous unemployment. The ALP announced that "Labor is determined to tackle Indigenous disadvantage through jobs, education and health services".

Ahead of the government announcing its 2007 Budget, the ALP Opposition Indigenous Affairs spokesperson Jenny Macklin said, "addressing the issues of employment, education, making sure that children at school are learning to read and write, finishing school, and addressing the

terrible difference in life expectancy facing Aboriginal Australians," should be priorities in the budget.

ALP Media comments and statements:  
[www.alp.org.au/media/](http://www.alp.org.au/media/)

## Indigenous children

The ALP's first major policy announcement on Indigenous Affairs focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, insisting that "to redress the life expectancy inequality, beginning with the young will make a significant impact".

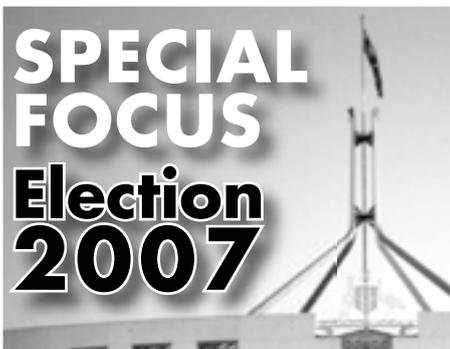
The ALP says a Rudd Labor Government will establish two new national objectives:

- "halving the gap in mortality rates between Indigenous and non Indigenous children under the age of five within a decade, and
- halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement within a decade by introducing a comprehensive package focusing on Indigenous children's early years."

The plan involves "total investment of \$261.4 million over four years, comprising \$186.4 million in Commonwealth expenditure, supported by \$75 million from the States and Territories". Labor's plan has three components:

1. Child and Maternal Health services, including such measures as:
  - "\$112 million over four years to provide national coverage of child and maternal health services to Indigenous Australians.
  - \$92.2 million over four years to provide new Indigenous mothers, babies and children with health care and early learning support (covering antenatal phase, child birth and until a child reaches eight years)." This will involve a comprehensive Mothers and Babies programme.
  - Labor building on the "\$37.4 million funding for home visiting provided in the 2007-08 Federal Budget to provide comprehensive nurse-led home visiting services of up to 20 visits in the first year and up to 12 visits in the second year".
2. Early Development and parenting support, including such measures as:
  - "\$17.5 million over four years for "new parent-child services in areas of need, to improve parenting skills and the development, learning and wellbeing of Indigenous children, from birth to 8 years old."

**continued on page 10**



continued from page 9

Building on “the \$23 million allocated in the 2007–08 Budget to establish new Child Care Service Hubs in rural and remote communities.”

**Note:** The ALP says that it will draw on the priority areas that SNAICC identified in briefings to FaCSIA on the development of a new Indigenous Child Care Plan. SNAICC provided media comment on the *ALP New Directions: An equal start in life for Indigenous children*; see [www.snaicc.asn.au/news/MediaALPpolicy07.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/MediaALPpolicy07.html)

- “All Indigenous four year olds will be eligible to receive 15 hours of Government-funded early learning programs per week, for a minimum of 40 weeks a year.” For more on this policy’s initiatives, see ‘Early Childhood education’ below.

3. Literacy and numeracy in the early years, including such measures as:

- Halving “the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students’ performance in reading, writing and numeracy achievement within a decade.”
- Ensuring “that every Indigenous student has an Individual Learning Plan.”
- “\$21.9 million over four years to expand intensive literacy and numeracy programs in our schools.”

### Early Childhood education

In January 2007, the ALP announced an early childhood education policy focused on the strategy of offering all Australian 4-year-olds a universal right to “access early play-based learning and development programs delivered by degree-qualified teachers” (but this will not be compulsory).

- The programs will be funded for 15 hours per week, and offered across a range of early childhood settings, both public and private.
- It is planned to take effect five years after legislation is passed, to take account of the shortage of skilled and qualified early childhood teachers (amongst other factors).

- To tackle the skill shortage, the ALP proposes policies to “boost the early childhood workforce”, including paying the TAFE fees for all child care trainees at TAFE, and paying half the HECS of early childhood teachers who will work in areas of need, including rural areas and disadvantaged areas in cities.
- The ALP promises Commonwealth funding of \$450 million per year when universal access is achieved. They also promise that fees and charges for parents will not increase as a result of the expansion of learning programs;
- The ALP will also develop an Early Years Learning Framework, expand early childhood infrastructure and transfer responsibility for early childhood into the Commonwealth Department of Education.
- They also propose funding an additional 260 child care centres, and offered a commitment to making child care more affordable.

ALP policy documents are available from the party’s website:

[www.alp.org.au/policy/index.php](http://www.alp.org.au/policy/index.php)

### ALP policy documents

A New Partnership with Indigenous Australians (*New Directions: An equal start in life for Indigenous children*) (May 2007)  
 New Directions: Literacy & Numeracy (*New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds*) (January 2007)  
 New Directions for Children’s Health & Development (April 2007)

### Contacts

The ALP’s Indigenous Affairs spokesperson is **Jenny Macklin, MP**, the Shadow Minister for Families & Community Services, Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

#### Parliament House:

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## Liberal-Nationals Coalition (Coalition of the Liberal Party of Australia and The Nationals)

As the incumbent government much of the material from the Liberal-Nationals Coalition is stated in government reports and initiatives funded through the Federal Budget. SNAICC has identified material from the most recent Federal Budget and a number of government websites to provide readers with access to current government information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and programs.

### Information from the Prime Minister’s website

The Liberal-Nationals Coalition lists a number of its initiatives from their current term of government that they believes have contributed to improving the well being of Indigenous Australians. In particular, the Prime Minister’s website points to:

- “Falls in the rates of Indigenous deaths from respiratory illness, infectious and parasitic diseases and the infant mortality rate.
- More Indigenous children completing school and achieving better results in literacy and numeracy.
- Lower Indigenous unemployment, more job placements, more business start-ups and more Indigenous Australians owning their own home.
- A significant fall in the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody.”

The Prime Minister’s website also states: “In 2005/06, expenditure on Indigenous-specific programs and services across government was over \$3.1 billion (a 30% real increase since 1995/96). Significant steps have been taken to get better value for money from this expenditure, including:

- Abolishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) so that government deals directly with Indigenous Australians.
- Transferring ATSIC programs, service delivery (and accountability) to mainstream agencies.
- Coordinating the work of Government agencies to make it easier for Indigenous Australians to deal with government.
- Introducing Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs). SRAs are developed at a local level between government, Indigenous communities or families spelling out what all partners will contribute to bring about good outcomes. At October 2006, 192 SRAs had been developed in 149 regional and remote communities.”

Website of Prime Minister of Australia,  
John Howard: Key achievements and current  
issues facing the government

[http://www.pm.gov.au/government/  
indigenous\\_australians.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/government/indigenous_australians.cfm)

## Budget 2007

In its 2007 budget announced in May this year, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition government announced a number of measures targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services.

These included early childhood targeted measures, mainly through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), such as:

- "Expansion of playgroups for Indigenous families: \$13.8 million for more playgroup services and to develop Indigenous parenting skills.
- Improved access to child care and early childhood services: \$23.5 million to establish 20 new Innovative Child Care Service Hubs [for 700 additional children] in rural and remote communities and to provide support for existing child care centres to improve services and improve access to mainstream programmes." (FaCSIA indicates that, "Support for existing services will improve the quality of care provided to approximately 840 children and enable their families to claim Child Care Benefit.")
- "\$37.4 million for home visits by health professionals and support teams for children aged 0–8 in outer regional and remote areas". (the Health@Home Plus programme under the Department of Health and Ageing.)

The government will also provide \$16.5 million over four years for FaCSIA to assist "those Indigenous child care services affected by the 1 July 2007 CDEP closures in urban and major regional areas".

Also, over the next four years FaCSIA will identify "Indigenous child care services in other priority areas that are being subsidised by CDEP to fund workers" and assist them "to transition".

**Note:** SNAICC has argued for increased funding for Indigenous child care services and playgroups in the lead up to the 2007 Federal budget and commended the government for these additional commitments – see SNAICC media release [www.snaicc.asn.au/news/  
MediaALPpolicy07.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/MediaALPpolicy07.html)

The Liberal-Nationals Coalition government also identified funding for health, housing, family violence prevention and education initiatives for Aboriginal and

## Changes to when the Electoral Roll closes Are you eligible to enrol to vote? Are your details on the electoral roll up-to-date?

There have been changes to when the electoral roll closes!

This information is from the **Australian Electoral Commission** (AEC) website:

**"There have been important changes to the deadlines to enrol to vote, or to update your enrolment, for federal elections.**

**If you are not enrolled, or you haven't made sure that your name or address details on the electoral rolls are up to date, you risk missing out on being able to vote."**

Further information about the new deadlines for enrolling to vote, or updating your enrolment details, for federal elections (Close of Rolls) is available on the AEC website:

[www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Fact\\_Sheets/Close\\_of\\_Rolls.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Fact_Sheets/Close_of_Rolls.htm)

Torres Strait Islander children and families, including:

- \$293.6 million in additional Indigenous housing funding to tackle overcrowding in Indigenous communities
- from 2008–09 abolish the Community Housing and Infrastructure Programme (CHIP) previously managed by ATSIC and replace it with "a new expanded Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation (ARIA) Programme".
- \$177.4 million to assist young Indigenous people from remote areas to access training in major centres and to study at high performing schools and universities.
- an extra \$38.2 million for existing Indigenous primary health care, by "funding up to 45 additional health professionals, new and upgraded buildings and clinics in six rural and remote areas and business management training for 100 Indigenous health service managers".
- \$50.7 million for additional places in the CDEP programme "that provide activities to prevent family violence and substance misuse problems in Indigenous communities".

**Budget 2007:** the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) initiatives for Indigenous Affairs:

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/  
facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/budget/  
budget2007-budget2007.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/budget/budget2007-budget2007.htm)

## Contact

The Coalition's spokesperson on Indigenous Affairs is the Federal Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, **The Hon Mal Brough MP:**

## Parliament House in Canberra:

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Tel: (07) 5495 6290

Fax: (07) 5498 3307

Email: [mal.brough.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:mal.brough.mp@aph.gov.au)

Web: [http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/  
Minister3.nsf](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/Minister3.nsf)

## Other political parties

### Family First Party

<http://www.familyfirst.org.au/>

### Independents in the House of Representatives

Andren, Mr Peter, Member for Calare

<http://www.peterandren.com/>

Katter, The Hon Robert, Member for Kennedy

<http://www.bobkatter.com.au/>

Windsor, Mr Tony, Member for New England

<http://www.tonywindsor.com.au/>

### Other information

Information on other political parties registered with Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is available from the AEC's website:

<http://www.aec.gov.au/>

**What do other community organisations say about the priorities for this election? See page 16**



Above: The SRS team (from left) SRS Clearinghouse Officer Tatiana Doroshenko, SRS Project Officer Nikki Butler, SRS Project Officer Rosie Elliott, SRS Programme Manager Veronica Johns, and SRS Evaluation Manager Liz Orr

The SRS work is getting deep into its operations, with many of the projects going full steam ahead and some producing resources that will shortly be landing on your doorstep.

## Projects

### Aboriginal Dreaming Stories publication

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and SNAICC are pleased to let you know about the "Dreaming Stories: A springboard for learning" publication that is being distributed through ECA. ECA subscribers, including 200 services from SNAICC's database, will receive their copy of the 'Research In Practice Series' publication in June 2007.

Others can order the resource directly from ECA (see the announcement below). We look forward to you receiving the publication and hearing your feedback.

### Promising Practices Profiles

Keep an eye out on the SNAICC Website for the Promising Practice Profiles resource. Nikki Butler from SNAICC and Jenny Higgins from AIFS are developing information booklets that present characteristics and profiles of promising practices in 'out of home' care. They will also travel across States and Territories to introduce and disseminate this resource through targeted workshops.

### Partners in Action Research and Evaluation (PARE)

Queensland and South Australia were identified as places to pilot this project. Planning is underway for the South

Australian project and the Queensland project is in full swing – the first workshop was held at Cherbourg in early July.

The Queensland PARE project is working with the early childhood Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Karen Martin, an Aboriginal Early Childhood Educator from the Queensland University of Technology, and three Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS). It is envisaged that the evaluation tools developed from this project will become accessible to all services through the SRS website.

### Support and Management (SaM)

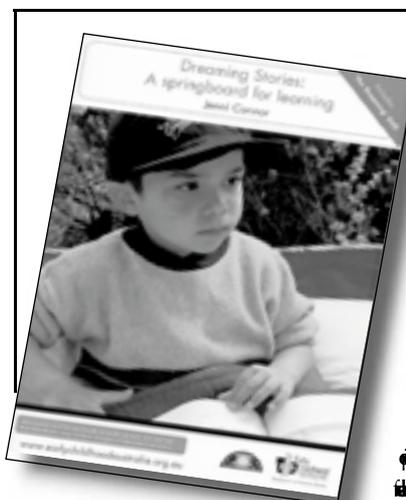
Through SaM two hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services will have online access (through the SNAICC website) to high quality resources, guides, tools, skill development opportunities and support to assist in areas of governance, management and operations of their service. SaM will also be a place

where services can share good stories and good practices that everyone can access. SaM will go 'live' in August this year.

### Early Childhood Communication Online (ECCO)

Approximately forty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services will have the opportunity to have

- 1) an audit done on their information technology systems,
- 2) identified any equipment, support and training needs,
- 3) a process in place for providing for some of their information technology needs,
- 4) online networks put in place to support services in their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.



### Dreaming Stories: A Springboard for Learning

Published by Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and SNAICC Cost: \$14.95

Developed by the SRS in partnership with ECA, this is a play-based teaching and learning resource for use in preschools, playgroups, child care and other early years services. It comprises a DVD of 13 animated Dreaming stories selected by the SRS and a booklet written by Jenni Connor to assist staff to explore concepts from the stories with children.

For more information, contact the SRS. To buy copies, contact Early Childhood Australia on their toll free sales line to order a copy: 1800 356 900.

You can also order it online: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/rip0702](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/rip0702)

Infoexchange Australia, our project partners, are currently undertaking audits in South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. These will be completed by the end of June before they move on to other states and territories.

### Foster carer booklets

A booklet for non-Indigenous foster carers who provide care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is near completion and is soon to be distributed through SNAICC.

*Foster our Culture* contains information and support to assist carers provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's cultural needs. The booklet also includes state and territory contacts and information.

### SRS Clearinghouse

#### Has your organisation made a resource you would like to share?

There is so much beautiful and useful work out there! Maybe you have made a poster, a photo magazine, recipes, healthy tucker menus, a booklet, game or story, a practical management tool, health and tips on well-being, a set of guidelines, training resources, maintenance manuals, how to use equipment, or how to upgrade equipment, shopping tips, cleaning tips, staff rewards, roster systems, drawing books, job descriptions, photography tips, playground equipment ideas, playground design, programming ideas, money matters, routines, communication ideas with staff, community, parents and children, IT tips, or good governance ideas.

Ring the SRS or go online at [www.snaicc.asn.au/srs](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/srs) to talk about how you can share your work with others across the nation.

#### Do you have a resource you want to produce or develop?

SNAICC wants to hear from services and communities about what assistance we could provide under our four SRS priority areas. This assistance might include resource materials we could develop or source funding for, or support we could offer to service providers.

### Evaluation and Feedback

Following are some sample comments about what people have said about the SRS Men and Parenting Posters and how people are using them:

- "Fantastic to have pictures focusing on men: the roles of fathers, brothers, uncles, sons, grandfathers etc."
- "We will use the posters to make families, particularly men, welcome to our service".
- "Positive projections of Aboriginal men work towards dispelling myths and creating role models in our communities".
- "Will be of benefit for the "just for dads" program currently being developed".
- "Great messages and images, powerful and well presented".
- "The family snap shots mixed with traditional art work really works".
- "Many of the faces are serious or worried"
- "There is so much focus on unhealthy relationships with fathers and children and even though I manage a domestic violence service I like to promote positive male role models and fathers".
- "Use them to promote literacy workshops – for fathers to be involved".

There is no single recipe for good evaluation, however there is one key ingredient and that is to give voice to the participants for whom the projects are by and for. We want to hear it all... the good, the bad, the ugly and of course the deadly – so please keep on telling us what you reckon about the SRS and its work.

For information on the SNAICC Resource Service work, its projects and publications please check out the SNAICC website [www.snaicc.asn.au/srs](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/srs) or contact me on tel: (03) 9489 8099.

by **Veronica Johns,**  
SRS Programme Manager



One of the SRS's National Men and Parenting posters. More information on these posters is online.

## Welcome to new SNAICC staff



### Rosie

Hello everyone, my name Rosie Elliott. I began work as a Project Officer with the SNAICC Resource Service this April.

I've worked for many years in remote NT health and family services. My recent work has been a timeline poster of NT Aboriginal health and community workers and producing the *Kids Tracks* newsletter about Territory Aboriginal child and family well being services. This work has been all about telling stories, networking, praising up the good things people do and letting the voices and faces shining through.

I'm proud to be now working for SNAICC – developing resources of all sorts and I really like the cool Melbourne weather, but I do miss those big NT hearts. Luckily, my SNAICC SRS manager is Veronica Johns, so the NT never feels very far away.

I will be the main SRS Project Officer working on the SaM (Support and Management online) project. (For details see page 12).

As part of this two-year-long SaM project, I will be ringing many of SNAICC's members and subscribers to see how they are making use of SaM and the extent to which it has helped them and their staff. I will also be asking these services if they would also like to link to, or develop some simple webpages linked to, the SNAICC Resource Service web pages.

Since most services receive *SNAICC News*, I am look forward to talking to many of you over the coming months!

# Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) Launch

by Veronica Johns, SRS Programme Manager

The Department of Family Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) recently launched the Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) program. IPSU Programs from across states and territories participated in the launch and had opportunities to meet each other and other services involved in the Child Care Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

Ray Burrows, Director of Gundoo Day Care Centre at Cherbourg, QLD, and a member of the SNAICC National Executive, was a guest speaker at the launch. Accompanying Ray from Cherbourg were two members of their Management Committee: President, Ms Elvie Sandow and Vice-President, Mr Rory Boney.

## Following are snippets of information edited from Ray's speech:

"The IPSU program is an integral part of the new Child Care Inclusion and Professional Support Program designed to take a linked-up and consistent approach to inclusion and professional support for child care services and workers, and give them better access to the support they need to provide high quality care to all children. The program comprises three main elements: the Indigenous Professional Support Unit, the Professional Support Co-ordinator, and the Inclusion Support Agency.

Our centre could never have reached the heights of providing high quality child care to the children of our community without the support of professional bodies such as our very own IPSU, previously known as ICSU, the Indigenous Children's Services Unit.

With the extra funding that has been provided by the government to expand especially our IPSU services, more staff from Indigenous centres will be able to participate in professional development activities, and be able to share their cultural experiences with others in their profession. These experiences can then be used to enhance the cultural learning experiences in our child care centres, playgroups, family day care centres, outside school hours care facilities etc. IPSU will help



Top: Ray Burrows, Director of Gundoo Day Care Centre at Cherbourg, QLD, speaking at the launch.

Middle (L to R): Elvie Sandow, Rory Boney and Ray Burrows from Gundoo Day Care Centre, Veronica Johns, SRS Programme Manager (middle) and representatives from RACCSU North.

Below (L to R): Dawn Wallan and Kathleen Pinkerton of Yorganop (IPSU WA), Debbie Bond of IPSU SA, and Lynn Flemming (now formerly of Yorganop).

meet our identified needs of professional development, which include effective programming, especially cultural programs, developing policies and procedures, workplace health and safety issues, conflict management and team building, and effective financial management and administrative processes. The provision of these workshops will help our Indigenous workers gain more confidence in themselves and thus result in an increase in our retention rates of Indigenous workers.

Our expanded IPSU is going to be able to provide many more services for our centres. One of our biggest drawbacks is remoteness, which does not necessarily refer to distance. Technology can help overcome this, but centres will need financial assistance in acquiring this technology and training in effectively using it. Face-to-face meetings, service visits, and local seminars and workshops are very valuable in disseminating valuable information to our workers. It also gives the project officers a firsthand insight into the difficulties faced by our workers in delivering their programs.

One of the greatest services provided by our IPSU is its ability to provide resources on loan to our child care services. These resources have a great impact on our children, and to see their happy, smiling faces when they are first introduced to

a new resource, possibly one which the service could never have afforded, is just astounding. Because of the need to keep providing affordable child care to our communities, despite the high increases in expenses, especially wages increases, our services are finding it extremely difficult to provide these new resources for our children, and thus this IPSU service will be well utilized.

The IPSU will also help provide professional assistance to our centres in gaining quality assurance and accreditation that may be required by all centres in the near future. It would be hoped that they would be involved in the development of an accreditation process suitable for Indigenous centres.

In concluding I wish to congratulate the Department of FaCSIA and the Minister, the Honorable Mr Mal Brough, on funding our new Indigenous Professional Support Unit which is going to be a wonderful asset to the Aboriginal and Islander child care services, and indirectly mainstream child care services throughout Queensland, and look forward to the release and implementation of the National Indigenous Child Care Plan by the Minister, which can also have a positive impact on the provision of high quality early childhood education and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children throughout Australia." ●

# The Way Forward – A Ten Point National Action Plan to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

**S**NAICC has developed this 10 Point Plan as part of our response to the federal government's intervention on child abuse in Northern Territory. The way forward from here is for the federal government to lead the development of a National Action Plan to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect within all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the support and involvement of states and territories, SNAICC and other representative Indigenous organisations.

This Action Plan must fund both short and long term measures and programs to reverse the over representation of Indigenous children in child protection and their under representation in early childhood services and education. This will require investment from all states and territories as well as the federal government.

To support the Action Plan, the federal government should convene a National Indigenous Children's Well Being and Development Taskforce including representation from all state and territory governments, SNAICC and other representative Indigenous organisations to develop measures for consideration at COAG. The Taskforce should report directly to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and oversee implementation of the Action Plan on a long term basis.

## SNAICC's Ten Point National Action Plan

**1. Safety is paramount – responsive child protection.** Allegations of child abuse and neglect must be investigated in a child-centred way. Ensure child protection systems are well resourced to respond when called upon to properly investigate and intervene where children are at risk of abuse or neglect.



### **2. Support for children – remove perpetrators not the children.**

Focus interventions on removing the risk and perpetrators from children rather than children from their families and communities. This requires extra funding and support for local community family support and counselling services and working in partnership with a child's extended family, family friends and local community services.

**3. Effective policing – speak up against violence and abuse.** Ensure the appropriate levels and forms of policing within communities are in place to enable people to speak out against violence and abuse without placing their own safety at risk.

**4. Early intervention.** Improve access to Indigenous community-based early childhood, childcare, family support and child welfare programs to support families to access help early and promote children's well being.

**5. Connections to culture.** Maintain children's rights to be connected with their extended family and community and their cultural and spiritual heritage – child removal is a last resort.

**6. Build on strengths.** All Aboriginal families and communities have strengths and capacity to support and nurture their children. Governments must do things *with* local communities, not *to* local communities. Recognise and build on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and kinship systems and develop workforce and community capacity.

**7. Healing and restoration.** Victims and perpetrators need access to a range of healing and therapeutic programs including alcohol and substance abuse rehabilitation, counselling and healing programs and family restoration programs to rebuild family relationships across generations.

### **8. Safe and healthy communities.**

Disempowered communities with woeful housing, extreme poverty, chronic alcohol and substance abuse, few early childhood programs or health services, no economic

base and inadequate schools are likely to have high rates of abuse and neglect. Well planned, large scale investment over generations is required to create safe and healthy communities for all Australian children.

**9. Listen and do what works.** Evidence on effective child protection systems from Australia and overseas demonstrates that community based and managed child protection systems achieve the best results. Governments should act on the best evidence and advice available – children deserve nothing less than a thorough response.

**10. A national response for a national emergency.** The Prime Minister has called child abuse in Aboriginal communities a national emergency – but the government has only developed a short-term response for the NT. The problem requires sustained national commitment from all states, territories, the Commonwealth and non-government agencies planned and monitored through a National Indigenous Children's Well Being and Development Taskforce.

SNAICC has written to Minister Brough and requested:

- That the federal government establish under COAG a national taskforce to lead the development of a national action plan as proposed and outlined by SNAICC
- That the NT Emergency Response Taskforce be immediately expanded to include a senior experienced child protection practitioner;
- That the federal government and the NT Emergency Response Task Force convene a national forum to hear the views of experts and stakeholders including Indigenous child and family welfare specialists on:
  - ♦ Maximising the impact of the emergency response with the NT;
  - ♦ Key areas for action in the development of longer term responses for the NT and all other states and territories.

SNAICC welcomes feedback on this and our other responses to the situation in NT. Please contact us on (03) 9489 8099 to share your ideas.



**Have you moved or changed your address details?  
Has your organisation changed its name?**

SNAICC receives a large number of returned mail due to incorrect postal details each time a mail-out is done. It would assist us immensely if you let us know whether your details have changed or are about to change. Please complete this change of address slip and either fax or post it back to SNAICC, attention to Angelique Davis.

**Send this form to SNAICC at:**

PO Box 1445  
Fitzroy North, VIC 3068  
fax: (03) 9489 8044  
email: snaicc@vicnet.net.au

Please tick :

Yes, we would like to stay on the SNAICC database – please update our details.

OR

Please remove us from the SNAICC database.

Organisation:	
Contact person:	
Address:	
State:	Postcode:
Phone:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Website:	

**Privacy statement:** SNAICC collects this information for our records and activities, including to mail our publications. This information is treated with strict confidentiality and is covered by our Privacy Policy. For details on how we protect your privacy, see [www.snaicc.asn.au/privacy.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/privacy.html)



You can find out what other community sector organisations are saying about the priorities for this federal election from their websites.

**ACOSS (Australian Council of Social Services)**

<http://www.acoss.org.au/>

ACOSS identifies what they believe are the budget priorities to meet Australia's socially equitable responsibilities:

Federal Budget Papers  
<http://www.acoss.org.au/Publications.aspx?displayID=1&subjectID=26>

**AIDA (Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association)**

<http://www.aida.org.au/>

**ANTaR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation)**

<http://www.antar.org.au/>

ANTaR's Healing Hands Campaign to improve Indigenous Health is part of the *Close the Gap* campaign

[http://www.antar.org.au/issues/healing\\_hands/](http://www.antar.org.au/issues/healing_hands/)

**CAFWAA (Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia)**

<http://www.cafwaa.org.au/>

**Early Childhood Australia (ECA)**

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

ECA has published information and comment on the federal budget and the opposition's policy announcement:

May 2007 – ECA response to Budget  
[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/early\\_childhood\\_news/may\\_2007\\_early\\_childhood\\_australia\\_response\\_to\\_budget.html](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/early_childhood_news/may_2007_early_childhood_australia_response_to_budget.html)

Jan 2007 – Federal Opposition unveils new early childhood education initiative

[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/early\\_childhood\\_news/jan\\_2007\\_federal\\_opposition\\_unveils\\_new\\_early\\_childhood\\_education\\_initiative.html](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/early_childhood_news/jan_2007_federal_opposition_unveils_new_early_childhood_education_initiative.html)

**Online Resources**

**Other community sector organisations' and media websites**

**Families Australia**

[www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au)

**FAIRA (Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action)**

<http://www.faira.org.au/>

**NACCHO (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation)**

<http://www.naccho.org.au/>

**Oxfam Australia – Close the Gap**

Campaign on Indigenous health  
<http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous/health.php>

**Media**

Media outlets can provide access to information, opinion and analysis on the political parties' priorities and policies for the election, including online

**ABC**

[www.abc.net.au/elections/](http://www.abc.net.au/elections/)

**SBS**

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

**Do you have extra early years' NAICD posters?**

SNAICC member Yorganop Aboriginal Child Care, of Perth, WA, would like to know if other SNAICC members and subscribers have extra copies of the National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day posters from **1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992** and **1993**.

The posters from these years are missing from their collection of NAICD posters, and they are happy to exchange extra copies of their posters for those missing from their current collection.

Please contact **Kathleen Pinkerton** at Yorganop if you have extra copies to share or exchange:

**telephone (08) 9321 9090**