



Fundraising dinner a great success

The VACCA Choir — Koorie Tiddas (pictured) were part of an iconic line-up of musicians that performed at a memorable SNAICC fundraising dinner in Melbourne on 22 November. See the back page.



SNAICC AGM and Members' Forum

The 2012 SNAICC AGM and Members' Forum were held in late November in Melbourne. The forum, hosted by the Korin Gamadji Institute at the Richmond Football Club, gave members the opportunity to come together to discuss major issues impacting on our children and families. See pages 12 and 13.

Sharron Williams elected as new SNAICC Chairperson

Sharron Williams was elected as interim Chairperson of SNAICC at its Annual General Meeting in Melbourne on 23 November, replacing Dawn Wallam.

A Narungga-Kurna woman, Ms Williams lives in Adelaide and is the CEO of Aboriginal Family Support Services, the peak Aboriginal social welfare organisation in South Australia.

Ms Williams has been a member of the SNAICC National Executive since 1999 and was elected SNAICC Deputy Chairperson (Child Welfare) in May 2011.

Ms Wallam, who has led SNAICC since May 2011 and is the CEO of Yorganop Association in Perth, has stepped down as chairperson due to work commitments

but will remain on the SNAICC National Executive.

In other election news from the AGM, Bill Pritchard was elected SNAICC Deputy Chairperson (Child Welfare) to fill the vacancy created by Ms Williams's election as chairperson.

A member of the National Executive since May 2011, Mr Pritchard is the CEO of AbSec, the peak body in NSW for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Geraldine Atkinson was re-elected as Deputy Chairperson (Early Childhood). The Chairperson of Lulla's Children and Family Centre at Shepparton (Victoria), Ms Atkinson has served on the National Executive since 1999.



Ms Sharron Williams

Lisa Coulson was elected as Secretary of SNAICC, replacing Desley Thompson. Ms Coulson is Director of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Association (TACCA) in Launceston and has been on the National Executive since 2001.

Continued on page 2



frankly speaking

Welcome to 2013! After an eventful past 12 months, SNAICC is heading into a special year — our 30th anniversary and a year full of challenges and promise.

Here are a few of the things SNAICC will be focused on, in addition to the full run of the work we are already doing.

Supporting our members across the country remains our major priority, particularly after changes of governments at the state-territory level that have created more challenges for many in out sector. In the Northern Territory and Queensland new governments have made significant cuts to community sector which will have a major impact on vulnerable children and families.

As SNAICC and others have said repeatedly, these are false economies

that will lead to greater costs in future — both human and financial — for out-of-home care, juvenile justice and prisons. Common sense would suggest (and much research demonstrates) that budgets for preventative work with children and families should be increased not cut.

In the same vein, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control of policy and services being delivered to our children and families is not only a fundamental right, but also the bleeding obvious way to go, if people and communities are to be supported to assume responsibility for their own affairs.

As long as governments and others refuse to let go of control and provide the necessary support, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will remain dependant, inexperienced with the dominant cultures systems and processes — and, therefore, subjugated.

SNAICC will continue to advocate on this urgent issue, as it remains perhaps the greatest single barrier to progress for Indigenous peoples in Australia and around the world.

SNAICC will continue to work with the United Nations and other international bodies to link these discussions and research findings, enabling us to build on the evidence base we use to put our case.

2013 will also see the SNAICC Conference held in Cairns. Interest to date suggests we can expect around 1000 people — making it the biggest event of its type in the southern hemisphere. The program is already building into a very interesting range of practical and policy presentations featuring renowned national and international experts (see pages 14-15).

SNAICC is leading a national campaign on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (see page 7). Several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations are going to work in unison, and as much as possible in partnership with governments, to better understand the issues and propose ways to change the current serious situation.

In 2013, a federal election will be held, one that could impact greatly on SNAICC and the work of this sector. We will be working hard to ensure that all politicians understand our issues and have the evidence on which to base their policies.

I look forward to 2013 and hope you can join us in furthering the work needed to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families have to opportunities to grow up safe and develop the skills necessary to have productive and rewarding lives.

Frank Hytten, SNAICC CEO
frank.hytten@snaicc.org.au

Sharron Williams new SNAICC Chairperson

Continued from page 1

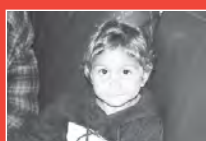
Garry Matthews was re-elected as Treasurer. On the National Executive since 1999, Mr Matthews is the CEO of Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre (Abcare) based on the NSW north coast.

SNAICC has two new National Executive members following elections held late in 2012 — Lisa Thorpe and Maureen Mossman.

Lisa Thorpe is the Chairperson of Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Aboriginal Children and Family Centre at Thomastown, in Melbourne's north; Maureen Mossman is a Director of Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns.

SNAICC extends a warm welcome to Lisa and Maureen!

In this issue...



Prime Minister names Royal Commissioners 3

New centre at Halls Creek looks to become a one-stop shop 4

Budget cuts a major blow to children and families in NT 5

Victoria on the way to Aboriginal guardianship 6



National campaign to reduce number of children in child protection system 7

SNAICC wins Indigenous Governance Award 7

Workshop on Budget Based Funding program 8-9

Sharing, caring and learning at Thursday Island centre 10-11



Queensland inquiry shifts focus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children 11

2012 SNAICC AGM and Members' Forum 12-13

Latest news on 2013 SNAICC National Conference 14-15



Indigenous Professional Support Units meet in Alice Springs 16

Check out the free training workshops! 17

New handbook and poster to support the Home Interaction Program for parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) 18

The Learning Games: a fun new activity for children 19

SNAICC fundraising dinner a big success 20

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images of people who may have since passed away.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has named six commissioners to undertake the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The panel includes Professor Helen Milroy, a descendant of the Paliku people of WA and Australia's first Aboriginal psychiatrist.

The Royal Commission will be led by Justice Peter McClellan, the Chief Judge at Common Law of the Supreme Court of NSW.

The other Royal Commissioners are:

- Bob Atkinson, a former Queensland Police commissioner
- Justice Jennifer Coate, a Judge of the Family Court of Australia
- Robert Fitzgerald, a commissioner in the Productivity Commission, and
- Andrew Murray, the former Democrat Senator for Western Australia.

SNAICC has welcomed the appointment of Professor Milroy, who is Winthrop Professor and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health at the University of Western Australia.

Professor Milroy has extensive clinical experience in working with children and adolescents who have suffered child abuse and is an expert on recovery from trauma and grief.

"Professor Milroy will bring great experience and expertise to this important inquiry," SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams said.

Ms Williams said SNAICC — in a joint submission with National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) — had called for the inclusion of an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Commissioner and was pleased that the Australian Government had named Professor Milroy among the Commissioners.

"We believe Professor Milroy's appointment is a crucial step in ensuring the effective participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims in the Royal Commission," Ms Williams said.

Ms Williams said it was imperative the Royal Commission's processes enable a comprehensive review of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who were forcibly removed by State and Commonwealth past protection and segregation policies.



Professor Helen Milroy

PM appoints Royal Commissioners for inquiry on child sexual abuse

SNAICC and NATSILS had called for the terms of reference to specifically mention the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and to recognise the continuing impact of past protection and segregation policies.

"SNAICC is concerned that there is no specific reference to those experiences. The impact still being felt — for example, in the disproportionate levels of children being removed from their homes," Ms Williams said.

However, she said SNAICC was pleased the terms of reference seek to ensure appropriate services and support are available for victims that come forward and any trauma they experience in discussing their abuse — as called for in the joint SNAICC-NATSILS submission.

"It is critical that further damage is not inflicted on victims of sexual abuse by the Royal Commission's investigations and that their testimonies will be treated in the appropriate way.

Ms Williams said it was important that the Royal Commission learns from the findings and lessons of past inquiries, such as the 1997 Bringing them Home report, particularly in putting in place mechanisms to ensure its eventual recommendations are implemented in full.

"Commitments need to be made now to implement the recommendations,

"We believe Professor Milroy's appointment is a crucial step in ensuring the effective participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims in the Royal Commission."

**— Sharron Williams,
SNAICC Chairperson**

to ensure respect for those people — particularly members of the Stolen Generations — that have told their stories again and again and for whom little action has followed," she said.

"In fact, SNAICC would urge that the inaction in relation to outcomes of past inquiries should be a subject of consideration for this Royal Commission."

The Royal Commission will focus on "systemic failures and issues" in the response of organisations and institutions to the sexual abuse of children. It will not deal with cases of sexual abuse within the family.

Under its terms of reference, the commission will end on 31 December 2015, although this date may be extended.

The commission will produce an interim report by the end of June 2014.

Robert Reichel has a vision for the Ningkuwum-Ngamayuwu Aboriginal children and family centre he manages at Halls Creek, a small town in the East Kimberley region of WA.

“We want this to be a family-friendly place that people feel comfortable in attending to get a range of services and help — what we’re trying to deliver is an integrated model,” says Robert.

“To make sure that when an Aboriginal person walks in the door, no matter who they are or what place they come from, that without them leaving, they can get the help they need.”

The children and family centre at Halls Creek has been operating since January 2012.

It is one of 38 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and family centres being established across the country by the Australian Government in partnership with state-territory governments.

The centre is a joint venture between the Wunan Foundation — an Aboriginal development organisation and the lead agency in the partnership — Little Nuggets Early Learning Centre and Save the Children Australia.

The facility consists of three separate areas: the licensed child care area is in the middle, while on either side are the medical consulting rooms and the family centre, which contains a dedicated education and training area.

Robert’s aim is to create a ‘one-stop shop’ for Aboriginal children and families in Halls Creek, bringing as many existing services together in one place to change what he calls a “fragmented” delivery of services in the town.

Breaking down the barriers

He believes a one-stop facility would help break down the barriers to accessing services which sees, for example, only 20 per cent of Aboriginal residents in the Halls Creek area currently accessing medical services.

Robert says a priority for the centre in 2013 will also be to identify and close major gaps in the provision of services. He says providing more and better-structured support programs for parents and carers (such as grandparents) is one such gap that needs addressing.

Little Nuggets, which has provided child care services for the past eight years, runs



A playgroup at Halls Creek. Playgroups are held every day to help meet the needs of children and families.

Creating a ‘one-stop shop’ for families in East Kimberley

as a separate entity with assistance from Wunan. The child care service has five full-time staff and six casual early education officers. Little Nuggets has places for up to 60 children, but is currently providing services for 20 to 25 children.

Halls Creek has a population of around 1400, with Aboriginal people representing 75 per cent of the population. It’s a fast growing and young population — Robert estimates there are 300 children in the area — and has a high proportion of young mothers.

The demographics create a huge challenge to meet the needs of families and children — a challenge made bigger by the low incomes and high unemployment rates of Aboriginal residents at Halls Creek.

Adding to the challenge is recruiting qualified child care workers, which Robert says is a difficult task for a number of reasons, including the remoteness of Halls Creek and a lack of accommodation for prospective staff.

The centre is working hard to secure Child Care Benefit (CCB) funding to be able to offer subsidised child care fees so that more children can attend the service.

According to Robert, Wunan’s aim is to build the capacity of Little Nuggets as a viable business so that it can eventually take over running of the whole centre.

A lack of certainty in government funding beyond June 2014 is a major obstacle in realising the goals of Little Nuggets and the children and family centre as a whole.

The uncertainty is making it even harder to recruit staff and to attract existing

services to use the facility as their base if they potentially have to relocate in 18 months’ time.

Creative solutions to meet needs

Budget restrictions and a shortage of staff have led to creative initiatives to meet the needs of families, such as holding playgroups which come at no expense to families.

“What we quickly realised is that we must broaden our approach to early education and we chose the playgroup model,” Robert says.

“This year we’ve been able to expand from three to five days a week. We’ve employed five Aboriginal women to run those programs and, in consultation with other agencies, we’ve broadened it so that we have a different focus on each day of the week.”

In an informal setting, the playgroups deal with a range of issues — from early education to medical, legal and housing issues, nutrition, language, culture, art and music.

“We’ve had some fantastic success there,” Robert says.

“Some of the women that have come on board as playgroup leaders are showing great leadership potential, now they’ve been given the opportunity to express it.

“They are passionate about what they’re doing and reaching out to the kids and their own people, all local Aboriginal women. They are feeling very good about being able to learn themselves and then teach others how to raise their kids in a better way.”

Budget cuts a major blow to children and families in the NT

SNAICC believes the NT Government's decision to halve the budget of peak body SAF,T (Strong Aboriginal Families, Together) is a backward step and a major blow for the territory's vulnerable Aboriginal children and families.

The cuts to SAF,T are part of the Mills Government's decision to reduce funding in the community sector by nearly \$5m, including the NT Council of Social Service and NAPCAN NT. SNAICC shares the deep concerns of the Australian Council of Social Service that these measures will severely impact on the lives of the most vulnerable Territorians.

Set up just 14 months ago, SAF,T represents something the Territory has never had before: an Aboriginal voice to advocate on behalf of our children, families and communities.

In slashing SAF,T's budget, the Government has weakened that voice, threatening the agency's viability and at the same time weakening an important link between Aboriginal communities and government. The budget cuts will also greatly reduce SAF,T's capacity to deliver much-needed and culturally-appropriate family support services.

SNAICC believes the Government has acted in great haste and not given the peak body a chance to take the lead in developing solutions and tackling the many serious and entrenched issues faced by Aboriginal children and families — the Territory's most disadvantaged citizens.

The setting up of SAF,T was one of the far-reaching reforms following the inquiry into the NT's child protection system carried out by Howard Bath, Muriel Bamblett and Rob Roseby.

Their inquiry found a child protection system unable to cope: children in the NT, and particularly Aboriginal children, were "significantly disadvantaged and exposed



Cuts to SAF,T and the community sector will impact severely on Aboriginal children and families — the most vulnerable Territorians.

to more harm than their counterparts in other jurisdictions."

"Children in the Northern Territory are more likely to be raised in unsatisfactory environments and to be exposed to various forms of harm such as exposure to family violence, alcohol and drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse and neglect," the heads of the inquiry wrote.

They called for immediate action, including a greater investment in staffing resources for statutory child protection and out-of-home care services.

A new collaborative approach

And they called for a new collaborative approach across government, NGOs and Aboriginal communities to deliver integrated support services dealing with both the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect.

Their recommendations to improve the safety and wellbeing of children were also based on the need for a bipartisan commitment to long-term change.

That is, the issues facing Aboriginal children and families are so serious and entrenched that they must be elevated beyond the realm of party politics and ideologies.

However, it seems the NT Government is intent on dismantling some of the most important reforms emanating from the Bath inquiry.

As well as the cuts to SAF,T, the Government has devolved the stand-alone Department for Children and Families, set up only 18 months ago, into the Office of Children and Families and formed a new department which includes education.

"These cuts are a 'false economy' that may relieve budget pressures in the short-term, but will lead to immense human and financial costs down the track."

It has also abolished the External Review and Monitoring Committee set up to oversee the inquiry's recommendations, which were accepted in full by the previous government.

In a separate decision, but with serious consequences for all Aboriginal citizens — including children and families — the Government has abolished the Office of the NT Coordinator General, whose first report found an urgent need to review the way government services are delivered in communities.

Progress stalled

The Government has said new priorities and the need for financial restraint are at the heart of its recent cuts. On the second issue, SNAICC is in vehement agreement with the former Coordinator General and NGOs in the child welfare sector: these cuts are a 'false economy' that may relieve budget pressures in the short-term, but will lead to immense human and financial costs down the track.

In SNAICC's view, the NT Government's actions will stall the progress the reforms to child protection have made in the past 12 months and will lead to a loss of confidence in Aboriginal families and organisations.

Aboriginal guardianship will soon become a reality in Victoria, allowing Aboriginal people to once again “look after their own.”

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) has been working to introduce Aboriginal guardianship for Aboriginal children since this possibility was first established in legislation seven years ago.

According to the CEO of VACCA, Muriel Bamblett, Aboriginal guardianship is a most significant step in achieving a service system for Aboriginal children based on the principle of self-determination.

It means that if the parent of an Aboriginal child can no longer be his/her guardian, then the child's guardian will be an Aboriginal person who understands and is proud of their Aboriginal culture and shares the aspirations for Aboriginal children that exist across Aboriginal communities.

For most children, their parent is their guardian. Sometimes, parents are not able to take care of their child and the child is at risk of being harmed. The responsibility for looking after these children is currently held by the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS).

This guardianship by government department has not been a positive experience for Aboriginal children and their families. Muriel Bamblett says there are some Aboriginal children under state guardianship who do not see or know their family; they do not know their Aboriginal community or their culture.

The relevant Victorian legislation — the Children, Youth and Families Act — enables the transfer of guardianship for an Aboriginal child from government to the CEO of an Aboriginal organisation.

For an Aboriginal child this means they will have a guardian who knows and is involved with them. Their Aboriginal guardian will make sure that they know their family, are connected to their culture and can access their country — wherever that is.

“We believe that this will make an enormous difference in our children's lives — our children will know who they are and where they belong. They will take pride



Victoria on the way to Aboriginal guardianship

in their cultural identity and will grow up strong and resilient,” Muriel said.

International experience

Aboriginal guardianship has been happening internationally, in Canada and New Zealand, for a number of years now. Last year, a delegation from Victoria travelled to Canada to see how this model worked.

“I was encouraged to see how effectively Aboriginal guardianship worked for children in Canada,” Muriel said.

“In the four provinces we visited, Aboriginal organisations delivered guardianship services to their own children; they had leadership and governance from community, support from government and a growing Aboriginal workforce.”

In Canada and New Zealand, experience shows that when Aboriginal people make their own decisions about what approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers.

VACCA has been chosen to introduce Aboriginal guardianship with a groundbreaking project that commenced in 2012. Over the next 12 months, VACCA will look after and make key decisions for a small group of Aboriginal children as if the CEO of VACCA was the child's guardian.

The Victorian project will give good grounding for the introduction of

Aboriginal guardianship across Victoria and will also answer some key questions like what resources and training Aboriginal organisations need to introduce Aboriginal guardianship.

A unique opportunity

For VACCA, the guardianship project means a unique opportunity to develop a service that is based on Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing and is focused on ‘growing up’ Aboriginal children safely and strongly connected to their Aboriginal family, community and culture.

“How we develop this Aboriginal guardianship service is in our hands,” Muriel said.

“There will be many challenges ahead; Aboriginal guardianship involves serious responsibilities for children. But when our children know who they are and where they are from, when they know about their culture and their Elders and our strong Aboriginal leaders, then they will be able to move into the future stronger, more supported and with confidence.”

Staff recruitment for VACCA's Aboriginal guardianship project will occur in February 2013. If you are interested in being on the team for this important project, please contact Julie Toohey on (03) 8388 1855.

For more information on the project contact Gabrielle Burke on (03) 9385 9000 or Gabrielleb@VACCA.org



Campaign aims to reduce high number of our children in child protection system

A national campaign is being planned to address the dramatic over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.

A team of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, led by SNAICC, has met with representatives from many major national and state-based peak organisations from across the sector.

A workshop was held in Melbourne on 21 November (pictured above) and discussions continued the next day at the SNAICC Members' Forum.

There was overwhelming agreement at both meetings that a campaign was urgently needed to break the cycle of persistent and systematic removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families, communities and culture.

There was unanimous support for the campaign's overall vision that:

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy and be proud of who they are.

The meetings generated some excellent ideas to promote this vision and keen interest from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies to be involved in the campaign's establishment.

It is hoped this interest will include providing some of the significant resources required to ensure the campaign is a success.

Those interested in supporting the national campaign can contact SNAICC directly or the Campaign Manager, Gillian Brannigan by email at gillian.brannigan@bigpond.com or on mobile: 0407 465 218.

Participants arrived at three campaign strategies: mobilising public support for change, resourcing communities and supporting respectful partnerships.

They agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, especially those who have been in out-of-home care, should be supported to help shape and lead a campaign that is:

- founded on an understanding of rights, culture and self determination
- informed by an understanding of the relationships between trauma, disadvantage and child abuse and neglect
- based on a holistic response to the needs of children and their families
- led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- enabled through partnerships with mainstream non-government organisations and governments, and
- sustained by long-term community development strategies and investment.

The initial task will be to establish networks of support to underpin coordination of the campaign, at both the national and state-territory levels.

SNAICC wins governance award



ABOVE: Chair of the awards judging panel, Professor Mick Dodson, with SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams (centre) and SNAICC Deputy Chairperson Geraldine Atkinson at the awards ceremony in Melbourne.

SNAICC has been recognised nationally for its leading governance work, winning the Highly Commended Award in Category A in the prestigious Indigenous Governance Awards (IGAs) in 2012.

SNAICC was one of five finalists in Category A of the Reconciliation Australia awards, which is "for outstanding examples of Indigenous governance in Indigenous incorporated organisations".

The main award in the category was won by the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPY Women's Council) in Alice Springs.

The Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, described SNAICC's award as a "testament" to its commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

"The contribution (SNAICC) has made to the development of culturally-relevant Indigenous service delivery has been outstanding," Minister Macklin wrote.

SNAICC will use the \$10,000 prize money to help fund its scholarships/traineeships program.

Reconciliation Australia received a record number of nominations in 2012 for its awards, which are held every two years in partnership with BHP Billiton.

SNAICC extends warm congratulations to NPY Women's Council and the other award winners in 2012.

Participants at the Melbourne workshop on BBF (from left) Amanda Walsh (DEEWR), SNAICC National Executive member Lisa Coulson, Sherry Sagers (Curtin University), Susan Nicolson (Australian Human Rights Commission) and Judy McKay-Tempest (Indigenous Professional Support Unit NSW & ACT).



Meeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood needs — what will it take?

In mid-2012 the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations (DEEWR) announced a review of the Australian Government's Budget Based Funding (BBF) program.

The BBF program provides vital funding to 269 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services around Australia. They represent 80 per cent of all BBF services and include long day care centres, out of school hours care, crèches, mobile children's services, playgroups and Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS).

These services usually operate from a strong, historical community base, providing accessible and affordable, community-controlled, culturally-competent early childhood care and family support.

SNAICC submitted a series of recommendations to this review, the most critical of which focused on the inadequacy of current funding and the detrimental effect this has had in limiting the support services are able to provide their communities.

SNAICC's submission also outlined the need for reframing the program to

ensure appropriate support for the large numbers of high-needs children in BBF services, and for a targeted, resourced and consistent funding program that meets the needs of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Workshop on future of BBF

Recognising that this review has the potential for enormous impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families across Australia, SNAICC then convened a workshop in November in Melbourne to enable a broad cross section of key stakeholders to develop concrete proposals for the future of the BBF program.

The workshop brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood service directors, representatives from key early childhood education and care (ECEC) peak bodies, academics specialising in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education, and Australian Government representatives.

Two members of SNAICC's National Executive — Geraldine Atkinson (Deputy Chairperson, Early Childhood) and Lisa Coulson — also participated in the workshop.

Over two days the group explored issues and opportunities around funding, program scope and eligibility requirements, operational issues and quality within BBF services.

Support for the BBF program was unanimous among workshop participants. However, the group recognised that significant improvements within the program and supports beyond it are also necessary.

Key recommendations were made to the Government, and a series of actions identified for SNAICC and the sector to take forward — see panel on page 9.

The workshop report also proposes the establishment of a federal department for children, a key 2012 recommendation to Australia from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

This department would support improved delivery of ECEC services to, and higher outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by research, monitoring, policy development and coordination efforts to ensure integrated government programs and policies for children in line with our national obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Continued on next page

Finally, the workshop explored the issue of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and its appropriateness for BBF services.

Participants recommended that DEEWR, in partnership with BBF services and the sector, host a workshop to explore the potential consistency or inconsistency of the components of the NQF with services in the BBF Program, and develop a paper for consultation on possible alternative approaches or adaptations of the NQF.

SNAICC understands that the Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care, Kate Ellis, is currently considering the outcomes of DEEWR's review of the BBF program, with an announcement on the next stage of the review process likely to come in the first half of 2013.

SNAICC will continue efforts to advance this critical issue through research and advocacy with the BBF Working Group, a committed group that emerged from the workshop and which interested others are welcome to join.

For more information, contact Holly Mason-White on (03) 9489 8099 or by email, Holly.Mason-White@snaicc.org.au

Two key recommendations from BBF workshop

Two critical recommendations aim to strengthen and better value the services that the BBF program supports, and draw in other funding sources to properly meet the program's objectives. These are:

- a review of the objectives of the BBF program to ensure that they better reflect current need and contexts, and to ground the program within the Council of Australian Governments's Closing the Gap and broader ECEC policy agenda, and
- the development of a transparent and flexible funding model, based on the core principles and philosophy of BBF services, that enables services to meet the needs of their communities, families and children. This could be a common model for integrated services that could be targeted for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC-related services.

Workshop discussions and emerging proposals identified a number of steps for Government to work towards

the development of a new model, including:

- nationwide mapping to identify service gaps and needs,
- facilitating trials of place-based early childhood services as a component of the second three-year action plan of the National Framework for the Protection of Australia's Children 2009-2020,
- establishing a Working Group comprised of academics, sector peaks, BBF service leaders and Government representatives to explore a principled place-based model that meets the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and that would combine resources from diverse funding streams, and
- economic modelling of the proposed model to determine and strengthen feasibility and cost-benefit outcomes.



MAIN PHOTO: Young Jacob Wunungmurra was an interested onlooker at the workshop. Jacob is the son of Alison Wunungmurra (pictured above) — an early childhood educator from the NT and former member of SNAICC's National Executive — who participated at the workshop.

ABOVE LEFT: Bridget Anyon (FaHCSIA) and Kate Oudyn from the Regional and Remote Children and Services Support Unit (RRACSSU) Central (IPSU NT)

ABOVE MIDDLE: SNAICC Deputy Chairperson (Early Childhood) Geraldine Atkinson

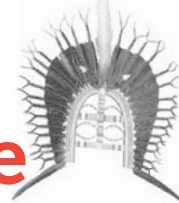


ABOVE: Director of the Thursday Island Child Care Centre, Agnes Fox.

RIGHT: Educators at TICCC (from left) Mapu Salee, Barbara Sagigi and Baiti Sagigi. Photos courtesy of Mark Roy and Torres News newspaper.



Sharing, caring and learning at TI centre



“The Torres Strait is going through a phase of strong cultural revival. There is much that people have lost. The children of today need to have a good understanding of what happened before.

“Part of reviving the culture is to know what happened in the past,” says Agnes Fox, director of the Thursday Island Child Care Centre, the largest such centre in the Torres Strait region. Agnes joined the centre in 2004 and has been working in children’s services since 1975.

“English is not the first language in the Torres Strait. The children at the TICCC are encouraged to be confident bi-lingual speakers,” says Agnes.

“Some staff members may not have experienced culture in its myriad colours as part of their childhood. For example, they must re-learn traditional songs to become confident in themselves before passing them on to the children.

“Last year when celebrating Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day, we invited a colleague to bring along her guitar and teach the educators some of the Torres Strait children’s songs. These songs incorporated hand and body movements.

“We were encouraged to learn the dance using the *kulap* shakers. To share some of the highlights with the parents we put up a photo display reflecting the Early Years Learning Outcomes, as well as themes around ‘Being, Belonging and Becoming’. The learning story focus was culture and music.

“‘Culture’ is what is inside all of us and linked to spirituality. Because I am living

on Horn Island, an inner island in the Torres Strait, I have to be respectful of Torres Strait culture and all the protocols as well as give respect to the Traditional Owners of the land. Non-Indigenous people who arrive here have to undergo cultural awareness — it’s the respect that we show to those who belong to the place,” says Agnes who is Indigenous and of PNG heritage.

The mission statement of TICCC relates to ‘sharing, caring and learning’: sharing skills and knowledge, caring for each other and learning that recognises everybody is a learner regardless of their position at the centre and no matter how menial the task.

The elements of teaching and caring are meshed into the program as staff establish a warm and trusting relationship with each individual child.

Agnes says staff encourage the children to share their ideas, experiences and feelings — and have a say in choosing activities — to foster their development.

TICCC provides 50 long day care places and 24 after school hours places. The centre employs 18 Indigenous staff and one non-Indigenous staff, some of whom commenced at the same time as Agnes and have benefitted from her mentoring. Some staff who started with Certificate III qualifications are now onto the Advanced Diploma.

Agnes firmly believes that Aboriginal and

Thursday Island, also known as TI or Waiben, is the administrative and commercial centre of the Torres Strait Islands, which lie north of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland.

According to the 2011 census, there were 5,787 people of Torres Strait Islander origin living on the islands, representing 77 per cent of the population for the Torres Strait region.

Torres Strait Islander influences in child care services are crucial to the success of meeting the desired outcomes for Indigenous children’s development and learning.

“It is an understanding of how people think, live, give and take, and still be firm, encouraging and patient. It is about respect.”

The local Torres Shire Council is the Approved Provider of the remote service.

“For a large centre we rely heavily on child care benefits and parents paying fees,” says Agnes.

“We do not get additional funds except some operational subsidies that are inadequate to develop programs to meet additional needs of the children.

“We organise fundraising events and have a recycling program. We are creative in

Continued on next page

The mission statement of TICCC relates to 'sharing, caring and learning': sharing skills and knowledge, caring for each other and learning that is recognising that everybody is a learner regardless of their position at the centre and no matter how menial the task.

PHOTOS: Children at TICCC enjoy a wide variety of learning experiences, including outdoor activities such as gardening; cultural activities include learning Torres Strait languages, traditional songs and dancing. The centre also has a transition program to prepare children for prep and primary school.

using and reusing materials — sometimes you have to do that. Also last year we installed solar panels. We've reduced our budget expenditure; we are trying to bring other agencies into the service to support us through partnership arrangements.

"We are looking at some of the cost savings. It's about being innovative in sustaining the service's quality care."

TICCC has a parent committee for the management of the service and a parent committee for the environment. Parents are included in the review of the all centre policies.

Part of the National Quality Standard relates to collaborative partnerships with families and communities. The centre involves parents at every opportunity face to face — whether it's filling in survey or permission forms, recording their requests, or providing them with encouragement to attend the settling-in time of the child.

"However, structural disadvantages such as affordability of housing, high cost of living, social problems can place child care on the backburner," says Agnes.

Communities plays a much-needed support role. TICCC is community-based and has a support network called "Friends of the Thursday Island Child Care Centre."



Links have been made with organisations as varied as Queensland Health, Child Safety and the police in addition to women's groups and not-for-profit organisations.

The centre also has an active link with the local high school. For example, During NAIDOC Week and on Harmony Day, students and community members and are invited to hold dance and music sessions with the children. On National Aboriginal and Islander Day last year, Year 11 and Year 12 students treated the children to a session of drumming.

"When we talk about building capacity within our community, it's important that we empower the community people themselves, people of 'the place'," says Agnes.

"I am a visitor here; it's been my home and my workplace since 1975. I am grateful and feel privileged to work and live in such a beautiful environment and to be able to work in children's services.

"The children in our care are provided with learning experiences that come from these natural environments. We couldn't ask for anything more."

Queensland inquiry shifts focus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry has commenced holding hearings in the Brisbane Magistrates Court in relation to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Queensland child protection system.

The commission has to date heard that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland are nearly nine times more likely to be subject to a protection order or an out-of-home care order than non-Indigenous children.

In its September 2011 report, *Losing Ground*, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak body (QATSICPP) reported 2,969 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in protective care in June 2010 — or 36.7 per cent of all children in care in Queensland.

At the current rate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will make up half of the child protection population by 2015, the peak body warned.

QATSICPP CEO Natalie Lewis was among nine witnesses to provide evidence to the inquiry in Brisbane.

Ms Lewis said the state's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle was sound but its implementation was inconsistent.

The inquiry was told non-Indigenous families were being reclassified as kinship carers under the principle, leading to serious question marks over compliance under the legislation.

QATSICPP argues cultural connection should be integral to the safety and well-being of Indigenous children in any placement.

Ms Lewis said the current system was "manifestly not working", based on the growing over-representation of Indigenous children. "We need to actually look at re-orienting the system and having a greater focus on family support and prevention if we're to make a difference going forward," she told the inquiry.



SNAICC

**AGM and Members' Forum
Korin Gamadji Institute,
Richmond FC, Melbourne
21-23 November 2012**

Members have their say on major children's issues

The SNAICC Members' Forum in late November gave members the opportunity to discuss important children and family issues with the SNAICC National Executive and raise the main points of these discussions with officers from two key Australian Government departments.

Two concurrent workshops were held to identify pressing issues in the child welfare and early childhood education and care sectors. Following the workshops, issues were canvassed with Ms Angela Hope and Dr Leanne Merrett from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and Ms Claire Brady from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

This article is a summary of the main issues that emerged at the forum.

Child welfare

A major issue discussed at the workshop was the need to improve implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) in the various jurisdictions across Australia.

Participants were concerned that, although the principle is enshrined in legislation in all state and territories, an increasing number of our children in out-of-home care are losing connection with family and culture.

Members said it was important the application of the principle was improved



*ABOVE: Participants at the early childhood sector workshop held as part of the Members' Forum.
RIGHT: The CEO of the NT peak body SAFT (Strong Aboriginal Families, Together), Josie Crawshaw, also attended the forum, contributing to the workshop dealing with child welfare issues.*

across the country, including making compliance requirements more stringent and uniform.

Another major topic was the National Framework for the Protection of Australia's Children 2009-20. The second phase of the plan (2012-15) has a specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children which aims to ensure the needs of our children and families are considered across all domains.

Members explored ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities could participate in the plan's implementation at a practical on-the-ground level.

Budget cuts to NT peak body Strong Aboriginal Families, Together (SAFT) were also a major discussion point at the workshop — which included SAFT CEO and SNAICC National Executive member Josie Crawshaw among the participants.

Although details of the cuts had not yet been officially announced, participants were concerned that any reduction to SAFT's budget would severely limit the agency's ability to advocate for, and deliver services to, Aboriginal children and families in the territory.

Another issue raised related to the need for greater inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies in the delivery of government services, many of which are currently being delivered by non-Indigenous organisations. Participants said awarding more government contracts to Indigenous agencies would confer many benefits to our families and communities.



Early childhood education and care

The major focus of discussions in this session was the current review of the Budget Based Funding (BBF) program being undertaken by the Australian Government.

Participants said the sector needed some clarity on anticipated directions for the program — for example, would the BBF review lead to a completely new program or a revision of the old?

Questions were raised about the inadequacy of BBF funding: Why doesn't BBF have a bigger pool of funding? Child Care Benefit (CCB) is uncapped, so why is BBF so limited?

It was noted that an incredibly high percentage of children attending BBF services have high needs — funding does not match these needs.

The point was made that there is no set formula for funding BBF services — some receive 20 per cent of operational funding, some 80 per cent.

Members called for the development of an equitable and consistent funding model to enable services to meet the needs of their communities, families and children.

Continued on next page



TOP PHOTO: SNAICC National Executive members Lisa Coulson and Garry Matthews (centre) with SNAICC Finance Manager Raj Kandiah.
ABOVE: New interim SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams (right) with fellow National Executive member Natalie Lewis and SNAICC CEO Frank Hytten.

Members said the introduction of the National Quality Standard (NQS) had led to an increase in work for staff, who were already pressed for time. While the Quality Measure does provide some support, this currently only applies to Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) and long day care centres.

Concerns were raised regarding penalties for non-compliance with NQS, which can be as high as \$20,000, and an apparent lack of consistency in penalties across the states and territories.

Cultural competence emerged as a major issue in discussions about the assessment process under the NQS. Members said the process needed to involve either Indigenous assessors or Indigenous mentors accompanying non-Indigenous assessors (which could be facilitated through IPSUs).

Members raised their concerns regarding funding after June 2014 for the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and family centres being established across Australia.

DEEWR advised that funding for the centres post June 2014 was being negotiated at state/Federal government level.



CEO of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, Richard Weston, was a guest speaker at the Members' Forum.

Richard (pictured above) told the audience that the Healing Foundation's work delves into areas in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that are often personal and emotional.

"There is no getting away from it," Richard said. "We necessarily in our work use numbers and statistics to describe the challenges that our people face.

"For example, in 2010 the Australian Bureau of Statistics told us that 8 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait population are members of the Stolen Generations and that 38 per cent of adults reported having a relative who was a member of Stolen Generations.

"These statistics are designed to help paint the picture of inequity. But for us as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people these numbers refer to heartfelt matters in our lives, in our families lives and in the life of our community or communities."

He said the Healing Foundation funded culturally-strong community programs, designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world view.

The agency was improving the social and emotional wellbeing of our people and communities by:

- developing the story of healing by funding healing programs
- raising the profile and documenting the importance of culturally-strong healing programs through research and evaluation, and
- building leadership and the capacity of communities and workers to deal with trauma through education and training.

For more information, go to:
www.healingfoundation.com.au

SNAICC
AGM and Members Forum
21-23 November 2012



SNAICC signs MOU with NATSILS

SNAICC and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at fostering closer links between the peak bodies.

The MOU was signed at the AGM by SNAICC CEO Frank Hytten and the NATSILS Chairperson Shane Duffy (both pictured above with Frank on the left).

Created in 2008, NATSILS represents all mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and advocates for law and justice reform and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The MOU seeks to:

- recognise in a positive, respectful and cooperative fashion that NATSILS and SNAICC activities comprise of many shared interests
- develop and encourage an open dialogue between NATSILS and SNAICC in the conduct of each organisation's work
- explore possibilities of collaboration where possible, including for example in advocacy, community education programs, or policy and law reform initiatives, and
- share resources where possible to improve the service value delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



5th SNAICC National Conference

For Our Children: Living and Learning Together

4 - 6 June 2013, Cairns



The 2013 SNAICC Conference to be held in the tropical surrounds of Cairns is less than five months away with registration scheduled to open in late February. The conference program will provide a great selection of presentations, workshops and discussions, with over 70 sessions available it promises to have something for everyone.

We are very pleased to announce that the conference — the biggest of its type in the southern hemisphere — will feature a number of national and international experts on children's issues.

Keynote speakers include Marta Maurás Perez, Kathy Guthadjaka (Gotha), Associate Professor Cynthia Kiro, Associate Professor Cindy Blackstock and Professor Judy Atkinson — see profiles on opposite page.

Pre-conference workshops

We will be offering a choice of two pre-conference workshops on Monday, 3 June (2-5pm) that will be held by two of the keynote speakers, Professor Judy Atkinson and Associate Professor Cindy Blackstock.

More information will be available in the registration brochure in late February.

Travel subsidies

There will be a limited number of travel subsidies available only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated organisations. Eligible organisations can only apply for one subsidy regardless of how many representatives attend. Travel subsidies will be released when registration opens and interested applicants can apply when they register.

For more information on travel and accommodation options visit the conference pages at www.snaicc.org.au/conference

Conference registrations

Registrations for the conference will open in late February. Full registration will include three days of conference sessions, materials, morning and afternoon teas, lunch and one ticket to the conference dinner at the Cairns Terminal Function Centre.

Pre-conference workshops will be available and evening social options will be also be offered during the conference for an additional booking fee. Some of the social options will include dinner and a film evening in the coastal Yarrabah community, an Inlet Sunset Cruise and a cultural experience and dinner at the Rainforestation Nature Park.

There will be a limited discount offer available to SNAICC members only and an Early Bird offer open to everyone.

The member's offer will close on 8 March 2013 and the early bird offer will close 29 March 2013. Standard rates will apply after this. Early Bird Registration Fees are:

Indigenous Organisations

Full three-day registration	\$600
One-day registration	\$240

Non-Indigenous/non-government organisations

Full three-day registration	\$800
One-day registration	\$290

Government organisations

Full three-day registration	\$1000
One-day registration	\$330

All fees are inclusive of GST.





Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities

Sponsorship is sought and opportunities are still available for the conference. Limited exhibitor and promotional opportunities are also available. For more information and to download the prospectus visit www.snaicc.com.au/conference or contact the SNAICC Conference Coordinator, Poppy Bervanakis at the SNAICC office (03) 9489 8099 to discuss.

SNAICC would like to thank the following supporters, sponsors and partners of our 2013 conference:

Government Supporters

Australian Government: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

NSW Government: Department of Family and Community Services

Government of South Australia: Department for Education and Child Development

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RAATSIC

Meet some of the keynote speakers...



Marta Maurás Perez (Chile): a member and Vice President of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and Special Rapporteur for Australia. She is a sociologist and independent consultant in social policy, human rights and international relations. Marta's attendance at our conference will provide an opportunity to reflect on the United Nations Committee's recommendations concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and highlight the importance of the right to culture, how change around the world is achieved from strength of culture and what this means for people living in communities in Australia.



Kathy Guthadjaka (Gotha) (Australia): a Gadjirrk Warramiri woman living at Gawa (north-east Arnhem Land). She worked as a teacher for over 40 years at Shepherdson College, and recently with her families established an independent school at Gawa. A strong advocate of bilingual education programs, Gotha is determined, and is succeeding in providing the best education possible for the children at Gäwa.



Associate Professor Cynthia Kiro (New Zealand): of Maori descent and the Head of the School of Public Health at Massey University, New Zealand. Cindy returned to Massey University following her term as the fourth and first female and only Maori to have held the position of Children's Commissioner in New Zealand between 2003-2009. With the pending appointment of Australia's first National Children's Commissioner, Professor Kiro will be share her expertise as the New Zealand Children's Commissioner and advise on how we can gain positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia.



Associate Professor Cindy Blackstock (Canada): this popular keynote speaker from our last conference will again be in attendance at our 2013 SNAICC Conference. Executive Director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) and Associate Professor, University of Alberta. A member of the Gitksan Nation, Cindy has worked in the field of child and family services for over 20 years and has published widely on the welfare and rights of First Nations children.



Professor Judy Atkinson (Australia): a Jiman and Bundjalung woman, Board Member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, Patron of the We Al-li Trust and former Head of the Southern Cross University's Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples. She was made an Emeritus Professor by Southern Cross University this year in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the area of Indigenous trauma, healing and recovery. As Head of Gnibi, Professor Atkinson developed unique courses designed to serve Indigenous peoples working at the grassroots level in their communities.

Indigenous Support Units meet in Alice Springs

By Jan Fleming,
RRACSSU (Regional
& Remote Aboriginal
Children & Central
Services Support
Unit) Central



In mid-November representatives from each state and territory (pictured above) travelled to Alice Springs to attend the National Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) Alliance meeting. Coming together on the Monday night for the welcome dinner it was great to catch up, after all it was six months since we had last seen each other.

We come together twice a year to share how we deliver professional development and support to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services. We come together to yarn, to learn from each other and to grow both personally and professionally.

The most important part of the meeting was the discussions, the focus on giving everyone the chance to talk about what they were doing that works, rather than focusing on negatives.

The meeting was focused on being very positive, about moving forward, and about the successes.

The sharing time was seen as very important by all participants and as an integral part of helping the different IPSUs provide better services and to provide a national picture.

We were lucky to be able to meet in a bush environment at a retreat called Campfire in the Heart. The vision of the retreat — "a place where people can gather to tell their stories, draw strength and sustenance from each other, and grow in their understanding of their life

in the Centre" — reflected the feelings of the National IPSU Alliance. We began and ended each day around our symbol of a campfire, a candle burning with one flame.

Highlights of the meeting included our meeting with SNAICC CEO Frank Hytten, who usually takes the time to talk with us.

Yamba the Honey Ant visited us and presented part of his new show, which has begun to travel to remote and regional Indigenous communities to deliver very important messages on health, hygiene and nutrition.

Everyone talked about what they were doing. For example, a service in Tasmania had a program that builds on children's interests and draws on connections to family and culture. They built shelters in the playground, had a campfire and all the families and kids came along. It became a cultural learning event for the service, families and the community.

Queensland showed a beautiful canvas which the services and IPSU in Queensland are painting showing the stakeholders and how they are all related. We were invited to paint something which symbolises our work.

NSW talked about its 'mathematics project' in partnership with Macquarie University and how many of the Indigenous educators have been increasing their students' knowledge of numeracy through a variety of games and activities.

The NT has developed a resource package on National Quality Standard that makes it easier to interpret for the staff of services.

"The meeting was focused on being very positive, about moving forward, and about the successes."

All states and territories shared innovative resources, projects and strategies which we will be able to use when we return to our homes.

One issue that emerged as important was the need to find ways to represent information to services in a visual way that can be work shopped in a more accessible and creative manner.

On a clear, warm night we travelled out to a sand dune out of town where we cooked up damper, had a barbeque tea and a lesson about the Southern night sky. It was a time to enjoy the calm and share our own stories, not just our professional ones.

From our meeting we have organised working groups in order to continue to grow as a national group and to be able to deliver stronger and better professional development and support to Indigenous early childhood educators and services.

Our final session was a drum beat session: working together as a team in rhythm to achieve a strong, harmonious beat.

At the end of the meeting, the candle was extinguished and passed to the next organiser. Farewells were said, gifts and good wishes exchanged. So everyone has returned to their homes with motivation to continue to improve what we do.

Free training workshops!

SNAICC is very excited to have been funded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation to provide 10 free two-day train-the-trainer workshops about how to use our fantastic 'Through Young Black Eyes' workshop kit.

The aim of these workshops is to promote the capacity building of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers across the sector. The workshops are designed to help workers plan workshops in their own community that encourage healing from and prevention of family violence, child abuse and neglect and building child-safe communities.

The 10 successful organisations chosen to host these workshops were selected following an expression of interest call in May 2012. We are very excited to announce that we will be visiting the following organisations over the next six months to provide them with their free two-day workshop:

- Wurli Wurlijang Aboriginal Health Service (Katherine, NT)
- Apunipima Cape York Health Council (Cairns, Qld)
- Bargumar Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and QATSICPP (Caboolture, Qld)
- Brewarrina Child & Family Centre (Brewarrina, NSW)



- Muloonimba Family Support (Raymond Terrace, NSW)
- Guuraama Women's Support Group (Caroona, NSW)
- Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (Echuca, Vic.)
- Mildura Aboriginal Corporation (Mildura, Vic.)
- Tangentyere Council Incorporated (Alice Springs, NT), and
- Aboriginal Family Law Service (Geraldton, WA).

The SNAICC training team kicked off these workshops in November with a visit to Wuri Wurlijang Aboriginal Health Service in Katherine, NT. Apart from one of our Melbourne facilitators struggling with the 40-degree plus temperatures, and an air-conditioner that ceased to function in the middle of night, the workshop was a big success.

Wurli Wurlijang partnered with The Smith Family to host the workshop,

attended by over 22 participants from organisations all over the Katherine region and Darwin.

The participants enjoyed learning how to use the Through Young Black Eyes workshop kit to develop their own workshops and how to adapt the abundance of activities to suit the particular needs of their communities.

There was plenty of networking and maybe just a little bit of dancing too! The SNAICC training team thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working with all the wonderful, deadly participants in Katherine, and are confident that they walked away from the workshop feeling inspired to implement their own local Through Young Black Eyes workshops.

We will start 2013 by visiting Muloonimba Family Support in Raymond Terrace, NSW, and look forward to continuing to deliver these deadly workshops across the country.

Didn't get a chance to submit your expression of interest? Don't despair! The SNAICC training team is still available to deliver other workshops to you. See our flyer in this newsletter, and contact Bec on (03) 9489 8099 or email rebecca.boss@snaicc.org.au for more information.

Check our website for more training opportunities and workshops: www.snaicc.org.au/training



Participants at the Katherine workshop held in November 2012.

As part of a three-year partnership with SNAICC, HIPPY Australia and the SNAICC Resource Service have jointly developed and launched the *HIPPY Cultural Awareness Handbook* and poster.

This close collaboration has produced a resource that is practical, engaging, HIPPY specific and culturally informative.

The SNAICC Resource Service has also developed and delivered training to HIPPY Australia staff and HIPPY site coordinators to support its implementation across the country.

The handbook and poster were launched in November 2012 at the national HIPPY training in Melbourne, attended by around 55 people from all over Australia.

Aboriginal educator and artist Victoria Doyle, a Gunai-Kurnai woman and also a HIPPY coordinator, was commissioned by HIPPY Australia to create the artwork that forms the cover of the handbook and the poster.

What is HIPPY?

The Brotherhood of St Laurence holds the license to deliver the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) across Australia, as part of a bigger international program that was developed by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

HIPPY is a two-year home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment program that supports parents and carers as their child's first and most important teacher. Parents and carers on the program receive activities and storybooks to use with their four- and five-year-old children. Importantly they are also supported by trained home tutors, who are usually also doing HIPPY with their four- or five-year-old child. Tutors work with parents and carers who then do HIPPY with their children.

There are 50 HIPPY sites throughout Australia, and a commitment from the Australian Government through DEEWR to extend HIPPY into a further 50 sites, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who wish to participate in the program.



From left: HIPPY staff members Nicola Mackenzie and Carmen Calleya-Capp with SNAICC manager Melissa Brickell and artist Victoria Doyle.

Doing the HIPPY, HIPPY SNAICC...

The artwork expresses the guiding principles of respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. The *Cultural Awareness Handbook* is aimed at supporting all HIPPY sites across Australia in their continued journey towards listening and learning more, and their ongoing reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The handbook (pictured right) contains lots of guiding information, tips, references, resources and activities to support the work of HIPPY.

"There were a lot of keen people involved in the project," says Melissa Brickell, Manager of the SNAICC Resource Service. Melissa, who managed the project and delivered the training, said the project was "only possible through the development of strong partnerships between HIPPY Australia staff, SNAICC staff and the HIPPY community".

Nicola Mackenzie, HIPPY consultant and part of the project team, said the program was committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across Australia.

"We value the partnership we have developed with SNAICC and we continue to find ways to strengthen the program in culturally appropriate ways and to meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families who wish to participate in HIPPY," says Nicola.



"We want to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who choose to do HIPPY in their family have access to culturally-appropriate materials as part of our program."

Included in the HIPPY materials are two Aboriginal storybooks, *Kuppi's Clever Surprise Plan* and *Merinya and Nupia*, that celebrate Aboriginal culture and community. Both books have been authored and developed in conjunction with Aboriginal people at two HIPPY sites.

"The inclusion of the Aboriginal stories strengthens the program for everyone. We hope they support the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the program, and the learnings of their children," Nicola said.

"We would anticipate that as more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities participate in HIPPY there will be more opportunities to work in partnership with sites to develop materials and for us to continue our valuable partnership with SNAICC."

Learning Games: a new fun resource



“The most important thing you can do to make these games succeed is to adopt the child’s attitude that playing is the best way to learn.”

The SNAICC Resource Service has developed the Learning Games, a series of simple, one-on-one exercises for engaging children aged between 0 and 3 in educational activities.

The activity sheets were adapted from the American Teaching Strategies resource to be culturally appropriate and relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The games are based on the philosophy that the most robust and beneficial learning for young children occurs in natural contexts, with loving caregivers, and involves activities that are fun.

The research

The Learning Games are based on the Abecedarian approach and are tested and proven games arranged to match the natural patterns of child development.

The Abecedarian approach is based on 30 years of research with at-risk children. Through the research, the investigators demonstrated benefits of early childhood education by developing simple tools, which increased children’s learning capacity, improved health, social and emotional wellbeing, employment prospects and other life outcomes.

Professor Joseph Sparling is the authority on the Abecedarian approach and its impact on children’s life outcomes.

In 2010 SNAICC brought Professor Sparling to Australia to undertake

a consultation process on the implementation of the Learning Games and the Abecedarian approach to early education and learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care services in Australia.

The feedback from these services indicated almost unanimous support for the project.

Using the Learning Games

The resource includes six activity sheets that can be played anywhere, any time. Each activity includes full-colour photographs and descriptions including how to play the game, what to expect from the child, how to engage the child and why the activity is so important.

The most important thing you can do to make these games succeed is to adopt the child’s attitude that playing is the best way to learn.

Your voice is also an important part of every game. Say what the child is doing. Name the things he touches. Let him know you’re proud of him. Your child will take in all this talk and, one day, surprise you with words of his own.

The Learning Games will be available to order from the SNAICC website — www.snaicc.org.au — in the coming weeks.

This project was made in partnership with the Parenting Research Centre, American Teaching Strategies and Prof Joseph Sparling.



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

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www.snaicc.org.au



relevant organisations for current information concerning their activities.

Line art by Ikanbala (Richard McLean).

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Subscriber forms or credit card subscriber payment online www.snaicc.asn.au or ring the SNAICC finance section to organise EFTPOS.

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Victoria 3068

SNAICC fundraising dinner a big success



SNAICC held a great night of food and entertainment on 22 November at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Museum in Melbourne to raise funds, increase awareness of SNAICC's work and make connections with the wider community.

The dinner and concert was attended by 240 guests, including members of the local Koori community, friends of SNAICC from the corporate, academic and philanthropic sectors, as well as the SNAICC National Executive and SNAICC members.

Special guests on the night were former SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett and National Executive member Brian Butler and former SNAICC CEOs Julian Pocock and Nigel D'Souza.

Through generous donations from local businesses and private donors, door raffles and a silent auction, the night raised over \$28,000 in funds.

The money will go towards funding the new SNAICC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship and traineeship program for tertiary students and workers to support the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family workforce.

The program will begin in 2013 and give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from rural and remote communities the opportunity to study by subsidising travel and accommodation costs. SNAICC is working with the philanthropic sector to raise further funds to achieve this goal.

The SNAICC event was also a chance to get together, share stories and enjoy some incredible music from some of Australia's most distinguished artists.

The VACCA Choir — Koorie Tiddas and Monica Weightman began the evening's entertainment, followed by stories and iconic songs by singer-songwriters Archie Roach, Neil Murray and Shane Howard. The music legends engaged the audience with the rich history behind their songs, sharing their varied and moving experiences of culture, separation and healing, and the transformative power of music and song.

SNAICC would like to thank Jeff McMullen, who donated his time to MC the event. Jeff is the CEO of the Ian Thorpe Fountain for Youth, which donated \$4,000 on the night. Many thanks also to the Manager of Bunjilaka centre, Caroline Martin, for her welcome to country and allowing us to use the stunning venue, photographer Steve Rhyall who shot and donated some wonderful images, to the artists on the night and those who donated so generously.

And an extra big 'thank you' to the many staff and volunteers who helped make the night such a success.



PHOTO 1: Members of the SNAICC National Executive **2.** SNAICC staff member, Ashley Tennyson **3.** Archie Roach, SNAICC National Executive member Desley Thompson and host Jeff McMullen **4.** Former SNAICC CEO Julian Pocock (left) and current CEO Frank Hytten **5.** Former SNAICC chairpersons Muriel Bamblett and Brian Butler were special guests on the night. **6.** SNAICC National Executive member Garry Matthews acknowledges the volunteers.