



# SNAICC NEWSLETTER

THE SECRETARIAT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHILD CARE (SNAICC)



CONFERENCE REVIEW

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TRAINING

MEMBER PROFILE

# FRANKLY SPEAKING



It has been a busy six months since we learned of our funding fate under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS), with the dust now starting to settle as we continue with the vital work at hand.

Our IAS contracts and workloads have been agreed, with the focus now for SNAICC to meet the challenge of delivering on these. This should be no problem, and we are happy with our strategic plan for the funding period (December 2017) – a contract of reasonable length, which includes increased training capacity, strategic communications activity and high quality policy production. However, what is problematic is that SNAICC's role as a representative of the sector has been utterly discounted and disallowed using Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) funds.

This requirement effectively serves to hobble the agency's core purpose and gag our voice, in so far as we cannot use PMC funds to continue this work, which specifically includes offering evidence-based ideas and directions to support policy formation at Government levels. Perhaps peak bodies are more powerful than we think – why else would governments seemingly be so frightened of what we say?

Peak bodies have a vested interest in listening to, supporting and representing members – that is, those working on the ground to find positive ways forward, for the most alienated in our community. This loss of voice reduces the capacity to support sharing of best practise, which enables ongoing innovation across the country; it prevents us from spending time with community services to better understand the impacts of government policy and it stops us learning from community what changes are needed to best enable services to support great outcomes for children.

We are not *troublemakers*, but we *do* see the UN Human Rights framework (as ratified by the Australian Government) as being the best way forward. All people deserve this support; the most marginalised need this support the most. I'm at a loss to know why this is at all contentious.

SNAICC will of course continue to represent the views and needs of our members, and ways forward, at every opportunity, at every level of Government, and to NGOs working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The change in our circumstances now means we will have to diversify our streams of income and call on the capacity of our member organisations to stand behind their peak – remembering that our voice is only as loud as theirs combined.

The impact of the IAS tendering process is not only being felt by SNAICC, but across the country. As an example, at our 6th National Conference this September we heard countless times of the enormous frustration around the competitive tender processes. SNAICC believes we urgently need a reset of engagement with the Australian Government and the

determination of priorities, based on respect, understanding and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership – led by the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, supported by other peak organisations.

If this does not happen, many more essential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations will be unable to deliver their vital services, effectively removing important supports for vulnerable children and families. I fear we will see even greater devastating repercussions as more time passes.

We have also had to restructure at staff level, with several accomplished and valued workers moving on. I understand this is a familiar scenario for the numerous organisations that had their funding reduced under the IAS.

The last 6-12 months has been chaotic and distracting, but we have survived! In spite of it all, SNAICC has had great recent successes. We had 1000 delegates attend our 6th SNAICC National Conference in Perth (see pages 3-10). We can't underestimate how important it is having so many knowledgeable people in one space discussing the complex issues we face and sharing successful models and research. The resolutions that came out of the conference give us some tangible targets to advocate for.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day has been a key triumph in 2015 (see pages 12-13). Congratulations to all those involved in the planning and implementation, and all the services who ran their own celebrations.

A great deal of our work over the next 2.5 years will involve the development and delivery of *training* – which will all be conducted in consultation with our members – allowing SNAICC to have greater and closer contact with the sector we serve, deliver opportunities to increase the skill and confidence levels of workers in the sector, and, not least, gather and offer information and better understanding of the sector's needs and ways forward.

It is an important time for our sector, with our services more necessary now than ever. We will continue to support our members and deliver on all fronts, and keep you updated with our work and status in future communications as the picture becomes clearer.

Frank Hytten

## SNAICC 6<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN PERTH, SEPTEMBER 2015 WITH GREAT SUCCESS!



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE REVIEW



For Our Children  
*Ngallak Koorlangka*

Community Voices:  
Sharing Knowledge and Practice

# 6<sup>TH</sup> SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

## OUTCOMES

Gathering on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar people at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, almost 1000 delegates from across the country and overseas came together to discuss some of the key issues faced by our children and families.

Our final list of resolutions is the product of three days of sharing, learning and planning among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, leading industry experts, policy makers, researchers, government representatives, and other non-government organisations.

Attendees at the conference heard over 100 presentations providing strong evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models of services and care are working across the diverse range of situations and places where our people live. Our communities and families have the capacity to care for our children; we have the knowledge and we have the skills to strengthen those families in stress and support child wellbeing.

The cultural strengths of communities and caregivers – both women and men – should be the basis upon which the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are ensured. It is time to respect and trust this knowledge, and work with our people and services to provide quality of life for our children.

These services should be delivered through a holistic, integrated, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led approach.

The removal of children from their families should be the option of last resort and, if removed, the focus should be to reunite them with their families and communities.

The lack of respect for our culture and our knowledge is a major contributing factor to the over-representation of our children and young people in the child protection system. We are outraged by the discrimination still embedded in the system, and we despair that we are not being heard. We also despair that current funding models are not delivering what is needed on the ground.

We are all too aware of the hurdles we face in giving our children a fair start. These resolutions give us a renewed collective vision of what must be done to rectify these faults and the required targets to make sure these measures are achieved and not forgotten.

### SNAICC URGENTLY CALLS:

- for a COAG target for early intervention investment to address the under representation of our children in the early childhood education and care system and their over representation in the child protection system.
- for all jurisdictions to establish independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mechanisms to monitor the exercise and enjoyment of our children's human rights, building on the example of the Victorian Aboriginal Children's Commissioner, Andrew Jackomos.
- for the Australian Government to quarantine a proportion of the Child Care Assistance Package for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research to expand the evidence base for supporting child wellbeing and cultural continuity.
- we commit to a national day of action in 2016 to raise awareness of child removals.
- we endorse SNAICC as the national voice for our children and families and call for the implementation of this communiqué to keep kids safe in culture.

## For Our Children

### Ngallak Koorlangka

This year the 6<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference was held in Perth, Western Australia on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people.

Attracting a diverse audience of over 1000+ people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, policy makers, researchers, government representatives, other non-government organisations and industry representatives, the conference provided a platform to discuss challenges and share knowledge and experiences in raising happy, healthy, proud and confident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The 2015 Conference worked to drive change through the following focus points:

- Investing in the early years
- Cultural connection promotes safety and wellbeing
- Prioritising early intervention
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in child protection decision-making
- Healing and trauma informed approaches

SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams outlined the challenges faced by our children and families during her opening address.

"It has been a tough period since we last met. Most of our families are doing OK, but too many of our communities continue to be rocked by trauma. We see too many of our young ones in distress and too many of our families struggling to get on their feet – whether with housing issues, facing family violence, child removal, disability and many other issues," Ms Williams said.

Ms Williams noted that while we face many issues we must take note of the successes that happen in spite of these barriers.

"Our services support children to get the best start in life, we are seeing many of our young ones thrive, growing up strong and proud of who they are."

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda also took to the stage during the opening plenary, focusing on self-determination driving outcomes.

"I work across many sectors, and what becomes very clear is that when communities are supported to drive their own agenda and their own strong culturally informed programs they work," Mr Gooda said.

Mr Gooda sent a clear message on Government decisions of removing advocacy funding from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations: our voices will not be silenced!

"We cannot tolerate a Government telling us what is important to us through funding decisions," Mr Gooda said.

Headlining presentations came in the form of local and international keynote speakers and panellists.

Canadian Professor Emeritus Michael Chandler delivered a presentation on his ongoing research that examines the role cultural continuity plays in reducing suicide youth risk (amongst a host of other negative outcomes) in Indigenous communities.

Amongst Professor Chandler's key findings is the understanding that self-governance is the most important factor in preventing youth suicide. We must always acknowledge the diverse nature of our communities and their individual challenges, and, by extension, must avoid the use of aggregate data when assessing these problems.

"Presenting data as a blanket statement across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is disrespectful to the lived experience of individual communities," Professor Chandler said.

Professor Fiona Stanley, Founding Director and Patron of the Telethon Kids Institute, shared her research on intergenerational trauma, and the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled early childhood services to overcome this trauma.

"If we want Aboriginal employment to improve, the best investment is these Aboriginal early years' services. We have evidence that culture and language and living on land are the most important protective factors for mental health of Aboriginal children. We have got enough evidence – let's act."

Professor Stanley's presentation showcased what we already know: trauma introduced via colonisation greatly impacts the brain development of young children, and this trauma is inherited by future generations.

With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children faced with so many stressors the importance of early childhood services is greater than ever.

June Oscar, CEO of Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre, shared her research and experience on community-led development, and the renowned Liliwan study, which recorded the prevalence of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

"Today research and evidence clearly tells us that the experiences of early childhood have a profound impact on physical, mental and spiritual health in later life," Ms Oscar said.

In her presentation Ms Oscar highlighted the shortcomings of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, and the impact it is having on child care centres to provide support to communities.

Ms Oscar called for everyone involved in child development to work together in our processes, with an agenda we can put forward to our new Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

"Both the Indigenous social services sector and government need to acknowledge that we are in partnership. When either of us does not fully comprehend this reality we quickly drift into often-adversarial positions."



Professor Emeritus Michael J. Chandler

## CULTURAL WOUNDS REQUIRE CULTURAL MEDICINE

The 6<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference had the honour and privilege of listening to Professor Michael Chandler, of the University of British Columbia, share his valuable research into identity development and suicide in Canada's First Nations.

Professor Chandler's research explored the role of *personal and cultural* continuity in shaping the wellbeing of individual youth and of whole communities in First Nations. His research revealed that cultural continuity works as a protective factor against suicide among youth.

In particular, he urged that both individual youth and whole Indigenous communities "that have suffered a loss of connectedness to their own collective past and future are at heightened risk for suicide".

Professor Chandler also shed light on the danger of aggregating data across whole communities. Presenting "generic and broad-brush" data for the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group as a whole "fail to capture the lived experience" of individual and unique communities. He asserted that such blanket statements were not only seriously "misleading and defamatory", but also contribute to the "misappropriation of human and financial resources".

Disaggregating data for individual communities revealed that while some communities had alarmingly high rates of suicide among youth, there were also communities that had **very low or no** recorded youth suicide for years.

Communities with greater control over civil lives had overwhelmingly lower rates in youth suicide compared to any other variable. Other factors of success include: land claims; education; health services; police/fire services; cultural services; women in government; child protection services and; knowledge of Indigenous languages.

He urged the importance of learning from these communities that were functioning well to identify "best practices". There exists a "large, poorly appreciated, source of real cultural knowledge" within these communities concerning how the problems of youth suicide might be addressed. He asserted that "it is only prejudice that prevents" us from looking at this cultural knowledge in our search for treatment models that work.

Professor Chandler stressed that the real knowledge about how to address youth suicide are already within the communities themselves. The first step in any positive program to address youth suicide will be to identify the existing Indigenous knowledge and focusing on lateral, rather than top-down, transfer of this knowledge.



Professor Fiona Stanley

## OVERCOMING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATIONS

**Speaking at the 2015 SNAICC National Conference, Professor Fiona Stanley, the Founding Director of Telethon Kids Institute, Western Australia, advocated for early childhood services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to counteract the impact of intergenerational trauma.**

All Children need a host of factors – operating within their families, communities and school environment

– to enhance early childhood development. In contrast, multiple and accumulative stress events, social inequity and exclusion constrain this healthy development.

Professor Stanley highlighted that in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations 44% of 0-3 year olds and 65% or 4-14 year olds experienced at least one stressor, and over 21% of children experienced between 7 and 14 life stresses. These early life adversities have lifelong impacts for children, even so far as changes in DNA that is passed down for generations.

The Western Australia Aboriginal Child Health Survey showed that, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the impact of the stolen generation was still observed into second and third generations. Consequently, the research found that children living in households with experience of forced intergenerational separation or relocation fared worse in every variable measured.

Professor Fiona Stanley warned that Australia is experiencing two populations in one country, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities are faring worse in almost every measure. Furthermore, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age distribution with more than one in three peoples under 15 years of age. As a result, the adult/child ratio in this population is 1.3, limiting the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population to facilitate healthy development of their children.

Professor Stanley emphasised on the importance of early childhood development for individual children's chances for

health, school success, economic participation and social citizenry. In an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are faced with multiple stressors; where communities are limited in their capacity to deal with these problems due to a growing young population; and where there is still entrenched racism and discrimination – the importance of early childhood services is greater than ever.

Furthermore, these services need to be Aboriginal led and controlled. She stressed the importance of privileging Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander knowledge when developing agendas and services, and recognising the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to meet the needs of communities and funding them appropriately.

Similarly, parental engagement in children's learning led to better test scores, higher grades, better attendance, higher graduation rates, lower drop-out rates, greater likelihood of higher education attainment and improved behaviour, personal competence and a life-long love of learning. Family participation in education was shown to be twice as predictive of students' academic success as socioeconomic status and equivalent to \$1000 in extra funding per student annually.

As such, Professor Stanley recommended a change in funding structure wherein most of the investment goes into early childhood and universal services instead of high-intensity tertiary responses. She concluded her presentation by recommending an emphasis on early childhood development as the best investment for the country.



June Oscar

## LEADING VOICE ON ABORIGINAL CHILDREN CALLS UPON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO MAKE GOOD ON ITS COMMITMENTS

**June Oscar, CEO of Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Crossing, WA, has drawn on her experience heading the Baya Gawiy Buga yani Jandu yani u Centre to highlight major funding and operational issues currently faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**

Ms Oscar's keynote address at the 6th SNAICC National Conference highlighted the shortcomings of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). Under the IAS, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Family Centres (ACFCs) have had their operational funds slashed. She demanded that the Federal Government honour its commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services.

The National Partnership Agreement that established the ACFCs ended over a year ago. These centres have been forced to operate on stop-gap funding measures while they awaited the outcome of their IAS submissions. Rather than providing stable funding, the IAS has left the Centres with around half of their previous allocations. As an example, Ms Oscar informed the 1000 conference attendees that the Baya Gawiy Centre is confronted with an ongoing, annual shortfall of \$450,000 for the operations of its licensed long day care centre, the Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit.

"The amateurish and haphazard way in which the Federal Government has handled the IAS will result in our childcare service being unable to meet its legislative obligations," she said.

With the Federal Government refusing to fund operational expenditure, the funds provided cannot be directed towards basic necessities of a childcare centre such as electricity, water or food. Ms Oscar explained that these funding cuts have also reinforced the existing capacity issues. While the Centre is licensed for 50 children, only half that number can be catered for with the current funding levels. Once the IAS begins to bite, this situation will be made even worse. Baya Gawiy is the only childcare centre in the region and already has a long waiting list.

"All but one of our families [who use the Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit], are working families. This is at odds with the general attitude of Governments who

view Indigenous families as unemployed and in need of interventionist policy," she said.

A huge strain has been placed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as parents are torn between working and caring for their children. Many frustrated families have also chosen not to enrol their children in early childhood services because of the difficulties faced in getting placements.

Ms Oscar also highlighted the overall discrimination faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – particularly those in remote areas – brought on by the inflexibility of mainstream policy frameworks and compliance requirements.

Due to the inflexible nature of mainstream funding, the Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit is ineligible to offer Child Care Benefits or Child Care Rebates to parents. This is due to unique community circumstances that impact Baya Gawiy's operations hours. Further, the existing restrictions on the number of allowable absences each year are at odds with the realities of living and working in remote communities.

Ms Oscar commented: "...even if we could resolve these issues, the amount of funding available through mainstream funding would only cover about 25% of our costs."

She explained that remote service delivery centres also have higher expenses compared to urban centres. Covering the cost of employing qualified early childhood educators who are experienced in working with children affected by early life trauma and disabilities is more expensive than employing educators with a Certificate III in Children's Services. In addition, in order to attract and retain these staff, it is essential to offer attractive employment packages. Staff housing and travel costs for professional development all incur increased costs in remote areas as does finding and relocating backfill staff who often come from across the country – not just from around the corner.

"The flat denial of our calls for reasonable flexibility is strangling our services," she said.

From July 2017, Indigenous services – including the Children and Family Centres, Budget Based Funded (BBF) services and Multifunctional Aboriginal Children Services (MACS) – will be transitioned to the new Child Care Assistance Package, which the Federal Government claims will provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities an opportunity to move forward.

Ms Oscar urged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations "to unite and call for the Federal government to bridge the policy shortfalls of the last leadership. A bridge that must see government reinstate with immediate effect the children and family centres' funds to previous operational levels. This will give us the time to work closely with the new government to plan for the sustained operations of our centres and guarantee access to the quality of education and care that our children deserve, that this nation deserves. This is our time to work collaboratively with this government as an equal partner across sectors and disciplines to set a course of action that appreciates the Social Services as the platform to deliver impacting outcomes and ultimately a strong economy."

"When we act together we will deliver a strong and flexible learning framework for our young generations which responds to the on-the-ground needs of all our people across Australia," she said.



## NPY WOMEN'S COUNCIL WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES IN THE TRI-STATE AREA

The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) was founded in 1980 by the women of the tri-state NPY region, which includes the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. The NPYWC service delivery area honours historical cultural and language groupings rather than state borders, covering an area of 350,000 sq. km.

For NPYWC member families – who are remote based, for whom poverty is often a reality, English is their second language, and access to telecommunication and transport resources are scarce – engaging with child protection systems can be considerably challenging. These complexities are compounded for families residing in a tri-state region whereby they may have:

- children placed under care and protection orders with different statutory jurisdictions;
- children placed in out of home care in different states;
- requirements to engage with multiple service professionals across states; and,
- expectations to maintain access that requires significant travel and accommodation logistics and costs.

Presenting at the 6<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference in September, Hannah Stanley of the NPY Women's Council spoke about the NPYWC Child Advocacy Service's role:

The Child Advocacy Service grew out of significant and increasing requests for support from remote Aboriginal families in such situations. Families reported feeling confused, overwhelmed and disempowered in their interactions with bureaucratic child protection agencies and requested support from NPYWC, an Aboriginal-controlled agency with which they were familiar and felt they could trust.

The Child Advocacy Service, which is the only one of its kind in Central Australia, officially commenced in 2014 with the appointment of a full-time Child Advocacy Officer (CAO). The position works flexibly and proactively with families to support them in understanding and engaging with child protection systems, thereby also supporting the work of child protection professionals. Specifically, the CAO advocates for access to be prioritised and ideally on country; supports the development of reunification plans; advocates for and supports family (non-statutory) and kinship (statutory) care; supports family consultation, participation and meetings; assists with the identification of kinship carers; and provides referrals for families to other necessary support services such as legal aid.

*"David was taken by welfare. But they worked with us and after a few weeks he came out to live with me. This is how it should be. But it seems like sometimes you get a good worker and sometimes you get a bad one, who doesn't care, doesn't respect Aboriginal ways or understand why our kids need to be with their families. But it shouldn't be like that; all the workers should care and do the right thing for kids."*

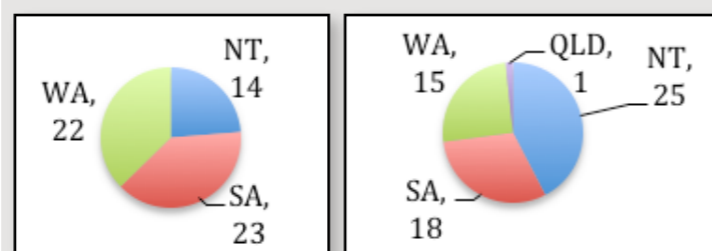
– Kinship carer

*"Women's Council can be our voice. They've been doing this for a long time, helping people listen to us. We need Women's Council to help talk to welfare for us. Because we don't always have phones or computers or cars to visit them and keep pushing them to get our kids back."*

– APY community member

The Child Advocacy Service has assisted 59 families since January 2014:

- 14 families from the Northern Territory
- 23 families from South Australia
- 22 families from Western Australia



When it came to working with child protection departments:

- 25 had DCF (NT) involvement
- 18 had FSA (SA) involvement
- 15 had DCP (WA) involvement
- 1 had QCS involvement

While this data illustrates the complications faced in the tri-state area due to the clash of Government state and territory borders, it does not show that 25 of these families had *inter-state* child protection complications.

Of these families 10 had two or more children involved with child protection authorities. One mother had three children involved with three different child protection departments, while a further four mothers had two children involved two different child protection departments.

The NPYWC Child Advocacy Service is helping these families stay together by providing critical services, ranging from linking families with legal aid services, to facilitating supervised access for families, and identifying potential kinship carers.

*"People talk to us too much and sometimes what they say doesn't make sense. We've got things to say too. They need to listen to us, to take turns, and to use interpreters so that everyone understands."*

– APY community member

By providing this assistance, and in spite of the complex matters faced by families in the region, the Child Advocacy Service has successfully supported in the reunification of five children with their families, and seven children into kinship care placements.

The NPY Women's Council have established priorities for the future, headlined by an ongoing commitment to the establishment of a cross-border child protection protocol for Central Australia (NT, SA and WA). Other targeted priorities are an increased investment in carer support (especially supports for kin carers), greater Aboriginal participation in decision-making, and ensuring Aboriginal agencies are adequately resourced to provide support across the child protection spectrum.

## FAMILY MATTERS

Kids safe in culture, not in care

The 2015 SNAICC National Conference saw a dynamic and captivating panel discussion between distinguished national and international leaders in child and family services. The discussion focused on issues in the child protection system and examined identifying different ways to address the ongoing removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

Experts from various areas within the child protection system were compiled for the panel discussion, including Muriel Bamblett, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency; Judge Matthew Myers of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia; Dr Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada; and Kay Benham, Acting Director General at the WA Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

As discussion began the panellists agreed that with more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of home care every year, it is evident that the increasing rate of punitive approaches in child protection systems are simply failing our children. Judge Matthew Myers of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia warned that we were "facing the next stolen generation" in the country.

Dr Cindy Blackstock raised the question of whether it was families or the state that were neglecting our children. She argued that neglect was often "caused by things outside of the families' influence" such as poverty, homelessness and unemployment. The state is responsible for creating and maintaining conditions where families can flourish and have access to appropriate support where needed. The state is neglecting its children by failing to create such conditions, argued Dr Blackstock.

Dr Blackstock stressed the importance of "assessing the harm caused by the child protection system". She argued: "we have to ask whether we have something better to offer". Professor Muriel Bamblett, the CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, emphasised the importance of "focusing on what we are doing well" and building on these strengths.

The plenary presentation followed work undertaken under SNAICC's *Family Matters* – Kids safe in culture, not in care initiative, which uses community engagement, systemic change, and communication strategies to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in out of home care.

All the panellists agreed on the importance of early intervention to support families before children are removed. Professor Bamblett urged governments and communities to look at what was already being done to keep children in their families and build on that. She also stressed the importance of involving men in looking after their children.

The panellists discussed the importance of cultural responsiveness in delivering services. This needs to take in to consideration the unique and distinct nature of separate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples.

There was consensus on the importance of such services being owned, designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations. Dr Blackstock argued that the solutions are within the communities themselves. Kay Benham, Acting Director General of the Western Australia Department for Child Protection and Family Support, emphasised that federal and jurisdictional governments need to work in partnership with the community to ensure that organisations are appropriately funded and supported to deliver such services.

Kay Benham assured the audience that the Western Australia state government was looking at ways to make it easier for relatives to be involved in the care of their children, within its reform process. Judge Myers claimed: "grandparents have an absolute right to be involved in family issues".

Furthermore the panellists agreed that more effort and resources needed to be invested in family reunification to ensure that children have an opportunity to grow up in their culture.

Judge Myers argued that child protection "is not a state or territory issue, it is a national issue, (and) needs to be discussed in Canberra", calling on the Federal Government to hold a National Summit to address the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities.

Children's Day celebrated by over 200 local communities around the country

# CHILDREN'S DAY 2015

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
CHILDREN'S DAY

## LITTLE PEOPLE BIG FUTURES

This year, all around the country – from Perth to Port Arlington, Tennant Creek to Townsville, Port Lincoln to Paroo – communities came together to celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

Over 200 communities and early childhood centres across Australia celebrated National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day by hosting an event for local children and families.

Children's Day 2015 supported and celebrated the services that empower our **little people** to have **big futures**, highlighting how important it is that these services are adequately funded to support the next generation of children.

*"Children's Day is a fantastic opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of celebrating our children's strengths and making sure our kids grow up strong in culture."* - Sharron Williams

In Perth, the Swan Aboriginal Child and Family Centre hosted an amazing National Launch event. Mr Ken Wyatt, Federal Assistant Minister for Health, and Ms Geraldine Atkinson, SNAICC Deputy Chairperson, spoke passionately about our deadly kids. Local Elders and community leaders united to celebrate with over 450 children from local schools and over 200 parents. Traditional dancers, singers, a roo-sausage sizzle, damper cooking demonstrations, stalls and giveaways made for a incredible day of celebration.



EVENTS held in Utopia Homelands (NT), Largs Bay (SA), Belconnen (ACT) and Melbourne (VIC).



In Melbourne, SNAICC and the Essendon Football Club hosted 70 little ones from the Yappera and Bubup Wilam local Aboriginal early learning services, with Children's Day ambassador Courtenay Dempsey leading the kids through a special footy clinic.

Joined by fellow Essendon players Jake Long and Conor McKenna, as well as AFL Players' Association representative (and 2014 Children's Day ambassador) Aaron Davey, Courtenay and the kids handballed, kicked, climbed, chased and rolled the morning away – and met Skeeta too!

Utopia Homelands (NT) top right, kids from Soapy Bore with their deadly banner. The **Little People Big Future** container mural in progress!

Largs Bay (SA) above left, Local Ngarrindjeri man Uncle Ross Karpany plays guitar and sings with children at Kura Yerlo Children's Centre at Largs Bay SA.

Hayley Rankine Ngarrindjeri Women, middle left, shows the children some Aboriginal symbols in her artwork.

Belconnen (ACT) middle right, Ngunnawal Primary school students danced with Chaydin from Wirra Club and Soliola from the Canberra Raiders at the Gungahlin Child and Family Centre in Belconnen ACT.

At Gummyaney Aboriginal Preschool in Grafton NSW, kids and staff celebrated with a BBQ, bush tucker, face painting, storytelling, music and dancing, arts and craft.

In Kyabra Queensland, the Kyabra Community Association hosted 'Murri Kids in the Park' – with story telling by Elders and performances from Mowogi Dan, Aboriginal dancers and the local kindergarten 'Gundoo Mirra'.

At Wonthaggi North Primary School in Victoria every class in the school made a Children's Day themed book.

At Roberta Jull Family Day Care in WA, children and families handled native animals, explored culture and natural land, and planted native plants in a new community garden.

Geraldine Atkinson, SNAICC Deputy Chairperson, said about the day: *"Right across this country we celebrated our diverse and strong cultures that infuse every part of us as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. On Children's Day we recognise and pay respect to these cultures; we enjoy these cultures with our children; and we share these cultures with great pride and joy with our communities."*

*"This is who we are. Through our cultures we live our values and meaning in life. This is what gives strength and pride to our little people and helps them stand tall."*

*"It was just so fabulous to see so many communities sharing stories with such pride and seeing our deadly kids singing, dancing, playing, learning and engaging - standing proud."*

SNAICC acknowledges everyone who celebrated Children's Day and helped recognise the strengths of our kids with such amazing festivities. We appreciate the passion, dedication and hard work of every person who helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids stand tall and proud.

PROMOTE

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# POLICY

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE | STRONGER, SAFER, TOGETHER | FAMILY MATTERS



## PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

### EARLY YEARS POLICY WORK

**SNAICC is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services, including MACS, BBFs and ACFCs to advocate for the best possible outcomes from the federal government childcare reforms.**

As part of these efforts, Deloitte Access Economics is working with SNAICC and our community controlled services to measure the impacts of the reforms on access to quality, culturally strong early childhood services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC has invited all services to participate, so if you haven't got in touch yet, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can work together to assess the impact and build the evidence we need to call for better funding and supports for our little ones.



### DEADLY FUTURES: RESOURCES FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT FROM BIRTH TO FIVE YEARS

**Deadly Futures is a new training project being developed by SNAICC which aims to improve early childhood development outcomes of particularly vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, through supporting parents and carers to use evidence-based strategies to increase their children's social, emotional and educational development.**

Through Deadly Futures, SNAICC will develop and deliver evidence based training and resources to a total of 300 educators in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander playgroups and parenting programs in 2016 and 2017, to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to support their children's development from the age of zero to five. We will be delivering training in communities with low Australian Early Development Census ratings across urban, rural and remote locations in at least five jurisdictions. Training will be conducted within a half-day and will focus on knowledge building, skills to work with parents and know-how of the resources to share with parents.



### FAMILY MATTERS

**Family Matters is a national initiative advocating that wherever possible children should be kept safe with their families, their culture and their communities. It is coordinated by a committed group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations, led by SNAICC, and supported by a broad base of highly regarded state and national peak bodies and non-government organisations (NGOs). The initiative aims to turn the tide on the continuing systematic removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to create a new paradigm of care.**

Currently, the Family Matters coordinating group, led by SNAICC, is undertaking a literature review interrogating the available evidence on strengths-based approaches to prevention and early intervention to support the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Once complete, this review will be used to inform Family Matters objectives and strategic advocacy.

Family Matters was highlighted at the SNAICC conference in Perth, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. The Family Matters plenary session on the Wednesday morning of the conference hosted a dynamic discussion with community, national and international leaders on reversing the tide of child removals.

In the coming months, SNAICC will host a strategic advisory meeting to inform future advocacy priorities for Family Matters. The meeting will include stakeholders from a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative organisations across the welfare, health and justice sectors.

### SNAICC POLICY POSITION STATEMENTS

**SNAICC is developing a set of policy position statements that will clearly and concisely present our policy positions on a range of key issues, in order to effectively advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and organisational members of SNAICC. SNAICC has a strong base of policy and research material that could be brought together to create more clear, succinct and effective messaging.**

The project aims to create policy positions that:

- can be used and shared consistently by the SNAICC board, leadership and staff, and in SNAICC's communications outputs; and
- can be inputted consistently and efficiently to a range of SNAICC submissions to government review and policy development processes

SNAICC policy positions will also provide an access point for the public and sector stakeholders coming to the SNAICC website to get a clear sense of SNAICC's positions on key issues. Topics we are developing positions statements on include permanency of care, family violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision making, early intervention, Intensive Family Support Services and partnerships.

Position papers will be developed in consultation with the SNAICC National Executive and members, and will be available to view and download from the SNAICC website once complete.



The SNAICC training team provides 2-day workshops for organisations seeking to reflect on and develop their practice in intensive and targeted family support.

## STRONGER, SAFER, TOGETHER

SNAICC has developed and released a new practice support resource for workers and organisations providing targeted and intensive support to prevent family breakdown and child protection intervention, or to reunify families. The resource draws on consultations exploring quality practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services providing these supports around the country.

This new resource, 'Stronger, Safer Together', can be used flexibly to suit the needs of services. Suggested ways to use the resource include as:

- A guide for reflection and discussion amongst family support staff teams in professional development sessions
- A toolkit of ideas for good practice for individual practitioners to explore and draw upon, and
- An information source to inform the development of locally adapted practice resources and service manuals.

### THE PRACTICE RESOURCE ADDRESSES EIGHT KEY LEARNING AREAS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT TEAMS:

1. Working differently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
2. Building trusting relationships and partnerships with families
3. Identifying the needs of children and their families
4. Providing an appropriate mix of practical, therapeutic, educational and advocacy supports
5. Including families in case planning and decision-making
6. Working effectively with statutory child protection agencies
7. Ensuring worker safety, self care, boundaries and supervision
8. Understanding and using family support tools

In relations to each of these learning areas, the practice resource:

- Provides a framework for quality intensive family support that prioritises unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practice and leadership.
- Shares quality practice examples, resources and practice ideas from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.
- Includes exercises to support reflective practice of family support teams.

The SNAICC training team provides 2-day workshops for organisations seeking to reflect on and develop their practice in intensive and targeted family support.

Contact SNAICC if you are interested in training support.

T: 03 9489 8099  
E: [training@snaicc.org.au](mailto:training@snaicc.org.au)  
W: [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)



## FAMILY MATTERS WEBSITE LAUNCHED

**Family Matters: kids safe in culture not in care website was launched in May to provide strategies and tools to reduce Indigenous child removals across the country.**

An important national initiative, the resource seeks to engage new partners to Close the Gap in child removals by 2030.

Critically, the resource recognises that child protection and wellbeing is everybody's business. Whoever we are – Government, community sector, business, philanthropy or community – we all need to look at how we are contributing to the piercing realities of Indigenous child removal today and how we can support change.

SNAICC Chairperson, Sharron Williams commented: "Family Matters recognises that we are not doing enough to ensure children are safe and cared for within their families. Family Matters prioritises investing in families in crisis to support them to care for their children. It offers models to embed Indigenous decision-making within child protection and wellbeing policies, programs and services.

"Our first goal must be to recognise the importance of our Indigenous families and communities, and to value them.

Too often they hear mixed messages at best, and or utter denigration at worst.

"Communities have the solutions. They have the knowledge. We need to provide the space for them to make decisions about the lives of their families and to support them in these decisions," said Ms Williams.

"Above all, Family Matters seeks to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on what they think needs to happen to turn around child neglect and abuse substantiation rates and child removals. It seeks to provide a voice for change and build the necessary partnerships to see this change happen.

"Only by investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and by valuing our cultures at the heart of our communities will we see change to the levels of removal of our children."

The Hon Natalie Hutchins, Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, launched the Family Matters website at an event hosted at Perpetual Private, Melbourne.



Only by investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and by valuing our cultures at the heart of our communities will we see change to the levels of removal of our children.

# TRAINING

TYBE | GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS | JOURNEY TO BIG SCHOOL | TRAUMA: RECOGNISE + RESPOND

## NEW TRAINING IN 2016

### STRONGER SAFER TOGETHER (Intensive & Targeted Family Support)

The team is busy developing an exciting new workshop, based on SNAICC's soon-to-be-released resource, *Stronger Safer Together*. The Stronger Safer Together workshop aims to develop skills in intensive and targeted family support to address multiple and/or complex needs and assist families to build their capacity to care for and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We will run two trials in the coming months, ready for it's release in 2016!

### EARLY YEARS CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Building on SNAICC's well-established cultural competence work, the Early Years

Cultural Competence workshop aims to develop cultural competency for staff in non-indigenous early childhood education and care services to improve service access and service quality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Following two trials before the end of 2015, this workshop will be ready in 2016.

### SNAICC workshops are available nationally.

If you are interested in hosting a workshop for your organisation, please call the SNAICC Training team to see how we can meet your training needs.  
E: training@snaicc.org.au  
T: 03 9489 8099



Opening Doors to Genuine Partnerships workshop participants, Townsville QLD

### OPENING DOORS TO GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS

Based on the SNAICC Partnership Audit Tool and Training Manual, the first of the Opening Doors to Genuine Partnerships workshops were delivered throughout Queensland from May to August 2015. SNAICC partnered with Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) to run seven workshops, focusing on supporting and sustaining genuine inter-agency partnerships in service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Various mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-controlled organisations participated in the training to explore ways of working together to implement the Family and Child Connect initiative that is about connecting families in Queensland to early intervention supports. A major focus for the training was to ensure community-controlled organisations have a leading role to support engagement and culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. SNAICC will conduct follow-up workshops to further progress partnership agreements and work in each of the Queensland sites in November 2015.



TYBE participants in Mackay, QLD

### THROUGH YOUNG BLACK EYES

SNAICC's Through Young Black Eyes Family Violence train-the-trainer has continued to be an extremely popular workshop, with the team delivering more than ten workshops around the country. The Through Young Black Eyes (TYBE) workshop is designed to help you learn to use the TYBE resource kit to run your own workshops on family violence, abuse and neglect and helping to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your community safe. Since February, family violence, family support, health and community workers have participated in the workshops in: Alice Springs, Darwin and Tennant Creek (NT); Walgett, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Dareton and Bourke (NSW); Port Augusta and Adelaide (SA); and Mackay (QLD).

TYBE participants in Alice Springs, NT



### JOURNEY TO BIG SCHOOL

SNAICC's Journey to Big School workshop, designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in their journey from early childhood education in to formal schooling, has been delivered in the Brewarrina and Lightning Ridge (NSW) and Cherbourg (QLD) communities. These workshops create a space for Elders, families, community members, community workers, early years educators and school staff to come together and discuss as a community holistic transition processes to support children and families as they journey in to big school. Kate Booth, the workshop facilitator, will return to these communities and in partnership review agreed transition activities and evaluate the workshop. In partnership with Wunan and supported by Little Nuggets Early Learning centre and many other community organisations, SNAICC recently conducted a Journey to Big School workshop in Halls Creek (WA). This was the first of many early years activities as part of our (inset name of Halls project). Kate will be returning to Halls Creek before the end of the year and in partnership with Delphine, SNAICC's Early Years Engagement and Support Officer, reviewing agreed transition activities and discussing with community future programs to support children transitioning in to big school.

SNAICC wishes all children every success on their educational journey and a special mention to those children heading off to big school!

Journey to Big School workshop participants



### RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO TRAUMA

SNAICC's Recognising and Responding to Trauma workshop looks at trauma and understanding it's impacts, and builds understanding of trauma-informed approaches to healing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. In collaboration with VACCA, SNAICC delivered workshops in Lismore (NSW), Adelaide (SA) and the Tiwi Islands (NT). It was pleasing to be able to deliver in an urban, regional and remote setting. The workshops were adjusted accordingly, particularly by drawing from the existing strengths in each community. The workshops received positive responses, with a highlight being the opportunity for workers to come together to share their practices and stories with each other. SNAICC is looking forward to delivering more workshops before the year comes to a close.

Recognising and Responding to Trauma workshop participants in Adelaide, SA



# NEWS

INQUIRIES | REFORMS | FUNDING | MINISTRY | SERVICES

## SNAICC WELCOMES INQUIRY REPORT RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY CONTROL OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

**The report of the Senate Inquiry into out of home care released on 19 August by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee has identified the need for urgent and comprehensive reforms to address a system that is failing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.**

SNAICC strongly supports the recommendations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled agencies to be funded across Australia for a full range of family support services as a key preventive strategy to child removal.

The report recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over nine times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children, leading the Committee to the view that, “current practices risk creating a ‘Stolen Generation’...The context in which children are removed today is different to that of past practices, but... the result is similar if adequate supports and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families are not provided.”

SNAICC CEO, Frank Hytten, emphasised the need for far more support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across the continuum of care. The Committee’s views were in clear agreement, recognising that, “the lack of family support services means there is limited scope for at-risk parents to get the support they need to build safe and resilient families for their children.”

SNAICC Deputy Chairperson Sue-Anne Hunter commented that, “The most important finding of the Committee is that we need to be empowered to make the decisions and deliver the services that will support better outcomes for our families.”

The Committee expressed the view that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled agencies “should be introduced across all jurisdictions and should be involved in the full range of family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, not just out-of-home care, and must be supported by flexible funding models.” The report recommends the development of “a nationally consistent

approach to building the capacity of Aboriginal community controlled agencies (ACCAs) to become integrated into all aspects of the child protection system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including:

- training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support workers;
- providing family support services;
- implementation of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle;
- involvement and responsibility for all decision making processes; and
- delivering out-of-home care services.”

In handing down the report, the Committee acknowledged “connection to family is integral to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people” and called for greater supports to promote connections including the provision of “services aimed at supporting family reunification.”

The report also highlights inconsistent application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle as a key concern. The Committee has recommended measures to address “the lack of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relative/kinship carers to become accredited, and lack of ongoing support to provide adequate support for children and young people.”

Ms Hunter praised the foresight of the Committee to recognise that such broad sweeping reforms are needed: “The Committee has rightly called for COAG to include their recommendations in the third action plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children so that they are the responsibility of all Australian governments and civil society.”

“It is vital that all Australian jurisdictions review and work to implement these critical recommendations so that we can turn the tide on the current devastating separation of our children from their families and cultures through child protection intervention.”

SNAICC welcomed the Minister’s commitment to work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations

## MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES REINFORCES COMMITMENT TO IMPROVED ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

**A commitment by the Former Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, to improve access to early years services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been welcomed by SNAICC.**

SNAICC welcomed the Minister’s commitment to work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in developing effective mechanisms for implementation of the Child Care Assistance Package.

SNAICC Deputy Chairperson, Geraldine Atkinson, met with Minister Morrison and commented, “We were impressed with the Minister’s understanding of the issues facing our communities and the role of integrated early years services in charting a different path for our children. It was good to hear that the Minister recognises that a *one size fits all* approach will not work and that he is committed to supporting Indigenous services to respond to their community need.”

“He has expressed his commitment to ensuring that the Child Care Assistance Package provides the necessary long-term supports to redress the current gap in service access for our children. In particular, I am heartened to hear that all current Budget Based Funded early learning services will receive support from the Government to transition to the new childcare system and operate efficiently within it. That will be so important for the future of those communities and our little ones in particular.”

SNAICC encourages the newly appointed Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Christian Porter MP to stand by his predecessor’s commitment to work closely with Indigenous services, fostering long-term support for strong early childhood outcomes, local employment opportunities and genuine development for communities that need support most.



## THE NEW TURNBULL MINISTRY – WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE SECTOR

On 20 September, new Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced significant changes to the federal Ministry, several of which directly affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The new federal ministry also sees Australia’s first Aboriginal Minister, with West Australian MP and proud Noongar, Yamatji and Wongi man Ken Wyatt appointed as Assistant Health Minister.

With Scott Morrison taking on the role of Treasurer, West Australian MP Christian Porter steps into the Social Services portfolio. While Minister Porter has only been a member of federal parliament since 2013, he has many years experience in West Australian politics, including responsibilities as Treasurer from 2010-12. Prime Minister Turnbull appointed Minister Turnbull to the Social Services portfolio on the basis of his sound financial management skills; the social services portfolio is responsible for approximately one third of the total federal budget.

Not only has there been a change of Social Services Minister but there is a shift in responsibilities for the funding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, with the portfolio moving back to the department of education. Incoming Education Minister, South Australian Liberal Senator Simon Birmingham, will take on early childhood funding responsibilities as part of his new portfolio. This means that Minister Birmingham will oversee the implementation of early childhood funding reforms announced by then Social Services Minister Scott Morrison as part of this year’s Federal Budget.

Northern Territory Senator Nigel Scullion has maintained his position as Minister for Indigenous Affairs, but while his responsibilities remain unchanged, there have been other changes to the Indigenous Affairs portfolio. Victorian MP Alan Tudge, who was previously Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with a focus on Indigenous Affairs, now steps into the dual roles of Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, and Assistant Minister for Social Services. In his role as Assistant Minister for Social Services, one of Mr Tudge’s key responsibilities will be oversight of the cashless welfare card pilot, which will commence next year in Ceduna, South Australia. The introduction of the card was recommended in the final report of the Indigenous Jobs and Training Review led by Andrew Forrest.

SNAICC congratulates Ken Wyatt on his appointment to the position of Assistant Minister for Health. SNAICC has also welcomed the new Ministers for Social Services and Education to their portfolios and is seeking meetings with them at their earliest convenience – we look forward to continuing a constructive relationship with the new Cabinet.

## NEW GOVERNMENT PACKAGE AIMS TO REDUCE FAMILY VIOLENCE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

In September, the Federal Government announced a \$100 million Women’s Safety Package, which contains a series of measures aimed at providing greater safety to women and children vulnerable to family and domestic violence.

Detailed in a joint statement from several ministers – including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull; Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion; Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter – the package will improve frontline support and services, leverage innovative technologies to keep women safe, and provide education resources to help change community attitudes to violence and abuse.

The package includes \$21 million for specific measures to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women 34 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.

The National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) has welcomed the funding announcement, yet is disappointed the package does not include a greater focus on improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors’ access to essential frontline legal services.

**“For too long the impacts of family violence in our communities have been hidden. The time has come to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women,” said Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of the National FVPLS Forum.**

“The time has come to act.”

Ms Braybrook explained: “FVPLSs are the frontline services providing critical legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of family violence. Regrettably, today’s package did not include measures that would enable us to further support some of the most marginalised women in the country. We want to work with the Prime Minister to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women can access our specialised services.”

The measures funded through the new Women’s Safety Package have been recommended by COAG’s Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children.



## 16 ORGANISATIONS RELEASE BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER IMPRISONMENT AND VIOLENCE RATES

**The Change the Record Coalition will today meet in Canberra to launch the ‘Blueprint for Change’. This is the first time a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations have come together with a concrete plan for Federal, State and Territory Governments to change the record on soaring Aboriginal imprisonment rates and high levels of experienced violence.**

The Blueprint urges a whole of government strategy, the setting of justice targets, and a commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their organisations and representatives to drive solutions.

Co-Chair Shane Duffy said, “This Blueprint is the result of more than two years of collaboration between 16 leading peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies, legal organisations and human rights groups.

“When these key organisations come together with one voice, governments need to listen. There is no more time to waste. Australia’s first peoples are being locked up at unprecedented rates, and experiencing high rates of violence.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are currently 13 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence than non-Indigenous women.

NATIONAL FVPLS FORUM: “The cost of family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is shocking – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be hospitalised because of family violence. We must support our women to ensure their voices are not silenced, by providing the services that allow them to rebuild their lives.” – Antoinette Braybrook, National Convenor for the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum

Change the Record Co-Chair Kirstie Parker said, “This is more than bad statistics; these figures represent people – brothers, sisters, sons and daughters who are being separated from their families and need our support.

“We know the underlying factors behind these statistics, and our Blueprint makes clear the steps that all levels of government must take to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people out of prison and improve community safety for us all.

“There is an urgent need for federal leadership and a national multi-partisan approach to drive co-ordinated action across the country. Our Blueprint outlines concrete changes that Federal, State and Territory governments must make to laws and policies to both reduce the escalating numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being imprisoned, and improve community safety.

Mr Duffy said the Coalition urged the Federal Government to lead their State and Territory colleagues on this critical issue, and looked forward to working with all levels of government to put the Blueprint for Change into action.

SNAICC: “The soaring rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being removed from their families and culture into out-of-home care is a tragedy for our communities and for this nation. Removing children from their families and communities is an early trigger for the cycle of imprisonment. To break this cycle we must invest in strengthening families and building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision-making processes throughout the child protection system. We need to act now - together” - Rachel Atkinson

The Blueprint highlights the need for justice targets to close the gap by 2040 both in the rates of imprisonment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and in the disproportionate rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, with priority strategies for women and children.

These targets should be accompanied by a National Agreement which includes a reporting mechanism, as well as measurable sub-targets and a commitment to halve the gap in the above over-arching goals by no later than 2030.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA: “Amnesty is known for its work around the world in in amplifying the voices of those who are marginalised and dispossessed. We acknowledge that the justice gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people in Australia is evidence we don’t need to look abroad to see marginalisation or dispossession. We must address this here and now.” – Tammy Solonec, Indigenous People’s Rights Manager

The Blueprint also calls for the establishment of an independent central agency with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oversight, to co-ordinate a comprehensive, current and consistent national approach to related data collection and policy development.

Laws, policies and strategies around reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment and violence rates must be underpinned by a human-rights approach, and designed in consultation and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Governments must also support capacity building for these communities and organisations, so that policies are underpinned by the principle of self-determination, respect, and recognition of the history of dispossession and trauma experienced by many communities.

ANTaR: “ANTAR, as a national advocacy organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, is seriously concerned about the justice crisis that is leaving a generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people behind. Report after report highlights the need for government to act on the rates of incarceration and violence experienced by First Peoples. Government must now commit to implementing the Change the Record Blueprint for Change” - Andrew Meehan, National Director

# SNAICC UPDATE

NEW BOARD MEMEBER | MEMBER ORGANIGATION PROFILE | STAFF + STUDENTS | MEMBERSHIP

## SNAICC BOARD MEMBER: JUNGALA



IN THIS ISSUE WE  
WELCOME THE NEWEST  
MEMBER OF THE SNAICC  
EXECUTIVE BOARD,  
**OOLDOONDA JUNGALA  
KRISS (JUNGALA),**  
A WARLPIRRI, LURITJA AND  
WESTERN ARRENTRE MAN  
FROM THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORY.

Jungala was born in the bush with traditional midwives attending at his birth at Narwietooma Station, in the Northern Territory. Spending his earliest years in the bush, Jungala was then removed by government policies of the day to a government institution before being placed in foster care in Melbourne. Jungala was a keen student, and was awarded a scholarship to study at Ballarat Clarendon College in Victoria.

Since then, Jungala has travelled extensively throughout Europe, working in the tourism industry and presented art and cultural workshops all over the world.

During his time in Europe, Jungala lectured about Aboriginal culture at various schools around Holland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, England and Germany. It was at this time that Jungala also realised the ignorance of a lot of Australians he met in relation to Australian history, cultural awareness and the need for economic development in Aboriginal communities and equality in education, housing and living standards – issues that most people take for granted.

As a result, on his return Jungala Enterprises Pty Ltd was officially registered in 1996 as a company, trading in Australian Aboriginal Art and Indigenous Tourism. Since its inception, each product developed by Jungala Enterprises reflects educational and/or cultural experiences. Jungala specialises as a Cultural Consultant and tour operator - working with Aboriginal outstations and communities to assist them in sustainable economic development in the tourism industry – Jungala has also become renowned for his artwork and dot painted (Jukurrpa) bikes experience, and cultural immersion programs.

Jungala sits on a number of council's including the Warlpirri Education Board and the Yipirinya School Council where he has served since 2010, firstly as a member, then as Vice President and now as School President for the last three years.

Yipirinya School, founded in 1978, is one of the few genuinely Independent Aboriginal Schools in Australia. Yipirinya is a community-controlled school, both founded and controlled by Indigenous Elders; with an all Aboriginal Board representing it's members.

Yipirinya School caters specifically for Indigenous students, teaching literacy and numeracy following the Northern Territory/ National Curriculum framework, but also teaching Indigenous languages and culture, offering a two-way (bilingual and bicultural) education to keep Indigenous culture alive.



## SNAICC MEMBER PROFILE: WINANGAY RESOURCES NSW

Winangay is a Gamilaraay word meaning  
“to know, to think, to love, to understand, to remember”.

**Winangay Resources’ vision is to build capacity in the sector through training and mentoring for workers and to work together to improve outcomes for Aboriginal kids in care and their families.**

Aunty Sue Blacklock, based in the small town of Tingha in rural NSW, is the Chair of Winangay Resources and Ambassador for the Australian Centre for Child Protection. Aunty Sue is a well-loved grandmother and great grandmother to her whole community. She can regularly be found in local schools talking about country and culture and telling stories of the old times and ways.

She describes herself as a simple woman but those who know her well describe her as special and unstoppable. She is deeply distressed about the number of Aboriginal kids that are being denied culture and separated from their kin and land:

**“We have to fight for our kids, we need to stand together and say enough is enough. We must use our words and actions to get the message out there that we need new ways and new approaches if we are going to stop what is now a national tragedy!”**

Aunty Sue established Winangay Resources in 2010, gathering a team of passionate and skilled women and men including Karen Menzies, Gillian Bonser and Paula Hayden to stand with her in this fight.

Since then, this small group – supported by friends and allies across Australia – has left its mark and contributed in its own unique way. Without funding they work together to blend traditional wisdom, cutting edge evidence-based practice, strong theoretical understandings and practice and culturally appropriate approaches.

An example of resources produced were the yarning and visual cards to assess kinship carers. The team worked with Aboriginal workers and Elders from around Australia and consulted with academics and leading practice experts – all of whom contributed to the validation and refinement of the tool: an unusual approach of blending strengths to create what has been described as the seismic shift in practice.

The Winangay Resources team are always happy to hear from workers, Elders and community workers with information about what new resources they feel would be useful. For further information about Winangay Resources Inc. contact Paula Hayden on 0421 912 757 or [www.winangay.com.au](http://www.winangay.com.au)

As a result the resources have been recommended by Senate enquiries, acknowledged by leading practitioners in the field, grassroots workers, carers, a range of academics and community members. Aunty Dawn Wallam commented:

**“The use of Winangay Resources has the potential to reduce the numbers of Aboriginal children in non-Aboriginal care and to contribute to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and families”.**

The resources have also been rolled out extensively throughout Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands in partnership with QATSICPP, the Australian Centre for Child Protection and the Department of Child Safety, with initial research findings being extremely positive.

The initial kinship tools have been expanded and Aboriginal review tools, foster care assessment tools, family support tools and social/emotional well-being yarning cards have been added. At the request of workers and organisations, a range of non-Aboriginal tools and resources are also available.

In addition to these resources, Winangay have also been offering trauma informed care training for some time. They have recently developed trauma informed care principles in plain English and new yarning cards for workers. Aunty Sue presented the new principles and a kids voice quilt at the Child Aware National Conference in Melbourne. The quilt, composed of messages and pictures from over 30 kids, clearly tells the story: bring our kids, cousins, brothers and sisters home.

**“These kids are too precious, too many have been lost and too many tears have been shed. We need to all work together to change the system, so our kids can be strong in culture be kept safe and protected, find healing from trauma and grow up strong in their families and communities. They are our future and so we need to ACT NOW,”** Aunty Sue Blacklock commented.



## NEW STAFF AND STUDENTS

**Back Row (L-R)** Daniel Kovacevic, Poppy Bervanakis, John Burton, Kate Booth, Chris Tangas, Jenine Godwin-Thompson, Nick Joseph, Frank Hytten

**Front Row (L-R)** Jessica Brennan, Emma Sydenham, Emily Maloney, Alice Davis, Luke Mazzeo

**Absent** Ashley Tennyson, Fleur Smith, David Ellis, Yane Myint

### IN THE TRAINING TEAM WE HAVE TWO NEW ADDITIONS:

Resource Manager DR. JENINE GODWIN-THOMPSON, a Yaggerah woman from South-East Queensland, and EMILY MALONEY, a Walpiri woman from North-West of Alice Springs on the Tanami Desert, as a Training and Resource Officer.

Other new arrivals include FLEUR SMITH as a Policy Officer, JESS BRENNAN and DANIEL KOVACEVIC as the Communications Coordinator and Communications Officer, respectively, and CHRIS TANGAS commencing the role of Manager, Finance and Operations.

KATE BOOTH, a Gunditjmara and Gunna/Kurnai woman from Victoria has also changed roles since our last newsletter; she is now SNAICC's Cultural and Community Engagement Manager.

And finally, working on the SNAICC/ Wunan 'Journey to Big School' project is DELPHINE SETON, a Kija/ Bunuba woman who joins us from her base in Halls Creek as an Early Years Engagement and Support Officer.

We also thank our current students, and recognise their valuable contribution at SNAICC.

### CURRENT STUDENTS INCLUDE:

MARIYAM SAMA, who started at SNAICC in July, is studying a Bachelor of Social Work at RMIT. Mariyam's main project at SNAICC has been working on Family Matters with the Policy and Research Team.

ALEX MURRAY is completing a Masters of Social work at RMIT and started at SNAICC mid-August. Alex's projects have included a TYBE review, cultural competence for early years, and family violence.

SHOVA LAMSAL is also a Masters of Social Work student at Monash University in Caulfield. Starting at the end of August, Shova is working on Cultural Competence in non-Indigenous Early Years Setting.

DIANNE GILMARTIN is studying a Masters of Social Work at LaTrobe University and is primarily focussing on Family Violence work during her time at SNAICC.

MARIA SHIN YI CHONG commenced at SNAICC mid-September and is a student at Monash University completing a Masters of Social Work. Maria's main project at SNAICC is researching the Impact of Childcare Reforms on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services.



[www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au](http://www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au)

## SNAICC RESOURCE: SUPPORTING CARERS

SNAICC has enhanced its online resources with the launch of the Supporting Carers website. The website will assist carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their day-to-day role. While still in the developmental stage, the website aims to ensure that a range of relevant resources and supports are available for carers as an engaging user experience. The resource:

- will provide quality, up-to-date and relevant content for carers
- is updated with new content in priority areas that are important to carers and draw on SNAICC's areas of expertise
- is informed by carers and site users of current and future activities

As a one-stop-site for general support and information, the Supporting Carers website is designed to inform, improve the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and reduce the incidence and impacts of child abuse and family violence.

It will assist carers to respond to the child's cultural – as well as developmental – needs. It will provide information and practical ideas for the children they are caring for, including specific input to support carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care who have experienced trauma, sexual assault, family violence and other related information and supports available.

Since its launch, SNAICC has received positive feedback regarding relevance and accessibility of the website. In the future the online resource will continue to empower carers and provide information about how carers can learn to best value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and keep them connected to their culture.



# SNAICC MEMBERSHIP



## BECOMING A SNAICC MEMBER GIVES YOU:

SNAICC is an influential national peak body that represents the interests of families and children across Australia in early childhood development, preschool, and child and family welfare. SNAICC is about organisations and community leaders standing up for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

It's about YOU and hundreds of other organisations together providing a strong voice for change.

**BECOME A SNAICC MEMBER TO  
SPEAK UP STRONGLY FOR OUR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

## SIGN UP TODAY

using our step-by-step online guide or if you'd like to discuss membership with us, please send us an email or call our office.

- **Exclusive** free access to SNAICC's online resources
- **Yearly** subscription of our popular SNAICC Newsletter, along with exclusive member alerts throughout the year
- **Discounts** to the SNAICC Conference and SNAICC Training
- **Membership Certificate** and Welcome pack
- **SNAICC voting rights** (for full members) and opportunity to be on the SNAICC National Executive
- **Capacity to input** to drive the SNAICC policy agenda
- **Opportunities** to learn and exchange information with other services like yours
- **Opportunities** to connect with key national decision-makers on issues that impact your service