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## **SNAICC NEWS SUMMER 2002/2003**

### **Strategic Partnership on Indigenous Early Childhood**

We are delighted to announce the formation of a strategic partnership between SNAICC and the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) around early childhood. CCCH, based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, has had a major involvement in raising public and government awareness of the critical importance of the early years of life. (See separate article in this issue on The Centre for Community Child Health).

SNAICC and CCCH believe it is critical that Indigenous families and children have access to early childhood programs and services which are culturally appropriate and responsive to their particular needs. Access by Indigenous children and families to preschool and early childhood services and support falls well behind that of the rest of the Australian community, and is declining (SNAICC, 2001).

#### **National project**

The new SNAICC & CCCH partnership has very recently been successful in attracting some funding from the Myer Foundation for a national project which aims to:

1. assist Indigenous people to have an effective voice on current and future practice in early childhood matters with particular emphasis on children aged 0-3 and their families;
2. recognise Indigenous expertise and good practice in the area of early childhood development
3. document and promote the innovative and effective work being carried out by Indigenous services and communities to support Indigenous children aged 0-3 and their families
4. influence responses to the early years research and the development of the National Agenda for Early Childhood

SNAICC and the CCCH will be working together to document and promote the types of innovative work that Indigenous services and communities are currently carrying out to support families with young children — particularly children under the age of 3.

By documenting the good practice and innovative work of Indigenous services, including MACS, playgroups, health services, family support services and Indigenous child care centres, the project will recognise the valuable work being carried out by Indigenous communities to support their young children.



This will involve consultations with Indigenous agencies from each state and territory, beginning in early February 2003, to identify current initiatives, services, programs and activities that

- ∑ engage Indigenous parents and very young children together around enhancing their children's development;
- ∑ support the development and well being of Indigenous children particularly those under the age of 3;
- ∑ assist Indigenous families with raising children - particularly when the children are very young.

The type of activities and programs we are interested in is quite broad but would include parenting programs, playgroups, programs to support young children who may have experienced violence or abuse, support groups for first time parents, flexible child care programs, programs to assist children develop language and cultural knowledge, health and nutrition programs and family support groups.

It is likely that some of these initiatives or ideas may come from services that might not describe themselves as "early childhood" services eg. family support services. After initial contact with key people in each state / territory (including government, service providers and non-government organisations), a small advisory group will be formed, and consultations with identified services will occur by telephone or selected site visits.

### **National Agenda for Early Childhood**

**Recent evidence from research on the human brain has established that the early years of development from conception to age six, particularly the first three years, sets the base for competence and coping skills that will affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life (Shore, R., 1997; McCain and Mustard, 1999). Nurturing and responsive care-giving in the first years of life, along with good early child development programs, and good nutrition, help prepare children for school, and improve their outcomes in later life, in terms of learning, behaviour, and physical and mental health. The earlier in life these programs begin, the better.**

In addition, there are insufficient services that actively involve parents with their young children in informal ways that support parenting skills and their role in early child development. We also know that many parents (Indigenous or not) who are experiencing disadvantage may have little understanding of child development, and may need some support to meet their children's developmental needs (Rogers & Martin, 2001:67). This support might include gentle modelling of communicating with babies, demonstrating the link between play and child development, language development activities and socialising with other young children.

In the coming months the Federal Government will release a draft National Agenda for Early Childhood for consultation. One outcome from the project will be the opportunity to influence the National Agenda by highlighting not just the issues and problems that confront Indigenous communities but the local solutions that Indigenous communities are developing.



### **Project Report**

Information from these consultations will be drawn together as a discussion paper, with case studies, which will be presented at the National Indigenous Child Welfare and Development Seminar to be held probably in June. A number of key conference participants and others will be invited to discuss the paper, add to our knowledge of current or possible programs and assist in recommendations. Any such additions will be followed up before completion of the final project report for distribution to a broad range of key stakeholders.

### **Getting your work/activities included in the project report**

**We are inviting anyone who knows of, or is undertaking, innovative work with Indigenous 0 to 3 year old children and their parents/carers in line with the aims of this project to contact the Project Coordinator. SNAICC and the CCCH intend to include a number of case studies and examples of good practice so please contact Rosemary about your work with Indigenous young children and their carers.**

Rosemary Rogers-Coordinator - Indigenous Early Childhood Project  
Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH)-Royal Children's Hospital

Flemington Road PARKVILLE, Vic. 3052

Phone: 03-9345 5618 Fax: 03-9345 5900

Email: [rosemary.rogers@rch.org.au](mailto:rosemary.rogers@rch.org.au)

## **About the Centre for Community Child Health**

The Centre for Community Child Health is a world-recognised centre of excellence supporting and empowering communities to continually improve the health, well-being and quality of life for children and their families.

The Centre's commitment is achieved through high quality education and training, clinical services, research, project consultancy, policy development and advocacy.

The Centre is under the umbrella of three prominent organisations. It is a University of Melbourne academic centre based at the Royal Children's Hospital, one of the world's leading paediatric hospitals.

It is also a key centre of the Murdoch Children's Research Unit, Australia's largest institute devoted to research in child and adolescent health.

The Centre embraces the philosophy that the promotion of children's health and wellbeing begins in the community and this drives our agenda.

The Centre believes that:

- The early years of children's lives have a significant impact on their physical, behavioural and social development later in life
- Many conditions and common problems faced by children are preventable or can be improved if they are recognised and managed early
- The best results are achieved where professionals work in close partnerships with parents who are supported and empowered to make the best choices for their children



- Supporting and strengthening community-based professionals and organisations ensures the best chance of good outcomes for children and their families
- Up-to-date research and evidence of what is shown to be effective and appropriate should inform policy formulation, organisation of services, professional practice with children and their families, and community development.

The Early Childhood Unit of the Centre was established during 1999 in recognition of the increasing evidence of the importance of the early years of life, especially the first three years. The Unit has a multi-disciplinary team that draws together a range of projects related to young children. In the early childhood field, the Unit provides leadership in research and program and policy development. The Unit has planned a long-term strategy of national activities to assist with the integration of services for families with young children, and to promote partnerships between children's services and child and family health services in Australia.

Areas of particular interest include:

- \* Exploring innovative models and pathways to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with high needs
- \* Contributing to health promotion policy at all levels.

The Early Childhood Unit has been contracted by government departments at all levels, and commercial sponsors to undertake resource development, research projects and professional development activities due to its expertise in the identified areas of interest and priorities. Recent projects include needs analyses, service development consultancies, and in particular:

- \* a consultancy to the Brotherhood of St. Laurence to explore interventions through which the organisation might improve the life chances of children from disadvantaged families by enhancing the first three years of their childhood
- \* research for the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services to inform the development of a capacity-building program for all professionals and volunteers who work with or support infants and young children (0 to 3 years).

The Centre believes the best results for improving children's health are achieved by working in partnerships. Consequently, Centre is committed to sharing its knowledge and expertise and has developed links with the community through community based professionals and organisations, policy makers, academic institutions, hospital departments and research centres.

Recent collaborative work between SNAICC and the Centre is an example of the approach taken by the Centre in seeking to improve the health and well being of all children. For further information about the Centre and our other activities please feel free to contact us.

**Centre for Community Child Health**

Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne  
Flemington Road, Parkville Victoria Australia 3052  
Telephone (03) 9345 6150, Facsimile (03) 9345 5900  
Website [www.copas.net.au/ccch](http://www.copas.net.au/ccch)



## Review of SNAICC Vision, Mission Statement and Aims and Objectives

At the November SNAICC AGM the SNAICC constitution was substantially amended to establish a revised set of aims and objectives for SNAICC. The previous aims and objectives had been in place since the mid 1980's. It was agreed that SNAICC's objectives needed to better reflect our commitment to the rights and needs of Indigenous children and families.

The amended aims and objectives for SNAICC are as follows:

### **Vision**

An Australian society in which our communities are empowered to determine their own future, where the rights of our children, young people and families are protected, our cultural identity and achievements are valued and our children and families have access to culturally appropriate services.

### **Mission**

To provide a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through a national body which represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services and promotes the rights, needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

### **Objectives**

1. To advocate for the cultural, emotional, social, spiritual, physical and economic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
2. To pursue Indigenous community based and controlled responses to the welfare and support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
3. To promote the early childhood development needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
4. To work towards the elimination of all forms of poverty and confront injustice which impacts upon the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
5. To promote public awareness and understanding of the historical and contemporary practices whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been forcibly removed from their families and the ongoing consequences of these practices.
6. To encourage, support and assist member organisations and Indigenous communities to develop independent and sustainable responses to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
7. To collaborate with other Indigenous peoples, governments, non government agencies, the corporate sector, international organisations and others in pursuing the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
8. To advocate for the right of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up in a community free from the harmful effects of violence, child abuse and child neglect.
9. To support the development of policy positions on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and promote Indigenous perspectives on such issues to governments, other relevant bodies and the broader community.
10. To highlight and seek recognition of the positive contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people make to their communities and the nation.



## SNAICC Annual Elections

Positions on the SNAICC National Executive and SNAICC office bearer positions were determined at the SNAICC AGM in November. The SNAICC National Executive is comprised of up to two delegates from Indigenous child and family welfare services, (such as AICCAs), in each state/territory and one delegate from an Indigenous early childhood service, (such as a MACS or preschool), from each state/territory. To be eligible to nominate services must be financial members of SNAICC at the time of the AGM.

The following delegates were elected to form the National Executive for 2003:

### **Child & Family Welfare**

- NSW Gary Matthews — Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Community Care  
Dorothy Whyman — NSW Aboriginal Children's Service, NSW ACS
- NT Karen Hall - Karu AICCA
- QLD Valerie Dempsey — Mt Isa AICCA & Mal Walker — QLD AICCA Secretariat
- SA Sharon Williams — SA Aboriginal Family Support Services, SA AFS  
Gwen Owens - SA Aboriginal Family Support Services, SA AFS
- TAS (vacant)
- VIC Muriel Cadd — Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, VACCA  
Alf Bamblett — Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association, VACSAI
- WA Dawn Wallam — Yorganop

### **Early Childhood**

- NSW Shirley Wilson — Allira MACS
- NT Linda Smith — Minbani Family Centre
- QLD (vacant)
- SA Leona Smith — Kuarna Plains MACS
- TAS Tina Harrison — Tasmania Aboriginal Child Care Association, TACCA
- VIC Rose Bamblett — Lidje MACS Aboriginal Corporation  
(alternate delegate; Geraldine Atkinson - Batja Preschool)
- WA Dorothy Bagshaw — Gurlongga Njiniinj MACS

## SNAICC Office Bearers

Elected by and from the 2003 National Executive

Chairperson — Muriel Cadd  
Deputy Chairperson ( Child Welfare) — Gary Matthews  
Deputy Chairperson ( Early Childhood) — Rose Bamblett  
Treasurer — Gwen Owen  
Secretary — Leona Smith



## **UNICEF - State of the World's Children's Report 2003**

This report has recently been launched by UNICEF and points out that 150 million children still suffer from malnutrition, that 120 million school-age children are not in school (mostly girls), and that 6,000 children and young people are infected with HIV every day.

The focus of the 2003 report is on the importance of child participation. The report argues that engaging children and young people and including them in the decision-making processes and in the prevention effort that affect their lives, is essential to addressing these problems. The report showcases examples of meaningful child participation from every region of the world and includes the economic and social statistics of the countries and territories of the world, with particular reference to children's well-being.

Electronic copies of the report are available from: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc03/>

In addition, hard copies of the report are available from our office, located at Level 3, 303 Pitt St, Sydney.

If you would like for us to send a hard copy to you or your organisation, please send your name, mailing address details and a cheque made payable to "UNICEF Australia" for \$6 per copy (to cover postage costs) to: UNICEF Australia, PO Box A2005, Sydney South, NSW 1235.

Lara Scott, Projects Officer

UNICEF Australia, United Nations Children's Fund

Tel: (61-2) 9261 2811 ext 205, Fax: (61-2) 9261 2844

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

## **CHILD WISE / ECPAT AUSTRALIA:**

### **New Website Launched**

CHILD WISE is an Australian organisation working in Australia and overseas to end child sexual exploitation and abuse. CHILD WISE is the Australian representative of ECPAT International which is a global campaign existing in over 70 countries committed to ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

Features of the new website include secure online bookshop for all Child Wise publications and membership, and/or donation facility for the Child Wise supporter's network. It also features the organisation's major projects: Child Wise Tourism and Choose With Care.

Please visit the website at [www.ecpat.org](http://www.ecpat.org) or [www.childwise.net](http://www.childwise.net).

For more information, contact: CHILD WISE

PO Box 451, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205

Tel: 03 9645 8911; Fax: 03 9645 8922; Email: [ecpat@ecpat.org](mailto:ecpat@ecpat.org)

Sender: [owner-childprotect@aifs.gov.au](mailto:owner-childprotect@aifs.gov.au)

## **CREATE Report Card Launched**

On Wednesday 15th of January the CREATE foundation released their third annual report card. The REPORT CARD: 2002 reports on how well Australian States and Territories are doing in promoting the safety and well being of their children and what has changed since the REPORT CARD: 2001.

The REPORT card is available at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

Please contact Michelle Townsend at the CREATE Foundation if you would like any further information.

Michelle Townsend, A/National Director

CREATE Foundation

Tel: 02 4227 4102, Fax: 02 4227 4102, Mob: 0411 455 447 Website: [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)



## CHILD CARE CONSULTATION

### The Child Care Support Broadband Redevelopment Project

The Child Care Support Broadband is a funding program of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), under which a variety of child care related services and activities receive financial support.

For instance, Indigenous services that might currently receive Broadband funding include Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services, Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Programs and resource and advisory agencies. The program also provides payments like Disadvantaged Area Subsidies, Special Needs Subsidies, operational subsidies for Family Day Care, Disability Supplementary Services payments, amongst many others.

**The program is now undergoing a redevelopment process with the aim of making it more cohesive, manageable and more effective in delivering important child care outcomes. This examination is to occur through a highly consultative and participative process, facilitated by a company called Community Link Australia (CLA).**

#### What are your views on the Broadband?

What does the Broadband mean to you? What should be its goals and objectives?

How should we describe the 'clients' and 'activities' funded under the Broadband? What is the Broadband doing well, and how should it be improved? What principles should guide the future development of the Broadband?

How should the program be organised?

These are just some of the key questions on which CLA would like your views.

**Please note, the Broadband consultations are not about the size of the Broadband cake or whether specific organisations should have more funding or less. Whilst funding levels are important, the consultations are not that sort of exercise.**

#### How do I have my say?

A nation-wide consultation process commences the beginning of March, and goes for eight weeks until the end of April 2003.

During that time, you can express your views by

- Attending a consultation meeting on the Broadband redevelopment. Details are on the website, as set out below. The meetings are for everyone to attend.
- Completing a questionnaire called the Response Paper, which will be available on the CLA website from 5 March
- Providing a written submission.

Community Link will be presenting a report to the Department on all of the views received at the conclusion of the widespread consultation.

#### Further information:

For further information, including details of the meeting nearest to you, please visit the CLA website [www.communitylink.com.au](http://www.communitylink.com.au) or telephone 07 3847 5188.

**Optional:** Consultation meetings (including videoconferences) will be held in the following locations:

QLD – Loganholme, Chermside, Townsville, Mt Isa, Roma, Mareeba

ACT – Woden and Belconnen

NSW – Parramatta, Sydney CBD, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Newcastle, Broken Hill

VIC – Coburg, Cranbourne, Box Hill, Caulfield, Shepparton, Mildura

TAS – Burnie, Launceston, Hobart

WA – Perth, Broome, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury

SA – Adelaide, Port Augusta, Berri

NT – Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine

Footnote: **SNAICC's response to the broadband redevelopment.**

SNAICC will be developing a written response to the broadband redevelopment working with the MACS representatives on our National Executive. SNAICC would appreciate and welcome any thoughts on the redevelopment from SNAICC members. Contact the SNAICC Coordinator on 039 482 9380.



### Commonwealth Child Care Reference Group

SNAICC is represented on the Commonwealth Child Care Reference Group which provides advice to the Commonwealth Minister for Children and Young People, the Hon Larry Anthony, MP.

At the December meeting of the reference group SNAICC provided a paper on the child care needs of Indigenous communities highlighting the need for additional services and programs. Currently Indigenous families have much lower access to Commonwealth funded child care than other Australian families.

The paper included the following recommendation for the development of a National Indigenous child care strategy which was endorsed:

#### Development of a National Indigenous Child Care Strategy

The development of a long term National strategy to increase access to child care for Indigenous children and families with a minimum bench mark of achieving equivalent access to child care for Indigenous to that of other Australian children within five years.

The national strategy to be drafted in partnership by SNAICC and the Department for the consideration of the Commonwealth Child Care Reference Group

A copy of the paper SNAICC presented to the Child Care Reference group is available on the SNAICC website at <http://www.snaicc.asn.au>

### Australia Council on Children and Parenting

The SNAICC Chairperson, Muriel Cadd, is a member of the Australia Council on Children and Parenting, ACCAP, which provides advice to the Federal Government on issues relating to parenting, children and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

SNAICC recently presented a paper on issues relating to child abuse and neglect within Indigenous communities and the potential role of the Commonwealth in responding to child abuse and neglect. SNAICC has consistently argued that the Commonwealth needs to focus on prevention through providing long term, secure and substantial funding directed towards family support and early intervention.

A copy of the paper SNAICC prepared for ACCAP is available on the SNAICC website at <http://www.snaicc.asn.au>

### SNAICC – National Indigenous Child Welfare and Development Seminar

SNAICC is pleased to announce that the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have agreed to sponsor and support the National Indigenous Child Welfare and Development Seminar being organised by SNAICC. The seminar will take place in June with final dates to be confirmed shortly.

SNAICC has appointed Julie Sleight who has previously worked in a range of social policy areas in both the government and non government sectors to work as the seminar organiser. Julie started in late February and will be working with SNAICC members to develop the seminar program.

The seminar will also be the major event to recognise SNAICC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and will include a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner, book launch and recognition of major contributors to the organisation and to the rights of Indigenous children.

### National Agenda for Early Childhood

The Federal Government has just released a draft paper for consultation proposing the development of National Agenda for Early Childhood. SNAICC supports the concept of a National Agenda for Early Childhood as it is readily apparent that many Indigenous families do not have the support, resources and assistance required to meet the developmental needs of their children.

SNAICC will be preparing a response to the draft National Agenda through our National Executive and would welcome feedback or comments from readers of SNAICC news. The draft National Agenda is available on the Dept of Family and Community Services Website at <http://www.facs.gov.au>



## Upcoming Conferences

19-21 February 2003

Helping Families Change Conference - from clinical trials to population health  
Sydney, NSW

This conference will be hosted by the Parenting and Family Support Centre, (School of Psychology, The University of Queensland), and Triple P International. Papers will cover topics relating to community-based intervention; prevention and early intervention; risk and resilience in childhood; dissemination of child and family interventions; cross-cultural issues in parenting; problem behaviours of childhood; couple relationships and family outcome; and families with special needs. Further information: Parenting and Family Support Centre, School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, Brisbane Qld 4072. Email: [hfc@triplep.net](mailto:hfc@triplep.net). Web: [http://www.triplep.net/04\\_training/training.htm#HFC](http://www.triplep.net/04_training/training.htm#HFC)

1-4 March 2003

7th National Rural Health Conference  
Hotel Grand Chancellor  
Hobart, Tas

Ph: 02 6285 4660 Fax: 02 6285 4670

Email: [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au) Website: [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

1-2 May 2003

Child Sexual Abuse: Justice Response or Alternative Resolution  
Adelaide, SA

This conference from the Australian Institute of Criminology seeks to provide academics, researchers, lawyers, policy makers and practitioners from areas such as child protection, family law, community organisations and social welfare with a forum to discuss issues associated with child sexual abuse and the appropriate justice response and to identify best practice, share knowledge and develop strategies to address the relevant issues. The closing date for submissions is 31 January 2003.

Further information: Conference Co-ordinators, PO Box 139, Calwell ACT 2905. Tel: (02) 6292 9000. Fax: (02) 6292 9002. Email: [confco@austarmetro.com.au](mailto:confco@austarmetro.com.au). Web: <http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/2003-abuse/>

15-18 June 2003

4th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers' Conference  
Adelaide, SA

An invitation is extended to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers across the nation, their colleagues, and all those who have an interest in the health of Indigenous communities, to attend the 4th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers' Conference. Papers are invited, abstracts to be submitted by February 21st, 2003.

Further information: Secretariat - SAPMEA Conventions, 68 Greenhill Road, Wayville SA 5034. Tel: (08) 8274 6060. Fax: (08) 8274 6000. Toll Free Number 1800 674 668. Email: [aihw4thconf@sapmea.asn.au](mailto:aihw4thconf@sapmea.asn.au). Web: <http://www.sapmea.asn.au>

18-19 September 2003

National Carers Conference  
Canberra, ACT

Advance notice of the 2003 National Carers Conference, to be held Rydges Lakeside, Canberra. More information will be posted on the Web site when it becomes available.

Further information: Carol Sweetapple, PO Box 73 Deakin West 2600. Project Co-ordinator - Tel: 02 6282 7886. Fax: 02 6282 7885. Email: [csweetapple@carersaustralia.com.au](mailto:csweetapple@carersaustralia.com.au).

Web: [http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/Carers\\_conference\\_2003.html](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/Carers_conference_2003.html)

19-22 September 2003

ISPCAN 15th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Share ideas and experiences from across the global community about protecting children and young people as valued participants. Which is hosted by NAPCAN.

For further information: Secretariat Office C/- ICMS PO Box 3496 South Brisbane Qld 4101. Ph: 07 3844 1138 Fax: 07 38440909 Email: [ispcan2004@icms.com.au](mailto:ispcan2004@icms.com.au) Website: [www.congress2004.com](http://www.congress2004.com)