



SNAICC NEWS

SNAICC Annual General Meeting 2006

by Mark Lawrence, SNAICC Publications Officer

Representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's and families' services from across the country met in Cairns last month for the SNAICC Annual General Meeting. They took stock of how far their national peak body had come this past year in advancing the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and helped set SNAICC's direction for 2007.

A wide cross section of SNAICC's membership attended the two-day meeting, which encompassed the Members' Forum on Wednesday 15 November and the AGM on Thursday 16 November. Those attending included MACS (Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services) from Western Australia and New South Wales, early childhood resource and professional support services from Northern Territory, and South Australia, and Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs) from each state and territory (except ACT),

amongst others.

At the AGM, the members accepted SNAICC's financial report for 2006 and approved the organisation's budget for 2007. They also heard from SNAICC Chairperson Ms Muriel Bamblett reporting on her work representing SNAICC as its Chairperson (see page 2 for a summary of Ms Bamblett's Chairperson's Report).

Muriel Bamblett also launched the *SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007–2009* at the Annual General Meeting.

SNAICC Executive Officer Julian Pockock, as the Returning Officer, reported to the AGM on the outcome from the election of the SNAICC National Executive (the list of those elected to the National Executive is available in the Returning Officer's report on page 3).

Issues and Priorities

The Member's Forum, held on the Wednesday, was an ideal opportunity for



Participants at SNAICC's AGM in Cairns. Above (left to right): Lyn Guidry (Indigenous Family & Child Support Service, QLD), Kevin Walker (Mackay AICCA, QLD), Mark Moore (Aboriginal & Islander Community Health Service, QLD). Below (left to right): Kenneth Johnson, Kalwun AICCA (QLD), Ray Burrows (Gundoo Day Care Centre, QLD), Ian Davidson (AFSS, SA).

representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled children's and families' services to share their insights on the pressing issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country.

From the issues they identified, a number of key advocacy, policy development and resource sharing priorities were identified for SNAICC in 2007. (A summary of the Members' Issues and Priorities from the Forum is on page 11 of this newsletter.)

These discussions also helped members from across the country to learn from each other what issues are affecting the different communities in various states and territories, and how the communities are dealing with them.

Election of Office Bearers

Immediately after the AGM the newly elected National Executive held its first



continued on page 3

Also in this edition:



AGM: SNAICC
Chairperson's
Report

page 2



National Executive
elected for
2007/2008

page 3



Overview of
SNAICC's work in
2006

page 5



SRS Update: the
Clearinghouse,
Evaluation and more

page 8



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Contributions, feedback and suggestions to *SNAICC News* are welcome. Copy deadline for our December edition is **9 February 2007**.

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

– Ms Muriel Bamblett, AM



Below are the key points from SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett's Report to the 2006 SNAICC Annual General Meeting in Cairns last November.

2006 Major Activities

- Speaking at conferences and forums on behalf of SNAICC:
 - ACWA – Children's Rights
 - FACSIA – Partnerships
 - ABSec – NSW
 - Forgotten Australians
 - ARACY
- Responding to media requests for information and comments from SNAICC in relation to a range of children's issues – in particular media surrounding child abuse in the NT
- Leading SNAICC delegations to meetings with Ministers Kay Patterson and Mal Brough
- Participation in forums with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies including NACCHO, NAJAC and NAILS
- Leading SNAICC's recent lobby trip to Canberra to meet with all the major political parties and discuss the development of their election policies for the 2007 Federal election
- Providing input into SNAICC's briefing and policy papers on the need for a national response to child abuse and neglect
- Chairing meetings of the SNAICC National Executive and Management Committee
- Participating in the planning meetings in relation to the SNAICC Resource Service
- Working with the SNAICC National Executive on the development of a new organisational structure for SNAICC
- Media work in relation to NAICD
- Representing SNAICC within government forums including the ATSI Services Working Group
- Participation in and membership of

the Australia Council on Children and Parenting (ACCAP)

- Acting as a co-signatory to SNAICC accounts and co-signing requisitions and cheques along with the SNAICC Executive Officer
- Liaison with SNAICC staff and in particular the SNAICC Executive Officer on a weekly basis in relation to SNAICC work priorities
- Providing input into the development of the National Indigenous Child Care Plan.

On-going challenges

- Continuing to assert that our children's culture is central to their well being
- Advocating that culture should be the critical component of quality assurance within childcare accreditation and licensing/accreditation of OOHCC services
- Working with our members in the States and Territories to lobby and advocate for child protection reforms and for the establishment of new and expanded AICCA services
- Consolidating the work of the SNAICC Resource Service and securing its long term funding
- Ensuring the new IPSUs (state resource agencies) receive expanded support and long term funding
- Developing an effective, strategic and 'safe' international role and profile
- Expanding our membership base
- Responding effectively to the needs of remote communities
- Advocating to the Federal Government, Ministers and Departments that services that work specifically with our families must be expanded – not 'mainstreamed'
- Staying focused on our agreed Seven Policy Priorities
- Preparing for the next SNAICC National Conference in September 2007
- Developing our policy statements on valuing children as discussed at the Members' Policy Forum.

National Executive 2007/2008

2006 SNAICC AGM – Returning Officer's Report

By Julian Pcock,
Returning Officer & SNAICC Executive Officer

From 2004, SNAICC has introduced a process of postal voting for the National Executive. Under the postal vote system all SNAICC members in each category of membership were provided with nomination forms and information on the election process approximately six weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

A postal vote ballot was conducted for the Early Childhood position from Western Australia and the outcome finalised prior to the AGM.

The following nominated agencies and delegates were elected to the SNAICC National Executive for a two-year term commencing from this year's AGM.

SNAICC National Executive 2007/2008

Category A. AICCA/child welfare lead agency or peak body – a representative from the AICCA/Child welfare lead agency or peak body in each state and territory

NSW – Aboriginal Child Family & Community Care State Secretariat
NSW (ABSec) – Steve Larkins
NT – Karu Aboriginal & Islander Childcare Agency – Natalie Hunter

QLD – Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council – name of delegate to be advised

SA – Aboriginal Family Support Service – Sharron Williams

TAS – Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre – Alison Overeem

WA – Yorganop Childcare Aboriginal Corporation – Dawn Wallam

VIC – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency – Muriel Bamblett

ACT – no eligible member in this category

Category B. MACS/Indigenous Childcare/ Indigenous child care resource agencies/playgroups – one service elected by and from the Commonwealth funded Indigenous childcare services and resource agencies in each state and territory

ACT – Wreck Bay MACS – Tanya Ardler

NSW – Multi-Purpose Allira Gathering Association – Shirley Wilson

NT – Regional and Remote Aboriginal Children and Services Support Unit – Veronica P

QLD – Gundoo MACS – Ray Burrows

SA – Aboriginal Resource Management Support Unit – Debbie Bond

TAS – Tasmanian Aboriginal Childcare

Association – Lisa Coulson
VIC – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc – Geraldine Atkinson
WA – Gurlongga Njiniinj MACS – Dot Bagshaw

Category C. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early learning and Preschool Services

Two to be elected from anywhere in Australia

Coolabaroo Neighbourhood Centre, Perth, WA

Batdja Preschool, Shepparton, VIC

Category D. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Welfare Services

Two nominations received for the two positions

Cape York RAATSICC Advisory

Association – Desley Thompson

Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family

Community Care – Garry Matthews

National Executive Office Bearers

Chairperson – Muriel Bamblett

Deputy Chair (Child Welfare) – Garry Matthews

Deputy Chair (Early Childhood) – Dot Bagshaw

Treasurer – Dawn Wallam

Secretary – Steve Larkins

continued from page 1

SNAICC AGM and Members' Forum

meeting to elect the organisation's Office Bearers. They elected Ms Muriel Bamblett from VACCA (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency) as SNAICC Chairperson for another term, and elected Ms Dot Bagshaw from Gurlongga Njiniinj MACS in WA was elected Deputy Chair (Early Childhood), and Mr Garry Matthews of Coffs Harbour (NSW) as Deputy Chair (Child Welfare).

Ms Dawn Wallam of Yorganop Childcare Aboriginal Corporation (WA) was elected Treasurer and Mr Steve Larkins, the representative of AbSEC (NSW), was elected Secretary.

Service visits

After the AGM, on Friday 17 November, those members who didn't have to return

immediately to their communities had the opportunity to visit local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services and communities around Cairns.

One group visited Wu Chopperen Health Service in Cairns, where the visitors got a presentation on the service's work. Recently, Wu Chopperen Health Service was awarded the top award for a large organisation in the Indigenous Governance Awards. The service also auspices the Wu Chopperen Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency, which is a SNAICC member.

Meanwhile, another group visited the Aboriginal community of Yarrabah, approximately 45 minutes outside Cairns, to learn what the services there are doing. These visits allowed SNAICC delegates the



Above: Desley Thompson, from the Cape York RAATSICC Advisory Association, was a great assistance to SNAICC in coordinating the service visits on the Friday. Photo: SNAICC © 2006

opportunity to learn from their colleagues in the Cape region of Queensland, and we are grateful to them for their hospitality.

Thank you also to Desley Thompson of Cape York RAATSICC Advisory Association, whose help in coordinating these visits was invaluable.

SNAICC Update

2006 has been a very busy year for SNAICC, with many challenges to face in ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families are supported in the best possible way. It has also been an exciting time for our organisation as it has continued to grow through the year and the SNAICC Resource Service has certainly taken-off in its work.

In this edition of *SNAICC News*, we've included a number of the reports that were presented at SNAICC's recent Annual General Meeting (AGM), and we trust this will give our readers further insight into what made 2006 a busy and engaging year, and what SNAICC sees as the priorities for 2007 and beyond.

SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007-2009

This past year, we reviewed our current Strategic Plan (2004-2006) with the view to developing our next three-year Strategic Plan. Julie Higgins, the SNAICC Policy Manager, worked extensively with the National Executive and SNAICC staff in identifying the focus themes and priority work areas SNAICC will pursue as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families over the next three years.

The *SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007-2009* was endorsed by the National Executive and has been published. SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett launched it at our AGM in Cairns. Copies of the *Strategic Plan* will be sent to all SNAICC members in early 2007. If any *SNAICC News* subscribers would like a copy, please contact the SNAICC office when it reopens in 2007.

Staff team restructure and appointments

With the increasing number of staff at SNAICC and the SRS (SNAICC Resource Service), SNAICC needed to assess the capacity of the Executive Officer position to directly manage all staff, whilst maintaining the Executive Officer's capacity to continue assisting the National Executive and the SNAICC Chairperson in advocating for SNAICC's position to federal and state and territory governments and in working on policy development.

As a result of the review, the

organisation restructured the SNAICC staff group into three staff teams and created three new positions to supervise the staff and lead each team's work. These teams are the **SRS Team** (led by the SRS Programme Manager), the **SNAICC Policy and Projects Team** (led by the SNAICC Policy Manager) and the **Administration Team** (led by the SNAICC Governance and Planning Manager).

Julie Higgins, who has been SNAICC's Policy Officer this last three years, was appointed as the SNAICC Policy Manager, while the organisation advertised nationally to recruit the SRS Programme Manager and the SNAICC Governance and Planning Manager.

We were pleased to offer the SRS Programme Manager position to Veronica Johns, who had originally joined SNAICC as an SRS Project Officer in April this year. We were also pleased to appoint Kim Werner as the SNAICC Governance and Planning Manager in November (see Kim's introduction to herself on page 10 of this newsletter).

The SRS Team encompasses all the SRS staff, including Liz Orr, who has been appointed the SRS Evaluation Manager, SRS Project Officers Michele Moloney and Nikki Butler, and SRS Clearinghouse Officer Tatiana Doroshenko. Recruitment for the SRS Project Officer position that Veronica vacated is underway.

The SNAICC Policy and Projects team, led by Julie Higgins, includes SNAICC Conference Organiser Carmen Isherwood and will include future SNAICC Project Officer positions that may be filled. Until recently, this team also included SNAICC Project Officer Moira Ross-Rayner, who finished her project in November and completed her contract with SNAICC.

Kim Werner leads the Administration Team, which includes Finance Officer Ragavan Kandiah (Raj), Administration Officer Angelique Davis and Publications Officer Mark Lawrence. When the new Administrative Assistant (Finance) position is filled in the New Year, it will come under this team as well.

Farewell to Moira

SNAICC wishes farewell and a sincere 'thank you' to Moira Ross-Rayner for all her work as the SNAICC Project Officer developing the Resource Booklets for non-Indigenous foster carers of Aboriginal and



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Torres Strait Islander children.

Moira's contract ended with the completion of the one-year project, and the Foster Carers' Resource booklets, which are now being prepared by the designer for publication, will be available in early 2007.

We wish Moira all the best in her return to the Victorian Department of Human Services, from which she was seconded to SNAICC for the term of the project.

SNAICC office closed for Xmas

The SNAICC office will be closed for the Christmas season from 25 December, and will reopen on 2 January 2007.

I will take this opportunity, on behalf of all SNAICC staff, to wish all our members and subscribers to *SNAICC News* **all the very best wishes for the season, and a Happy New Year for 2007!**

– Julian Pocock,
SNAICC Executive Officer



**SNAICC National Conference
2007**
19, 20 and 21 September 2007
Convention Centre, Adelaide

For more information, contact
Carmen Isherwood
SNAICC Conference Organiser:
carmen@snaicc.asn.au

or go to:
[www.snaicc.asn.au/news/
NationalConference2007.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/NationalConference2007.html)

An overview of SNAICC's work – 2006 and beyond

This overview of SNAICC's key achievements and work for 2006 is an adaptation of the SNAICC Secretariat Report presented by SNAICC Executive Officer Julian Pocock at the SNAICC AGM in Cairns in November. A list of SNAICC's Major Work Priorities for 2007 is on page 6.

At the 2005 AGM, we focused on issues for remote communities and SNAICC expressed its doubts and concerns about the approach of the Australian government and in particular the focus on shared responsibility agreements and 'whole of government' service provision.

A year later it is clear that COAG pilots including the Wadeye pilot are struggling to make any significant difference to the living conditions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are being born into. Whilst taking a whole of government approach to service delivery sounds attractive, in practice it appears to be making service delivery unnecessarily complex – diminishing the prospect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will have access to the same basic infrastructure that other Australian communities take for granted.

SNAICC has expressed its concerns about the 'shared responsibility' approach to service delivery from the time they were first proposed and will continue to do so. Communities need mainstream departments such as health, housing, education, family and community services and transport to focus on their core business and deliver better services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

During 2006, Australia's mainstream media focused on the Northern Territory when looking for stories and news in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The media attention on violence and child abuse within communities created threats and opportunities. SNAICC, in responding to these issues, sought to draw upon its considerable policy work in relation to child abuse to support its members and communities in the Northern Territory, balance the media story with information about the positive efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to care for and protect children, and offer solutions and hope.

Whilst the media spotlight has moved on, SNAICC and NT communities are continuing to work on these issues and to highlight the critical role of a child's

Indigenous culture and family as the foundation of their well being – not the cause of their vulnerability.

Policy work for SNAICC remains a high priority for our Policy Manager, Julie Higgins, who has been coordinating SNAICC's advocacy and lobbying in the lead up to the next federal election and working this year on several policy briefing papers.

This has included policy papers on permanency planning and a briefing paper for all states and territories on the need for a national strategy responding to child abuse and neglect. Seeking proper implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander placement principle remains a core policy objective. During 2007 our policy work will also focus on the development by the United Nations General Assembly of a statement on Indigenous children.

The next SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007–2009 has been developed and endorsed by the SNAICC National Executive and was released at the end of the AGM. SNAICC has been quite specific about the issues and priorities we will pursue, as we believe that this provides transparency

and accountability. Significantly the new strategic plan has merged the previously separate sections on child welfare and early childhood development. SNAICC has always seen these two areas of policy and service delivery as connected and mutually reinforcing. This is reflected in our policy and advocacy and, increasingly, we are seeing a merging of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child welfare and early childhood development services.

Children's Day this year was a great success with what seemed to be a much higher level of participation through local events. The production of the Children's Day leaflet in the past three years and the Activity Kit this year has made a significant and positive difference. In Victoria the state government supported Children's Day with grants provided to every children's service that had any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the service. This made a great difference to the capacity of services to run activities and in 2007 SNAICC will be advocating that other states and territories do the same.

The SNAICC Resource Service, or SRS as it is now known, had its first independent evaluation in 2006 and has been very highly rated for the work to date in establishing the service and developing a broad range of projects. The SRS has delivered projects that communities value and which are underpinned by our core focus on the strength of culture and its central role in children's well being. The SRS and SNAICC's policy work link very clearly and

continued on page 6

“Our profile as an organisation continues to expand and SNAICC is constantly sought after to make presentations and participate in conferences and seminars focused on children and families.”



An Overview of 2006

strategically in this way.

While it is necessary to shine a light on the horror of child abuse, it is equally important to shine a light on how culture and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices are the key to protecting kids. This is what the SRS does and will continue to do. Veronica Johns as SRS Program Manager will be leading the ongoing development of the SRS in 2007.

Since the last Annual General Meeting the SNAICC staff team has continued to grow and we have made considerable progress building the capacity of the organisation to manage a higher level of demand, funding and staffing. This has included a governance audit and review, an internal restructure and implementation of a new organisational structure and the appointment of a Governance and Planning Manager, Kim Werner, to lead SNAICC's organisational development over the next several years.

Our profile as an organisation continues to expand and SNAICC is constantly sought after to make presentations and participate in conferences and seminars focused on children and families. With the demise of ATSIC over the past 12 months the interest from governments and others to



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“We can be confident that the organisation will perform and deliver across all areas...

We will continue, however, to feel anxious and angry about the way in which the rights and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across this country are denied.”

work with SNAICC has also grown. In essence NACCHO and SNAICC are all that's left at the national level and as a result the requests for us to input into policy development have expanded significantly.

Funding and resources have expanded over the past year with SNAICC slowly developing its asset base and a small accumulated surplus. We will need to continue to budget for surpluses across the organisation to ensure our financial position is consolidated. The audit this year was completed in September with no significant issues to report to members. During 2007 we will be exploring options for SNAICC to establish a children's trust or fund to enable SNAICC to access a larger range of philanthropic grants and to accept gifts and donations on a tax deductible basis.

SNAICC can look ahead to 2007 with a mixture of confidence and anxiety. We can be confident that the organisation will perform and deliver across all of the areas outlined in the new strategic plan. SNAICC has a very talented, dedicated and diverse staff team; a highly committed and focused National Executive; extensive membership and community networks; access to and respect from government and significant financial resources.

We will continue, however, to feel anxious and angry about the way in which the rights and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across this country are denied. Denied not in the sense that governments refute what rights children have but in the sense that they fail to do what's required to see children's rights acted upon and their needs met.

Whilst our advocacy work in 2007 will be driven by that anxiety and anger it will be characterised by the dignity and determination that SNAICC has displayed since its formation over 20 years ago. ●

SNAICC's major work priorities for 2007

The issues and areas below provide an indication of SNAICC's on-going work priorities for 2007:

- Advocating for the finalisation and implementation of the National Indigenous Child Care Plan
- Implementation of the SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007–2009
- Diversifying SNAICC's income and resource base/development of children's trust
- Pre-election lobbying in the lead up to the next federal election
- Participation in the development of the UN General Assembly general comment on Indigenous children
- 2007 SNAICC National Conference – For Our Children
- Review of the SNAICC policy paper – *Seven Priorities for Children*
- Development of research projects on child welfare and protection including on family decision making and the importance of family and cultural connections for children in care
- Lobbying state and territory governments in relation to child protection reforms
- Preparation of 2007–08 SRS and SNAICC Budgets
- Further developing the SNAICC quarterly newsletter with major themes/topics for each quarter's edition
- Further development of interactive members' section on SNAICC website through a new set of SNAICC Resource Service web pages and clearinghouse service
- Ongoing membership campaign to expand SNAICC membership
- Continually improving our systems and approaches to staff support and supervision and project planning and management
- Update of SNAICC National Executive Induction manual and governance training
- Advocating for child care quality assurance systems based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and child rearing practices
- Re/negotiating funding agreements for SNAICC Resource Service
- Advocating for increased longer term funding for the IPSUs/state resource agencies
- Finalisation of SNAICC Governance Manual, policies and procedures.

Cultural Day at Newmerella Primary School

By Michele Moloney
SRS Project Officer



Above is the invitation that was designed and distributed to children, families and past pupils inviting them to the Cultural Day at Newmerella Primary School. Situated between Orbost and Lakes Entrance, Victoria, Newmerella is one of those places whereby if you blink you will miss it.

Cultural Day is for them National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, which they could not hold at the time (4 August).

Newmerella is a lovely little 60 pupil school – nine who are Aboriginal (mostly from the farms) – nestled in the lovely surrounding tree-filled bush.

Newmerella school has a long history of Aboriginal children attending, coming from Aboriginal families living in the area. In fact at some periods it had far more Aboriginal children than non. Some of the Gunai Elders – each of whom had attended the school sixty years ago – came to the day, as did seven other Aboriginal people, and they took on the responsibility for what happened with the children for the day.

It started at 10 o'clock with a welcome – not an acknowledgement, as it is the land of those people that attended. Harry Stewart, Madge Seilly and Phyllis Hewit all spoke about what the area was like, families that lived around the area and what it was

like for them attending the school. In some ways some things were the same as today and in some other ways they were not. For instance, in their day you would get the cane or the strap. The school though and the area have changed very little.

At the conclusion of the welcome it was playtime.

Following playtime the pupils were split up into three groups. One group worked on creating a very large banner. The second painted some very large animal cut outs and the third group made some clapsticks. All the groups worked like this until lunch time.

For lunch there was a barbeque of kangaroo, sausages and beef.

Following lunch there was a large group session in when the principal spoke of the importance of a day such as this. A few songs were sung and then everyone adjourned to the front of the school and the flag pole where the Aboriginal flag was raised.

For the remainder of the day the three groups swapped so that each one got a turn at each of the activities.

The day was good, not only for the students who were totally immersed in the activities and the day, but the elders and the other Aboriginal people who attended the day.

They were able to see their names of many years ago on the rolls, the trees they climbed as children and numerous other reminders of those times. It was also good for others of us who attended.



Above: Local Aboriginal Elder Uncle Harry Stewart sharing stories with students of Newmerella Primary School during their Cultural Day. **Top:** The invitation to the Cultural Day featured children's artwork. Photo and invitation courtesy of Newmerella Primary School.

Best Start Implementation Forum

'Building Effective Partnerships with the Aboriginal Community'

A SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) information stand was set-up at the Best Start forum held at the Aborigines Advancement League in Thornbury (Melbourne) on 21 November.

A number of SRS and general SNAICC resources were placed on display and disseminated to the forum participants. These were *Footprints to Where We Are*, *Through Young Black Eyes* handbook and brochure, the *Dreaming Resource*, parenting and men posters and SNAICC's 2007–2009 Strategic Plan.

The day was productive and a number of new networks and partnerships were made due to our presence at this forum. We look forward to attending similar forums in the future to promote the work of SNAICC and the SRS.

– Nikki Butler, SRS Project Officer

SRS Clearinghouse and website

The SRS Clearinghouse and website are expected to be in place in the first half of 2007. The Clearinghouse website will have a public face which will allow the general public to have access to a collection of resources, such as publications, community events and conference calendars, training and a range of resources available on the world wide web.

There will also be an 'Our Business' section of the website for members that will house information and resources available for exchange amongst SNAICC members. These will include a collection of materials, an index of materials from the clearinghouse library that can be borrowed, and a discussion forum.

The SRS website will be an integral part of the SNAICC website and will be the resource component of the SNAICC site.

Fraynetwork is our chosen site authors and host. (Gary Saunders from Fraynetwork was a part design author of the new SRS logo that was conceptualised by Veronica Johns. Gary will also work on our site.)

Fraynetwork are also updating the SNAICC website to make it compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's



Above: SRS Evaluation Manager Liz Orr and SRS Project Officer Nikki Butler staffing the SRS Information stall at the Best Start Forum in Melbourne. Photo: SNAICC © 2006

standard of accessibility (www.w3c.org), which is current best-practice for the web that allows people with disabilities, and lower bandwidths and technology capabilities to access clear and accurate material on the web, and is adhered to by all Australian Government sites.

We will also be putting in place a Content Management System (CMS) across the entire site that will allow greater flexibility in the way we manage and edit the website and allow members to actively contribute content.

– Tatiana Doroshenko,
SRS Clearinghouse Officer

Evaluation of the SNAICC Resource Service

The evaluation of the SNAICC Resource Service is being undertaken as an action research partnership between the consultancy firm beyond... and SNAICC. Staff from beyond... and the SRS gather feedback, analyse surveys, conduct case studies and do phone and personal interviews with SNAICC members and other key stakeholders about the resources and activities of the SRS.

There will be several written reports given to the SNAICC Executive and the SRS Reference Group over the three year lifetime of the evaluation. The first report was tabled at the SNAICC Executive

meeting in September and the next written report will be ready in July 2007.

As promised in the August–September newsletter, the SRS will provide information about the evaluation to our members through the newsletter from time to time. The format for presenting feedback about the activities and projects of the SRS is through a series of themes. Here is a summary of the feedback we received about the *Dreaming Resource* taken from the first evaluation report and an update about what action the SRS is taking in response to the feedback.

The *Dreaming Resource* falls into 'THEME 4: Improved access to and cultural relevance of resources'.

Fifty-four SNAICC core members completed evaluation surveys on the *Dreaming Resource* in the initial months after it was distributed; this represents a 28 per cent initial return rate without any reminders, which is a good outcome for a written survey. A wide variety of member organisations returned surveys with the majority of responses coming from Multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services, followed by preschools, child care centres, and early childhood resource agencies.

The most common response was that people greatly appreciated receiving the resource (60 per cent), with some specifically commenting on the value of it having strong cultural content (19 per cent) and also information on the story

context (19 per cent), i.e. knowing who told the story, where they were from and information about that place. A handful of people mentioned they appreciated that the resource represented the diversity of Aboriginal people, and a few others noted that it was of good quality.

Organisations identified between one and four ways that they would use the resource. The most common purpose was to improve cultural awareness. People also frequently said it was a good children's resource and useful for general education within their centre, e.g. for literacy, while some specifically named playing the stories at story time or during quiet time.

Some centres reported they would use the resource for staff training and a few others during committee meetings. A few centres would make it available for library loan so children could take it home and share it with their family members. There were single examples of other ideas, such as using it for a fathers' night, at a conference workshop or for a parent meeting.

“Some community centres were inspired to start gathering local stories and bring elders and children together to tell them and document them.”

People were also asked if the resource had inspired them to create particular projects or activities linked to the *Dreaming Resource*. The most frequent suggestions related to extending the stories into literacy, art/craft, music and drama activities, e.g. encouraging children to do their own performances, songs or puppet shows based on a story; and teaching them their local Aboriginal language names for things in the story. A few centres planned to use the stories more formally to set up curriculum themes around which many activities would be developed over a period of time. Nine community centres said they were inspired to start gathering local stories and bring elders and children together to tell them and, in some cases, document them.

Suggested areas for improving the resource centred on adapting the material so it was suitable for a younger age group and providing people with training or direct guidance in using the resource. A few centres had been proactive in this area. For example, one service identified which stories were suitable to map into their early literacy curriculum program and developed

activities built on these stories. Another service encouraged their children, after they had listened to the DVDs or story books, to tell their own stories about their everyday life. Staff then wrote the stories down for them to illustrate and take home to share with family. This was well received by family members.

The feedback also noted that although there are many stories from different areas, it is not possible for the resource to do full justice to the wide diversity of Aboriginal communities and nations. People wished that more stories from their area were included and were finding ways to address this. However, they hoped the SRS could provide a 'how to' guide or other resources to assist them to gather and depict stories from their area and get them to a publishable storybook form or even an animated DVD story.

Thank you to all the services and people who returned survey sheets or phoned in with comments about the *Dreaming Resource*. Some of your suggestions and feedback will be addressed through another project we are doing in partnership with Early Childhood Australia.

A booklet with suggestions about how to use the stories is being produced to accompany one DVD with a smaller selection of stories aimed at the 3–5 year age group. This resource is expected to be released in March 2007. The SRS is also exploring the possibility of working with clusters of local services to document their own local stories.

If you have any feedback about any of the SRS projects or want to find out more about the evaluation, contact:

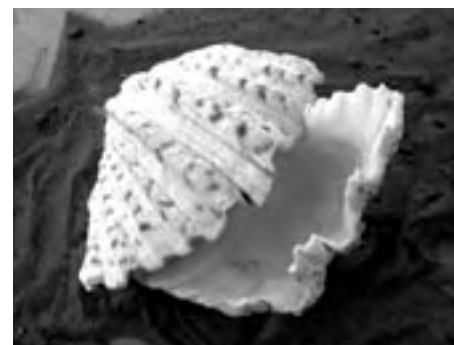
SRS Evaluation Manager Liz Orr: email project3@snaicc.asn.au

Or email Kathleen@beyond-kathleenstacey.com.au.

– Liz Orr, SRS Evaluation Manager



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At the Child Rearing Workshop, the clam was used as a metaphor for reflecting on how Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can work together in documenting and passing on knowledge and practices.

Child Rearing Workshop

On 7 December, SNAICC convened a full-day workshop titled 'Options for Gathering and Documenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Knowledge(s) and Practice(s)'. The workshop was held at Hotel Y in Melbourne and looked at concepts used to explain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices, and culturally accepted and understood ways of passing on knowledge and practices, and heard from projects that addressed issues around cultural sensitivity and restricted information.

A key outcome from the forum was to inform SNAICC and the SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) on how to further progress the idea of documenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices, and then how to share this information respectfully and appropriately with a wider audience.

Many participants travelled from far and wide to participate in such an important milestone in the progression of this SRS project, and shared their expertise and skills. Government, non-government and community representatives were in attendance, and are willing to remain involved in the project.

The workshop was part of a two-day general forum that focused on 'Using Our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids'. The idea for this forum came through a partnership the SRS has established with the Community and Family Clearinghouse of Australia (CAFCA). CAFCA held a workshop titled 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childhood Outcomes – Research and Evaluation' on the second day. A full report on the workshop will be in the next SNAICC newsletter, which is expected for March 2007.

– Nikki Butler, SRS Project Officer

SNAICC 2006 AGM Photo Gallery



Participants of the SNAICC AGM in Cairns came from across the country. **From top down:** Amanda Bridge (Great Lakes/Manning Aboriginal Children's Service, NSW); Jackie Rout and Christine Armstrong (Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi, Alice Springs, NT); Mark Moore and Uncle Steve Mam (Aboriginal & Islander Community Health Service, Brisbane, QLD); Dhaykamalu Valerie, Regional and Remote Aboriginal Children and Services Support Unit, (Elcho Island, via Darwin, NT).

Top right: Some of the AGM's participants visiting the Children's Service at Yarrabah community during one of the service visits on the Friday.

More information about the AGM is on pages 1 and 3.



Welcome to new SNAICC staff

Kim



Hi, my name is Kim Werner and in November I took up the position of Governance and Planning Manager at SNAICC. This new role has been created to support the effective governance of the organisation and coordinate organisational planning. The position has an internal focus on internal communication, planning and governance procedures and an external focus on supporting members of SNAICC's National Executive in their range of important roles.

I moved to Melbourne in August after living and working for 2 years in Cairns. While in Cairns I worked for the Indigenous Coordination Centre and for Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation. Both of these roles brought

me into contact with many of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities in Cape York and it was a time of immense personal and professional learning. Ultimately the desire to be closer to family led to the move back down south and my husband and I are now happily settled in Melbourne.

Before moving to Cairns I studied and worked in Canberra for 16 years. I studied law and politics, and after university I worked for the Australian Taxation Office for five years. During this time I found myself increasingly involved in a voluntary capacity in many non-government organisations and ultimately decided that my heart lay in the community sector.

I then spent the next five years working in management roles in a women's health organisation and then with a large provider of drug and alcohol, mental health and housing services to women and children. Through this experience I developed an unexpected but passionate interest in how NGOs can more effectively achieve their aims by being better managed and governed. This position is a wonderful opportunity for me as it brings together all the different threads of my interests and experiences.

It is a real privilege to be working at SNAICC and I hope to make a contribution to the vital work it does. ●

More news about SNAICC staff movements is in the SNAICC Update on page 4.

SNAICC Members' Issues and Priorities

A range of issues were reported by SNAICC members at the Members' Forum, held the day before the AGM, and raised for follow up action by SNAICC. These include:

1. Antenatal impact of drug abuse (crystal meth/ice) on children – lack of awareness amongst the community about the effects, treatment options for users, health impacts on children, behavioural impacts. Need for public education campaigns, treatment options for users and treatment responses for children. [SNAICC to write to relevant Ministers.]

2. Hunter ACS – positive news about the agency being granted parental responsibility for children in care – rather than DoCS. Need to follow up agency receiving appropriate funding for this case management role.

3. Proposal for SNAICC to develop a nationally coordinated media campaign promoting the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander foster/relative/kinship carers and encouraging more people to take on these roles. SNAICC Resource Service to possibly pursue this with all states and territories.

4. Great Lakes–Manning Aboriginal Children's Service. SNAICC to share information/good news story about the legal case in NSW whereby the children's court found against non-Indigenous carers seeking to stop the transfer of three Koori children to an Aboriginal placement on the basis that the three children had formed an attachment to their non-Indigenous carers.

5. Ongoing impact of fetal alcohol syndrome on children and young people. Whilst focus on impacts on very young children has improved, need to assess and respond to the needs of older children and young people including how it continues to impact on their behaviour and the support families and services need to work with these kids. [NSW – SNAICC to see what research/information is available and distribute through SNAICC newsletter and other networks.]

6. Use of fee-for-service arrangements by state welfare departments to provide out-of-home care placements, e.g. Life

Without Barriers, who are now operating in NSW, QLD and NT. Issues around who is responsible for standards of care: the brokerage agency or the individual they contract to provide placements. Children's rights and needs can be compromised through these arrangements. Departments should be using AICCA agencies, expanding their funding and capacity to provide additional placements rather than pursuing the quick fix of fee-for-service arrangements with mainstream agencies. [SNAICC to collate information on the use of these arrangements, consider that information and respond to relevant Ministers.]

7. Lack of child mental health beds in the QLD hospital system outside of Brisbane. Children from Cairns/Cape York who require hospitalisation don't have access to a specialist children's ward in Cairns (there isn't one). Need also to pursue expanded community based mental health programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through the community controlled sector, which is currently only funded to provide programs for 18+ age group. [SNAICC to follow up with RAATSICC and QAIHC.]

8. MACS/Indigenous childcare services – current inadequacy of funding and further extreme pressures on services flowing on from the increases in childcare worker award wages. [SNAICC to take up all of these issues in discussions with FaCSIA/Minister Brough next week and as part of pursuing the National Indigenous Child Care Plan.]

- Services are having to cut back essential services, increase fees or draw down accumulated reserves to meet escalating costs
- MACS model of holistic service provision needs to have all its elements, (transport, family support, childcare, health & nutrition, higher costs of service provision in rural and remote, cost impacts of QA and licensing standards) properly costed and a funding model agreed with FaCSIA to replace 'budget based funding'
- Fear that Dept is willing to let services go to the wall as it suits an agenda of 'mainstreaming' services and forcing services and families into the CCB system. Concern also that services may be using GST income component

of funding grants to cover wages/operational costs – this GST collected has to be remitted to ATO, not spent

- Services unable to meet training needs of staff due to increased budget pressures.

9. IPSU funding agreements and service delivery requirements assume that remote services will have functioning information and communication technology/computers for email/web access. Many don't have the technology or have issues having it maintained. Issues remain about final contract payment. [SNAICC to respond including through the SRS project to provide computers to these services.]

10. CDEP changes having a severe impact on the capacity of children's services to retain and manage their current staffing arrangements/workforce. FaCSIA, DEWR and DEST need to coordinate a response that ensures the changes to CDEP don't have negative impacts on services and that the negative impacts already felt are addressed. [SNAICC to take this up with all three departments and their Ministers.]

11. Impact of changes to preschool service provision in QLD relating to changes from 2007 in school starting age. [SNAICC to seek more information through RAATSICC and respond working with relevant NGOs in QLD.]

12. Lack of respite care for kinship carers in NSW and failure of DoCS to recognise that kinship carers need commensurate levels of support and respite as foster carers. [SNAICC to follow up with AbSec NSW.]

13. Amendments to adoptions legislation in NSW and possible opening up of adoption of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children by non-Indigenous families. SNAICC to advocate against this policy shift and oppose any legislation in NSW or elsewhere that heads in that direction. [SNAICC to write asap to NSW Minister for Community Services.]

14. Imbalance in funding provided to AICCA services and programs between tertiary services (OOHC/placement support etc) and prevention and early intervention services. [SNAICC to pursue for our members increased funding for early intervention and prevention (to match the rhetoric from governments about focusing on early intervention)].

– compiled by Julian Pocock,
SNAICC Executive Officer



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

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

Send this form to SNAICC at:
Suite 8, 1st Floor, 252-260 St Georges Road
North Fitzroy, VIC 3068
fax: 03 9489 8044
email: snaicc@vicnet.net.au

Please tick :

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

OR

Please remove us from the SNAICC database.

Organisation:	
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Indigenous Child Care Plan Update

By the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs

The Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is developing an Indigenous Child Care Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and communities. The plan will build on some of the insights gained from the community consultations conducted by Edith Cowan University on the Departments' behalf.

At a glance, the public consultations highlight that:

- child care plays a broad role in Indigenous communities and there is a need to improve people's awareness of the benefits of child care to the children, families and communities themselves;

- child care services and support systems need to be more culturally responsive by promoting cultural identity and being more supportive and inclusive of families and communities;
- rural and remote child care services face a range of additional barriers including the availability of a qualified workforce, suitable infrastructure and governance support.

The primary focus of the Indigenous Child Care Plan will be to increase the participation of Indigenous children and families in high quality, culturally responsive children's services. The Department is working closely with SNAICC in developing the plan to achieve this.

Opposition Shadow Cabinet reshuffled as Kevin Rudd takes leadership of federal ALP

– Mark Lawrence, Publications Officer

In the final days of the last parliamentary sitting, the federal ALP caucus elected Mr Kevin Rudd as the new Leader of the Opposition in federal Parliament. The new Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, from Queensland, and new Deputy Leader Julia Gillard, from Victoria, have restructured the ALP's Shadow cabinet.

Mr Rudd reordered the divisions of portfolios so that Shadow Ministers more closely shadow a particular minister in the federal government, rather than retain the ALP's previous more thematic divisions, according to the former ALP spokesperson for child care, Tanya Plibersek.

Jenny Macklin has been appointed the new Shadow Minister for Families & Community Services, Indigenous Affairs & Reconciliation. She will shadow the Government's Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Mr Mal Brough. This means she will also take up early childhood and child care issues.

Tanya Plibersek, who in her previous shadow portfolio had responsibility for early childhood and child care affairs, has now been appointed Shadow Minister for Human Services, Housing, Women and Youth.

Senator Chris Evans, who was formerly ALP Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and for Family and Community Services, has been appointed Federal Labor Leader in the Senate and Shadow Minister for National Development, Resources & Energy.

Besides being Deputy Leader, Julia Gillard is also now Shadow Minister for Employment & Industrial Relations, Social Inclusion. Her former Health portfolio has been taken up by Nicola Roxon.

During SNAICC's recent lobbying trip to Canberra, as reported in the November edition of our newsletter, SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett and National Executive member Mr Ray Burrows met various ALP shadow ministers, including some of those mentioned above, as well as with various other federal parties, to put to them SNAICC's perspective on the priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the lead-up to the 2007 federal election.

In the next year, SNAICC will seek to communicate with the various relevant members of the ALP's new shadow cabinet so that the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are met in the development of federal policy.