



# SNAICC NEWS

## Becoming a Nation – the Spirit of '67

by Muriel Bamblett

We are still waiting for our hopes of 1967 to be fulfilled, says Muriel Bamblett, SNAICC Chairperson and CEO of VACCA.

The 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum that gave the federal government the right to make laws for Aboriginal people and counted us in the census for the first time is an important event, not only for Indigenous people but also for non-Indigenous people.

It makes me ask when we began as an Australian nation.

Not in 1788, because we were brutalised by invasion.

Not in 1901, the time of Federation, because we weren't part of it. In fact, the constitution's only mention of Aboriginal people specifically excluded us from being counted as citizens. And worse than that – one of the early acts of Federal Parliament in 1902 denied Indigenous people voting rights.

For me, 1967 marks the time when becoming a nation became possible. At least

we counted, and we were counted in the census.

We became de facto citizens of the land that has been ours for time immemorial, a land that claims us and that we have been given divine duty to protect.

On May 27, many Aboriginal people, including me, will turn 40. That is, 40 years of being citizens, even though some of us are chronologically slightly older than that. But we are still only at the stage of promising to become a nation.

How can we be a nation if to be Aboriginal is bad for your health, if our deaths come 20 years sooner than for other Australians?

How can we be a nation if our rights are denied and our voices are silenced and we have no representative voice?

How can we be a nation if our sacred role as custodians of the land is ignored or trivialised?

How can we be a nation if every day we suffer from obvious and subtle forms of racism and our children find the classroom

and the playground to be battlegrounds where they are forced to defend their cultural identity?

I consider the non-Indigenous tradition of human rights as a possible meeting place for our cultures.

But there are problems with that. The nation that was built on a framework of human rights, the United States of America, itself initially ignored the rights of non-whites and non-males. A key symbol of its human rights tradition, the White House,

“How can we be a nation if to be Aboriginal is bad for your health, if our deaths come 20 years sooner than for other Australians?”

was built by slaves. And today, human rights seems to be far away from the mind of its present leader.

Another problem is that there is no explicit protection of human rights in the Australian constitution. Your rights, our rights, for what they are, are accidental, not intentional.

But in this country we have a great opportunity, an opportunity that began with Paul Keating's Redfern speech and the human rights charters of the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria. An opportunity was lost with the lack of movement in the reconciliation journey after the bridge walks of a million Australians in 2000.



continued on page 7

### Also in this edition:



Draft SNAICC  
policy: feedback  
invited

page 5



SNAICC Conference:  
guest speakers and  
call for presentations

page 3



Calendar of  
significant dates and  
events 2007

page 10



SRS Update: Child  
Rearing Workshop  
and more

page 8



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

© SNAICC 2007. Copyright for images and text published is retained by SNAICC, unless specified otherwise.

Please seek permission from SNAICC before reproducing any information published here.

**Disclaimer**

While SNAICC makes an effort to ensure the information published in this newsletter is correct at the time of printing, readers should contact the relevant organisations for current information on events, conferences, services or publications.

The photographs in this publication are intended for illustrative purposes only. No inference is intended or implied that the children or adults depicted in the photographs are the subject of any issue(s) raised in this newsletter.

Contributions, feedback and suggestions to *SNAICC News* are welcome. Copy deadline for our July edition is **28 May 2007**.

**For publication inquiries, contact:**

Mark Lawrence, Publications Officer  
Email: [publicatons@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:publicatons@snaicc.asn.au)  
Telephone: (03) 9489 8099

**Subscribe to SNAICC News**

Any organisation, government department, service or individual may subscribe to *SNAICC News* and receive other information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's and families' issues. The subscription fee for the newsletter is voluntary.

**Fees (including GST):**

Government departments	\$100
Non-government organisations	\$55
Individuals	\$33

All subscriptions are paid annually, based on the financial year.

Members and affiliate members receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

**For subscription inquiries, contact:**

Angelique Davis  
Email: [admin@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:admin@snaicc.asn.au)  
Telephone: (03) 9489 8099  
SNAICC, PO Box 1445, Fitzroy North, Victoria 3068  
[www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au)



© SNAICC 2005

Clearly, 2007 is a year for remembering, with so many anniversaries significant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community occurring this year.

We mark, this year, the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, which saw a resounding majority of Australians vote to recognise the citizenship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Commemorating this important anniversary allows the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – and Australia as a whole – to take stock of what has been achieved for our children, our young people, our Elders, and our families. As SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett comments in the piece re-published on page 1 of this edition, there is so much yet to be accomplished for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities before we can all experience true nationhood.

This year is also the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC. The first week of July is traditionally full of activities throughout the community to celebrate the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the wider community. This anniversary year will certainly be special.

Just as significantly, but somewhat missed in the media to date, 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of the publication of the report of the National Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families.

The report, *Bringing Them Home*, was launched on 26 May 1997 during the National Convention on Reconciliation in Melbourne. It was the culmination of many years of struggle – to have an inquiry held and to make the necessary submissions to the inquiry – by the community.

This anniversary is special for SNAICC. We saw a pressing need for a National Inquiry into the removal of our children from our families and were the first national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation to call for one. This demand featured nationally through SNAICC's themes for National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day in 1991 and 1992. In 1997, after the Report's release, we called for the Inquiry Report's recommendations to be implemented, with the Children's Day theme, 'Bring Them Home'.

However, there is much unfinished business left. Speaking at the Inquiry Report launch, Mick Dodson said, "Removal is not something in the past – it is still happening to our people as I speak."

Since 1997, there has been little change in the rate of removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It is still unacceptably high today.

SNAICC will mark these anniversaries in a number of ways this year, including through our publications and activities at our National Conference this year. We hope that highlighting the current needs of our children will prompt action in the Spirit of the 1967 Referendum.

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

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

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

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Copy Deadline</b>	<b>Theme</b>
July 2007	28 May	Pre-federal election – focus on policy priorities
October 2007	27 August	Education and literacy
January 2008	5 November	Health and nutrition
April 2008	TBC	Focus on Torres Strait Islander communities

Each edition will generally be mailed out the first week of the month the edition is named for (except January's, which goes out mid-December). Contact Mark at SNAICC for details: telephone (03) 9489 8099; email: [publications@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:publications@snaicc.asn.au)

# Call for Proposals for Presentations, Workshops and Displays

**S**NAICC is currently inviting proposals for formal presentations and other forms of contribution to our National Conference on 19 to 21 September 2007 at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

You are welcome to make a proposal to contribute to the conference in any of six ways:

1. Presenting a short formal paper.
2. Sharing stories or case studies, or running workshops.
3. Facilitating discussion circles.
4. Having a display about your service or resources.
5. Exhibiting artwork in the arts space.
6. Showing a video or DVD.

All proposals will be considered by the Conference organisers and priority given to those that best achieve Conference objectives and involve Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander presenters, where appropriate.

If you or your organisation would like to present at or contribute to the Conference, please complete an application form and send your proposal to SNAICC.

Application forms are available on the SNAICC website:

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

Or contact Carmen Isherwood [carmen@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:carmen@snaicc.asn.au) or Julie Higgins [julie@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:julie@snaicc.asn.au) or telephone (03) 9489 8099.

The forms must be returned to SNAICC by **30 April 2007**.

## Sponsorship opportunities

SNAICC is also seeking sponsors for the conference. Sponsorship opportunities are available for Conference t-shirts, satchels and travel subsidies for delegates from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations. For further information contact Carmen or Julie at SNAICC.



## FOR OUR CHILDREN

Adelaide Convention Centre

**19 – 21 September 2007**

**SNAICC National Conference**

### Confirmed speakers

Conference registration brochures will be distributed in April and will include an exciting list of confirmed International and Australian speakers. These include:

Ms Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director, Caring for First Nations Children Society, British Columbia, Canada.

Mr Terry Cross, Executive Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association, Portland, Oregon, United States.

Ms Muriel Bamblett, Chairperson of SNAICC and Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association.

Mr Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Ms Tania Major, Cape York Institute's Youth Ambassador and Young Australian of the Year 2007.

Dr Helen Milroy, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Associate Professor and Director for the Centre for Aboriginal Dental and Medical Health at the University of Western Australia.

Dr Chris Sarra, Director of the Institute for Indigenous Leadership in Education and Development, Cherbourg Queensland.

Ms Judy Atkinson, Director of the Circle Collaborative Indigenous Research Centre for Learning and Educare.

Mr Jack Beetson, Founder of Linga Longer Aboriginal Philosophy Farm.

Mr David Vadiveloo, Filmmaker, and creator and director of *UsMob*, an interactive website featuring a series of short films on children's lives in the town camps of Alice Springs.

Tania Major



Tom Calma



Cindy Blackstock



# SNAICC Update

This will prove to be a very eventful year for SNAICC as we gear up for our first National Conference in four years (in September this year), as the SNAICC Resource Service's ongoing projects get well underway, and new ones are initiated, and we begin preparing for another exciting Children's Day.

This year will also be important for SNAICC as we lobby the political parties contesting the federal election this year to make the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and families amongst their top priorities for the next term of government and beyond.

## SNAICC National Executive meeting

The new SNAICC National Executive held its first full meeting in Melbourne from 21 to 23 February. The National Executive worked on a number of key tasks at this meeting, and reflected on its vision for SNAICC as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

They also identified SNAICC's priorities for the next two years, which will form SNAICC's organisational work-plan for this year.

There were some new faces around the table, including Roxanne Highfold from the Regional and Remote Aboriginal Children and Services Support Unit (RRACSSU) of Darwin, NT.

There were also some familiar faces returning to the table, including Steve Larkins, who represents ABSec (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat) of New South Wales on the Executive. Steve has in previous years represented Hunter Aboriginal Children's Service on the Executive.

This National Executive will serve a two-year term, under the amendments to the SNAICC constitution made at the 2005 Annual General Meeting.

## Visit by Jenny Macklin to SNAICC Executive

On the second day of its meeting, the National Executive met with the Federal Opposition spokesperson for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Ms Jenny Macklin MP. She wanted



The Federal Opposition spokesperson for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Ms Jenny Macklin (left), met with the SNAICC National Executive at its February meeting in Melbourne. In the picture with her are (from left) SNAICC Chair Muriel Bamblett, Ryan Batchelor (adviser from Ms Macklin's office), SNAICC Deputy Chair (Child Welfare) Garry Mathews, and Lisa Coulson of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Association.

to meet the SNAICC National Executive, to hear SNAICC's views and priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the next term of government, and to outline the Australian Labor Party's recently released policy promising universal preschool for four-year-olds.

“Currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have significantly lower levels of access to childcare and early childhood services than other Australian children.”

The ALP had announced a proposal for all children in Australia from the age of four to be entitled to attend preschool free. While the proposed 15 hours a week of 'play-based learning' would be available to all parents of young children, it would not be compulsory. Ms Macklin added that the ALP is also proposing funding an additional 260 child care centres, and is committed to making child care more affordable.

Ms Macklin pointed out that Labor's universal preschool proposal will require many more staff for early childhood services than are available, and so the ALP will commit funding for training. This will include paying the TAFE fees for all child care trainees at TAFE, and paying half the HECS of early childhood teachers who will work in areas of need, including rural areas and disadvantaged areas in cities.

SNAICC's perspective is that the preschool entitlement should be fully

available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait children. In order for this to become a reality the next federal government will need to fund the establishment of new services and expand the funding currently being made available to existing services.

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services, JET Crèches, Innovative child care services and other Indigenous services could, if supported through additional funding, expand their programs and services to reach additional families and children.

Ms Macklin indicated her willingness to continue listening to SNAICC's views in formulating ALP policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families leading up to the federal election later this year.

Last October, SNAICC made a trip to Canberra to lobby the various political parties to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's needs and interests high in their priorities for the upcoming federal election.

A copy of the SNAICC briefing paper provided to all the major parties is available on the SNAICC website. SNAICC will continue to meet with all the major parties in the lead up to the election to press the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to have greatly improved access to early childhood services.

**SNAICC Briefing Paper:** *Key Commitments Political Parties Must Make to Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families (October 2006)*  
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/KeyCommitments.html>

# SNAICC Update

## SNAICC draft policy – your feedback invited

At SNAICC's Annual General Meeting in Cairns last November, the SNAICC membership began formulating two important documents that will guide SNAICC's and our members' approach to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are best supported, their needs met and their rights upheld.

These are the draft *Statement of Principles for Child Welfare and Protection Systems* and the draft *Statement on Valuing Children*. The National Executive then developed the two drafts further when they met in February.

To advance this process and widen support for these statements, the National Executive is inviting general comment and feedback on these Draft Statements from the SNAICC membership and stakeholders. The feedback will inform the National Executive's development of the final statements at the end of May this year.

“These statements say what we value about our children, and what we value for them.”

The draft *Statement on Valuing Children* outlines the values and principles that underpin how we, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled children's and families' organisations, hold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as important to our communities.

These statements say what we value about our children, and what we value for them. Underpinning these values are our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's rights to know their culture, to know their community, and to know and learn from their Elders, and also underpin how our communities value children.

The draft *Statement of Principles for Child Welfare and Protection Systems* sets out the guiding principles that SNAICC expects all state, territory and federal governments to uphold in developing – and implementing – an effective and integrated child welfare and protection system in Australia.

Like the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, these principles would underpin how governments approach child welfare and child protection policies and decisions, and uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander children's cultural rights as part of their wider rights to safe and fulfilling lives, and their rights to have fulfilled the needs and necessities that the rest of the Australian community takes for granted.

These draft documents can be found on SNAICC's website (see below), where you can also download them. You are invited to contribute feedback and comments on these two documents to me by 4 May 2007.

You can send me your feedback by email to [julian@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:julian@snaicc.asn.au), or by fax to (03) 9489 8044.

Download these drafts from:  
[www.snaicc.asn.au/news/briefing-papers.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/briefing-papers.html)

## NT Board of Inquiry into sexual abuse of Aboriginal children

SNAICC has completed a detailed written submission for the Northern Territory (NT) Board of Inquiry into sexual abuse of Aboriginal children. The inquiry was established by the NT Government in 2006 following the ongoing community concerns in relation to incidences of child abuse within Aboriginal communities.

SNAICC has recommended a major overhaul of the child protection system within the Northern Territory. Our recommendations include the establishment of a statutory authority to oversee the transfer of child protection functions from the centralised government agency to a network of community based agencies. SNAICC also recommends support for long term community education and awareness programs, therapeutic healing programs for victims and perpetrator and programs focused on rebuilding parenting capacity.

The Board of Inquiry is due to report to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory by 30 April.

A copy of the SNAICC submission can be found on the SNAICC website:  
[www.snaicc.asn.au/news/briefing-papers.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/briefing-papers.html)

## SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007–2009

You may have noticed that we included a copy of the *SNAICC Strategic Plan 2007–2009* for your service in the mailout of this edition of *SNAICC News*. The Strategic Plan was published last November and launched at our 2006 AGM in Cairns by SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett.

If you would like an extra copy of the *Strategic Plan* sent to you, please contact the SNAICC office or order one directly through our online order form. To order, go to [www.snaicc.asn.au/publications/](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/publications/) and click on 'Order Online'.

– Julian Pocock,  
SNAICC Executive Officer

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

### Theme announced

The theme for National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day this year will be: *'Raise Children Strong in Culture: pathways to healing and revival'*.

A central part of SNAICC's advocacy has always been the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being raised in their culture. For an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, culture is a source of strength, resilience, happiness, identity and confidence. For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in particular, such as those that are being raised away from their families, access to their culture is critical as it provides a pathway to healing and revival.

SNAICC encourages everyone with some role in raising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to raise them strong in their Indigenous culture. Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and kin should talk to their children about the importance of culture, show pride in your identity and encourage kids to do the same.

Foster parents, carers and services working with our kids should talk up culture and encourage children to feel proud of their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. Strengthening our children's confidence and cultural identity is also the best way to heal our communities and revive our cultural practices.

We look forward to celebrating Children's day every year as one day that we can focus all our attention to showcase the excellent achievements of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. As always NAICD is 4 August, although this year the date falls on a Saturday. Therefore, if services aren't usually open on a Saturday, they can celebrate NAICD on a day that is

continued on page 9

# Indigenous Professional Support Units

Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) for various states and territories were announced by FaCSIA (Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) after a lengthy tendering process last year. This year, the selected organisations have already begun to roll out their extended services, such as toll-free telephone lines, new/updated websites and in some instances new offices to cater for their expanded facilities.

According to FaCSIA, IPSUs are part of the department's Inclusion and Professional Support Program:

"Through state and territory based Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs) and Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs), the IPSP [Inclusion and Professional Support Program] ensures that all Australian Government approved child care services, regardless of geographic location, have access to quality professional support.

PSCs are the first point of contact for eligible child care services requiring professional support and use local professional support service providers to deliver support that meets the individual needs of child care services. IPSUs provide culturally appropriate advice and support to eligible Indigenous-run child care services.

The support services available to eligible child care services through PSCs and IPSUs include:

- + telephone advice and support
- + resource materials
- + flexible training options
- + on-line resource collections, including fact sheets, training information and useful links



**"[IPSUs help] ensure that all Australian Government approved child care services, regardless of geographic location, have access to quality professional support."**

- + referral to appropriate agencies for further advice and information.

IPSUs also advise PSCs on professional support that meets the needs of eligible mainstream child care services with Indigenous staff or children." \*

## **QUEENSLAND IPSU QCOSS Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Queensland Council of Social Services Inc**

Contact: Norelle Gleeson, Manager  
Phone: (07) 4723 4088  
Phone: 1800 110 869 (toll free for services)  
Address: 11 Thuringowa Drive, Kirwan, Queensland 4817  
Email: [ipsu@ipsu.com.au](mailto:ipsu@ipsu.com.au)  
Website: [www.ipsu.com.au](http://www.ipsu.com.au)

QCOSS IPSU is based in Townsville, and services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander run children's services across Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES IPSU Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Lady Gowrie Child Centre**

Contact: Judy Mackay-Tempest, Coordinator  
Phone: (02) 8345 7605  
Phone: 1800 450 472 (toll free for services)  
Fax: (02) 9313 7022  
Address: PO Box 6385 Alexandria NSW 2015  
Email: [ipsu@gowrie-sydney.com.au](mailto:ipsu@gowrie-sydney.com.au)  
Website: [www.ipsunswact.com.au](http://www.ipsunswact.com.au)

## **ACT**

Eligible services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander run child care services in the ACT can contact the NSW IPSU for advice and support.

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA IPSU Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corporation**

Contact: Lynn Fleming, Program Manager

Phone: (08) 9321 9090  
Phone: 1800 788 520 (toll free for services)  
Fax: (08) 9321 9019  
Address: 1320 Hay Street, West Perth WA 6005  
Website: [www.ipsuwa.org.au](http://www.ipsuwa.org.au)

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA IPSU Aboriginal Resource and Management Support Unit (ARMSU), Network SA**

Contact: Debbie Bond, ARMSU Coordinator  
Phone: (08) 8445 8128  
Phone: 1800 679 199 (toll free for services)  
Fax: (08) 8268 8065  
Address: ARMSU, Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc, PO Box 2440 Regency Park SA 5942  
Email: [debbie.bond@networksa.org.au](mailto:debbie.bond@networksa.org.au)  
Website: [www.ipsusa.org.au](http://www.ipsusa.org.au)

## **NORTHERN TERRITORY (North) and NORTHERN TERRITORY (South) IPSU**

### **Regional and Remote Aboriginal Children and Services Support Unit (RRACSSU)**

Contact: Roxanne Highfold  
Phone: (08) 8946 3802  
Phone: 1800 890 133 (toll free for services)  
Address: PO Box 106, Parap NT 0804  
Website: [www.rracssu.batchelor.edu.au](http://www.rracssu.batchelor.edu.au)

## **VICTORIA**

An IPSU has not yet been established in Victoria. However, eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander run child care services can contact the Victoria PSC, Community Child Care Association, for advice and support.

### **Community Child Care Association**

Phone: 1800 177 017 (toll free for services)  
Website: [www.cccvic.org.au](http://www.cccvic.org.au)

## **TASMANIA**

Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander run child care services can contact the Victoria PSC, Community Child Care Association, for advice and support.

More information about the IPSUs and the PSCs (Professional Support Coordinators) is available from FaCSIA's website:

[www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-ipsps.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-ipsps.htm)

\* from the FaCSIA web page: [www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-ipsps.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-ipsps.htm)

# 'Bazza' at the Aboriginal Children's Centre – a trial of resources for the SRS

By Michele Moloney  
SRS Project Officer

The Aboriginal Children's Centre is a program of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and operates from Emily Road West Moonah, a suburb of Hobart in Tasmania.

The services that they provide are child care, out-of-school-hours care, a family and child health nurse, and a playgroup, along with parenting education and support.

“To say Bazza has transformed the place is an understatement.”

In September–October 2006 a new attendee arrived at the centre by the name of Basil or 'Bazza' as they call him. Bazza is very shy and most of the time hides in his tent. He was able to bring his tent with him.

In order for the kids to coax Bazza out they must speak gently and softly to him. When they do this he does come out for a little bit to spend some time with them.

To say he has transformed the place is an understatement.

Basil, or Bazza, is a very cuddly bear hand puppet who lives inside a little tent. It is true to say that the children and some of the staff find Bazza real. They talk gently to him to come out and they talk to him. When you see the children they all look straight at Bazza and they all talk directly to Bazza.

They tell him stories of what is going on with their day. One child who rarely talks speaks constantly to Bazza. One day she even sat outside his tent singing him 'twinkle, twinkle little star'. Another child who is not keen on touching and cuddles allows Bazza to cuddle him and rub up against him.



© SNAICC 2006

Alison Overeem, Children's Services Coordinator at Aboriginal Children's Centre, holding Bazza the puppet, surrounded by children at the Centre.

This photograph is intended for illustrative purposes only. No inference is intended or implied that the children depicted in the photograph are the subject of any issue raised in the article.

In fact he seems to look for the cuddles from Bazza. All the children and even the staff like involving him in their day. They want him to go on an outing and sometimes home on the bus with them.

This is one truly positive resource.

As Children's Services Coordinator Alison Overeem remarked about this resource, "What a great example of the power of entering a child's world of imagination." ■

continued from page 1

## Becoming a Nation – the Spirit of '67

And it is an opportunity not only for Indigenous people like me, but for all Australians.

That promise of nationhood that the 1967 referendum represents — a referendum like no other, which had the most astonishing of outcomes in that more than 90 per cent of white Australia said yes to Aboriginal and Islander people — it's that promise that we can all build on.



Painting by Sarah Hazel Pickering, Tyalla Primary School Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, for SNAICC's 2006 Children's Day children's artwork initiative. See it online at [www.snaicc.asn.au/children/artgallery.html](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/children/artgallery.html)  
© SNAICC 2006

Even the Prime Minister wants to revive the spirit of the '67 referendum. I wonder if he really knows what that means.

I wonder if he knows that to revive the spirit of the '67 referendum he will need to reverse most of his decisions in Aboriginal affairs.

He will need to apologise to the Stolen Generations; amend the Native Title Act so that it is bound by, and does not avoid, the Racial Discrimination Act; restore a representative voice for Indigenous people; end the Government craze to move services for Indigenous people into the mainstream; tackle disadvantage and marginalisation of Indigenous communities by restoring self-determination, promoting respect for Aboriginal people and mandating cultural competence for all public services.

Perhaps this is a fantasy when it comes to this Prime Minister. But I live in the hope that the next prime minister will want to truly revive the spirit of '67 and say 'yes' again to my people. Then we can begin again the work of the referendum campaigners and do some real nation-building.

We need a nation built on real rights for all and, as Indigenous academic Larissa Berendt says, if you acknowledge the rights of Aboriginal people you don't take away from other individuals, in fact you increase the rights pie for everyone.

For this country, Aboriginal rights to voice, land and culture will be like yeast. We can be a nation built on respect for Aboriginal people and the heritage of the land. A nation built on honour instead of the spoils of invasion.

It would mean that I can have my rights back and you can restore your honour and pride. And maybe, just maybe, we can one day all call ourselves Australians.

**Muriel Bamblett** is CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and Chairperson of SNAICC. This is an edited extract of a speech she



delivered at a forum on the 1967 referendum, held to mark the re-opening of the Fitzroy Town Hall in Fitzroy, Victorian. It was also published as an Opinion piece in *The Age*, 23 March 2007. Republished with permission from Ms Bamblett. © Muriel Bamblett 2007



**Above:** Closing activity for the women at Day 1 of the Child Rearing Workshop. **Below:** Closing activity for the men at Day 1. © SNAICC 2006

The SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) Team looks forward to continuing and building on our working relationship together. Following is information to update you about two specific projects the SRS is doing:

1. The *Partners in Action Research and Evaluation (PARE)* project is a way of acknowledging the skills and input from three to four selected SNAICC member services in evaluating SRS projects and resources. As part of this process it is also hoped to facilitate accredited training for them in action research modules.

2. The SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) and Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA) worked together to co-host *Using our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids* on 7 and 8 December 2006 at the Hotel Y in Melbourne. Fifty to 60 participants attended two distinct yet related workshops over the two days. Attendance at the workshop was by invitation only with limited spaces.

The 'Options for Gathering and Documenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Knowledge(s) and Practice(s) Workshop' was held on Day 1, Thursday 7 December, with the SRS having the primary role in co-ordinating and hosting this day.

This workshop was a step to assist the SRS to further scope and develop a framework for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Practices project. 'Researchers' and multimedia professionals with experience and links

with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services were brought together to:

- Discuss cultural protocols and ethics;
- Share information and knowledge about existing data, research, and initiatives and look at how they link with existing programs/projects;
- Identify a range of ways of engaging with communities and services;
- Explore a diverse range of ways of gathering, documenting and presenting information;
- Consider themes and methodologies for developing and implementing the Child Rearing Practices project;
- Contribute to identifying potential partnerships and networks.

The Workshop presentations and participants' input and contributions gave a very strong messages of:

- The place, importance and responsibility of having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples involved and pivotal to the process and decision making of gathering, documenting, and disseminating information for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples;
- Men and their role in the lives of children and child rearing was also a strong message given to us;
- Having men's attendance and input at workshops such as this;
- Telling the 'story', sharing the 'story', hearing and seeing the 'story'.







**Above:** Yungirringa, from Yalu Marngithinyaraw Nurturing Centre, was the opening speaker on cultural protocols at the Child Rearing Workshop. **Below:** some workshop participants. © SNAICC 2006

Following are some key themes and elements that emerged from the Workshop for the SNAICC Resource Service to consider and develop further for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Practices project:

- ✦ Challenge, disrupt and influence the mainstream
- ✦ Building Our Identity Web Together
- ✦ Trauma and healing
- ✦ Valuing diversity
- ✦ The role of men and boys/fathers/uncles
- ✦ Empowering parenting through cultural diversity
- ✦ Research
- ✦ Education.

Participants were asked to respond to the following questions in considering the themes:

- ✦ What are the key elements to consider for this theme?

- ✦ What steps/ processes need to be put in place to explore this theme topic?
- ✦ What protocols need to be put in place to ensure this theme topic is respected and grounded in the appropriate ways?
- ✦ What ways could the information and stories around this theme topic be collected and documented?
- ✦ Who are the key stakeholders, partners and networks that could benefit from and support this project and why?
- ✦ Is there learning and practices from other cultures, i.e. Western, that could be considered in this project?

The SRS needs to do more work to investigate and develop these themes further. Look out for the Report and information from the *Using Our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids* Forum, which will be available on the SRS's web pages in the next couple of months.

– Veronica Johns, SRS Programme Manager



continued from page 5

## NAICD theme – continued

convenient to them during that week.

This year, we will produce an activity kit similar to last year's that will include some of the activities from last year's kit as well as tip sheets, links to popular children's websites and radio programs, some new activities, a SNAICC leaflet and stickers.

We will be encouraging child care centres, schools and preschools to arrange for their children to create artwork for NAICD. This artwork will then be displayed at SNAICC's National Conference in Adelaide from 19 to 21 September.

This year's poster will use a combination of artwork and positive images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children – they show our children proud, happy and confident about who they are – children from the oldest living cultures on earth.

This year is also the first year that we have contacted the education departments in all states and territories to encourage their involvement in NAICD. This initiative is not a new idea but a natural progression to the growth and success of NAICD.

The day is one that the SNAICC National Executive believes should be embraced by all Australians.

For information about NAICD, please contact Carmen Isherwood: [carmen@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:carmen@snaicc.asn.au) or Julie Higgins: [julie@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:julie@snaicc.asn.au), or telephone us on (03) 9489 8099.

– Carmen Isherwood, SNAICC Children's Day Coordinator

### Do you have extra early years' NAICD posters in your collection?

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

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

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

**telephone (08) 9321 9090**

# Calendar of Significant Dates and Events

## **21 March – Harmony Day – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

This date coincides with United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and began to be commemorated in 1999 as a day to encourage tolerance and understanding between Australians of all races and cultural backgrounds.

## **25 April – Anzac Day**

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people risked their lives for their home countries and the land now called Australia. They are the forgotten heroes of our people and on this day we should pause to remember them.

## **15 May – International Day of Families**

Declared by the United Nations to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to promote appropriate action.

## **13–19 May – National Families Week Theme: *Families Investing in Time Together***

An initiative of Families Australia. You can find out more about National Families Week and register your event through their website: [www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm)

## **26 May – Sorry Day**

This day marks the anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's *Bringing Them Home Report*. Hundreds of thousands of Australians participated in the first National Sorry Day in 1998. Every year since there have been gatherings and activities across the country, including bridge walks, barbeques and concerts.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the report's release. SNAICC will commemorate this significant anniversary through various activities and publications. A National Sorry Day Committee has a website with an events calendar at: [www.journeyofhealing.com/](http://www.journeyofhealing.com/)

## **27 May – Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum**

This year will mark the 60th anniversary of the 1967 referendum to recognise full citizenship rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including to be counted "as citizens in the national census.... This event is often referred to as the first stage of the

reconciliation movement in Australia".\*

Reconciliation Australia has an online calendar of events marking the anniversary: [www.reconciliation.org.au/events](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/events)

\* Reconciliation Australia's website

## **27 May–3 June – National Reconciliation Week**

**Theme: *Their Spirit Still Shines***

The week began as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation (1993) and was organised by the Faith Communities for Reconciliation and has now grown into the National Reconciliation Week. The week starts off on the 27 of May, which was chosen because it is the anniversary of the 1967 referendum, and ends with 'Mabo Day' on 3 June.

Reconciliation Australia has a website with an online calendar of activities and events across the country:

[www.reconciliation.org.au/events](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/events)

## **3 June – Mabo Day**

This day commemorates the anniversary of the 1992 High Court decision in the case brought by Eddie Mabo and others that recognised the existence in Australia of native title rights. On the 10th anniversary of this day in 2002 there were many calls for the day to become a public holiday, an official National Mabo Day.

## **1 July – Coming of the Light Festival**

The Torres Strait Islanders faced significant historical, cultural and social change when Reverend Samuel MacFarlane of the London Missionary Society brought Christianity to the Torres Strait on 1 July 1871.

This is referred to by the Islanders as the 'Coming of the Light' and is celebrated annually on 1 July by all Torres Strait Islander communities throughout the Torres Strait and mainland Australia

## **First full week of July – NAIDOC Week**

**Theme: *50 years: Looking Forward, Looking Back***

NAIDOC week commences on the first Sunday in July and is a way to celebrate the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the continuation of culture, as well as demonstrate the contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made to our nation.

This year sees the celebration of the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC, and anniversary commemorations are being planned across



© SNAICC 2006

the country. The history of NAIDOC is available online at the National NAIDOC website:

[www.naidoc.org.au/history/](http://www.naidoc.org.au/history/)

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

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

A SNAICC initiative, this day was first observed in 1988 and each year has a special theme. Every year, SNAICC produces a poster featuring the year's theme to celebrate the Day. The aim of NAICD is to demonstrate how important children are to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and others concerned with supporting the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, are encouraged to organise events and activities that celebrate and feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Details are available on the SNAICC website:

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

## **3–7 August – 9th Garma Festival**

Held at Gulkula, North East Arnhem Land, NT, the festival is a celebration of cultural traditions and practices – dance, song, music, and art – and a venue for a leading key forum on Indigenous issues. This year's Key Forum theme is 'Indigenous Health: Real Solutions for a chronic problem'. Presented by the Yothu Yindi Foundation. Details are on the festival website:

[www.garma.telstra.com/](http://www.garma.telstra.com/)

## **9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous People**

This day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994 to be observed each year throughout the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995–2004). This day is an opportunity for intergovernmental and non-governmental groups to work with

## Calendar of Significant Dates and Events – continued

indigenous people and others to organise activities that contribute to a greater appreciation of indigenous history, culture, languages, rights and aspirations.

### 2–8 September – National Child Protection Week

An initiative of the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), this week highlights how we can keep our children safe from abuse and neglect. Details are on the NAPCAN website: [www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

### 19–21 September – SNAICC National Conference: 'Ngadluko Ngartunnaitya – For Our Children'

SNAICC is holding a two and a half day National Conference in Adelaide for service providers, policy makers, researchers and others focussed on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The focus is on practical approaches to working with children, families and communities from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. More information is on SNAICC's website:

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

### 20 November – Universal Children's Day

The date marks the day on which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The day is recommended as a way to mark the ideals and objectives



Left: A storyteller and performer take kids at Coolabaroo Neighbourhood Centre MACS through a cultural activity for the Centre's NAICD celebrations for 2006.

of the Charter and focus on the welfare of the children of the world. More information is available on the related United Nations website:

[www.un.org/depts/dhl/children\\_day/](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/children_day/)

### November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Focuses attention on the persistence of violence against women globally, with campaigns across the world to eliminate violence against women. These involve women's organisations, domestic violence services and human rights organisations. The day is also an opportunity for men to demonstrate their opposition to violence against women.

For more information go to the website, 'Not a minute more':

[www.unifem.org/campaigns/november25/index.php](http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/november25/index.php)

### 25 November–10 December – 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Incorporating 25 November, this campaign initiative is an organising strategy by individuals and groups around the world to eliminate all forms of violence against women. More information is on the international 16 Days Campaign website:

[www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html)

### 10 December – International Human Rights Day

Celebrates the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and provides an opportunity to acknowledge where and how human rights abuses continue across the globe and to reflect on international efforts to advance and protect human rights. More details are on the United Nations website on the Declaration:

[www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

### Compiled by Mark Lawrence

Drawn from various sources, including from material provided by Prue Stewart, Ministerial Adviser in the Office of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Community Services (Victoria), and from SNAICC's upcoming *Foster Carers' Resource* booklet edited by former SNAICC Project Officer Moira Ross-Rayner.

## Welcome to new SNAICC staff



### Bethalia

Hello everyone, my name is Bethalia Tabuai. In January I started employment as Administration Assistant (Finance). This position provides support to the Admin & Finance, and SRS teams.

After many years of living in Far North Queensland, I've decided to look for a new challenge, so I moved to Ballarat (Victoria) at the end of June 2006. I found it really hard to leave my family and friends. I do miss them all at times.

I am a Torres Strait Islander. My mum's family is from Kubin in the Western Islands group, my dad's family is from Saibai in the top of the Western Islands group. My family has been settled in Cairns, Queensland, for many years now.

My previous position was Administration Assistant with the Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Indigenous Theology College in Cairns. The role there was simple compared to what I'm doing here.

Whilst working there I began studying at Australia Catholic University, undertaking a Diploma of Business Administration, which I later decided to transfer into the Associate Degree Business Administration.

I was really grateful when I secured this opportunity with SNAICC and it's a pleasure working with all the staff who have all made me feel very welcome. ●



## Have you moved or changed your address details?

## Has your organisation changed its name?

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

### Send this form to SNAICC at:

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

Please tick :

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

OR

Please remove us from the SNAICC database.

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

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

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's health still lagging behind

– Mark Lawrence, SNAICC Publications Officer

A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) report on child health in Australia has noted that the death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 1–14 years was more than twice that of other Australian children.

The recently released report, *Health of Children in Australia: A Snapshot, 2004–05*, draws from a range of statistical sources.

Significantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants were more likely to have a lower birth rate and have higher rates of hospitalisation than non-Indigenous children.

Hearing problems, including from otitis media, are still three times higher amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children than amongst non-Indigenous children.

However, not all was negative in 2004–2005, with nine out of ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in non-remote areas being immunised.

### The statistical snapshot below is an excerpt from the ABS report:

- “ In 2004–05, 44% of Indigenous children aged under 15 years were reported to have at least one type of long term health condition, which was not significantly different from the corresponding rate for non-Indigenous children (41%) (ABS 2006e).
- The most common long term health conditions among Indigenous children were diseases of the respiratory system (19%), diseases of the ear and mastoid (10%), and diseases of the eye and adnexa (8%) (ABS 2006e).
- The prevalence of ear/hearing problems, including total/partial hearing loss and otitis media (middle ear infection), was three times higher among Indigenous than non-Indigenous children (ABS 2006e).
- Between 1999 and 2003, mortality rates for Indigenous infants were nearly three times higher than those for other Australian infants (AIHW 2006).

- According to data combined from Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, in 1999–2003, the death rate for Indigenous children aged 1–14 years was 39 per 100,000 children, compared with 16 deaths per 100,000 among other Australian children (AIHW 2006).
- According to the 2000–02 National Perinatal Data Collection, babies of Indigenous mothers were twice as likely as those born to non-Indigenous mothers to have low birthweight (13% compared with 6%) (AIHW 2005b).
- In 2004–05, nine in ten Indigenous children who were aged under seven years and living in non-remote areas were reported as being vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella and haemophiles influenza type B (ABS 2006e).

- In 2003–04, Indigenous infants aged less than one year were hospitalised at a rate that was one-and-one-thirds higher than that for non-Indigenous infants, while among children aged 1–14 years, rates of hospitalisation were similar for most conditions regardless of Indigenous status (ABS 2005b).
- Diseases of the respiratory system was the most common reason for hospitalisation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children aged 1–14 years (ABS 2005b).”

The full report, including its references, is available online at:

[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4829.0.55.001?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4829.0.55.001?OpenDocument)

