



SNAICC NEWS

Secretariat of National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Newsletter

April-May 2005

National Resource Service to support local children's and families' initiatives launched



Photo: Mark Lawrence

The Minister also launched SNAICC's online Service Directory on the day. From left: Muriel Bamblett, SNAICC Chairperson, Natalie Collins from service partner Infoxchange, and the Minister, Senator Kay Patterson.

From Perth to Cairns, from Adelaide to the Torres Strait Islands, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives to stop child abuse and neglect, support families in trouble, or improve care for young children in their communities can now be supported by SNAICC's newly launched National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service.

The Service will focus on resourcing and assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services to deliver programs focused on child abuse prevention, early intervention, family support and early childhood development.

"The service will allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to be supported at the time when it counts – during early childhood, and in ways our communities deem culturally relevant," said Muriel Bamblett AM, SNAICC's Chairperson.

While recognising that local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are in the best position to deal with the special needs of their children and families, SNAICC will also showcase local initiatives so that they can be modelled across the country.

The Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Kay Patterson, launched the service on 4 May at SNAICC's premises

in Melbourne. The Minister said, "This new service will work to strengthen Indigenous people's capacity to raise strong healthy children."

"By working in partnership with Indigenous communities, we are supporting community projects to improve the social, emotional and physical well-being of Indigenous families," Senator Patterson said.

The opening was attended by SNAICC National Executive members and guests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government services and the wider families' and children's services sector.

Wurrundjeri elder Joy Murphy-Wandin, who welcomed the guests to country, applauded the initiative and SNAICC's work as important for supporting the needs of the children in our communities.

Speaking at the launch, Muriel Bamblett said, "the creation of the service is an important milestone for SNAICC, but also for the Australian Government, because it recognises that we need to work together to document Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches to raising kids."

"SNAICC has always advocated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are best placed to determine

what it is in the best interests of their children," Muriel Bamblett said. "We know a great deal about the difficulties so many of our children will face in their young lives."

"The service will assist communities to tell their stories and share some good news about the strong mums and dads who are caring for their kids, about the services that are reconnecting families to their culture and about the communities that are working together to prevent abuse and neglect," she said.

Working with a range of partner agencies, SNAICC will produce resource materials and resources that will build the capacity of local services and expand the relevance of their programs to our families and children.

SNAICC will receive \$4 million over four years from the Australian Government to establish and manage the National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service, under the National Agenda for Early Childhood and the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. It allows SNAICC to employ more staff, establish the resource service, develop resources and assist local initiatives across the country.

The launch also marked the opening of SNAICC's new offices at North Fitzroy, in Melbourne. ◆

SNAICC's response to the Child Care Inclusion and Professional Support Program consultation

by Julie Sleight, SNAICC Policy Officer

Indigenous children's services resource, support and training agencies play a valuable role in assisting Indigenous child care services to provide crucial benefits to Indigenous communities. The specialist nature of this role is based on understanding and supporting the cultural needs of families and children using the centres and building and maintaining close relationships with the staff and management of services.

Late last year, the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) distributed a consultation paper on changes to the new Child Care Inclusion and Professional Support Program, the program that funds both Indigenous and mainstream resource agencies. FaCS indicated it was seeking input on the development of program 'micro policy' but said that the basic model for the new program was not for consultation.

SNAICC considered carefully the details of the consultation paper. After discussion with members of our National Executive and existing Indigenous resource and support agencies, SNAICC indicated to FaCS that we were gravely concerned about some aspects of the basic model and the impact of the proposed reforms. In SNAICC's view, the new model for child care inclusion and professional support was not developed with a sufficient focus on the needs of the specialised Indigenous resource services.

The key elements of the model we were concerned about were:

- The plan for a single mainstream non-government Professional Services Co-ordinator in each state and territory to take responsibility for choosing, funding and managing a single Indigenous Professional Support Unit in each state and territory;
- The role of the Professional Services Co-ordinator as a needs planner and contact point for Indigenous services;
- The non-eligibility of JET creches under the new program guidelines, with no indication of what arrangements would be put in place to ensure that they would continue to be supported;
- The lack of consideration of states without a service (WA, ACT and Tasmania); and the special needs of the Northern Territory which currently has two agencies, one in Darwin and one in Alice Springs, both of which have, over time, built up good relationships with services.

The location, role, management and scope of the Indigenous support, resource and training agencies across the country has evolved in different ways in response to local needs and opportunities, and therefore varies from state to state. The common feature of the agencies however is that they have over time become part of the fabric of the A&TSI child care sector in their state or territory and come to be accepted, valued and trusted by A&TSI child care services and able to help them identify their needs and respond to these needs.



“The government’s new model for child care inclusion and professional support was not developed with a sufficient focus on the needs of the specialised Indigenous resource services.”

These agencies are not however all robust organisations that could readily survive coming under the control of a mainstream Professional Services Co-ordinator and associated changes to management, location, staffing levels or personnel. There was a real danger that the proposed changes could irrevocably damage existing agencies and do nothing to help establish new agencies.

Furthermore, SNAICC felt it would be contrary to general government support for greater self determination by A&TSI people to require the Indigenous resource agencies, which are currently directly funded by the government and managed and controlled by Indigenous people, to be funded and controlled by a Professional Services Co-ordinator that would be a mainstream non-government agency or company controlled by non- Indigenous people.

In responding to the FaCS paper, SNAICC provided the following recommendations:

1. FaCS should continue to have a direct funding, support and oversight role in relation to Indigenous children's services support, resource and training agencies. Indigenous resource, support, and training agencies should exist in each state and territory as independent Indigenous managed and controlled bodies, equal in status to the mainstream Professional Services Co-ordinators, able to work alongside them and provide advice and support to them, but not controlled by them.
2. FaCS should fund a series of needs analyses across the country to determine the resource, support and professional development needs of the Indigenous child care sector, including the need to support participation in the development of the planned Indigenous child care Quality Improvement and Accreditation System and the Indigenous Child Care Strategy. These needs analyses should be conducted by people and organisations known and trusted by Indigenous communities and should be based around face-to-face discussions.

3. The tender specifications for the mainstream Professional Services Coordinators who should work alongside the Indigenous resource and support agencies and who will be supporting the inclusion of Indigenous children in mainstream child care services should require tenderers to demonstrate their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and political issues, how A&TSI communities work and the A&TSI early childhood service system in the state or territory.

Muriel Bamblett, the SNAICC Chairperson, and Julian Pocock, the SNAICC Co-ordinator, met with Eliza Hazlett, the FaCS manager of Inclusion and Professional Support, in early February to discuss SNAICC's views.

In response to this meeting and the SNAICC submission, FaCS has clarified some matters and made some changes to the planned Child Care Inclusion and Professional Support Program to protect and strengthen the Indigenous child care resource and support sector. Specifically FaCS has indicated that:

- The Indigenous Professional Support Units will have a direct relationship with FaCS rather than being funded and managed by the Professional Services Co-ordinators. FaCS, the Professional Services Co-ordinators and the Indigenous Professional Support Units will enter into a tripartite agreement that makes the respective roles and responsibilities of each party clear. FaCS will directly fund the Indigenous Professional Support Units and each will be appointed through a process jointly conducted by the mainstream Professional Services Co-ordinator and FaCS..
- Current levels of support for JET Creches and Indigenous playgroups will continue pending broader consideration of the needs of these services in the context of the JET and Indigenous Playgroup Program respectively,
- The issues associated with providing support to Indigenous child care services in the Northern Territory, including geography and natural servicing areas, are being considered by the government. This consideration includes the possibility of having two Indigenous Professional Support Units in the Northern Territory.

The selection of Indigenous Professional Support Units will commence in November 2005.

There is great scope to further improve the quality of A&TSI child care services and expand the role they play in improving the lives and opportunities of A&TSI children and families – and Indigenous children's services resource, support and training agencies have a vital role to play in this regard. The work of these agencies must be nourished and expanded in the future. SNAICC will continue to work with the Australian Government to make sure this happens. ■

2005 National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day theme

Foster and Kinship Carers - Keeping kids connected to community, family and culture

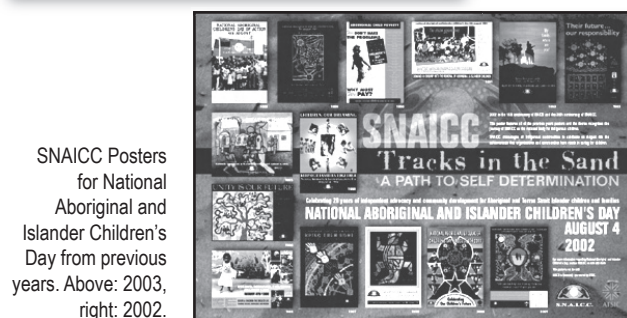
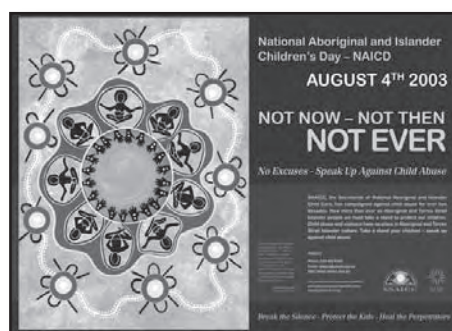
This year on National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD), 4 August, SNAICC will celebrate the critical role and fabulous work of foster and kinship carers who support kids and keep them in touch with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, family and culture. Making sure kids in care stay connected to their families and culture is the birth right of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait children. Children in foster or kinship care deserve and need stability, family connection, cultural strength and the same love, support and affection all children desire.

SNAICC's view is that the best models of foster and kinship care work hand in hand with families to ensure children learn about and develop healthy relationships with their birth family. Children and young people in care have the right to know their family and culture.

During 2005, SNAICC will continue to advocate for increased support for foster, relative and kinship carers - the best volunteers a community can have.

SNAICC encourages all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, mainstream child and family welfare services, government agencies, schools, preschools, childcare services and any organisations with an interest in children to celebrate National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day.

SNAICC will distribute a free poster, leaflet and other materials in the lead up to NAICD to all readers of *SNAICC News*.



SNAICC Posters for National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day from previous years. Above: 2003, right: 2002.

SNAICC Update

Since the last edition of *SNAICC News*, the SNAICC staff team has grown from four to nine, we have moved office, established the National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service and launched our new online Indigenous children's services directory.

Policy work remains a high priority with our Policy Officer, Julie Sleight, carrying out the work to complete a SNAICC paper on permanency planning and a model for Aboriginal and Islander foster care. We have also been successful in reaching agreement with all States and Territories that this paper will form the basis of advice to go to all Community Services Ministers later this year. This is a great opportunity for SNAICC to advocate for culturally appropriate models of foster care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as an alternative to permanency planning in child protection.

After hosting the launch of SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service (NIFCRS), the SNAICC National Executive met at our new offices in Melbourne from Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 May. The Executive reviewed SNAICC's governance structure, and considered changes to the membership of the National Executive. They also decided that SNAICC's strategic plan be reviewed in light of the Commonwealth's decision to abolish ATSIC and develop new ways to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The priorities for SNAICC include working to ensure that communities are empowered to negotiate Shared Responsibility Agreements that address the needs of children – particularly in relation to child development and the prevention of abuse or neglect.

Update on priority activities

AICCA and Indigenous parenting and family well-being program review

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services has been reviewing its funding program for Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs). SNAICC attended the last meeting of the reference group for the review and provided a written response to the draft review report.

The independent review found that AICCA services had been poorly funded, that there were major gaps in the service network and that the program base of services needed to be expanded to cover the breadth of family support, early intervention, child protection and alternative care.

SNAICC understands that the final report of the review contains clear recommendations supporting an expansion of Commonwealth funding and support for AICCA services and a re-focusing of the Commonwealth investment on early intervention and family support which would be more consistent with the original vision of AICCA services.

Indigenous child care accreditation

In December last year, SNAICC, FaCS and the National Childcare Accreditation Council came together to convene a seminar on quality assurance and accreditation for Indigenous child care services. SNAICC's aims in progressing this work are to:

- ensure the quality of care provided by Indigenous services is formally recognised,
- promote child care services and programs accessible to families that are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices, and
- enable Indigenous child care services to gain accreditation for all of their models of child care.

There is still a strong commitment from FaCS, SNAICC and the NCAC to progress this work, which will commence with community consultations and discussion to carefully develop the best options for quality assurance and accreditation. SNAICC anticipates that consultations will commence in the next six months.



The SNAICC National Executive met in Melbourne from Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 May.

The Executive also addressed key policy priorities, including Permanency Planning and the Model of Foster Care, and nationwide compliance with the Placement Principle. Some key projects were also identified for the NIFCRS to pursue in the next year. They also found that SNAICC should develop a broad funding submission for the next Federal Budget cycle outlining the need for additional AICCA/Indigenous child and family welfare services in each state and territory.

Included below are some brief updates on current priorities within SNAICC. Please feel free to ring the SNAICC office to get more information on any of these items.

– Julian Pocock, SNAICC Coordinator

National Indigenous Child care Plan

FaCS have also agreed to develop a National Indigenous Childcare Plan to outline their ongoing commitment to support, expand and deliver child care programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. FaCS have advised SNAICC that they will appoint a consultant shortly to commence work on the development of the plan. As with the accreditation project, this area of work will be a major priority for SNAICC and FaCS over the next two years.

Additional funding for MACS/ Indigenous child care services

Announced some weeks ago, the Australian Government have allocated an extra \$7.5 million for MACS and other Indigenous child care services and programs. The funding is to support the existing services as well as progress existing proposals to further develop Indigenous child care services. In future years the National Indigenous Childcare Plan will drive additional funding bids and proposals.

State/Territory Government and SNAICC child care licensing forum

At last year's SNAICC Annual General Meeting, members suggested that SNAICC try to broker some discussions between the states and territories and services in relation to the licensing of children's services. A preliminary discussion for half a day was held on April 20, attended by all states and territories and five delegates from SNAICC. There were several positive outcomes, including a commitment to work with SNAICC in relation to national standards for licensing and to ensure that licensing arrangements take account of the cultural perspectives, practices and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Community Services Ministers Advisory Council - ATSI Services Working Group

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Working Group consists of senior officials from each state and territory responsible for Indigenous child protection and family well being. The group has recently agreed to expand its membership and terms of reference to include SNAICC, and we attended their first meeting in Darwin on April 22.

The group discussed what particular areas of child protection and family well-being should be the focus of joint work between all the states, territories and SNAICC. It was agreed to focus on stability in out-of-home care and compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

It was agreed to commence work in relation to stability in out-of-home care by utilising SNAICC's paper on a model of foster care as a possible alternative to permanency planning. Further it was agreed that all States and Territories needed to examine and report back on their compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

SNAICC and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Working Group will continue to meet throughout 2005 and will prepare advice on these issues for a meeting of all Community Services Ministers later this year.

SNAICC meeting with Senator Kay Patterson

Members of SNAICC's National Executive met with the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Kay Patterson. The Minister expressed strong interest in working with SNAICC to progress a number

SNAICC Executive members and guests at the launch of SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service on 4 May.
Photo: SNAICC



of priority issues including those relating to child care accreditation and licensing, family violence projects, NAICD, improving support for foster carers, improving support for men in parenting and family impact statements being developed by FaCS in relation to papers prepared for Federal Cabinet.

SNAICC projects

Parenting information project

Parenting and family issues were the focus of a project SNAICC ran for the first half of 2004. The project was funded by FaCS with SNAICC required to prepare a comprehensive report on parenting issues and the information and parenting program support needs of Indigenous families. The project was carried out by Tracey Borg and included focus groups with families and workers, stakeholder consultations, a national workshop and a program audit and literature review SNAICC contracted out to Swinburne University. The detailed final report and an executive summary of the project are currently being printed and will be distributed to SNAICC News readers in June.

The report and an executive summary are available electronically on SNAICC's website: www.snaicc.asn.au/publications

ARACY Research Priorities for Indigenous Children and Youth

Following the success of the parenting project SNAICC was asked by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to prepare a report on research priorities for Indigenous children and young people. SNAICC developed the brief through a national stakeholder consultation survey and an examination of recent SNAICC AGM member's reports and through consultation with the SNAICC National Executive. The brief paper was prepared by Tracey Borg and submitted to ARACY in September.

The final report is now available in print from SNAICC and electronically on these websites: SNAICC: www.snaicc.asn.au/publications ARACY: http://www.aracy.org.au/research_agenda.htm

National Resource and Services Directory

We are providing Indigenous children's services across the country with a national services directory and resource manual on child development, welfare and governance through this project. From January to September last year, Cecilia Gore-Birch was the SNAICC project officer working on the production of these important resources. When Cecilia returned home to the Kimberley to be with family, SNAICC appointed Renee Williams and now Tracey Borg to complete the project.

The services directory is being developed in both hard copy format and as an on-line directory in partnership with Infoxchange Australia. The on-line directory was launched on 4 May.

Other elements of the resource manual are also being developed in partnership with Indigenous resource agencies and the Centre for Community Child Health. The resources will be launched in the first half of 2005.

Risk and protective factors research project - UTS

Funded by the Telstra Foundation, this project is being conducted in partnership with Professor Terri Libesman from University of Technology Sydney's Law Faculty. The project will work with families and services in eight communities to document their views on the factors which contribute to children's resilience and well being. It aims to provide an alternative to the very narrow risk and protective factors which have been used to frame the Australia Government's National Agenda for Early Childhood.

Victorian Department of Human Services - International Literature Review

SNAICC will conduct a literature review on the different models for Indigenous child welfare in the US, Canada, NZ and Australia. The project will look at legislation, policy, practice and service models and is due to report in September. We anticipate publishing a report on the literature review later this year. ♦

News

Victorian Government announces funding for projects for Aboriginal children and families

The Victorian Government has announced funding for projects to assist Aboriginal children and families as part of its 'A Fairer Victoria' package to tackle social disadvantage in the state.

According to Victoria's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gavin Jennings, funding will provide for projects that assist Aboriginal children and their families, including:

"Recruiting and training more Aboriginal people to be foster carers ... ; providing 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, in-home support to entire families where there is a risk of the children being placed in out-of-home care; and providing up to 100 hours of support a year, for two years, to vulnerable new mothers by training Indigenous women in early childhood development."

New initiatives to be funded include "\$5.1 million over four years for a permanent Stolen Generations Organisation to provide direct services to individuals and families, including pre and post-reunion counselling", states Mr Jennings. ♦

Source: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Victoria

Federal Budget news: rural and Indigenous families to get mediation and counselling services

Rural and Indigenous families will get - for the first time in some communities - access to mediation and counselling services through an outreach programme funded by the Federal Government. This initiative is part of the government's commitment to overhaul the Family Law system in Australia: by supporting families in conflict or experiencing relationship breakdown to access mediation, relationship counselling and supported children's contact centres.

The Attorney General, Phillip Ruddock MP, and the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Kay Paterson, announced a total package of \$397.2 million over four years as part of the Government's budget announcements.

"The centrepiece of the package is \$189 million to establish 65 Family Relationship Centres, a place where all families can go to get help with their relationship difficulties. The centres will be a visible entry point into the family law system, which will provide some mediation services and refer families to other appropriate services," they announced.

SNAICC will pursue with the Australian Government how these new services and programs will be made accessible to Indigenous families. This will include advocating that existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and children's services should be able to expand to deliver these new services and programs. ♦

Source: Commonwealth Government; and SNAICC

Senate committee inquiry into the abolishing of ATSIC report released

The Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs tabled its report *After ATSIC - Life in the mainstream?* on Tuesday, 8 March 2005.

The report can be accessed via the committee's Internet site at: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/indigenouaffairs_ctte/report/final/index.htm

Source: Senate Committee on Indigenous Affairs

Foster Carer National Recognition Award

Nominations are now open for the 2005 Foster Carer National Recognition Award. The awards organiser, the Australian Foster Care Association, will present the award at its 2005 National Foster Care Conference in Alice Springs this July.

Agencies are encouraged to nominate a foster carer for the award. Application forms are now available from the Association, and must be submitted before 1 June 2005 if you want your nominee to be eligible to receive the award at the 30 July Conference Dinner. All relative, kin and foster carers are eligible for the award, but:

- Nominees must have 20 or more years' active service in total as a foster, relative and/or kinship carer (shorter periods added up count towards the 20 yrs).
- Nominees must be of good character.
- The application form must be completed in full and all requested information supplied.

Completed applications should be sent to:

Fax: (02) 6253 8887

Mail: Awards, 132 William Webb Dr, Evatt ACT 2617

For more information, contact the Association:

Email: AFCA@bigpond.com

For more Information on the 2005 National Foster Care Conference in Alice Springs this July, see page 10. ♦

Source: Australian Foster Care Association

New on the National Child Protection Clearinghouse web site

Recent publications relating to information on child abuse have been updated on the web site of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse. You can find this information on the 'What's New' page and at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/afsapubs.html>

The conference page has also been updated. This information is available at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/nchconfs.html>

Submissions on child protection and child abuse prevention practice, prepared by Clearinghouse staff have been collocated, and are now available at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/submissions.html> ♦

Source: National Child Protection Clearinghouse

Capacity Building Project update

by Tracey Borg, SNAICC Project Officer

The Capacity Building Project has been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services as part of their commitment to supporting the effectiveness of Indigenous non-government agencies working directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. In particular agencies operating in the early childhood development and child and family welfare fields.

The Capacity Building Project commenced in January 2004, with a full time Project Officer employed to undertake the project.

The overall aim of the project is to provide direct assistance to Indigenous agencies working in the early childhood development and child and family welfare field by supporting them to extend good practice within their ongoing work. This will include supporting them with issues relating to governance and service management as well as issues relating to service practice and developing new models of service delivery.

The overall goals of the project are to:

1. Assist existing Indigenous services, particular Indigenous child and family welfare services and Indigenous early childhood services, to strengthen and extend their service provision for children and families at a local level;
2. Support Indigenous child and family welfare and Indigenous early childhood services to develop a united approach in addressing the needs of Indigenous children and families at a State/Territory and National level;
3. Further SNAICC's role and capacity to provide practical support to existing and emerging Indigenous child and family welfare and Indigenous early childhood services;
4. Produce a National Resource Directory that will include information on:
 - The key stages in early childhood development,
 - Prevention and early intervention strategies,
 - Community based approaches to prevention of child abuse and neglect,
 - Good governance,
 - Financial and administrative management practices.

I have been working on the Capacity Building Project since about November last year on a part-time basis, after the initial Project Officer resigned from their position with SNAICC. I have been working on the Resource Directory, in particular writing the Governance and Child Welfare sections, and also contributing to the Early Childhood section.

Infoxchange Australia, a not-for-profit Information Technology social enterprise, has developed an online service directory for SNAICC members that includes a national database of Indigenous services. (See more news on the launch of the online Directory on page 12.)

We are now in the final stages of producing the National Resource Directory, and have been seeking feedback and approval of the work completed thus far from the project Reference Group.

The National Resource Directory is due to be published in June, while the print version of the Services Directory will be put together by Infoxchange Australia and published later this year. ●

New SNAICC report now available

SNAICC has just published a report on the research priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth.



The report, *Research Priorities for Indigenous Children and Youth*, was commissioned by Curtin University to form recommendations to the Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY). A Commonwealth Government initiative, ARACY undertakes research on the needs of all Australian children.

SNAICC's report provides approximately 50 recommendations to assist ARACY in developing their research priorities for Indigenous children and youth. It is significant that Curtin University acknowledged SNAICC's expertise in this area and felt it important that an Indigenous organisation produce the report.

To obtain a printed copy of this report, please contact the SNAICC offices. Alternatively you can download a pdf version of the report from SNAICC'S website on our publications page.

Go to www.snaicc.asn.au/publications

Or telephone: 03 9489 8099 or email: snaicc@vicnet.net.au

Creative writing submissions wanted

Works of creative writing are being sought from Indigenous women and girls for a new book project coming out of North America. The co-editors of this new anthology, with the proposed title 'Father Tongue', want to hear women's and girl's stories of fathers in Indigenous communities across the world.

'Our fathers and grandfathers are often overlooked in much of the writing that exists in Indigenous communities,' they say. 'We need you to share with us your stories of fathers.'

The book's co-editors are Chrystos, a Menominee woman from North Western United States and a renowned poet, and Nancy Cooper, a poet/photographer from central Canada of Ojibway/Irish decent. They are accepting poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essays, narratives, songs, cartoons and other creative endeavours.

They are seeking work from indigenous women and girls from North and South America, Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand and 'anywhere Indigenous women and girls are found'.

Deadline for submissions: 28 July 2005

Submission and queries can be sent to indigenouswomen@hotmail.com

Send submissions as a Microsoft Word file attachment with your full contact information, including your name, nation, affiliation, address and email address.

Source: TASTOTS



SNAICC staff at their Staff team building day in April. From left: Carmen, Julie, Tracey, Julian, Mark, Michele, Cathy and Simone. Not in the photo: Raj. Photo by Cathy Kirwan.

Meet SNAICC's staff

Receiving Federal government funding for the National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service has meant that SNAICC has expanded to meet new needs and demands. SNAICC has taken on more staff, as well as moved into larger premises in North Fitzroy. Find out about the fantastic new staff that have recently joined SNAICC, and be re-acquainted with the staff who have been SNAICC's mainstay to date.

Carmen

Hello to SNAICC News readers. My name is Carmen Dunn, I am a Wiradjuri woman from Forbes in NSW. I have been with SNAICC now for 20 months. I was originally employed with SNAICC as the Administration Officer in September 2003 on a full-time basis. Since 1 December 2004, my position has changed to Office Manager.

This year, I have been focusing most of my energy and time on organising the SNAICC move from Northcote to Fitzroy, assisting Julian in the process of employing new staff and training some of the new staff members.

Just on a personal note, I took leave in March to get married and move into our new house. We didn't go away on a honeymoon as we didn't have enough time, but we are going to Malaysia on a belated honeymoon in July, which we are looking forward to. ♦

Julie

My name is Julie Sleight and I am the SNAICC Policy Officer. I was originally employed by SNAICC in February 2003 to work with Julian in organising the SNAICC National Seminar 'Our Future Generations' and to prepare the seminar report. Since November 2003, I have worked part-time as the Policy Officer and completed a

number of projects. I recently did some research for SNAICC about 'permanency planning' and following from this, am currently developing a SNAICC foster care model for A&TSI children.

Prior to joining SNAICC I worked for the Victorian State Government in a number of policy roles in the areas of youth, preschool and child care, and housing. SNAICC is a great place to be because we have a staff group and management committee who are all wonderful people and committed to the important work we are doing. I love working here. ♦

Simone

Hi, my name is Simone Andy. I am a Yorta Yorta woman from Cummergunja, located on the border of Victoria and N.S.W. I'm employed at SNAICC as the administrative assistant and work on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am to 5pm.

I am also studying part-time, doing the Diploma of Children's Services at NMIT in Preston. As part of my studies, I am required to do a student placement and have chosen to be a volunteer worker at Yappera Children's Services, where I love spending time with our young ones.

I am deeply committed to the Aboriginal community and I have dedicated my life to addressing Indigenous issues to better the outcomes for our people.

I enjoy working at SNAICC as I am learning news skills and find this position challenging, as I have not worked for a National organisation before. I am one of the many new staff members at SNAICC and I started in January. I would like to thank SNAICC for being supportive and understanding of my studies. ♦

Michelle

Hi, I am Michele Moloney, one of the new project officers of the new service that has started up alongside SNAICC. Where I come from is a little bit over the border along the Edwards, but only as a child. All I remember is the heat – it used to be really hot in those days, walking up the dirt streets into town across the railway tracks that were running through town and down to the beach. That is what it was like to us.

I have lived many lives, such as many years in Canberra working at ANU on an Indigenous study on HIV; with the Education department seeing what, if any, Aboriginal languages could be introduced into the ACT schools; with the Chief Minister's department evaluating their implementation of the Deaths in Custody Recommendations; with the health service for over four years with Kaye Mundine doing their research and my own; and back at ANU doing my own research into smoking in the community.

Then up to Alice and the Northern Territory for a few years working with the Health Workers and then the South Coast of NSW, which I love, again with the health service. As you can see, I am really really old. In January this year, I completed my Masters of Public Health, then the very next week started here. At the moment, I am working on revamping the *Through Young Black Eyes* handbook, putting together a couple of Powerpoint presentations to present and for services on the ground to use in workshops every few months to raise the profile in their own areas, and a few posters and a booklet with sheets you can pull out or photocopy to use in interactive sessions. ♦

Raj

Sri Lanka became a trouble spot to live in the early part of 1983 and that was just after I returned from the Middle East, where I was employed on a two years' job assignment. My wife and I left Sri Lanka and went to the United Kingdom. We lived and worked there for four years on a student/temporary visa until we found a place to migrate. We were permitted to arrive in Melbourne in November 1987.

I joined SNAICC in the first week of February 2005. I had been working for commercial educational institutions for many years before I decided to work for a non-profit or charitable organisation. My background, education and experience has been in the field of Accountancy and I feel that I have joined a place where I can utilise my skills fully – in a small organisation that is and growing for the benefit of the children and families in our community. ♦

Tracey

Hi, my name is Tracey and I have been at SNAICC for 15 months, in the role of Project Officer. I am employed part time at SNAICC and work on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The rest of the time, I am at home with my beautiful 2-year-old daughter, Lana.

Since commencing at SNAICC, I have worked on and completed various projects, including the Parenting Information Project (done in conjunction with the Early Childhood Department at Swinburne University), and wrote a report on research issues for Indigenous

children and young people (*Research Priorities for Indigenous Children and Youth*). I am currently working on the Capacity Building Project. ♦

Cathy

Hi there. My name is Cathy Kirwan and I started with SNAICC in February this year. I am one of the two new Project Officers with the National Resource Service (NRS) and am working here full time. My role will focus on establishing the project plan for the service, supporting and coordinating the reference group and implementing specific projects through the National Resource Service.

So far I have been working closely with staff at SNAICC and consultancy Morgan Disney, who did some consulting work to assist in establishing the NRS, to write up the 4-year project plan. I have also been trying to meet up with people in the sector and orientate myself.

Prior to coming to SNAICC, I was working with a philanthropic trust managing their Indigenous grants program for young people. My background is in Youth Work and I have done a lot of work directly with young people over the past 12 years. ♦

Mark

Hello, my name is Mark Lawrence and I'm the new Publications Officer at SNAICC. Since starting here in March, I've been settling in, getting to know the organisation and my colleagues, and thinking about SNAICC's various publications.

I'll be looking after SNAICC's newsletters and website, and designing and producing our project reports, resources, posters, leaflets and other publications. I am keen to hear if readers have any ideas or comments about our publications. In particular, we plan to revamp our newsletter, *SNAICC News*, so please let me know what you like about this newsletter, what else you would like to read in it, or any other ideas you may have for it.

My background is in higher education: I worked for over four years at a university Student Union, producing publications and organising events for their postgraduate area, and before that tutoring at the university. Making the switch to Indigenous early childhood, family and children's welfare issues is challenging, but I'm relishing it. I'm excited about being a part of SNAICC's work and the great team I get to work with here! ♦

Julian

Day one of my time at SNAICC started with a flag raising ceremony at the Aborigines Advancement League (in Melbourne) on the first day of NAIDOC week in 1998. Having previously worked for other national organisations and been involved as a volunteer in the Aboriginal Rights Solidarity Group in Melbourne, I grasped with both hands the opportunity to work for SNAICC. Almost seven years later, the same things that inspired me to be involved with SNAICC still provide the energy to keep going – the people and their stories.

Being able to hear about the determined, dignified and loving ways in which Aboriginal and Islander communities care for their children is both a privilege and a great asset for a father of three. It's also, of course, a reminder that all non-Aboriginal people, myself included, must accept responsibility for the damage colonisation has created within our Indigenous communities. Home for me is Melbourne, family is a big mob of people centred around my partner Fiona and our three children Fynn, Eadie and Louka. And, believe it or not, watching my beloved Collingwood (losing mostly) seems to take away the stress. ♦

CONFERENCES

National Foster Care Conference 2005

Living and Learning Together: A Celebration and Appreciation of Diversity

29-31 July 2005

Alice Springs Convention Centre
Alice Springs, Northern Territory

This will be a creative, constructive and enjoyable learning forum where all involved in or with the foster care sector can share experiences and learning both formally and informally.

Three sub-themes will underpin the conference sessions and activities, while the sessions will focus on positive outcomes:

- Cross cultural diversity
- Learning from each other - best practice and partnerships
- Drawing on wider experience

The program and more information will be available from the Association's website:
www.fostercare.org.au/national.html

The 2005 Foster Carer National Recognition Awards will be presented at the conference dinner.

Our Children The Future 4 *Challenging Realities, Rights, Relationships, Research*

16-18 June 2005

Adelaide Convention Centre
South Australia

Our Children the Future 4 will bring together early childhood professionals involved in the care and education of children birth to eight and those involved in school aged care throughout South Australia, interstate and overseas.

To find out more about the conference contact:

Our Children the Future Conference Secretariat,
Department of Education and Children's Services
GPO Box 1152, Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8226 0044
Fax: +61 (08) 8410 2406
Email: octf@saugov.sa.gov.au
Website: www.octf.sa.edu.au/octf/

Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association (PECERA) Sixth Conference

Understanding Individual and Cultural Differences Among Children

15-18 July

Taipei, Taiwan

For more information, go to:
<http://tmtc.edu.tw/~pecera/en/index.htm>

Early Childhood Australia Biennial Conference

Kaleidoscope-Changing Images of Childhood

28 September-1 October 2005

Brisbane, Australia

For more information, go to:
www.eca2005.com/homepage.html

National Symposium 2005

Their Lives, Our Work: Critical questions for practice in child, youth and family services

10-12 October 2005

Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre,
Preston, Victoria

Hosted by Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia & The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

The Symposium will showcase practical approaches that assist in responding to, and supporting children, young people and families with complex needs.

For information, contact:
Tiffany Tyler
Telephone: (03) 9614 1577

Tenth Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

14-16 February 2006

Wellington, New Zealand

Conference organisers are now inviting abstracts for papers to be presented in concurrent streams at the conference. The closing date for the receipt of abstracts is 12 July 2005.

The Conference aims to provide a forum for the exchange and discussion of ideas and strategies concerning the prevention, and interventions for the treatment, of child abuse and neglect.

The conference will bring together practitioners, policy makers, researchers and community groups to exchange information and share knowledge, with the potential to influence current practice and policy making.

The conference Registration Brochure and Programme will be available in early September.

To submit an abstract or to find out more about the conference go to:
www.nzfvc.org.nz/accan

If you have further enquiries, contact:
Avenues Event Management
Email: accan@avenues.co.nz

Inaugural National Indigenous Women's Conference

7-9 June 2005

Kurrajong, New South Wales

The three-day conference will draw together a range of inspirational speakers and showcase good practice and good-news stories from across Australia.

The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination within the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs will host the conference as part of the Indigenous Women's Development Program.



About Us
SNAICC News
Children's Day
Service Directory
SNAICC Publications
Contact Us & Links
Networking
Home



Did you know...

You can promote your conference, training programme or community event through SNAICC's website?

You can receive the latest information from SNAICC's Network News and Calendar via email?

Go to www.networking.snaicc.asn.au where you can:

- register for the email Network News Infocast
- add your news story or
- promote your event or conference.

Conferences continued

It is expected that 300 women will be supported to attend.

To help organisers to identify and invite women to attend the conference, they are asking for *Expressions of Interest from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women only* who are actively leading and contributing to Indigenous women's development.

If you wish to participate at this conference, please fill out an Expression of Interest form and send it via:

Email: Pamela.neame@consec.com.au
Fax: (02) 6251 0672

Or post: Conference Organiser - NIWC,
PO Box 3127, Belconnen Mail Delivery Centre, ACT 2617.

For more information, contact the Conference organiser:
Telephone: 1800 422 568 or 02 6251 0675
Email: Pamela.neame@consec.com.au

Supporting positive leaving care and transition experiences

23-25 August 2005
Brisbane, Queensland

A national forum hosted by FACE to FACE National Partnership in Out of Home Care

FACE to FACE is a national partnership forum of all stakeholders involved in out of home care. It is convened by the CREATE Foundation.

FACE to FACE is not a conference, but a

dynamic working forum which facilitates a process of engagement, exchange and learning in a collaborative environment.

Streams and themes to be discussed include: Indigenous, disability, NESB, younger children transitions, independent living, identity and significant others.

The Forum is looking for 'Leaving Care' projects to showcase, and invites you to submit an expression of interest.

Email your full contact details with an expression of interest to:

Sharyn Low from Matrix On Board
FACE to FACE Coordinator
Email: sharyn@mob.com.au

You can also contact Sharyn on:

Telephone: (02) 4572 3079

Fax: (02) 4572 3972

Post: PO Box 4023 Pitt Town NSW 2756

Website: www.create.org.au/f2f

Professional Development

The Australian Childhood Foundation has a professional development series for those working in the child welfare sector.

In 2005, the series will be run in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

For information, contact the Debby de Hoogd, Development Officer:

Email: ddehoogd@childhood.org.au
Telephone: (03) 9874 3922
Website: www.childhood.org.au/events/professional.asp

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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 or publications.

Contributions, feedback and suggestions to *SNAICC News* are welcome.

For publication inquiries, contact:

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

You can 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:

Simone Andy
Email: simone@snaicc.asn.au
Telephone: (03) 9489 8099
SNAICC, 252-260 St Georges Rd
North Fitzroy, Victoria 3068

Online Service Directory and community networking launched on SNAICC's website

Any service, agency or person across Australia can now search for specialist and culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families online.

SNAICC's newly launched National Children's Services Directory allows users to find details of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and children's services, health and legal services, and government departments, peak bodies and resource agencies from across the country. Searching the online directory is fast and user-friendly.

Covering over 2,000 services and organisations from across the country, the directory was compiled and developed by Infoxchange Australia in partnership with SNAICC. Infoxchange Australia – a not-for-profit information technology social enterprise company – pursues community development through information technology to create positive social change.

The Directory was developed as part of SNAICC's Capacity Building Project, which was funded by the Federal Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). The Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Kay Patterson, launched the online Children's Services Directory alongside the National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service on 4 May.

Users can search for services and organisations by their type or name, or through a focus search that allows them to narrow their search to specific types of Aboriginal and Islander Children's and Families' services. Searches can be limited to a particular area or postcode or encompass a whole state or territory.

As part of the Capacity Building initiative, Infoxchange Australia has also developed a community networking section for SNAICC's website, aimed at encouraging an online community in our sector.

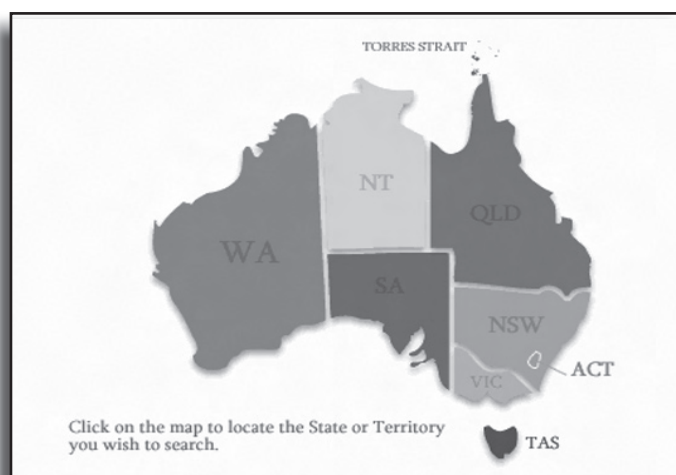


Part of the Infoxchange Australia team responsible for the Children's Service Directory and Networking sections on SNAICC's website. From left: Web Designer Andrew Stevens, Multimedia & Web Services Manager Natalie Collins, and Infoxchange Australia's Executive Director Andrew Mahar at the launch. Photo: Mark Lawrence

The new Networking section allows Aboriginal and Islander children's welfare, child care and family services, and other Indigenous agencies, to network and support each other online through our website. On this section, users can quickly and easily:

- + Publish news stories and publicise events and conferences on the **News** section;
- + Share opinions and discuss topics important to Aboriginal and Islander children and families in the online **Forum**;
- + Share and access resources, publications and information documents through the **Library**;
- + Share **Links** to useful websites or online resources;
- + Register for and access a **Mailing List** for those on the Network;
- + Receive a regular **Email Infocast** of the latest news items and calendar events published on the Network's pages.

Both the online National Children's Services Directory and the new Networking section are publicly available, easy to use and free. ◆



The online National Service Directory allows anyone to search for relevant family and children's services in any state or territory across Australia. Go to www.snaicc.asn.au and click on 'Service Directory' on the navigation bar to start your online search.

Find out more

- 👉 Read more about SNAICC's Capacity Building Project in the report from the Project Officer, Tracey Borg, on page 7 of this newsletter.
- 🖱️ Find out more about Infoxchange Australia on their website: <http://www.infoxchange.net.au>
- 🖱️ The National Children's Service Directory and Networking section are on SNAICC's website: www.snaicc.asn.au