

# SNAICC NEWS

Secretariat of National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Newsletter

December 2005 – January 2006

## SNAICC members meet in Darwin

The SNAICC Members Forum and Annual General Meeting were held in Darwin last November with a focus on the strengths and needs of remote communities, the current Commonwealth review of the AICCA (Aboriginal and Islander Child Care) Program, Shared Responsibility Agreements and the development of a National Indigenous Child Care Plan.

### Members Forum and Issues

Members present at the AGM discussed children's issues and needs from the point of view of remote communities with presentations provided by delegates including Litia Vuqa (Galiwinku Child Care), Paul Thomas (Angurugu Community Council), Veronica Johns (NT Remote Area Children's Services Support Unit), Desley Thompson and Clara Day (Cape York Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care) and Julian Pocock (SNAICC Executive Officer).

The AGM noted that while there is sporadic media attention on remote communities particularly in relation to issues such as petrol sniffing or family violence, the underlying causes of these issues and the great strengths of remote communities tend to be overlooked.



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**SNAICC members at the AGM in Darwin.** (Left to right) **Back row:** Bruce Borey – KIPA Child Placement Agency Qld, Ray Burrows – Gundoo Day Care Qld, Ian Davidson – Aboriginal Family Support Services SA, Glen Rennie Manning Aboriginal Children's Services NSW, Eddie Yasso – Colun ACCA Qld, Paul Thomas – Anurugu Community Government Council, Amanda Bridge – Great Lakes Manning Aboriginal Children's Services NSW. **Back middle:** Joanne Della-Bona – Coolaburra Neighbourhood Centre WA, Veronica John – RACSSU NT, Debbie Bond – ARMSU SA, Leon Smith – Kaurna Plains Child Care Centre SA, Ray Bobongie – Mackay ACCA Qld, Desley Thomson – Cape York/Gulf RAATSIC Qld, Rebecca Moore – ISACSS Qld, Julian Pocock – SNAICC Vic, Simone Andy – SNAICC Vic, Ursula Barber – Undoonoo Child Care Centre Qld. **Front middle:** Dawn Wallam – Yorganop WA, Clara Day – Cape York/Gulf RAATSIC Qld, Muriel Bamblett – VACCA Vic, Dot Bagshaw – Gurlongga Ngininj Association WA, Kathleen Pinkerton – Yorganop WA, Cecilia Gore-Birch – Kununurra Youth Services WA, Stacey Atkinson-Brown – Yappera Children's Services Vic, Katherine Bartley – Marungai NSW. **Front row:** Sharron Williams – Aboriginal Family Support Services SA, Marie Page – Great Lakes/Manning Aboriginal Children's Service, Garry Matthews – Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Community Care Centre NSW, Carmen Dunn – SNAICC, Lila Stewart – Great Lakes Manning Aboriginal Children's Service.

Delegates talked about the need for SNAICC, governments at all levels, other national bodies and the broader Australian community to respond to issues that particularly impact on remote communities. It was noted that new Commonwealth arrangements for Indigenous affairs, including shared responsibility agreements, had not had an impact on the fundamental issues such as inadequate housing and infrastructure and high levels of poverty and unemployment.

SNAICC resolved to strengthen its focus on remote communities including highlighting the strengths of remote communities and the importance of culture as a key resource to overcoming

disadvantage within these communities. It was also emphasised that the difficulties faced by remote communities in accessing the resources they need to raise strong healthy children are mirrored in rural and urban communities.

### AICCA program review

The AGM discussed the recent review of the AICCA (Aboriginal and Islander Child Care) Program under which the Commonwealth provides some core funding to approximately half of Australia's AICCA services. Delegates spoke about the review as an opportunity to develop a stronger

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# National Indigenous Child Care Plan

by Julie Sleight, SNAICC Policy Officer



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The Australian Government recently contracted Edith Cowan University to develop a National Indigenous Child Care Plan, something SNAICC has been requesting for several years.

As part of developing the Plan, the University is conducting interviews across the country with stakeholders such as child care providers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, other community members, Australian and state and territory government representatives and SNAICC.

**"MACS can only achieve their potential if funding is increased and funding guidelines made more flexible so that services can meet the broad needs of the communities they serve."**

The purpose of the Plan is to guide the development of new and existing child care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

SNAICC believes that the directions set by the Indigenous Child Care Plan could greatly impact on the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - because child care services have the potential to make an enormous contribution to children, families and communities.

We want the Plan to be a document that makes a real difference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It should do this by leading to the development of more child care services and more appropriate services.

The Plan should focus on the important role child care can play in the lives of children, families and communities.

The potential contribution of child care services at the community level should not be overlooked. Child care services can contribute to building the health, cultural and spiritual strength, education levels, employment opportunities and economic

strength of the community as a whole and reducing stress, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect.

We need to take the opportunity to look beyond child care as it is currently provided and look at child care as it could be and the contribution it could make and what resources are needed to develop child care services that fulfil their potential.

SNAICC's view is that the breadth of the MACS service model with its emphasis on supporting families with children in a multitude of ways makes it the most broadly

applicable service model for providing child care within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – the MACS model works! However, MACS can only achieve their potential if funding levels are increased and funding guidelines made more flexible so that services are able to meet the broad needs of the communities they serve.

SNAICC will contribute to the development of the Plan over the next nine months. As part of this, we will be asking that the Plan explicitly recognise the following:

- the history of the last two hundred years, during which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were dispossessed of their land, livelihood, families, communities, language and culture, and the way this has devastated people economically, psychologically and spiritually.
- the systematic removal of Aboriginal children (the stolen generations) from their families, communities, land and

heritage and the forced relocation of communities and the ongoing effects of these policies today.

- the children in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who are suffering abuse and neglect because of the problems being faced by their families and the potential of child care to improve the lives and life chances of these children.
- the need to ensure adequate funding is provided for professional development, staff training, management support, financial administration and program development to ensure that services are set up to succeed.
- the high numbers of children with additional needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care services compared to mainstream services.
- the need for a quality assurance system that assists services to define what they see as quality child care and then provides them with support to achieve this.

If you would like to know more about the Indigenous Child Care Plan development project please contact the research team:

Professor Sherry Saggers, Edith Cowan University Centre for Social Research  
Tel: (08) 6304 5074  
email: s.saggers@ecu.edu.au

or Stephainie Jackiewicz, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research  
Tel: (08) 9489 7959  
email: stephainie@ichr.uwa.edu.au

or contact SNAICC:  
Tel: (03) 9489 8099  
Julie Sleight, email: julie@snaicc.asn.au  
Julian Pocock, email: julian@snaicc.asn.au

# SNAICC helps shape new draft child protection legislation in Victoria

by Julie Sleight, SNAICC Policy Officer

**N**ew Child Protection legislation is being developed in Victoria and SNAICC and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) have grasped the opportunity to advocate for changes that will improve the cultural strength of out of home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC and VACCA advocated for some changes based on our views that the legislation should recognise that placing an Aboriginal child in accordance with the requirements of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is always in their best interests.

"The draft legislation provided too much scope for other considerations to take precedence over protecting and promoting the Aboriginal child's cultural and spiritual development."

Also we felt that the draft legislation provided too much scope for other "best interests" considerations, such as promoting the child's general development, to take precedence over protecting and promoting the Aboriginal child's cultural and spiritual development.

Recently, we were pleased to hear from the Victorian Minister for Children, the Hon. Sherryl Garbutt MP, that the new Children Youth and Family Bill has been amended to incorporate:

- Including in the "best interests" principles a specific reference to the need to take account of Aboriginal children's cultural identity and maintain their cultural connection;



- Strengthening responses to Aboriginal children by providing for the development of cultural plans, to spell out how carers and agencies will maintain an Aboriginal child's cultural connection;
- Including the reference in the (current) CPYA (Children and Young Persons Act) to promoting self determination;
- Strengthening the reference to Aboriginal family decision-making; and
- Removing the statement at the end of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle that the order of priority of placement under the principle applies at all times unless this is not in the best interests of the child.

**SNAICC's policy paper (prepared by Julie Sleight) on how to achieve stable and culturally strong out of home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can now be ordered from us.**

**See page 8 for details. You can also go to [www.snaicc.asn.au/publications](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/publications) to download an electronic version in PDF.**



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

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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. Copy deadline for our April edition is **10 March 2006**.

For publication inquiries, contact:

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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.

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Government departments	\$100
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Members and affiliate members receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

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# SNAICC Update



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## SNAICC Annual General Meeting

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focus on primary intervention and family support to complement out-of-home care and child protection programs.

For this opportunity to be realised though, it would be necessary for governments to provide additional funding for new types of service provision rather than shift funding from areas of child protection to primary prevention.

**Note:** since the SNAICC AGM the full independent report on the AICCA program review has been released by the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services and is available on the department's website here:

[http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/content/parenting\\_early\\_childhood.htm#AICCA](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/content/parenting_early_childhood.htm#AICCA)

The report includes significant recommendations including that FaCS facilitate the development of a national strategy to better address the support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

It also recommends that the national strategy focus on supporting, healing, developing and sustaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities by:

- improving access to existing prevention, early intervention and family support services that can assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families raising children
- building the continuum of prevention, early intervention and family support services available to Aboriginal and

**Above:** AGM delegates visited some local services around Darwin. Here, a group visited the Danila Dilba Health Service.

**Top right (from left):** At the AGM, Veronica Pompei, Litia Vuqa, Veronica Johns, Paul Thomas; (at back) Leona Smith, Debbie Bond.

**Below right (from left):** SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett, Deputy Chair Dawn Wallam, and Kathleen Pinkerton.

Torres Strait Islander families raising children

- recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices and family kinship systems within service delivery
- coordinating and maximising the impact of investment from each level of government

SNAICC is seeking full implementation of the review recommendations that recognised the important work of AICCA services and the long history of services being poorly funded.

### Reforms to SNAICC Governance

The AGM considered and approved a range of significant changes to SNAICC's structure and governance. SNAICC membership categories were altered to provide membership categories for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander state peak bodies from the child welfare field as well as continuing membership for all existing members such as child care services, early childhood services, preschools, kindergartens and any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and family welfare services.

Provision was also made for co-opting representatives from remote communities and the Torres Strait onto the SNAICC National Executive, the elected board that governs SNAICC.

### SNAICC Elections and Office Bearers

The National Executive for 2006 was elected through a postal ballot and the results confirmed at the AGM.

The SNAICC National Executive and office bearers for 2006 are as follows:

Muriel Bamblett – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (SNAICC Chairperson)

Garry Matthews – Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Community Care (Deputy Chair)

Dot Bagshaw – Gurlongga Njinjinj MACS (Perth) (Deputy Chair)

Dawn Wallam – Yorganop (Treasurer)

Natalie Hunter – Karu Aboriginal Child Care Agency (Darwin) (Secretary)

Shirley Wilson – Allira MACS (Dubbo)

Kate Lindsay – Aboriginal Child Family & Community Care State Secretariat NSW (ABSec)

Tanya Ardler – Wreck Bay MACS

Veronica Johns – RACSSU (Darwin)

Tina Couzens – Kura Yerlo Aboriginal Children's Centre (SA)

Geraldine Atkinson – Batdjia Preschool/ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.

Ian Davidson – SA Aboriginal Family Support Services

Alison Overeem – Aboriginal Children's Centre/TAC (Hobart)

Desley Thompson – RAATISCC (Cape York)

Ray Burrowes – Gundoo MACS (Cherbourg)

Debbie Hart – Townsville Child Protection and Alternative Care program  
– Julian Pocock, SNAICC Coordinator

# SNAICC visits Canada and New Zealand

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by Julian Pocock, SNAICC Coordinator

**S**NAICC was invited to attend an international Indigenous child welfare conference in Canada in October and was able to send three delegates: Muriel Bamblett, Dawn Wallam and Julian Pocock.

Common histories of colonisation, dispossession and the break up of Aboriginal families in Australia, Canada and the US have created strong bonds between Indigenous peoples across these continents. SNAICC will continue to strengthen our links to Indigenous peoples and organisations in Canada and the US, particularly those focussed on children.

Common also are the stories of survival and the revival of language and culture as the key to strengthening families and nurturing children.

**"There was a strong sense of a new beginning in child welfare based on respect for the traditional practices of Aboriginal communities."**

During the trip to Canada, SNAICC delegates visited services and communities in Manitoba and Toronto to exchange information and learn more of the new models of autonomous Indigenous child protection services operating in Canada.

These models of child welfare are seen as being the most advanced in terms of providing control and autonomy to Indigenous families and communities. The reforms are part of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative.

**Above:** Some of the participants from the meeting in Toronto that established an Indigenous children's advisory group for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. **From left:** Kenn Richard (Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, Canada), Yolanda Teran (Andes Chinchesuyo, Ecuador), Cindy Blackstock (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Canada), Muriel Bamblett (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, Australia), Terry Cross (National Indian Child Welfare Association, United States), Lesley du Toit (Child and Youth Care Agency for Development, South Africa).

We visited a range of services and communities including Native Child and Family Services in Toronto, the Rolling River reserve in Manitoba, West Region Child and Family Services in Winnipeg, Ma Mawi Family Services (Winnipeg), Niji Mahkwa School (Winnipeg), First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority at the University of Manitoba and the Keesekoojenin Sharing Lodge.

There was a strong sense of a new beginning in child welfare based on respect for the traditional practices of Aboriginal communities, (doing things in the old ways), supported by the emergence of young leaders in the field. Perhaps best described through the words of Kenn Richard:

"Anishnawbe (Ojibwe) have an ancient prophecy that tells of seven prophets foretelling the future. The seventh prophet—or the seventh fire—told them of a time when a younger generation would regain the people's pride and greatness after a period of loss, tragedy and alienation. Many believe that this seventh generation has now been born."

—**Kenn Richard**, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services (Toronto), in the *Voices for Children Report*, 12 July 2005.



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**Top:** Dawn and Muriel at the Keesekoojenin Sharing Lodge in Manitoba with Linda Charstrand from West Region Child and Family Services. Linda was our host and guide for the trip to Rolling River reserve, a community supported by West Region Child and Family Services.

**Above:** Muriel Bamblett (SNAICC Chairperson) and Dawn Wallam (SNAICC Deputy Chairperson) enjoying a break during the New Zealand Family Violence Conference. Photos by Julian Pocock, SNAICC.

## More information

Aboriginal Justice – Child Welfare Initiative: <http://www.aji-cwi.mb.ca/eng/index.html>

## Reconciliation: Looking back, reaching forward – Indigenous peoples and child welfare

Niagara Falls, October 26-28, 2005,

The Reconciliation conference was the main reason for SNAICC's trip to Canada and it brought together 200 people with diverse experiences and perspectives from across Canada and the United States.

The event was organized by a coalition of child welfare peak bodies including the National Indian Child Welfare Association (United States), Canada's First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Child Welfare League of America and Child Welfare League of Canada.

SNAICC, representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from Australia, was one of four international delegations. The other delegations were from South Africa, Ecuador and India. SNAICC

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# NATIONAL ROUNDUP



## Northern Territory



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Karu staff at their Darwin office. Natalie Hunter (second from right) was appointed Director of Karu last year.

## Karu hosts SNAICC AGM dinner

Karu Aboriginal Child Care Agency staff hosted participants of SNAICC's Darwin AGM to a lovely dinner with traditional food. ■

## VICTORIA

### \$500,000 grant for Aboriginal Children's Centre in Shepparton

The Victorian Government has granted \$500,000 towards a new Children's Centre in Shepparton.

The State Government grant to the Batdja Aboriginal Corporation would help fund the \$1.18 million merger of the Batdja Preschool and Child Care Centre and the Lidje Child Care Centre to boost the range of children's services for young families living in the area.

Batkja Preschool and Child Care Centre is a SNAICC member.

The Premier, Steve Bracks, said the Victorian Government is "investing heavily in children's services across the State because we know how important good quality child and family support services are to parents raising families".

The new children's centre will come about from the merger of the Batdja centre in Harold Street with the Lidje centre in Mooroopna. The new centre will be based in Harold Street.

"The Lidje centre currently provides childcare places for 65 children. The new expanded centre will also offer a kindergarten program, long day care, occasional and outside school hours care, maternal and child health and parenting programs and a meeting room for parents," Mr Bracks said.

Geraldine Atkinson, Batdja's Director and

a SNAICC Executive member, said "the co-location of Lidje MACS, Batdja Preschool and Playgroup will enable existing staff and the bigger premises to be used more effectively to provide improved early childhood and ancillary services to the Goulburn Valley community".

The funding for the new centre is part of the State Government's \$16 million, three-year program to set up to 60 Children's Centres across Victoria.

Construction on the new centre is expected to start in June 2006.

**Contributor:** Roland Finette, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI); Source: Victorian Government website: [www.vaeai.org.au](http://www.vaeai.org.au)

## WEST AUSTRALIA

### Yorganop receives awards for training and child protection initiatives

Yorganop, the Aboriginal child welfare agency in Perth, WA, has won state and national awards for its training and child protection initiatives.

At the recent WA Community Services Industry Awards, Yorganop won *Category 2: Working Creatively to make a Difference (Large Group/Organisation)* for its Aboriginal Training Initiative.

"The Aboriginal Training Initiative is an innovative program that has broken new ground in providing culturally appropriate childcare qualifications for Aboriginal people. Initially developed by the Department for Community Development, Yorganop has worked creatively to modify the training resource package, extending it to map across to the Certificate III in Children's Services. The program has generated employment for Aboriginal people, increased confidence, self reliance and esteem and at the same time fulfilled the need for improved Indigenous child care and protection."

— WA Community Services Industry Awards

Yorganop was also winner of a 2005 National Child Protection Award in the Indigenous

Specific Services category in recognition of its outstanding and significant contribution to child protection in Australia.

This award was presented by the Australian Council for Children and Parenting at a ceremony at Parliament House Canberra.

More details are available online:  
WA Community Services Industry Awards  
[http://www.community.wa.gov.au/Resources/Awards/CSIA/2005\\_winners.htm](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/Resources/Awards/CSIA/2005_winners.htm)  
2005 National Child Protection Awards  
[http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/accap-protection\\_awards.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/accap-protection_awards.htm)

**Contributor:** Dawn Wallam, CEO, Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corporation, Perth, WA website: <http://www.yorganop.org.au> ■

## Kimberley conference reaches rural and remote children's workers

The Kimberley and Pilbara Children's Services (KAPCS) held its 2005 Annual Conference in Fitzroy Crossing, WA, last September.

The conference, *Learning and Growing Respectfully Together*, attracted 90 children's services workers from around the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. Half of them were Aboriginal or Torres Strait



Islander participants. They met to share ideas, experiences and inspiration, to develop skills, and to learn together.

Many Aboriginal speakers gave presentations, and there was an interpreting service so that all could participate fully.

KAPCS take their conferences to the people, and cater to those in rural and remote areas. They offered scholarships and subsidies to assist Aboriginal participants from remote areas to attend. Participants came from as far away as Halls Creek and Roebourne, and the Fitzroy Valley generally, as well as from capital cities across the country.

With a mix of discussions tackling practical and theoretical matters, participants reflected on what they are doing with and for the children in their communities, and on what their children need for the future.

Originally targeted at early childhood workers in the region, over time the conference has attracted a range of people working with children, including foster carers and refuge workers.

KAPCS is a voluntary organisation that supports children's services in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia. They organise an annual conference each year for people interested in the care and wellbeing of young children.

The next Annual Conference conference will be from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 August 2006 in South Hedland in the Pilbara, WA. Got to: [www.kapcs.org.au/next\\_confer.htm](http://www.kapcs.org.au/next_confer.htm) for more information.

-ML

**Source:** Vicki Hyman, Secretary, Kimberley and Pilbara Children's Services (KAPCS), WA website: [www.kapcs.org.au](http://www.kapcs.org.au)

### Contributions welcome

What's happening in your state/territory or organisation? Share your news, reports and issues in our next newsletter. Send contributions to our National Roundup (less than 300 words) to Mark at SNAICC.

Email your news to:  
[publications@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:publications@snaicc.asn.au)

community announcement

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 P: 03 9418 7400

Hours: 8:30 to 5:30 Monday to Friday



# Caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care

by Moira Ross-Rayner,  
 SNAICC Project Worker



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Following the success of the Victorian publication *Caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care*, SNAICC will produce a national resource to support non-Indigenous carers who care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This will be similar to the Victorian version produced by VACCA (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency) and will consist of information that is relevant to each state and territory.

"This resource will help non-Indigenous carers to have a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's needs."

We recognise that despite the efforts of government and non-government agencies to implement the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children cannot be placed with family, kin or another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family.

Funded by FACS, this resource aims to assist non-Indigenous carers to have a better understanding of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need to grow up with a strong

sense of cultural knowledge and identity.

When in care there are many cultural and social issues that need to be considered when addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Children with a strong identity and strong culture are more able to cope with life challenges and become resilient adults.

We encourage carers to become active in bringing about better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care. It is the key to supporting placement stability and long-term wellbeing for our children in out of care home arrangements when placed in a non-Indigenous setting.

If you have any queries please contact Moira Ross-Rayner at the SNAICC office or email: [project4@snaicc.asn.au](mailto:project4@snaicc.asn.au)

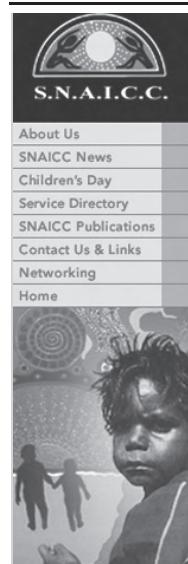
### Did you know...

**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](http://www.networking.snaicc.asn.au) where you can:**

- register for the weekly email Network News Infocast
- add your news story or
- promote your event or conference.
- share publications and resources



# In the News

## Number of children in care on the rise

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is over six times the rate of other children in care according to a report released in January.

The report found the worst rates persist in Victoria, despite its relatively small Aboriginal population.

Despite Victoria's legislation supporting the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, in the year to June, more than a third of the affected children were placed with non-Indigenous carers.

"There are still too many Aboriginal children being placed with non-Indigenous families," Muriel Bamblett, CEO of VACCA, told *The Age*. "History says that children who don't grow up 'connected' suffer from greater dysfunction. Stolen generations is evidence of this."

The report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Child Protection Australia 2004-05*, found that the number of all children in care in 2005 had increased 70 per cent since 1996.

Report author Meredith Bryant, of the AIHW, said "the increase is due, in part, to a greater awareness of child abuse and neglect, but also to the cumulative effect of children who enter the system at a young age and remain on care and protection orders for longer periods".

Children are entering care for increasingly complex factors related to parental substance abuse, mental health and family violence.

The majority of children in care were either in foster care (54 per cent) or living with relatives (40 per cent) with only 4 per cent of the children in residential care as at 30 June 2005.

### Sources:

**AIHW:** <http://www.aihw.gov.au>

**ABC Online:** <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1549708.htm>

**The Age:** <http://theage.com.au/news/national/child-removals-high-for-aborigines/2006/01/17/1137466991615.html>

## New youth and family services centre for TI

Plans for a new government service centre on Thursday Island, to provide co-ordinated family support, child protection, alternative care and youth justice services, were announced by Queensland Premier Peter Beattie on 5 December.

The old Court House building will be renovated at a cost of \$135,000 to accommodate the Department of Child Safety, Queensland Police Service Juvenile Aid Bureau and the Dept of Communities, projected to be operational by May 2006.

"Once operational, this service hub will provide accommodation for three community workers, five JAB staff and three Child Safety Officers," Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie said a coordinated approach to locating services was the only way to meet the challenges of the future in remote areas such as Thursday Island.

Minister for Child Safety Mike Reynolds said the co-location model recognised that child protection services on Thursday Island need to be supported by a suite of community services, as well as other complementary government services.

### From: Torres News

<http://www.torresnews.com.au>

Posted 6 December 2005

## New SNAICC publications

SNAICC published three new publications in late 2005. They will be posted to all SNAICC members in early 2006. Non-members can order them from SNAICC's office. Call us on: (03) 9489 8099.

### Achieving Stable and Culturally Strong Out of Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

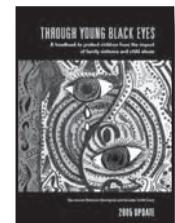
ISBN: 1-921174-05-6



SNAICC's policy paper on out of home care for the children in our communities includes our recommendations to governments on policy and initiatives.

### Through Young Black Eyes: A handbook to protect children from the impact of family violence and child abuse

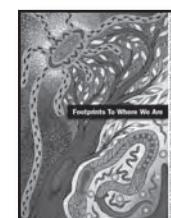
ISBN: 1-921172-02-1



Fully updated, this is the 2005 edition of our breakthrough resource helping communities to stop family violence. Also available: Leaders' pamphlet and community leaflet.

### Footprints to Where We Are: A Resource Manual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Services

ISBN: 1-921174-00-5



Useful, culturally relevant information, models and ideas on child welfare, child development and the governance of community organisations in our sector.

Contact our office to have these publications sent to you. Or download them (PDF) from: [www.snaicc.asn.au/publications](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/publications)

by a Teacher's Guide with background information about the storytellers and suggested activities for children.

Keith Salvat, the producer of the resource, also managed to secure a donation of DVD players that were sent to the services along with the resource to ensure it was able to be used.

The NRS is undertaking a further partnership project with Early Childhood Australia and Aboriginal Nations to use a smaller number of the stories and develop a version of the resource that will be available for sale to mainstream services.

## Children's services get Dreaming stories on DVD

Liz Orr, NRS Program Manager

Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander early childhood and kindergarten services – predominantly SNAICC's members – were sent a set of DVDs with Dreamtime story animations and a DVD player in mid-December by SNAICC. This certainly made Christmas exciting!

SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service (NRS) reproduced and distributed copies of this informative resource to approximately two hundred Australian Government funded early childhood agencies during December 2005 and January 2006.

The *Dreaming Resource*, which was developed by Aboriginal Nations and shown on ABC television, consists of 78 animated dreaming stories narrated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers.

The stories have been reproduced onto a set of six DVDs and are accompanied



## Welcome to new SNAICC staff

Moira (left) and Liz joined SNAICC in late 2005

In the later part of 2005, SNAICC saw the arrival of two new staff members: Moira and Liz. We know that you will enjoy getting to know them and working with them this year.

### Moira

Hello, my name is Moira Ross-Rayner. I am the new project officer at SNAICC. I am a Dainggatti/Bundjalung woman from Coffs Harbour, NSW, although I have spent most of my life in Melbourne. My role is to develop a national resource for non-Indigenous foster carers who care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in out of home care. I am still settling in and have been engaging in some extensive reading!

My background is in the early childhood field so when the opportunity came up at SNAICC, I jumped!!! My previous employment has been in the Koori social welfare sector and Aboriginal health. I have worked in both community and mainstream sectors over the years but seem to always drift back to the community sector.

I am really grateful for the opportunity to work with people who have extensive skills and a passion for Indigenous rights that will make a difference to our children and families. I look forward to working with you all. (Julian, can I stop reading now?...) •

### Liz

Hi! I was detoured on my way to working at SNAICC earlier this year but as my Aunt used to say – what is for you or what you are for doesn't go past you. My name is Liz Orr and I have joined SNAICC as a Program Manager for the National Indigenous Family and Children's

Resource Centre. I started work here on 17 October after an important journey for me to Scotland on family business.

I've worked in a lot of different places mostly in the broad areas of health, training and community development. Most of my work has aimed to prevent violence against women and children and promote healing from the aftermath of family violence.

I have been privileged to work alongside Aboriginal and Islander people in Victoria, the Northern Territory, NSW and Tasmania and I continue to grow both work-wise and personally from these experiences. My two daughters Greer and Isobel were also fortunate to spend four and a half years of their growing up with me in Alice Springs.

Recent work at the Stronger Families Learning Exchange at the Australian Institute of Family Studies back here in Melbourne provided me an overview of what Commonwealth and State governments are trying to do with early years programs and research. It also gave me the chance to work alongside a number of Aboriginal communities as they documented and evaluated some of those programs.

That experience and knowledge is very relevant to my role with the national resource service and SNAICC feels like the right place for me to share my skills and passion and to continue to learn.

Realising family well being and growing and building strong families and communities is lifetime work, I look forward to continuing that journey of learning from people and country and working for justice along with you.

P.S. We are still waiting for a right name so if you are reading this and have any ideas about a name for the National Resource Service please let us know! •

### Farewell Tracey Borg and Cathy Kirwan



Tracey

Since the last edition of SNAICC News, two SNAICC staff members have resigned in order to pursue new opportunities.

Tracey Borg has worked with SNAICC for just over two years as the SNAICC Project Officer with responsibility for the SNAICC parenting information project, risk and protective factors research project and the SNAICC capacity building project.

All three projects have involved local community consultations, liaison with governments, working with research and project partners and the production of project reports and resources.

Tracey has managed all these projects and been a superb contributor to SNAICC at a time when the organisation has been expanding and coping with new challenges.



Cathy

Cathy Kirwan joined SNAICC in early 2005 to work on the establishment of SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service.

Cathy established the reference group for the NRS, drew up the initial workplans for the operation of the NRS and carried out preparatory work for some of the initial NRS projects.

We wish them both well with their new endeavours and thank them for their commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

– Julian Pocock  
SNAICC Executive Officer



print/online

### Helping to link the stolen generations in Victoria

*Finding Your Story: A Resource Manual to the Records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria*

**Public Record Office Victoria**

**Cost:** \$34.95 (incl. gst) + p/h; free for Indigenous people and Stolen Generation members

The journey of members of the stolen generations continues as they try to trace where they've come from and who their families are. In many instances, their families have also taken up the journey – wanting to know who their parents, uncles, aunts or grandparents were and where they're from.

This involves finding out where they were taken from, where they were taken to, who took them, and more. It can be an incredibly difficult process of trawling through archives and records to track down documents on birth, marriage and death; removal, adoption or care orders; and court records – the list goes on.

What makes this harder is these records are often spread across a number of organisations – both government and non-government – involved in the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

To help those going through this process, the Victorian Government has published a new guide to government and non-government records and archives that are relevant to the stolen generations and their families in Victoria.

*Finding Your Story: A Resource Manual to the Records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria* provides detailed information on where records that may contain information on a child's removal from their family may be found. It covers how to start looking, how to find and access relevant archives and records and where to get help.

The manual also acknowledges this can be a distressing experience for those searching and points to organisations and services available to support those in need.

The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) published the manual with funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, as part of the Victorian Government's response to the *Bringing Them Home* report.

Print versions can be bought from the PROV or electronic versions downloaded free from their website.

The print version is also provided free to members of the stolen generations, Indigenous Victorians, and organisations supporting the stolen generations.

To find out more, go to:

[www.prov.vic.gov.au/findingyourstory/](http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/findingyourstory/)

#### Distribution:

Call Information Victoria Bookshop telephone: 1300 366 356 to order your copy.

For free copies for Indigenous people/Stolen Generation members and their support organisations contact:

Koorie Heritage Trust, tel: 03 8622 2600

Link Up Victoria, tel: 03 9480 5411

Reviewer: Mark Lawrence



online

### New website for animated Aboriginal Dreaming stories



Screenshot from the Wagalak Sisters animation.

*Dust Echoes: Ancient Stories, New Voices*  
**Australian Broadcasting Corporation with Deakin University**  
**website:** <http://www.abc.net.au/message/dustechoes/>

Recently put online, *Dust Echoes* is Tom E. Lewis's and the ABC New Media and Digital Service's latest project, an Indigenous animated website of five Dreamtime stories.

Five Dreamtime stories from the Wugularr Community from the Northern Territory and the Warmun Community from Western Australia have been animated: 'the Wagalak Sisters', 'the Be', 'Namorrodor', 'Morning Star', and 'Frog Story'. The animations are colourful, lush, and very eye-catching, with great music and narration that convey the stories well.

You can view the animations with either Windows Media Player or RealPlayer on your computer, which are both free. You will probably need a pretty good connection to the internet, though.

Besides the five animations, you'll also find information on the stories,

games, images, lesson plans for educators, screensavers and e-cards.

A Deakin University team coordinated the project, while actor, musician and songwriter Tom E. Lewis was the Indigenous consultant to the project.

This is a great resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids and those working with them. Importantly, in a sea of online material *Dust Echoes* offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids stories that are theirs, and that speak directly to them.

Reviewer: Mark Lawrence

resource

### Supporting inclusive kindergartens

*Koorie Kindergarten Inclusion Kit*

**Department of Human Services Koorie Early Childhood Field Officers**

**Cost:** Free; in print or download electronically  
**Information:**

<http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/>

This kit will assist kindergartens develop culturally relevant and responsive material for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It is a response to government statistics that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not accessing kindergarten as much as possible.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families believe that mainstream kindergarten programs are not culturally appropriate. Some families feel intimidated and self-conscious about using such a service.

This manual provides practical strategies and ideas for non-Indigenous staff to develop a culturally inclusive kindergarten program. This includes historical information and protocols, important dates to remember and check lists that indicate culturally relevant perspectives.

There's also practical advise on program activities staff can implement that encourage inclusive practice that will benefit all children.

Also included is information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents about the importance of kindergarten and handy hints on how to support young children's early literacy development.

This is a great resource for kindergarten teachers and early years workers.

Reviewer: Moira Ross-Rayner



## Putting words into action

*Walking the Talk: Family Violence and Sexual Assault in Indigenous Communities'*

**Monique Keel, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Briefing Paper 4, September 2004**

**Cost:** Free to download electronically online

### Information:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/briefing/b4.html>

This academic paper acknowledges that it falls short of conveying the enormous contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men who continue to raise community awareness of these issues. However, it does give voice to the work of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers on the ground and the continuing struggle by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to get more appropriate services on the ground.

Furthermore, the paper recognises and describes some important differences between indigenous and non-indigenous approaches to healing.

The call to 'walk the talk' is an overdue response to the increasing number of forums, reports and policy initiatives sponsored by governments at all levels. Action is needed if there are to be lasting results yielded.

An extensive reference list and bibliography, which gives a brief summary of recent reports and articles, should prove to be a useful resource.

The PDF copy of this Briefing Paper has been posted on SNAICC's Network Library on its website. You can access it online here:

<http://networking.snaicc.asn.au/library/resources.chtml>

It can also be accessed it from the AIFS website (see information above for details).

Reviewer: Liz Orr

**Do you know of a book, DVD, website or other resource that you think would be useful to SNAICC News readers? Would you like to share a review of the resource here?**

**Contact Mark Lawrence at SNAICC to discuss your contribution.**

**Telephone: 03 9489 8099**

**email: publications@snaicc.asn.au**

# CONFERENCES

## First Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Perinatal Infant Mental Health Conference

5–6 May 2006

**Novotel, Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney**  
Workshop: Attachment – Theory & Practice  
on 4 May

Hosted by Sydney South West Area Health Service and Sydney South West Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Service, this conference will focus on the impact of abuse, neglect, drugs, alcohol and family violence on developing infants and their parents.

The conference theme, *Old Families, New Beginnings – working with 'Ghosts in the Nursery'*, was developed from a desire to bring local, national and international participants together to share their experience and plan for the future.

Come and discuss the effects of the unremembered past (stolen generations) on the community and work with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities to improve long term outcomes of children.

### For information:

Murray Tonkin

Tel: (02) 9680 9311

email: murrayt@aimhighermarketing.com.au

## Queen Elizabeth Centre Fourth National Conference: Early Childhood – Evidence into Practice

23–24 November 2006

**University of Melbourne, Melbourne**

Conference Themes are:

- Care and education in early childhood
- New understandings of early childhood
- Vulnerable children and their families
- Prevention and early intervention for parents and children: building competence
- Early parenting education.

Keynote International Speakers include:

- Professor Sarah Stewart-Brown. Professor of Public Health, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. Sarah has worked extensively on emotional and social development in parenting and parenting interventions.
- Professor Linda Gilkerson. Erikson Institute's Graduate School in Child

Development in Chicago, USA.

Founding director of the Fussy Baby Network, a community-based clinical service providing consultation and assistance to parents.

Plus five Australian keynote speakers.

A call for abstracts has been made. Details will be available on the QEC website.

### For information:

QEC Education Unit

Tel: (03) 9549 2777

web: [www.qec.org.au/4thNational.htm](http://www.qec.org.au/4thNational.htm)

## Strengthening Practice: the First National Australian College for Child and Family Protection Practitioners Professional Development Conference

**Brighton Beach, Sydney, NSW**  
**21–23 May 2006**

This conference is open to all workers in the child and family protection system, both in statutory and non-government roles.

Themes/topics will include:

- Working with vulnerable people
- Maintaining professional focus
- Education and training
- Service evaluation
- Quality improvement
- Ethical practice developments

### For information:

Conference Organisers

Tel: (07) 4957 5400

Email: [croccs@bigpond.net.au](mailto:croccs@bigpond.net.au)

web: [www.croccs.org.au](http://www.croccs.org.au)

## More conferences listed online

**AIFS:** There is an extensive listing of conferences, with more information, relevant to SNAICC News readers on the Australian Institute of Family Studies website. Go to: [www.aifs.gov.au/institute/conf/confmenu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/conf/confmenu.html)

**SNAICC:** You can also find conferences regularly posted on SNAICC's online **Network News** site. You can also post your own conference information on this site to share with others. Go to: <http://networking.snaicc.asn.au/news/>

## 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 that 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 Simone Andy.

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

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## SNAICC visits Canada and New Zealand

participated on the international panel with Muriel and Dawn sharing their perspectives on reconciliation in child welfare.

### More information

Reconciliation Conference: <http://www.reconciliationmovement.org/initiatives/international.html>  
 First Nations Child and Family Caring Society: <http://www.fncfcs.com>  
 National Indian Child Welfare Association: <http://www.nicwa.org>

### Formation of Indigenous advisory group for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and Toronto Native Child and Family Services sponsored a meeting involving all the international delegates attending the conference, child welfare peak bodies from Canada and the US and the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The purpose of the meeting was to formally establish an Indigenous advisory group on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

SNAICC supported the establishment of the Indigenous advisory group and has agreed to participate as a member. The group will work to promote children's rights and monitor progress towards implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Courageous Practice in Family Violence Conference – Auckland

SNAICC was invited to present a workshop at the Courageous Practice In Family Violence Conference in New Zealand in October. Muriel Bamblett and Dawn Wallam presented a workshop on SNAICC's *Through Young Black Eyes* resources and provided an overview of the trends and underlying issues relating to family violence.

Our participation enabled some stronger links to form between SNAICC and a number of Maori communities and service providers with a common interest in responding to family violence. Common amongst the approach of Maori Services and communities at the conference was the importance of culture and the involvement



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**Above:** Marion and Alanna – high school students in Winnipeg who were interested in SNAICC and National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day. **Below:** Mural at the Niji Mahkwa School in Winnipeg that SNAICC visited featuring the medicine wheel and bear as a protector.

of the whole family in responding to or preventing violence. There was a strong sense that Maori communities were proactively taking ownership of issues relating to violence and leadership.



One such example was the Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy, an integrated community based initiative made up of the Chief Executives of seven *iwi* authorities: Te Aupouri, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahu, Whaingaroa, Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua and Ngati Wai. The Amokura's purpose is to provide strategic leadership and co-ordination of violence prevention and early intervention activities across Taitokerau.

Part of their work has been the development of the 'Step Back' violence prevention campaign communicated primarily through the medium of music via radio and community concerts.

Opportunities are provided for young people and providers to be involved in aspects of event planning and organisation, and review of artist material to ensure consistency with violence prevention messages.

The brand has been picked up by young people in remote rural communities such as Whaingaroa as well as urban centres in Taitokerau. Their conference presentation included DVD footage of 'Step Back' events, community responses, and a *rangatahi* 'Step Back' rap. This rap is a hard hitting and sophisticated analysis of the impact of violence as expressed by young people.

### More information on Amokura:

<http://www.preventingviolence.org.nz/Files/Di%20Grenell%20notes.pdf>

To access conference papers go to:

<http://www.preventingviolence.org.nz/conference%20index.htm>