

JANUARY 2017

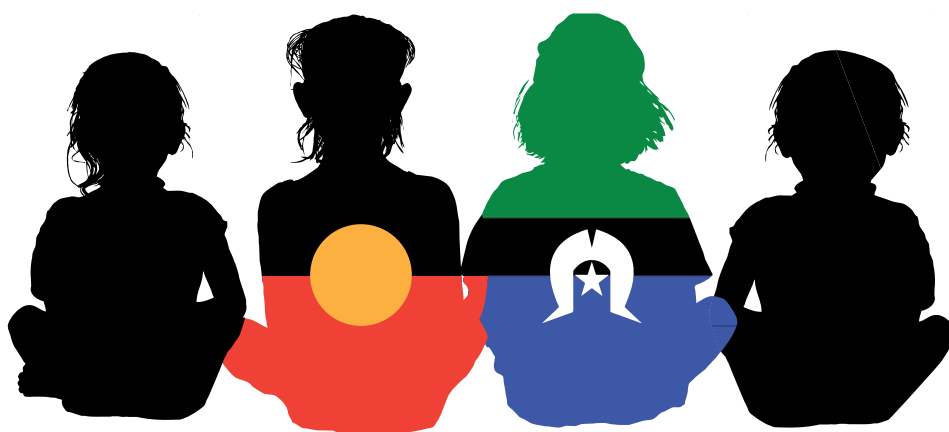


SNAICC

SNAICC NEWSLETTER

SNAICC – NATIONAL VOICE FOR OUR CHILDREN

BRING
THEM
HOME



SECURING THE RIGHTS OF OUR CHILDREN

7TH SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

12 - 14 September 2017
National Convention Centre Canberra

POLICY UPDATE

TRAINING

NEWS

MEMBER PROFILE

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CEO UPDATE

GERRY MOORE

This first newsletter for 2017, coming so early in the year, provides me with an opportunity to not only reflect on everything SNAICC members achieved in 2016, but also to look to the exciting work we're planning to undertake this year.

One of the most significant things we saw happen last year was SNAICC's shift to the CATSI Act. This has seen us take on a number of changes, from our board structure, to our name and logo.

A lot of work and energy has gone into this change process, and we're excited to see what impact this has on the way our organisation operates. This is an important milestone in SNAICC's history, and every SNAICC member has played a part in this history, as recognised by the inaugural register of SNAICC – *National Voice for our Children*.

As part of our adaptation our board has reduced in size, which I believe will provide us with a more focused and strategic approach in dealing with the big picture issues.

Our new board was instated at the SNAICC AGM and Members Forum in November, where, with a heavy heart, many of our very knowledgeable and long-serving members either decided to step down or were required to move on from their roles. Several of these people will continue to provide their specialised input on the SNAICC Council, offering insight and guidance to the board. Others will support SNAICC in the vitally important role shared by all SNAICC members: maintaining their strong work and practices, and advocating for the rights and well-being of our children.

Alongside the new SNAICC Board, the November AGM also saw the launch of the SNAICC 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, marking a new phase that all of us should be excited about embarking on. The next five years will see SNAICC operate with a more focused purpose, which captures, enables and supports the strengths of our communities and members.

Our new Strategic Plan will help us identify new avenues in which to support our children, communities and members, and being able to secure funding for these projects will play a big part in just how successful they are. We've been able to achieve so much by working with our philanthropic partners, and I hope that we continue to strengthen these partnerships in 2017 and beyond.

The Family Matters campaign grew substantially in 2016. We had over 150 organisations signed up to support the campaign by the end of the year, many financially, and having such recognised names championing our strategy goes a long way to making sure we're seen and heard.



We launched the inaugural Family Matters Report from Parliament House in November (see page 8), which found that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed by child protection authorities will triple by 2035 if we don't act now to turn things around.

If we are going to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, we need governments to take up our recommendations and show that they understand that we all have a responsibility in creating positive change.

We've been able to set up Family Matters Working Groups in many of the states and territories, which are not only having successes in their own jurisdictions, but also help inform the national campaign and ensure that we're hearing voices from all corners of the country (see page 9).

The Third Action Plan of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children gives us another avenue to improving the safety and well-being of our children. A lot of good came out of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group meeting in November, and the discussions had there have since informed the National Forum, which was held in December (see page 6).

Advocating on behalf of our members is an integral part of what SNAICC stands for – our DNA. We worked with our members in the early years education and care space to learn how the government's proposed reforms would affect our children and families in these essential services.

We provided two submissions on the Jobs for Families Child Care Package – one in February; a second in September – recommending adjustments to the reform, highlighting that without changes the package would further disadvantage vulnerable children (see page 4).

No Australian child should have their future compromised by being denied access to quality education.

The Senate Committee has handed down its findings, with the bill to be tabled when parliament resumes early this year. We are confident that the opposition and crossbenchers have heard our calls for amendment to protect our children, and that the bill will not pass until its faults have been addressed.

Our SNAICC Training Team did some really excellent work last year, delivering a huge volume of very important workshops to groups right across the country.

The Training Team is central to what SNAICC does, as our trainers are our people on the ground, and our face-to-face interaction with members. The work that the team does behind the scenes is second-to-none, and the feedback I receive from people that have undertaken our training is testament to how much they put into the content and delivery of each workshop.

While we expanded our training delivery in 2016, we're growing just as much this year. Not only will we deliver more workshops in 2017, but there'll be more packages being delivered than ever before in our history (see page 10).

2016 also saw the initial roll-out of SNAICC's work supporting Aboriginal Family-led Decision Making, which took place in four sites across Queensland.

As is to be expected, this is a very complicated endeavour with many considerations and barriers, but we are already seeing some encouraging outcomes for the families involved (see page 5).

Something I'm particularly excited about is the 7th SNAICC National Conference, which will be held in September this year in Canberra (see page 12).

Calls for abstracts have opened, and we've got a very strong advisory group considering all submissions. This will be my first conference as a part of the SNAICC team, and while the great reputation and high expectations of the conference are daunting, I'm certain that we'll put on another exceptional gathering for our sector.

Enjoy our first newsletter for 2017, all the best with your work this year, and I hope to see you all very soon.

Regards,

Gerry Moore

POLICY

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

JOBS FOR FAMILIES CHILD CARE PACKAGE

Throughout 2016, SNAICC has continued to work tirelessly to advocate for reform of the Jobs for Families Child Care package to ensure that our children have the best start in life through access to quality early years education.

SNAICC has been active in raising the importance of our centres with key decision makers in the Commonwealth Government through direct engagement and public media.

Continuous and sustained advocacy resulted in the Department of Education and Training confirming a number of amendments to the way the Jobs for Families Child Care package will operate to accommodate for a number of SNAICC's recommendations, including:

- a discretionary funding pool for services transitioning from Budget Based Funding (BBF)
- longer-term funding agreements that can be reviewed over time, and
- greater flexibility to the Additional Child Care Subsidy to enable sustained support for vulnerable families and children.

While SNAICC acknowledges these changes are a huge achievement for services, there is still a long way to go to ensure that BBFs and Aboriginal Child and Family Centres (ACFCs) have adequate, secure and sustainable funding arrangements. SNAICC still has the following concerns:

- There is still no dedicated funding allocation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services under the Community Child Care Fund, or any recognition of the unique role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in the Jobs for Families Child Care Package.
- No details have been provided on how much of the \$110 million under the Community Child Care Fund will be in the discretionary part of the funding (that will not be a competitive grants process).

- The administrative requirements of subsidies under the new funding arrangements will place a heavy burden on services and may exclude vulnerable families from accessing services. There will be a need to monitor these impacts closely.
- Access for families earning under \$65,000 and not meeting the activity test is being reduced from 24 to 12 hours of subsidised care weekly.
- No comprehensive financial modelling has been provided by the Department of Education and Training to show that BBF and ACFC services will have adequate funding under the reforms. While this is happening through the PWC/PIC process, the Department is still making high-level policy decisions about how the package of funding will be structured based off minimal evidence and modelling.

As such, in the latter half of 2016, one of SNAICC's key activities was our submission to the second senate inquiry into the Jobs for Families Child Care Package, which included giving evidence at a senate hearing. Evidence given at this inquiry by SNAICC and other key sector organisations again successfully stalled the passage of the unchanged bill through the senate to allow urgent amendments to be further considered.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has indicated that the Jobs for Families Child Care package will be a priority when parliament resumes in February. SNAICC will continue to actively advocate for the needs and rights of our children to access quality early years education.



Cindy Namok from Port Kennedy Association (PKA) is bringing Torres Strait Islander families together to make decisions about their kids - recognising that families are the experts in their own lives.

SNAICC and VACCA are supporting PKA and all the other organisations trialling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-led Decision Making across Queensland.

Scott McAlister, Cindy Namok, Paul Ferris, John Burton

ATSIFLDM TRIALS UPDATE

SNAICC continues to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-led Decision Making (ATSIFLDM) trials, which commenced in Queensland in 2016 in collaboration with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the Department).

Signalling a change in the way the Department works with Indigenous families, family-led decision making is based on the belief that families have a shared history, wisdom, untapped resources, and an unrivalled commitment to their children and are best placed to meet children's needs.

Family-led decision making is about shifting authority and seeking to empower families and communities to promote self-determination in child protection decision-making.

Queensland's 12-month trial is being conducted across different locations – and different phases of the child protection continuum:

- **Trial 1 – Early intervention phase implemented by Kummara Association Inc. Family Support Services in Goodna (Ipswich region).** Eligible families are high needs but have no requirement for departmental contact. The trial seeks to divert families from future department intervention and strengthen the ability of families to keep children connected to family, community and culture.
- **Trial 2 – Investigation and Assessment phase implemented by Aboriginal and Islanders Development and Recreational Women's Association and District Inc. (AIDRWA) in Mt. Isa, in collaboration with the Department.** Eligible families have an investigation and assessment process open, and statutory protection is likely or being considered. The trial seeks to reduce entry to out-of-home care, promote rapid reunification, and increase the role of the recognised entity in supporting families to keep children connected to family, community and culture.
- **Trial 3 – The phase of supporting families with Child Protection orders in place is being implemented in Cairns through Wuchopperen Health Service Limited, as well as in the Torres Strait Islands through Port Kennedy Association.** These trials are co-convened with the Department and seek to identify culturally appropriate placement options and alternatives to out-of-home care,

and to improve quality of case plans, cultural support plans and transition from care plans at both the case planning and review stages.

As the trials progress, key strengths and challenges have been identified. Strengths are found in the people driving the trials, including the passion, expertise and engagement skills of the family-led decision making convenors and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations that are enabling community ownership and adaptation of the trials to meet community needs and priorities.

Convenors are building trust and confidence with families, identifying solutions to keep children safe within family and community. Families have reported feeling genuinely listened to and supported to set their own goals and achieve them.

Convenors also have a role in ensuring the plans that families create adequately address the worries of the Department. This new way of working aims to disrupt the recurrent cycle for families that experience ongoing department intervention. For others, it aims to prevent a future intervention by strengthening family kinship and community ties that keep children safe and connected to family, community and culture.

One convenor stated, *"We are seeing that spending more time with family leading up to a meeting is helping to get more support people [family] involved, and makes the difference in shifting culture to get people to believe there is value in attending the family meeting."*

The ATSIFLDM trials are playing a role in shaping the future of child protection in Queensland. As one of the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reforms, the Department is committed to family-led decision making processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to child protection concerns. The findings from this trial, including an independent evaluation, will influence future models of family participation implemented across Queensland. SNAICC hopes that this important step towards empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in decision making for their children will be supported to develop and expand into the future.

ACHIEVING STABILITY – SNAICC POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

In recent times, SNAICC and many of its members have been watching with concern as, around the country, a range of processes are undertaken to progress longer-term care arrangements for children. They vary in detail but have been broadly described as *permanency planning* measures. Some of these proposals have already taken the form of legislative changes (NSW, Vic. and NT), whilst in other jurisdictions they are still being considered (WA and Qld).

The promotion of *permanency planning* has already been impacting on the practice of the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care.

For children who are placed in out-of-home care, stability of relationships and identity are vitally important to their well-being and must be promoted. SNAICC is deeply concerned, however, that these changes fail to sufficiently recognise that stability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is grounded in the permanence of their connection with kin and culture.

SNAICC has undertaken research and consultation and has produced a research paper to inform and influence policy development and practice reform. Both policy and practice must support the safety and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and cannot be allowed to place them at greater risk of harm.

The paper examines the proposals and sets out SNAICC's key concerns. It describes the concepts that underpin our understanding of best practice in achieving stability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Finally, it articulates priorities for reform, including the key principles that we believe should guide stability and permanency planning.

Our key recommendations to advance stability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children include:

1. Child protection legislation, policy, and practice guidelines and decision-making are reviewed and amended to ensure effective safeguards and differential recognition of the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to safe and stable connections to kin, culture and community.
2. All governments increase investment to ensure access to community controlled, holistic, best practice, intensive family support, preservation and reunification services tailored to vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to prevent abuse, neglect and removal of children to alternative care, and to promote family restoration where children have been removed.
3. Mechanisms are established to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled agencies, families and children to participate in all decisions relating to the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, particularly those relating to longer-term or permanent care. SNAICC believes that a hold on long-term court orders placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and risking extinguishment of their links to family and culture is essential for a two year period while these recommendations are implemented to prevent further harm to children and exacerbation of intergenerational trauma to families and communities.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Building on the strengths of our children and families: leading a shift in child protection practice through the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*.

Key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have continued to be active in advocating for strengths-based and culturally grounded approaches to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection services under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009-2020). The Third Action Plan (2015-2018) under the National Framework sets an ambitious agenda for fully implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. The mandate of the Working Group – of which SNAICC CEO Gerry Moore is Chair – is to offer advice on how to effectively implement the Principle and monitor progress against this commitment.

A key focus of the Working Group to date has been the development of a baseline analysis of compliance with the Principle in each jurisdiction.

This baseline analysis will enable the Working Group to effectively support and monitor progress of states and territories against their commitments under the Third Action Plan.

Having met several times in second half of 2016, the Working Group identified the lack of clear data on governments' compliance with the Principle as one of the key obstacles to monitoring and guiding a sector-wide change in child protection practice under the Third Action Plan.



GROWING UP CHILDREN IN TWO WORLDS

SNAICC is working in partnership with Galiwinku in East Arnhem to develop culturally responsive assessment and support processes, as well as a web-based educational resource, for staff working with Yolŋu communities and families in the field of early childhood development.

In November community members and researchers from Galiwinku presented findings and updates from the project, *Growing up children in two worlds*, at the Lowitja Conference in Melbourne.

The space created provided an opportunity for all involved to exchange cultural knowledge and learnings, and share collected data and video updates from the study.

Those presenting the *Growing up children in two worlds* presentation were Lawurrpa Maypilama, Rosemary Gundarranbuy, Abbey Gandangu Golpa Guyula and Anne Lowell.



Many jurisdictions do not have publicly available policies on the implementation of the Principle, and clear and detailed data on how policy commitments are translated into practice remain even rarer.

The Working Group has welcomed the commitment and goodwill of all partners and collaborators under the Third Action Plan, but it became evident that more support would be needed from the Working Group and SNAICC for each of the groups to adequately implement the Principle into all actions under the Third Action Plan. The group has noted key gaps to date in the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the design and development phases of initiatives under the plan and has called for a stronger inclusion of cultural knowledge and leadership.

The Working Group also identified that there was still a long way to go for the National Framework to adequately capture and recognise cultural ways of strengthening families and children. The group discussed the need for strengths-

based approaches to engaging effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, shifting the focus from a narrow understanding of children's needs based on the vulnerabilities they may currently experience, to the bigger picture of children's hopes and aspirations for the future. Discussion was focused on the power of deficit language to disable and disempower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through communicating that their problems are so big that they can only resolve them through continued reliance and dependence on the support of services, instead of building upon their own strengths and solutions. A key recommendation of the Working Group was the need for resourcing and supporting cultural healing programs to build community and family strengths and enhance the safety and well-being of our children.

The Working Group will be continuing to meet over the lifetime of the Third Action Plan and be an active presence pushing for the rights of our children with governments and non-government organisations.



Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children.



Family Matters is Australia's national campaign to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Family Matters aims to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 2040.

The last six months have seen significant achievements for the Family Matters campaign. We have focused on:

- Re-branding the campaign and developing a set of strong, clear messages and resources
- Developing the campaign's primary political strategy (a COAG strategy and target)
- Completing the inaugural Family Matters Report
- Building momentum and engagement across Australia in the lead-up to the national launch, which took place at Parliament House Canberra on 9 November.

NATIONAL LAUNCH, POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

In the lead up to the national launch, we called for signatories to the Family Matters Statement of Commitment, which sets out the six core principles of the campaign. There has been a strong response to the Statement, including:

- **85 organisational signatories** from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations across Australia
- **sign on from 27 members of state and federal parliaments**
- **sign on from Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates** in Victoria, Queensland, the ACT and South Australia.

The Family Matters National Launch and Parliamentary Breakfast was held on 9 November at Parliament House, Canberra. The launch was very well attended, with 106 guests in attendance, including 43 Members of Parliament. Participants heard from Family Matters Co-Chairs Natalie Lewis and Gerry Moore, Ambassadors Muriel Bamblett and Chris Sarra, as well as Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion, Senator Pat Dodson, and Linda Burney MP.

During this time, Family Matters leadership attended 34 meetings with Federal Parliamentarians, political advisers and senior bureaucrats.

This was in addition to gaining significant traction with state governments including positive meetings with Minister Fentiman (Qld), Minister Mikakos (Vic.), Minister Hazzard (NSW), Minister Susan Close (SA), Chief Minister Gunner (NT) and Minister Petrusma (Tas), with the first four signing the Statement of Commitment and having their Premiers write to the Commonwealth seeking the issue of over-representation be placed on the COAG agenda. In addition, the Community Services Ministers included in their November meeting Communiqué a request for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in out-of-home care to be a priority on the COAG agenda.

CAMPAIGN BRANDING

Following extensive message testing – which explored public understanding of the underlying issues influencing child removals, attitudes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and reception of the campaign's core messages – the campaign's previous tagline *kids safe in culture, not in care* was changed to **Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children.** The Family Matters logo and website were updated and re-launched with the new campaign branding in November.

The Family Matters Strategic Alliance (our core organisational membership) is now 150+ members strong and growing rapidly. We are also very proud to announce that we have welcomed on board two high profile Ambassadors for the Family Matters campaign – Professor Muriel Bamblett (*below left*), CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), and Dr Chris Sarra (*below, 2nd left*), founder of the Stronger Smarter Institute and NAIDOC Person of the Year 2016.





COMING IN 2017

A key focus for Family Matters in early 2017 will be planning and promoting our first National Week of Action on 19-25 May. The National Week of Action will feature a flagship event in Melbourne and be marked by community events across the country.

The dual aims of the National Week of Action are to increase public awareness of the crucial issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety and well-being, and to provide resources and supports to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to realise their rights and lead the push for change in their local area.

THE FAMILY MATTERS REPORT

The Family Matters Report was released at the national launch, along with a Snapshot of key findings. SNAICC, The University of Melbourne and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation worked collaboratively to produce the report.

The report finds that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families are grossly over-represented in their involvement with child protection systems, as well as on key determinants of social and economic disadvantage that contribute to entry into out-of-home care. At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are under-represented in access to quality universal and targeted services to reduce the potential risks of a child being removed from family and kin.

The report makes nine recommendations, the most urgent of which is a comprehensive national strategy, developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their organisations, through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), to redress the causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child removal.

The Family Matters Roadmap is now available to view and download on the Family Matters website.

On 1 December, Family Matters representatives met with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten in Canberra to canvass their support for the

campaign. The Prime Minister indicated hesitation around creation of a new target, but supported the idea of a state and territory-led strategy, while Mr Shorten indicated support for the core principles of the campaign and a national target. Family Matters leadership will continue bipartisan lobbying at the federal level for the next four to six months, in the lead up to the 20-year anniversary of the release of the *Bringing them Home* report, on 26 May 2017.

Shortly after these meetings, on 9 December, COAG recognised the critical importance of early intervention efforts to reduce the flow of children into child protection and juvenile justice systems, noting the importance of identifying opportunities to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous children.

While the Family Matters leadership was pleased to see the crucial issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety and well-being on the COAG agenda, it was disappointing that no further steps were taken towards a comprehensive national strategy. We will continue to lobby hard for more meaningful commitment from all governments in 2017.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA

QLD: Queensland continues to lead the way in promoting Family Matters at the state level. On 4-5 August the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak hosted a very successful Family Matters Forum in Brisbane, which was supported by the State Government. A state-wide action plan is currently being developed by the Government as a follow up to the forum, co-designed with the Queensland Family Matters Leadership Group.

In early November, the Queensland Government announced that, as part of the *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* state-wide reforms, it aims to develop and implement an action plan tailored specifically for children and families who may be experiencing hardships or who have less access to formal support services. As part of this plan, one immediate

commitment is to partner with the Family Matters Queensland Working Group.

WA: The Western Australia Family Matters Working Group was established in August, appointing Donna Kickett as chairperson, and has held monthly meetings since then, where a work plan, Working Group brief and fundraising plan were finalised. The Working Group has recently had confirmation of funding from Woodside Energy of \$120,000 to employ a Project Officer to help lead policy and advocacy input to the various reform processes currently underway.

SA: The South Australian Family Matters Working Group is now established and meeting regularly. South Australia has determined key priorities for the coming year and has just appointed a Project Officer to help drive the ongoing development of the campaign at the state level.



TRAINING

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

THROUGH YOUNG BLACK EYES (TYBE)

SNAICC's two-day family violence train-the-trainer program, *Through Young Black Eyes* (TYBE), continues to be our most sought after family violence training program. TYBE is continually reviewed and updated to remain relevant for all those working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families across Australia.

Over the past six months the 2016 training package has been delivered across the following sites: Palm Island (QLD), Hope Vale (QLD), Brisbane (QLD), Umbakumba (NT), and Bendigo (VIC). Given the diversity of training locations, the training package is always modified to suit the needs of the participants of each location.

“Great to have so many rich resources, which we can utilise.” – Participant

INTENSIVE AND TARGETED FAMILY SUPPORT (STRONGER, SAFER, TOGETHER)

There were three *Intensive and Targeted Family Support* workshops delivered in the second half of 2016, at locations in Darwin (NT), Kwinana (WA) and Maningrida (NT).

The workshops in Darwin and Maningrida were co-facilitated by local Aboriginal leaders and SNAICC staff, tailoring the workshops to the particular region with knowledge of the strengths and constraints that are happening on the ground. The workshops were well received, particularly in regards to the collaborative nature of the program.

The SNAICC resource *Stronger, Safer, Together*, which draws on community input and best practice examples from across Australia, is incorporated throughout the workshop and provides a range of approaches that can be considered and which draw on the experience of current Aboriginal-led programs and services.

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO TRAUMA

SNAICC delivered three *Recognising and Responding to Trauma* workshops in the second half of 2016, in Groote Eylandt (NT), Bendigo (VIC) and Melbourne.

It was pleasing to see how the workshop can be successfully adapted and tailored to remote, rural and urban settings, with different emphasis for each location, and a focus on the specific training needs of community-based workers in the local area.

SNAICC also delivered a workshop in Darwin to the team at Children in Care and Youth Detention Advice Service (CICAYDAS). CICAYDAS was established to provide free legal advice and information to people about the Royal Commission into the Child Protection and Youth Detention System in the Northern Territory. This important training was based on trauma-related information and content from our *Stronger, Safer, Together* resource (intensive and targeted family support) and provided a particular emphasis on effective engagement strategies and accessing culturally safe support networks.

SNAICC continues to ensure our workshop is up-to-date with current tools and resources related to responding to trauma in a culturally safe manner, as well as adapting the program for particular groups of workers.

A PLACE FOR CULTURE?

Following very successful trials of this package throughout 2016, SNAICC's *A Place for Culture?* training package continues to gain momentum with four packages being completed in recent months.

A Place for Culture? aims to take non-Indigenous educators on a journey to gain a deeper understanding of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and context, and to support culturally inclusive practice approaches throughout their services.

Associated resources such as *A place for culture? A cultural competency framework for Early Childhood Education and Care services* are also in the process of being completed, which will be used to support and guide participants undertaking the training workshops.

TRAINING IN 2016

SNAICC workshops are available nationally.

If you are interested in hosting a workshop for your organisation, please call the SNAICC Training team to see how we can meet your training needs.

E: training@snaicc.org.au | T: 03 9489 8099



WORKING & WALKING TOGETHER

Working and Walking Together (WWT) is one of SNAICC's foundational training packages and last year played a role in the development of SNAICC's new early years cultural competency training *A Place for Culture*.

Over the last six months SNAICC has delivered two workshops in Canberra with the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS). The strong work between SNAICC and ACTCOSS has culminated in a number of WWT workshops also being scheduled for 2017.

In 2017, WWT is also due for a review to ensure it maintains its relevance in supporting people and organisations that wish to develop culturally appropriate and responsive professional practice and services for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This will include looking at how the program adapts to current urban, rural and remote settings.

DEADLY FUTURES

SNAICC's *Deadly Futures* one-day workshop, aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS), aims to improve early childhood development outcomes of particularly vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by supporting educators to work with parents and carers to increase their children's social, emotional and educational development.

Built on the 3a approach (Australian Abecedarian Approach), the *Deadly Futures* training program brings a strong cultural lens to the learning model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Supported by the NT LearningGames, the training program informs participants of the 3a learning approaches, promoting everyday routines as a time to teach children through conversation and interaction.

In all 11 workshops have been conducted nationally since its inception in June 2016. SNAICC has had an overwhelming response to *Deadly Futures*, and 2017 is looking like a busy year ahead with bookings filling fast.

FAMILY VIOLENCE TRAINING

"For Aboriginal and non-Indigenous workers this should be a prerequisite for working in family violence." – Participant

Based on significant sector demand for more intensive family violence training, SNAICC has been successful in gaining funding support from three trusts: R E Ross, Flora and Frank Leith and 5 Point Foundation. Following the development of new programs SNAICC has now begun delivery of our new family violence package, having facilitated a first pilot in late 2016.

This three-day workshop, *Recognising and responding to family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*, is linked to national VET competencies to assist with national qualification recognition. This first workshop provides an overview and context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence with an emphasis on holistic, culturally based and healing responses.

This first module was delivered in December 2016 in Melbourne, and will be followed by a regional version in Gippsland (VIC) this February. Three new pilot programs will also be rolled out in Victoria and NSW (initially) in 2017.

Participants from both NSW and Victoria appreciated the quality of the content, the approach, and the generous sharing of stories and ideas from all participants.

JOURNEY TO BIG SCHOOL

SNAICC's *Journey to Big School* program, which promotes successful transitions to school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, focuses on addressing the causes behind poor school readiness as a strategy to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attend and engage successfully with formal schooling from the start.

SNAICC has recently completed a *Journey to Big School* program (Morwell, VIC), having delivered the initial workshop block in Aurukun (QLD), and Albany (WA).

Proving to be an incredibly popular program, SNAICC is already scheduled to roll out 5 programs and 5 initial workshop blocks in 2017.

2017 SNAICC CONFERENCE

BRING
THEM
HOME



SECURING THE RIGHTS OF OUR CHILDREN

7TH SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

12 - 14 September 2017

National Convention Centre Canberra



**THIS GATHERING
WILL COINCIDE
WITH THE
20-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SEMINAL
BRINGING
THEM HOME
REPORT,
WHICH WILL
BE THE
CORE
FOCUS
OF THE
CONFERENCE.**

The program is presently taking shape and key program themes will be centred on the *Bringing Them Home* report to raise awareness and encourage discussion of ongoing child removal, its causes and consequences for children, families and communities.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

Honour and learn from experience

To honour the Stolen Generations and their families – their strength and resilience – by listening to their stories and strategies, learning from their experiences and committing to systemic change to protect the rights of our children, families and cultures. To honour also the knowledge of our Elders and wisdom of our cultural responses, sharing successes and struggles to chart effective, evidence-informed ways forward.

Strategise Collectively

This conference provides an opportunity to reflect, 20 years on from the seminal *Bringing Them Home* report, on one of the most pressing human rights issues facing Australia today: the care and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the appallingly high rates of their removal from family and culture. It presses upon us the need to redress the recommendations from this report, to share best practice, and to develop collective strategies – from the local to the national – to see our children grow up safe and cared for within family, community and culture.

Inspire Action

To inspire and enable leaders, services and other partners to take the leadership of *Bringing Them Home* to the next level, to step up action to redress the causes of child removal today, and to ensure the rights of our children and families are respected and fulfilled.

SPONSORSHIP AND EXHIBITOR OPPORTUNITIES

The 2017 SNAICC Conference Sponsorship and Exhibitor prospectus has been released and provides an outline of the opportunities available for organisations wanting to support the conference whilst promoting their organisations to the diverse audience that attends the conference.

Sponsorship of the SNAICC Conference provides a unique opportunity to make a genuine contribution and statement of your commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. For those participating in our 2017 Conference a range of benefits can be provided, including:

- **Recognition** of your corporate social responsibility and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.
- **Promotion** and brand awareness with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services from all over Australia.
- **Engagement** with your target audience – opportunity to engage those child and family services you wish to reach.
- **Acknowledgement** of your support in a wide variety of ways.

To download the sponsorship prospectus or for more information on sponsorship visit <http://www.snaicc.org.au/conference/sponsorship-exhibition/>

CONFERENCE KEY DATES

5 DECEMBER 2016	Abstract Submissions Open
24 FEBRUARY 2017	Abstract Submissions Close
APRIL 2017	Authors advised of Submission Outcome
1 MAY 2017	Early Bird Registrations Open
23 JUNE 2017	Early Bird Registrations Close

For more information on the SNAICC Conference please contact

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To receive our latest updates make sure you subscribe to the SNAICC eBulletin or visit the conference website at www.snaicc.org.au/conference

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

for presentation are now open for the 7th SNAICC National Conference.

We'd like to encourage potential presenters from relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, child welfare leaders, practitioners and policy makers, researchers, government and anyone else working in this sector to consider submitting an abstract to present at our conference.

SNAICC is seeking presentations from interested communities, organisations and individuals on the following key themes:

- The Stolen Generations
- Redressing Causes of Removal
- Accountability
- Partnership, Collaboration, and Relationships
- A Child Rights Approach
- Community Advocacy for Change
- Early Childhood Development
- Keeping Children Connected with Family, Community, and Culture

Abstracts must be submitted online via the Conference website at www.snaicc.org.au/conference

NEWS

SNAICC STRATEGIC PLAN

Announced at the 2016 AGM in Melbourne, SNAICC's ambitious 2016-2021 Strategic Plan will see radical change for the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including higher rates of early childhood learning and reduced rates of contact with the child protection system.

To achieve genuine change, SNAICC will progress key strategies across its advocacy, policy, resources, training, communications and administration teams, with a focus on three areas:

1. Improving the cultural safety and responsiveness of child protection systems
2. Strengthening the safety and well-being of our children, raised within family and culture
3. Increasing access to quality early childhood development

In practise, this strategic plan will see SNAICC:

- Continue to build momentum for the *Family Matters: Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children* campaign, and focus in particular on building community engagement and focus.
- Advocate for a strong Aboriginal program within the Jobs for Families Child Care Package, as well as further amendments to the package to ensure improved access to early learning services for our children.

- Produce quality SNAICC position papers, achieving tangible progress across targeted states on family violence, effective intensive family support services, Aboriginal family-led decision-making and reunification.
- Work with states to improve compliance with the Child Placement Principle.
- Finalise and roll out our new training and mentorship programs, including holistic work with men, women, children and communities on family violence; trauma informed practice; cultural competency in the early years; and developmental supports for families working with children.
- Continue to increase our public profile, legitimacy and presence in public debate.
- Improve our internal systems and support to ensure effectiveness and staff well-being.

“SNAICC seeks to harness the potential of our combined expertise to see substantial improvements for the basic human rights of our children and their families.” – Sharron Williams, SNAICC Chairperson





REPORT ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DISADVANTAGE SHOWS ALARMING GAPS IN PROGRESSION

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children CEO Gerry Moore has responded to findings from the Productivity Commission's Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report, which was released in November.

*"I think we have every right to be disheartened by the findings in the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report this year. – Gerry Moore, SNAICC
– National Voice for our Children CEO"*

"It's great to be able to look at some of the figures and see that things are being turned around in some areas, but we shouldn't have *any* areas, let alone so many important ones, where disadvantage in our community is increasing."
– Gerry Moore

The 2016 report showed that measurements for drug and alcohol use, mental health, suicide, self-harm, and juvenile imprisonment had all alarmingly regressed.

"As far as our children are concerned, the data is not there to know what progress is being made in early childhood education and care, or child abuse and neglect; we must do more to address these data gaps so we can better identify issues and measure progress.

"We've just released the Family Matters Report, which analyses data on child safety and well-being in depth. I'm hopeful that community and government can work together with this data to see the recommendations from that report taken up so we can see genuine, sustained change for our children." – Gerry Moore

SNAICC again invited Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his colleagues within the Federal Government to meet with the leaders of the Redfern Statement to discuss the necessary investments required to move towards genuine advancement.

"It is clear that the commission has some understanding of what is required to turn things around – you can see that in the writing of the report, where things like community involvement and trust building are championed – but good intentions aren't enough if they're not followed by actions.

"We need to see greater investment from government in not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, but in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Work with us." – Gerry Moore

ABOUT THE REPORT

The OID Report is the most comprehensive report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander well-being produced in Australia. It covers areas including governance and culture, early child development, health, education, economic participation, and safe and supportive communities, as well as reporting on indicators related to the Closing the Gap targets.

The report is produced by the Productivity Commission for the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians involved in its development. The 2016 report is the seventh in the series.

CONNECTION TO CULTURE PLAYS CRITICAL ROLE IN POSITIVE TRANSITIONS FROM CARE

The transition into adulthood can be daunting and abrupt for young people leaving the child protection system. The manner with which care and protection of the state ceases on their eighteenth birthday (marked by the expiration of their statutory orders) is daunting for many young people leaving care.

This process is difficult for all children that have grown up in out-of-home care, who have often enduring complex and challenging circumstances throughout their young lives. Evicting young people with significant trauma backgrounds from state care leaves them vulnerable to a host of negative life trajectories including high risks of homelessness, imprisonment, unemployment, early parenthood, and unresolved trauma and mental health issues – and without supports in place to achieve independence.

When we consider this transition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their overrepresentation in out-of-home care further compounds intergenerational trauma caused by past policies of forcible removal. Measures to preserve children's connection to culture – such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle – fail to be observed, despite our understanding that a strong cultural identity shields children from adverse life circumstances, and builds their resilience.

The presence of positive, supportive adult relationships is a strong influencer for young people, encouraging them to develop lives they see as meaningful and positive. These important relationships carry them through the difficult phase into adulthood, and are particularly important for young people who have been in care, without their families around them.

Family is the cornerstone of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, spirituality and identity. Maintaining connection to family for young people in care promotes strong ties that can support them during their transition. These family relationships for young people affect their development, long-term well-being and transition from out-of-home care.

CREATE Foundation, the national peak consumer body for children and young people in out-of-home care, has developed a resource kit in consultation with young people, to support their transition from care. The resource, *Go Your Own Way*, provides important insight into the experiences of transitioning, and the issues of concern for these young people.

The report finds that the concerns identified by participants related largely to financial and housing insecurity. A number of participants also felt a lack of support and planning in the transition period. In fact, 29.1 per cent of respondents reported that they had not spoken with anyone about what they could expect after turning eighteen, which highlights how critical leaving-care planning is in setting up young people for successful transition from out-of-home care.

The *National Standards for Out-of-home Care* promotes planning as pivotal in preparing care leavers for independence. In a system that prioritises responding to crises, unfortunately leaving-care planning is often left to

the last minute. Increasing investment in crisis response (versus prevention) reduces focus on the already undervalued process of setting up expectations with young people about their future. This mental and emotional preparation is imperative, and equally important as setting up service supports.

Go Your Own Way provides important insight into the experiences of young people transitions from care, however, to build on specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues – including the shocking rates of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care – we look to a recent Monash University report, *Indigenous Care Leavers in Victoria*.

This report identifies concerns relating to the specific cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care, particularly concerning the transition period. Amongst the obstacles children face in having these needs met are a lack of resources invested in cultural support planning and implementation of plans, culturally specific programs and supports, inadequate referral pathways to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and complex relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous services.

The research finds that culturally aware and sensitive service delivery, alongside cultural support planning, promotes positive outcomes for young people, linking them to strong community support upon leaving care.

Culture is central to identity. It defines who we are and what we value. All children have the right to know and celebrate their culture. SNAICC maintains that connection to culture and to community is a powerful protective factor for children and young people in care.

Fostering attachment to culture builds sense of identity, resilience and self-esteem, and strengthens young people against the uncertainty of the future. As discussed above, cultural planning must be incorporated into transition planning for young people leaving care to ensure a positive experience.

SNAICC welcomes the Victorian Government's recent investment in cultural support planning in out-of-home care that sets a benchmark for safeguarding young people's connection to culture, which they will carry with them into adulthood.

Achieving independence without a strong sense of identity, and without belonging to community, is an assignment that is doomed to fail. We must ensure young people leaving care are given the best opportunities and support to be able to go their own way.

As Andrew Jackomos, Victoria's Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, explains:

“Culture links us to our past so we can navigate our future.” – Andrew Jackomos, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN IN THE NT

In August 2016, the Royal Commission into the Detention of Children in the Northern Territory was set up to address the shocking revelations of abuse at Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

At this time, SNAICC welcomed the appointment of Mick Gooda as co-commissioner, an honour shared with former Queensland Supreme Court Justice Margaret White. An outstanding and respected Aboriginal leader, Mr Gooda stepped down from his role as Social Justice Commissioner after almost seven years in order to fulfil this role.

Revelations in the ABC's *Four Corners* program exposed significant concerns about the Government's approach to and treatment of children in its care. On this basis, and given the strong relationship between the child protection and juvenile justice systems, SNAICC also welcomes the

inclusion of both child protection and youth detention in the Terms of Reference. Assessment of treatment against international human rights mechanisms is also critical.

SNAICC also urges the Federal and NT Governments to show a strong demonstration of political will and commit to the implementation of all recommendations of this inquiry.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have witnessed countless Royal Commissions with little follow through and implementation, including the Bringing Them Home Report.

SNAICC calls for this Royal Commission to tell a different story and harness its potential to correct horrific wrongs in the NT, and be a genuine example of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnership with the Australian and Northern Territory Governments.

“Research and common sense shows us that for any program to be effective, it is essential Aboriginal participation is embedded from the outset, and at all times.”

SNAICC CEO Gerry Moore commented

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT INVESTS \$128MILLION IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICES

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children congratulates the Queensland Government and Communities Minister Shannon Fentiman for their leadership in investments in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children family wellbeing services.

In September the Queensland Government announced \$128million to be invested over five years, which will see the development of new services in 15 locations throughout Queensland to help reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

Critically, the Government has also committed to implement this through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led strategy under the *Family Matters* campaign. Working with the commitment demonstrated by the Queensland Government and the genuine partnership approach, SNAICC is confident this funding will see change on the ground for our children most in need in Queensland.





National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (Children's Day) is the largest national day to celebrate our children. Children's Day is celebrated across Australia each year on 4 August and has been run annually since 1988.

Children's Day is a time to for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to celebrate the strengths and culture of their children. The day is also an opportunity for all Australians to show their support for Aboriginal children, as well as learn about the crucial impact that culture, family and community play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.

In 2016 SNAICC was thrilled to have NBA and Olympic basketballer Patrick Mills as its Children's Day Ambassador for 2016. Patty is one of Australia's top basketballers, winning an NBA Championship with the San Antonio Spurs in 2014 and representing Australia at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics.

Patty actively engaged with SNAICC on social media and in promotional material such as the 2016 Children's Day video, housed on SNAICC's YouTube Channel and broadcast extensively on Channel 10, SBS and NITV.



MAJOR PARTNER

event hosted by the Long Walk and the Essendon Football Club.

5

Five major high profile events in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

MAJOR AMBASSADOR

Indigenous NBL Player and Olympian Patty Mills.

420

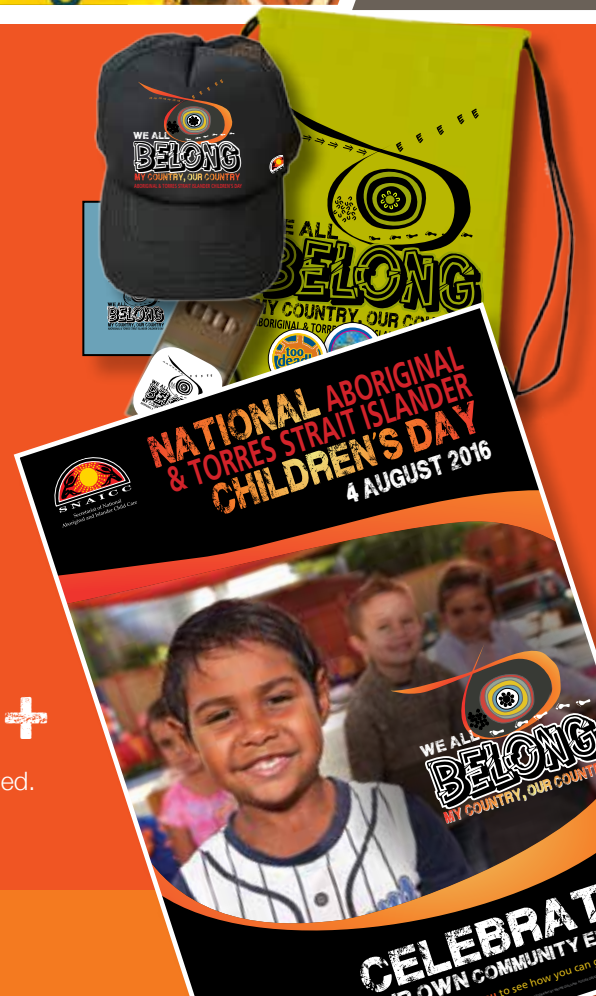
420 community events held across the country (see images overleaf).

15,000

Kids Celebration Bags distributed across Australia – a 50% increase from 2015.

6,000+

promotional posters distributed.



National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 2016 was a hugely successful event, celebrated at hundreds of registered events across the country and supported by an extensive suite of resources and promotional tools developed and distributed by SNAICC.

The theme for Children's Day 2016 was **My Country, Our Country – We All Belong** and was all about helping our kids feel connected and proud in culture. The 2016 theme aimed to provide a space for everyone to come together to celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and the families and children they support.



Children's Day is celebrated across Australia each year on 4 August and has been run annually since 1988.

WEBSITE

Children's Day website redesigned and highly utilised for information, updates and engagement.

PROMO

An integrated communications campaign executed on time and to budget, including promotion of professional Children's Day television commercial and strong social media outreach, directly engaging **30,000 FACEBOOK** users and reaching **160,000 TWITTER** users on 4 August.

MEDIA

Extensive media engagement and national coverage including in major metro news outlets such as The ABC and The Guardian and leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlet, The Koori Mail.

SNAICC RESPONDS TO RACIST BILL LEAK CARTOON IN THE AUSTRALIAN

The cartoon published this year on August 4 – **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day** – in *The Australian*, one of this country's largest newspapers, was labelled by SNAICC as disgusting, disrespectful, and hurtful.

SNAICC called for those involved in publishing such a clearly racist cartoon to issue a public apology to all Australians, commenting that "responsibility, professionalism and duty of care have all been abandoned in this unforgivable act".

After widespread condemnation and over 700 complaints submitted to the Australian Press Council, SNAICC and NSW Aboriginal Land Council ran lengthy opinion pieces in *The Australian*. SNAICC took this opportunity to examine the persistent presence of negative portrayals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our national media, and the impact this has on our children.

The full editorial, *Hurtful cartoon fails to help Indigenous victims of injustice*, is available on *The Australian's* website.

SNAICC UPDATE

[COUNCIL](#) | [MEMBER PROFILE](#) | [MEMBER ORGANISATION PROFILE](#) | [STAFF + STUDENTS](#) | [DONATE](#)

SNAICC COUNCIL MEMBER: DAWN ROSS



SENIOR MANAGER CHILD & FAMILY SERVICE

**CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL
CONGRESS (CAAC)**

As a local Aboriginal person having worked in child and family services for the last 25 years, Dawn has gained extensive knowledge working with some of the most vulnerable families in the Central Australian region.

Currently working as the Senior Manager of Child & Family Services at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), Dawn oversees early childhood services in the region, ensuring evidence-based parenting support and education is provided to vulnerable and at-risk Aboriginal children and their families in Alice Springs. This support is provided through a range of specialist services, including delivery of an Intensive Family Support Service, primary health care services and the child and family services division.

Through experience in her current and previous roles, Dawn has been exposed to many different practice approaches in remote and urban settings, which have greatly influenced her work in policy and practice development at both local and state levels. In addition to this work, Dawn has represented on many boards (Yipirinya School Council; National Strategic Framework for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Social Emotional Wellbeing Social Health Reference Committee; Northern Territory Parole Board) and contributed to many reports (Report of the Board of Enquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse; State of Denial; Early Childhood

Development in Alice Springs), providing her knowledge and experience of the sector, allowing her to highlight the needs of children and families from the Northern Territory perspective.

CAAC is the largest Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation in the Northern Territory, providing a comprehensive, holistic and culturally appropriate primary health care service to Aboriginal people living in and around Alice Springs (including five remote communities).

CAAC provides a holistic integrated model for children through a number of services that target both the child and family, including home visitations through the Australian Nursing Family Partnership Program, Pre-School Readiness Program, Child Care, the Community Health Outreach Program, Targeted and Intensive Family Support Services, and a newly established Early Childhood Learning Centre.

Dawn is the most recent representative on the SNAICC Council, offering her experience, passion and collaborative nature to the organisation, while playing a key role in ensuring SNAICC's work is informed by voices from across the country.



“Marninwarntikura exists today on the shoulders of remarkable women from the Fitzroy Valley.. It is because of their past actions that the Women's Resource Centre occupies its central position, delivering vital human services across this remarkable region.” - June Oscar AO

SNAICC MEMBER PROFILE:

MARNINWARNTIKURA FITZROY WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre (MWRC) is a community controlled resource centre dedicated to servicing local women, children and families in Fitzroy Crossing, WA.

Marninwarntikura is a Walmajarri word. 'Marnin' means 'women', 'Wanti' means 'big mobs of women' and 'Kura' means 'belonging to'. When said together, it means that women who belong to the region, the country and to each other, have come together

MWRC operates a family violence prevention legal team, drives the Marulu Strategy (addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and Early Life Trauma (ELT) in the region), the Marnin Social Enterprise Studio and the Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit (which includes the Indigenous Parenting Support Program, a mobile Playgroup, a community garden and a children and parents centre.

Marninwarntikura is headed by CEO June Oscar (AO), a Bunuba woman and a leading Aboriginal advocate and activist for Indigenous Australian languages, social justice, women's issues, and FASD.

MWRC is steadfast in ensuring that services provided to families in the Fitzroy Valley commit to addressing the adverse effects of poverty, alcohol misuse, family violence and high rates of suicide, particularly of young people. Children in the Fitzroy Valley are exposed to one or all of the above either directly or indirectly necessitating trauma-informed and healing-aware practice.

A focus on culturally secure, trauma informed early childhood services

Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit ('Baya Gawiy') is a licensed, culturally secure, healing informed, therapeutic centre for the children and families of the Fitzroy Valley. Baya Gawiy is committed to improving the lives of families in this region focusing on their strengths, empowerment and self-determination. Baya Gawiy is the only service of its kind in the area, the next nearest being in Derby, 256kms away.

Baya Gawiy is staffed by qualified Early Childhood Educators and is licensed for 50 children aged 4 months – 4 years, however due to funding shortfalls, the current staffing levels only enable it to cater for a maximum of 28 children at any one time, 75% of whom are Aboriginal.

The Baya Gawiy Early Childhood Learning Unit provides a culturally rich and safe environment where children have a sense of belonging, gain knowledge of their own identity and are strong in knowing who they are and how they are connected. Baya Gawiy's skilled educators are committed to providing an Education and Care program that addresses disadvantage. Through a strengths-based lens and informal conversations, families share in their children's experiences as they develop dispositions and skills to build the foundations for school readiness and lifelong learning.

Building trusting relationships within this partnership and acknowledging the family as the child's first teacher brings together 'two ways' of parenting that best serves families and children, empowering families to confidently engage in their child's lifelong learning.

Baya Gawiy's model is a leading example of what is needed in Indigenous communities. The following testimonial has been provided by one of the visiting paediatricians whose team has been responsible for the establishment of a team care approach to infant and child health in Fitzroy Valley.

Challenges and vision for the future

Like many former Aboriginal Child and Family Centers (CFC's) – auspiced under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development which ceased in June 2014 – Baya Gawiy, and its Early Childhood Learning Unit, are currently existing with precarious funding. Funding previously provided by the Commonwealth for a holistic integrated approach to early childhood education and care has now been fragmented into a combination of state and federal funding which has led to a splitting up in services and an effectual 'disintegration' of services.

As such, MWRC is currently instrumental in driving changes to the *Jobs for Families* bill (see page 4) in collaboration with SNAICC to ensure all children, no matter their location and circumstance, have the right to equal access and quality of education.

Despite these challenges, MWRC continues to look towards contemporary evidence to continue to develop programs that address the needs of children and families in the Fitzroy Valley.



NEW STAFF AND STUDENTS

In the second half of 2016, SNAICC welcomed several new staff members to the team.

The SNAICC Policy Team has been strengthened by the addition of both **Joanne Lau** and **Claire Stacey** as Senior Policy Officers, and **Peter Lewis** has joined us as Acting Deputy CEO, replacing Emma Sydenham who is welcoming her second child and taking maternity leave until December 2017.

Outside of the SNAICC head office, **Eva Ruggiero** has joined us from Brisbane supporting both the training team and SNAICC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-Led Decision Making trials taking place in partnership with local organisations in Queensland.

.....

Each year SNAICC provides experience to a number of students via practical placements. We thank our students and recognise the valuable contribution they make.

Stefan Anjou is currently completing an Executive Master of Arts at the University of Melbourne, which combines humanities, management and business. Stefan is supporting the Policy Team, working on the development of Family Matters campaign resources and assisting with the research for an upcoming position statement.

Chad Chan joined SNAICC in the Policy Team mid-2016 to complete her final student placement for her Master's of Social Work (at RMIT University), which she has since completed. While at SNAICC, Chad contributed greatly to the Family Matters campaign through coordination and research while also learning the important processes behind campaigning.

Hailey Goins is completing a Masters of Social Work at RMIT. Hailey is currently undertaking an internship with the SNAICC Policy Team, and is working with the team on a variety of projects, including the *Journey to Big School* program based in Halls Creek WA, surveying Aboriginal Children and Family Centres around the country, and research on FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder).

Rebecca Nicoll is completing a Master of Social Work degree at RMIT University. Supporting the Training Team, Rebecca is learning about the purpose and structure of the ten training programs delivered by SNAICC, including the new Family Violence training programs under development. Rebecca is also working on a small research project exploring career path development, cultural safety, and supervision and debriefing.

SNAICC GOVERNANCE

In 2016 SNAICC was required by the Australian Government to become incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act (Cth) 2006 (CATSI Act). This process involved the development of a new constitution and amendment of the SNAICC governance structure.

We believe that these changes help to ensure that we are the most effective national community-controlled peak body

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, with strong governance, community legitimacy and responsiveness to community needs.

This change process also provided an ideal opportunity to review and refresh our name and logo to ensure it clearly reflects the role, purpose and scope of SNAICC's work, and communicates clearly both the history and journey of the organisation.

A MORE TARGETED SNAICC PURPOSE



For the purposes of implementing SNAICC's next strategic plan, we have revised SNAICC's purpose, which more clearly and simply states what SNAICC exists for.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and well-being.



SNAICC MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

SNAICC membership eligibility has also been broadened to include the diversity of stakeholder organisations involved in child and family care, development and well-being.

SNAICC has also condensed its five tiers of membership to two.

Members must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations that work for childhood development, safety or well-being.

Associates incorporate other organisations or individuals that work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childhood development, safety or well-being.

LEADERSHIP

The previous 18-person National Executive, which met twice per year, has been replaced by a 9-person Board of Directors, which now meets four times per year.

The purpose of the SNAICC Board of Directors is to provide strong cultural and corporate governance to ensure SNAICC effectiveness, good management and future prosperity.

The Board is supported through strategic and policy advice from a 17-person Council, which meets twice per year.

The new SNAICC Council has been structured in such a way as to bring together cross-sector state and territory experience and knowledge to advise SNAICC policy and

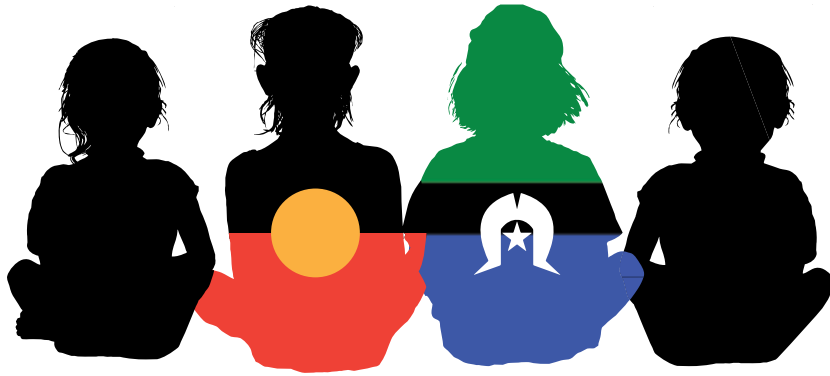
strategy, and to foster inter-state information exchange and engagement.

Council and Board members have a term of two years, and can serve a maximum of four terms in a row.

The SNAICC Board of Directors is made up of six SNAICC Council members, while two other members have been identified on the basis on a skills matrix, with the Chairperson completing the make-up of the board.

All Directors and Council members are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

BRING
THEM
HOME



SECURING THE RIGHTS OF OUR CHILDREN

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS FOR PRESENTATION NOW OPEN

for the 7th SNAICC National Conference.

We'd like to encourage potential presenters from relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, child welfare leaders, practitioners and policy makers, researchers, government and anyone else working in this sector to consider submitting an abstract to present at our conference.

SNAICC is seeking presentations from interested communities, organisations and individuals on the following key themes:

- The Stolen Generations
- Redressing Causes of Removal
- Accountability
- Partnership, Collaboration, and Relationships
- A Child Rights Approach
- Community Advocacy for Change
- Early Childhood Development
- Keeping Children Connected with Family, Community, and Culture

Abstracts must be submitted online via the Conference website at

www.snaicc.org.au/conference