



SNAICC

National Voice for our Children

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and
Family Centres**

Changing futures with our children and families

Northern Territory Profiles: July 2018

Acknowledgments

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 wellbeing.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Over the past 30 years SNAICC's efforts has resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.

SNAICC thanks the staff of each participating service for their time in providing information for the development of these profiles and recognises that the data is owned by the services who have kindly shared it with SNAICC for the purposes of these profiles.

SNAICC thanks the Northern Territory Department of Education for support in preparing this report.

Acronyms

ACCO	Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation
ACFC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Centre
CCB	Child Care Benefit
CFC	Child and Family Centre
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DE	Department of Education
DECD	Department of Education and Child Development
DET	Department of Education and Training
DH	Department of Health
ELC	Early Learning Centre
FACS	Family and Community Services
FaFT	Family as First Teachers
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
NPA IECD	National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development
OOHC	Out-of-Home Care
PM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
SCfC	Stronger Communities for Children

Introduction

The establishment of 38 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Family Centres (ACFCs) across Australia was a major initiative in the development of integrated services that respond holistically to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young children and their families.

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) entered into the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development (NPA IECD) in support of achieving Closing the Gap targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their early years. Under the NPA IECD, the Australian Government and state and territory governments committed \$564 million over six years for a range of Indigenous early childhood initiatives.

ACFCs seek to redress low rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in early years services, which requires a 70% increase to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are on par with their non-Indigenous peers. The flexible, inclusive and community-based approach of ACFCs has been successful in facilitating the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to access high quality early childhood education programs, many for the first time. Engagement with early years services is recognised as critically important for educational and developmental outcomes later in life.

Further, ACFCs connect vulnerable families to an array of integrated services designed to meet locally determined priorities and needs. As a trusted 'one-stop shop' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who would otherwise be unlikely to access any other service supports, ACFCs have a significant impact in improving the safety, health and wellbeing of families and communities. ACFCs are uniquely placed in their delivery of culturally strong services designed, where a focus on the employment and training of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff further facilitates the sustainability and empowerment of local communities.

Federal funding for the 38 centres was discontinued in July 2014. The services were then caught in the cross-fire of State-Commonwealth politics and have still not managed to be seen simply as integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services. The Queensland Government continued funding for their ten centres and New South Wales provided temporary funding. Other states, such as South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania, managed the Centres directly. The Victorian Government continued to see the ACFCs as a Commonwealth responsibility. From July 2018, the ACFCs will face new challenges under the mainstream Jobs for Families Child Care Package, as detailed further in SNAICC Policy Brief on that issue. Above all, they still just require recognition as integrated culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families experiencing particular disadvantage.

Despite the struggles, the services have flourished, developing deep bonds and strengthening cultural pride within their communities. Many have achieved the highest possible rating of exceeding under the national quality standards. They are playing a centre

role in ensuring a good start for some of the most vulnerable children across the country, changing their life trajectory.

SNAICC is developing a series of profiles to provide an overview of the 36 services still operating. The profiles detail the key features of each participating service, namely: programs offered; governance structure; funding; engagement with families and communities; and some highlights on outcomes for children and families. The profiles aim to deepen understanding of the work of these services and their impact, as well as to foster sharing and exchange amongst services themselves.

These profiles will be released on a state-by-state basis, and will then finally be compiled into one report.

Northern Territory Child and Family Centres

The Northern Territory Department of Education provided the following description of Child and Family Centres:

The Northern Territory's child and family centres (CFCs) are a focal point for the integration of services focussing on children from before birth to five years and their families within a community.

Northern Territory CFCs can and do provide services for young children and their families e.g. Families as First Teachers (FaFT); child care; maternal and child health; but are not 'one stop shops'. Rather they promote and facilitate a community wide 'no wrong door' approach to services for young children and their families.

Northern Territory CFCs foster:

- a shared understanding and model a collaborative and integrated mindset;
- a shared practice that are evidence and outcomes-based, supporting service; providers, families and community to reach agreements about aims and outcomes.
- an interdisciplinary teamwork model striving to provide universal core services to all families and children;
- leadership that is relational, effective, inspiring and supportive and able to work across traditional divides; and
- a co-design that is sensitive and responsive to diversity and to families' and communities' needs and priorities ensuring that families and communities are partners in planning and governance.

Northern Territory CFCs have adopted a modern Collective Impact approach with the CFC being the 'Container for Change' through which 'Inclusive Community Engagement' supports the identification and articulation of 'Community Aspiration' and encourages 'High Leverage Activities' and 'Strategic Learning'¹ across all service providers.

The Northern Territory CFC Integrated Service Model operates on the following principles:

- Services are centred on the child and family and are integrated.
- Services and programs understand and privilege the local cultural context.
- Services are committed to prevention and early intervention.
- Services are committed to a long term, evidence informed approach.

The CFC integrated service paradigm represents authentic community co-design, joined up service provision, sustainable local employment pathways and, most of all, better education, health and social outcomes for young children.

¹ Tamarack Institute https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/Multi-Day%20Events/Community%20Change%20Institute%20-%20CCI/2016%20CCI%20Toronto/CCI_Publications/Collective_Impact_3.0_FINAL_PDF.pdf



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Northern Territory Services

	Number of Aboriginal children participating in Early Learning Centres (ELC)	Percentage of children supported by each service who are Aboriginal	Number of Aboriginal parents/carers receiving services	Percentage of staff who are Aboriginal
Maningrida (Manayingkarirra CFC)	50	74%	50+	75%
Ngukurr (Guluman CFC)	106 enrolled (50-60 regular users each week)	96%	50+	83%
Gunbalanya (Arrmunbu CFC)	76 regularly	91%	55+	76%
Larapinta	50	38%	40+	50%
	48	32%		2%
Yuendumu	65	95%	50+	68%
Palmerston	20	22.9% (of the ELC)	Approx. 40 – very hard to	60% of CFC staff

			determine at this stage	
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Approximate figures drawn from responses of Integrated Early Childhood Services Leaders June 2018

Governance

Currently in the Northern Territory, none of the CFCs are run by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. All centres are connected with and managed by a local school. They are staffed by two funded positions, an Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader and an Aboriginal Co-ordinator. In general, various advisory boards of Aboriginal staff, parents and/or community members guide decision-making. The table below provides more detail.

	Leadership	Consultation/guidance	Reflections
Maningrida	School Principal (non-Aboriginal) and School Council (President is Aboriginal, as are the other 8-10 representatives)	Indigenous Reference Group – six members, representative of traditional land owners and meets quarterly	<p>“it's a broader scope of community input for the child and family centre...they're the decision makers not me.”</p> <p>“I think the effectiveness is just because I have invested so much in local employment. So the centre can actually give that security to the community in that there is a lot of local representation there.”</p>
Ngukurr	School Principal, School Council, Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader and Aboriginal Co-ordinator and DoE Senior ACFC staff	ACFC Reference Group (currently the Ngukurr School Council) Aboriginal Co-ordinator, local families and community members	“Community whispers’ are used to get information into family groups and for family groups to get messages into the ACFC. People will then visit the CFC to discuss issues...[There is an] open timeframe for decision making”

Gunbalanya	Co-School Principals (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), Early Childhood Integrated Service Leader	Independent public school board includes teachers, parents, student and community representatives (approximately 80-90% Aboriginal)	“The board actually has the possibility to be quite fluid from year to year...so you can invite particular skill sets onto the board to assist you with whatever the strategic direction is that you want to take”
Larapinta	‘Leadership group’ is comprised of the School Principal, Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader, Aboriginal Co-ordinator and ELC Director	Existing School Council and a Family and Community Advisory Committee (25 families invited to take part)	“We wanted to include families that perhaps aren’t sitting on the School Council and don’t necessarily have a voice. We see this as gaining important voice from lived experience and also a capacity building process. It’s still early days”
Yuendumu	School Principal and School Council (School Council made up of 18 members – including the Principal, two teachers, 12 family members, three invited guests)	Marlpa Jungu Jintangka (Early Childhood Reference Group) consists of Aboriginal community women with representatives from all camps. A core group of female elders make up this group.	The reference group was developed with the assistance of World Vision, they advocated for Yuendumu to have a CFC and have been the guiding force for stakeholders in the early years space for Warlpiri children and their families.
Palmerston	Executive team (School Principal and Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader) Leadership Team - comprises of Integrated Early	Palmerston Indigenous Network meetings In collaboration with Larrakia Nation, the ACFC Aboriginal Coordinator established a local Indigenous Network which meets monthly. The intent of meetings is to network and share information	The centre initially established a governance structure to guide the planning and delivery of services. This included an executive team, advisory group and leadership team. However, as the ACFC has become

	<p>Childhood Services Leader , Aboriginal Co-ordinator, Young Mothers Strong Mothers Co-ordinator, Families as First Teachers Family Eductaors, Gray Family Centre Co-ordinator and ELC Director</p>	<p>with both government and non-government stakeholders who work with Aboriginal families & children in the Palmerston region.</p> <p>In addition the ACFC Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader is a member of the Palmerston Grow Well Live Well Community Engagement Group a collective impact project</p> <p>These groups along with other community network groups are used as a source of information and guide as to what is happening in the community.</p>	<p>more established in the community and valuing the importance of being part of the local community, ACFC staff are engaged in a variety of networks and community projects and events which assist in guiding the direction of the ACFC.</p> <p>Networks the ACFC is connected with include: Palmerston Indigenous Network, Grow Well Live Well, Palmerston Kids Network, ECA Northern Territory Branch Committee, Palmerston Children's Week working party and event.</p>
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Funding

	State (DE)	Federal (PM&C)	Other
Maningrida	✓ (operational funding)	✓ IAS as well as Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) funding for specific projects	✓ fees \$10/day
Ngukurr	✓ (operational funding)	✓ including: - IAS for Childcare - Playgroup/Anglicare and - SCfC funding for cooking program	✓ Childcare fees \$10/day Playgroup free
Gunbalanya	✓ (operational funding)	✓ IAS (for long day care)	✓ fees \$50/week

Larapinta	✓ (operational funding)		✓ Fees for ELC (childcare)
Yuendumu	✓ (operational funding)	✓ IAS (for long day care, via Central Desert Regional Council)	✓ Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation Project funding ✓ Warlpiri Education Training Trust (WETT) (for Early Childhood Reference Group needs and Professional development for CFC staff)
Palmerston	✓ (operational funding) ✓ Young Mother Strong Mothers operational program funding		

Funding arrangements as described by Integrated Early Childhood Services leaders June 2018.

The programs in the centres receive funding from a number of different sources. Four out of six centres receive IAS funding. Most centres at the time of the survey indicated to have sufficient funding for current operational costs.

Services

	Maningrida	Ngukurr	Gunbalanya	Larapinta	Yuendumu	Palmerston
Early Childhood Education and Care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Early childhood learning programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parent Capacity Building programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visiting health professionals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allied health services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family and parenting support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing, Centrelink and/or legal assistance		✓	✓			✓
Elders group		✓ - use the training room to access services such as Centrelink and Catholic Care NT, but no specific services for this group as aged care is across the road.			✓	
Cultural programs		✓		✓	✓	
Community events		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All centres have close networks with mainstream community and health organisations, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. According to Maningrida Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader Michelle Callahan this leads to a more “seamless approach” to engaging families with services because it means that “families don't have to tell their story twenty different times”. This is also helped by the fact that the Integrated Early Childhood

Services Leader has been “a stable person in the community for so long” and “there is a lot of time and effort that goes into that relational trust”.

Similarly, Larapinta Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader Marisa Kelly says, “we don't see ourselves as a new service in Alice Springs, we see ourselves working with existing services to support and enhance what they're already doing”. She continues, “all the services and agencies would be here in a heartbeat and they would be doing stuff and we would have a full program. But we don't want to just get the agencies to tell us what to do; we want to get the families informed and aware and get them to tell us what to do!” “We are a small part of a big focus on changing and improving the service system for families in Alice Springs. There is a lot of effort in our town at the moment to work together better, especially for the families and young children who need it the most.”

Gunbalanya service highlights

Gunbalanya provides a long day care centre and preschool. The centre also targets integrated services for children zero to five and their families. A FaFT playgroup runs five days per week. Gunbalanya sees this as critical, “designed around early intervention and capacity building”. It uses the Abecedarian Approach Australia across the whole centre, with all staff being trained to build parent's capacity to engage with their children to get them school ready, and supports health and well-being with fly-in health services.

Health services include a child health maternal nurse, a doctor, a dental nurse, a skin clinic, a community hearing health worker, NT Hearing and Australian Hearing. An antenatal nurse comes through the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program to support expectant and new mums, making sure they have supports and networks and are connected to their community. They also have a men's cooking program and women's cooking program for to help parents of skinny babies or those with children with low iron levels.

This year, Gunbalanya is strengthening its engagement with the local Women's Safe House that is run by West Arnhem Shire. This is done through community events such as International Women's Day and consistent communication between the Safe House and CFC.

Larapinta service highlights

Larapinta has a range of weekly playgroups for families with young children from birth to five years. One is an Autism Family Support group formed by families with children living with autism. This is a small group and just part of a range of support structures for families. Last year four children successfully transitioned from this program to preschool.

Another playgroup is a weekly universal playgroup for everyone that attracts up to 25 families of diverse cultural and language backgrounds, and offers regular support from a range of different services for families. FaFT has recently begun at Larapinta and up to 18 families are enrolled and attending 3-5 times per week. This is a highly supportive program that provides quality early learning support for the children and parenting support for the families. A large number of Aboriginal families are enrolled. There have been a number of programs and initiatives for young mothers including two Baby Families and Schools



Together programs and a Young Mums playgroup. More than 18 young Aboriginal mothers have engaged with these programs over the past 18 months. Larapinta is ready to expand this program in collaboration with other services and with a targeted and ongoing program for both young mothers and young fathers.

Beyond that, Larapinta has been focusing on informal opportunities for families to visit and a space for families to meet local service providers. More than 50 families have used the centre to 'drop-in' in the past 18 months and up to 10-12 families drop-in more than once a week. The centre is developing a welcoming, relationship based culture based on a sense of belonging.

Maningrida service highlights

Maningrida operates a long day care centre and a FaFT program. The long day care centre at Maningrida averages 12-17 children per day. Two Aboriginal Co-ordinators lead the service, which currently has five Aboriginal staff. The FaFT playgroup and mobile playgroup form the foundation for a diverse range of early years, health and family support programs, with up to 80 families per week accessing playgroup and up to 30 children attending per day.

Maningrida also provides access to the Healthy Under 5 Kids Program on site with two nurses practicing preventative health care, immunisation, developmental support and referrals three to four days a week. The teams work closely together to provide an integrated service with CFC staff and health teams collaborating to support families.

Families also can access counselling and wellbeing programs run by the Malabam Health Board staff. These include quitting smoking, stress release and a Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture program. Having an integrated approach enables streamlined support for families experiencing vulnerability, home liaison, outreach, cooking classes and child development checks.

Yuendumu CFC service highlights

The CFC through the direction of the Early Childhood Reference Group works on creating a strong health focus, cultural programs and two-way learning thus creating a safe cultural space to encourage all families to access services within the centre.

Yuendumu CFC has a long day care centre, and playgroup, FaFT program, Healthy Under 5 Kids Program, maternity nurse, Territory Families Remote Community Family workers, as well as Parents and Community Engagement and Warra-Warra Kanyi Counselling and Mentoring Service run through Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation.

These services integrate and work collaboratively to deliver their core business as well as support the following programs:

- Bilingual Resource Development Unit – Warlpiri singing and reading
- Bush trips and cultural activities including baby smoking etc
- Community events (Baby Welcoming Orientation, KidSafe Car Seat program, NAIDOC Celebrations etc)



- Other visiting Health Teams (including a trachoma health visitor, Captain Starlight, nutritionist, etc.)
- Yuendumu School activities and celebrations.

The centre facilitates programs around a bilingual, biliteracy ethos and the Warlpiri theme cycle, which is carried on through the children's school life. The service also provides facilities like a shower and baby bath for families, as well as a large lounge area for both set and impromptu meetings, workshops and yarnning.

Palmerston service highlights

The centre is located in the suburb of Farrar and managed by Gray Primary School. It has a strong community partnership with Child Australia. Child Australia provides a 60 place early learning centre (ELC). The centre has established several partnerships with non-government organisations which deliver a range of playgroups.

In April 2016 Young Mothers Strong Mothers (YMSM), a pilot program aimed to support young mothers under 25 years of age to re-engage in education and attain qualifications. It was expected that the program would support mothers to complete Year 10, 12 and/or a Certificate II in Community Services. The program is delivered through a model of partnership with several government and non-government organisations including: the Department of Education (Palmerston Child and Family Centre, Palmerston Senior College), Department of Health, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Child Australia. The Australian Government Department of Human Services has also provided support and guidance for the program. The YMSM program is delivered two days per week and provides a collaborative and integrated service delivery model of care including parenting and family wellbeing support, child health checks, adult education/capacity building and early childhood education and care. A similar program aimed at young fathers is being developed.

The FaFT program commenced in Term 2 2018. Currently a FaFT playgroup is offered three days a week across two locations, the Palmerston CFC and Gray Family Centre.

Ngukurr service highlights

The CFC at Ngukurr runs daily long day care and four days a week provides preschool and playgroup, which is run by Anglicare and FaFT program. The FaFT program in Ngukurr is involved in a range of other activities including Ages and Stages Questionnaire TRAK, a developmental screening tool for observing and monitoring the developmental progress of Australian Aboriginal children, home visits, community playgroups and works closely with our centre-based community hearing health worker.

The CFC is a hub for visiting professions from a range of fields including health services such as a physiotherapist, a dentist, an NT Hearing and Australian Hearing and a locally-based maternal and child health nurse who has started screening children for referral to the clinic. Northern Land Council, Catholic Care NT, Centrelink, NAAJA and other services also use the facility. There are two permanent tenants at the CFC including the Stronger



Communities for Children (SCfC) team and the Yungbala Rangers, a joint project with Yugul Mangi Development Board and Macquarie University in NSW.

Ngukurr is excited to be the first CFC to recruit a Young Fathers Co-ordinator to mentor and support young dads, aged 15-25, in the community to help them improve their literacy and further their education and training.

Engagement with families and communities

All centres focus on building relationships in the community with families and seek feedback on what families want from the centres. As Yuendumu Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader says, “we are talking with the community constantly on what they would like to see in the centre, gathering their ideas on how to run things.” Larapinta Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader sums it up further, “It’s about building those relationships: if we’re going to have any impacts on supporting families, it’s a long term journey.”

Centres are working hard to make sure that it is a community space and that it is the community that is driving what the centre is and not the services. Larapinta Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader says, “the best thing we can do is create a space that people feel comfortable in and love coming to...[and then] they can tap into some resources and support structures more on their demand rather than the system demand.”

At the Ngukurr CFC, educators have regular interviews with families about their children in order to better understand the different approaches taken by families and to foster stronger connections between the centre and the home. The centre aims to use and build on children’s strengths and interests to encourage learning in other developmental areas, such as music and storytelling. According to previous centre manager, Nick Bewg, “The Guluman centre is a safe, open and friendly place which encourages all community to attend. We have a steady flow of families coming in and out of the centre.”

At the CFC in Gunbalanya, the centre has “Ngurrimray Rowk”, meaning “come together,” to invite the community to see the activities that the children and families are engaging in. It is the centre’s aim to have guest speakers or visitors at each open house to talk with families about an issue that is relevant to their cohort. A highlight for the year is the centre’s Graduation. This is part of the school’s Transitioning Plan and celebrates the continuing of the children’s educational journey, whether it is from FaFT or long day care into preschool or preschool into Transition. The centre also has fortnightly assemblies in which families are invited to celebrate their child’s learning, and the Aboriginal Coordinator is starting to have regular chats with the community to seek feedback on how to make the centre better.

Workforce and community development

Most centres provide staff training and mentoring. The CFC in Ngukurr, for example, supports staff members to undertake formal qualifications at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. It also offers professional development for all staff around recognising behavioural and background issues, and strategies to respond appropriately with children and families.



The CFC in Gunbalanya CFC has just started training all of the staff across the centre in the Abecedarian Approach Australia. This is done on Fridays and delivered by the FaFT Educator. All staff have current First Aid in a school setting, which was done through various training times throughout the year. The centre is also supporting staff to obtain their Certificate III or Diploma in Early Education through Charles Darwin University.

Successful outcomes for families

Ngukurr Stories

According to current Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader Melissa Watters, the CFC in Ngukurr has high levels of participation and engagement with children and families coming in and out frequently. The centre is reaching a significant number of families in the community and its focus is on embedding culture into all aspects of the programs on an everyday basis. This is being achieved by developing a preschool rubric that was introduced in 2017, which includes cultural competencies and aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework and competency check list. The Ngukurr Language Centre is teaching language at the centre on a weekly basis, which has also increased community participation and attendance.

Another success has been better health and nutrition outcomes for kids. The men's and women's cooking programs have been very popular, with 100 different men and 98 women attending over a year, resulting in the creation of a community cookbook in each 2015 and 2016.

Gunbalanya Stories

The CFC in Gunbalaya believes the centre is "a place that families see that they can come and get wellness checks as opposed to just going to the clinic once they are sick".

Families feel comfortable bringing their children to the centre, as can be seen by the significantly increased attendance at health check-ups from around 20 to 50 families when the child and maternal health nurse works from the centre. Furthermore, immunisation blitzes are held each semester to coincide with other events at the centre to increase attendance and build community engagement with health workers.

Initially some of the children accessing the clinic had low iron levels. Through the centre providing iron rich foods and delivering nutrition education, the children's iron levels have come back up to normal.

In addition, the centre worked with KidSafeNT to educate the community about the safe use of car seats. This included training for staff and community members on how to safely install car and booster seats, as well as informing them of all the laws. On the day of the event, 67 car seats were handed out and installed in cars in the community. Families are also able to the centre to have a seat safely installed at any time.

Maningrida stories

Maningrida CFC is well established in the community as a welcoming supportive space for families with young children. There are more than 150 children enrolled in the FaFT program and long day care centre. The centre's strong focus on building capacity is supported by the community. Staff working at the CFC are encouraged to participate in training programs. For example, Talking about Feeding Babies training that is offered enables educators and family members to provide support to young mums. Two of the Aboriginal staff are lead co-ordinators in the long day care centre. One lead co-ordinator has Certificate III in Children's Services and a Certificate III in Community Services, while the other is studying for the Diploma in Early Childhood through Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The centre is also able to support school students for work experience both in the FaFT program and at the long day care centre. Fun events are held for families each term and the last was a BBQ in collaboration with Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture for International Woman's Day.

Maningrida Integrated Early Childhood Services Leader, Michelle Callahan talks of the collaboration itself among services as a key success, "I guess you know some of these success stories are the collaboration between services in a specifically designed space like this. Because we all have very similar KPI's and reporting mechanisms, it's very open communication, resources are shared and the data is shared. That's just become the way that we work. Even though things may be the property of the Centre, they are there for the utilisation of all services. We are really all working together to get kids tracking well."

Palmerston stories

Since the commencement of the program in 2016, 18 Young Mums Strong Mums program participants have graduated with a Certificate II in Community Services and received recognition for their dedication to their education. Some have gone on to further study, one has gained employment in the ELC within the Palmerston CFC and another has gained work experience at Gray Primary.