

SNAICC NEWS

Casting a positive light on the men in our families

This year SNAICC is publishing a series of full colour posters depicting positive images of and messages on the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in their children's lives.

These posters depict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men with young children (aged 0 to 6) in their families. The men are locals in various communities across of Australia, including Hobart in Tasmania, Wreck Bay in ACT, Tiwi Island and Alice Springs in Northern Territory, and Yarrabah in Queensland.

“We worked extensively with local children's services in the communities to ensure that local men and their children were photographed.”

This is part of a project developed through SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service (NRS) in partnership with the Family Action Centre at The University of Newcastle. A series of five national posters are being produced for distribution across the country, along with a series of three local community posters for each of the communities mentioned above.

Last year SNAICC NRS Project Officer Michelle Moloney and Community Worker Craig Hammond from the Family Action Centre worked extensively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services in these communities to ensure that local men and their children were photographed. All of the men were eager to be involved in this project.

For the local posters, organisations from the local communities developed the positive messages they wanted, some using their local language. Local artists also contributed by producing artwork to be incorporated into the poster designs.

All these elements also guided the development of the national posters, albeit aiming at the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Although the process involved more consultation and development than it would have to use models and an advertising agency, it was important for SNAICC that we do it this way.

A couple of years ago, SNAICC conducted wide-ranging consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, foster carers and community members who care for children about the types of parenting information they prefer and what they want from them. This was part of our Indigenous Parenting Project,



One of the Indigenous Fathering National Posters published by SNAICC in partnership with the Family Action Centre at The University of Newcastle. Copyright SNAICC and Family Action Centre 2006.

funded by the Department of Family and Community Services (see SNAICC, 2005 *Indigenous Parenting Project – Executive Summary*).

From the focus groups SNAICC conducted, we found that the participants overwhelmingly wanted information products that were “locally produced” and “featuring people they know”. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers told us “they wanted to identify with the message as well as the messenger.”

Another key finding of the project is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents want parenting information that is “visual with simple messages. Local people should be featured utilising local artwork.” Posters were identified as the most effective

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

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

Contributions, feedback and suggestions to *SNAICC News* are welcome. Copy deadline for our June edition is **15 May 2006**.

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Working with Children safety check rolls out in Victoria

by Mark Lawrence, SNAICC Publications Officer

The new regime of mandatory checks of all those working with children will begin to roll-out in Victoria from mid this year. This covers both employees and volunteers.

Victorian child protection workers and foster carers will be amongst the first required to submit to the safety check in order for them to continue to work with children.

The Victorian Government says the intention is to "prevent people with inappropriate criminal and professional disciplinary records from working with children or volunteering in children's clubs and activities."

The Victorian Parliament passed the Working with Children Act 2005 in September 2005 to establish the Working with Children Check, which requires all those who work or volunteer with children in 'child-related work' and activities to undergo screening for criminal offences.

Where a police check is usually one-off, the Working with Children checking scheme makes minimum screening standards mandatory and will be continually updated.

According to the Victorian government, "People found suitable to work with children will be continually screened for new criminal charges. If a person who has already qualified for an assessment notice is subsequently charged with a relevant offence, their assessment notice will be reconsidered." They can be prevented from continuing their work if their check is unsatisfactory.

This will include registered sex offenders, anyone convicted or found guilty as an adult of a serious sex offence committed against a child or of a child pornography offence, as well as those with convictions or findings of guilt for serious sexual offences against an adult or against children committed when the offender was a child.

From mid-2006–2007, those working in child protection, juvenile justice, foster carers, school crossing services, outside school hours care, family day care, schools and overnight camps will have to complete their Safety Checks.

In 2007–2008, those in child care services, pre-schools and kindergartens, religious organisations, refuges and other residential facilities, transport and counselling services for children will have to undergo the checks.

"Where a police check is usually one-off, the Working with Children scheme makes minimum screening standards mandatory and will be continually updated."

The Working with Children Bill will apply to: "all employees, self-employed persons, and volunteers in child-related work where that work involves regular direct contact with a child and that contact is not directly supervised by another person. Work, in this legislation, includes work performed as a volunteer."

The government has insisted that the working-with-children check will be free for all volunteers affected. This covers foster carers.

In **Victoria**, you can get more information about the Working with Children Safety Check online at: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

For more information or to order an Information Kit on the Check:
Telephone: 1300 652 879

A number of other states and territories have similar screening regimes already in place or about to be introduced.

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Casting a positive light on men in our families

and immediate way in meeting these requirements.

These findings were instrumental in informing SNAICC's approach to developing the Indigenous Fathering Posters project.

We know this project will in some way start to redress the imbalance in parenting roles. There are many 'Mums & bubs' programs and we have dozens of images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in parenting roles, but only a handful of men in parenting roles. To date, this project has been received excitedly in the community.

The National posters will be available



One of the five national fathering posters published.

nationally. We encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services to display these posters in their waiting rooms, in meeting places, at child care centres and kindergartens, and in their shopfront windows. More information on these posters, including how to order them, will be available on SNAICC's website later this year.

The local posters will be used by the respective local communities for similar purposes. Samples and templates will be available as examples and inspiration for other communities wanting to do their own.

In 2006 the NRS will be working with another five local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the remaining states to develop another series of local posters depicting men and children in their communities, using their local language and artwork. Information on this will also be available on our website as this project gets underway.

– Mark Lawrence,
SNAICC Publications Officer

New Federal minister for Indigenous Affairs

Prime Minister John Howard appointed the Hon Mal Brough MP as the new Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in a cabinet reshuffle early this year. In related changes the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination has moved to the Family and Community Services, forming a new Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs provides policies, income support and assistance for families and their children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, carers and community groups. The Office for Women provides policies and programs for women and the Office for Indigenous Policy Coordination coordinates a whole-of-government approach to programs and services for Indigenous Australians.

From SNAICC's perspective this creates some opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and children's issues to receive a higher level of attention within the Federal Government's priorities for Indigenous Affairs.



The Hon. Mal Brough MP is the new Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Photo: FaCSIA

care services it does focus attention on the limitations of the current accreditation system.

Minister Brough is concerned that notifying child care centres in advance of checks by regulatory authorities gives centres time to prepare for inspections well in advance, rather than maintaining good conditions all the time irrespective of inspections. He has also expressed concerns about the potential for fraud in child care centres in record keeping and funding arrangements with the Australian Government.

“Mal Brough has shown a willingness to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and proved responsive to the needs and concerns of those communities...”

Since his appointment to his new portfolio, Mr Brough has been travelling widely to remote and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Northern Territory and in Western Australia. He has shown a willingness to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and proved responsive to the needs and concerns of those communities in remote areas of Australia.

While visiting Elcho Island in February the Minister met with Aboriginal leaders from the Galiwinku Council, who asked for assistance to deal with domestic violence and substance abuse in their community.

Meanwhile, the Minister also wants to make a strong impression on the child care sector, announcing plans to introduce spot checks and audits of accredited child care centres.

Whilst at this point this is unlikely to have any direct impact on Indigenous child

SNAICC will be seeking to establish an effective working relationship with the new Minister and highlighting the important policy reforms SNAICC has been advocating in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These are outlined in SNAICC's *Seven Priorities for Children* and the recently released SNAICC policy paper, *Stable and Strong*, which proposes major reforms to out-of-home care (both available from the SNAICC website).

Sources:

Community News, Infoxchange Australia,
www.communitynews.infoxchange.net.au/news/

ABC News Online, www.abc.net.au/news
Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs,
www.facs.gov.au

– Mark Lawrence, Publications Officer

SNAICC Update



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SNAICC National Executive Meeting

The SNAICC National Executive met for the first time this year in Adelaide from 20 to 22 March. Amongst the issues discussed were:

Withdrawal of alternative care funding from Karu Aboriginal Child Care Agency

One of the major issues of concern that the National Executive discussed was the recent decision by the Northern Territory Government to withdraw alternative care funding from the Karu Aboriginal Child Care Agency in Darwin. Karu was the only Aboriginal agency providing alternative care placements and providing some advice in relation to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

SNAICC has met the NT Minister for Community Services regarding this decision and written to the Chief Minister of the NT in support of Karu. We highlighted the recommendations of a recent independent review of the operation of child protection case planning and alternative care. The review, which was commissioned by the NT Department of Health and Community Services at the suggestion of Karu, highlighted that the alternative care program at Karu was hampered by inadequate funding and poor case planning within the NT Department of Health and Community Services.

SNAICC has indicated that whilst Karu had work to do in improving the alternative care program to withdraw funding was premature – particularly when the review recommendations relating to the Department's responsibilities for improving case planning for children in care have not been implemented.

SNAICC will continue to pursue the development of a well funded and supported Aboriginal community based alternative care and child protection agency for Darwin and surrounding regions.

SNAICC's draft Strategic Plan 2006–2008

A near complete draft of the 2006–2008 Strategic Plan for SNAICC was discussed, with the next strategic plan to cover four key areas. The National Executive have identified priorities and tasks for SNAICC

to pursue within each of the four areas. These tasks and priorities have been taken from issues identified at the 2003 SNAICC conference, each year's Annual General Meeting and through state and territory reports prepared by members of the National Executive. The final plan will be published in July.

SNAICC Governance Review

The National Executive undertook governance training and assessed SNAICC's governance and management systems, identifying key priorities for improving our governance. SNAICC believes that all organisations need to be continually reviewing and improving their systems for decision making, planning, risk management and quality assurance.

Over the course of the year SNAICC will be re-developing its policies and procedures framework to ensure it meets its legislative, funding, and constitutional requirements. This is also consistent with SNAICC's work in supporting governance development in our member organisations through resources such as *Footprints to Where We Are*.

Resource Agencies' funding extended

Early this year, the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs agreed to support long term funding for an Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) for each State and Territory. SNAICC has been advocating for this for some time and has been seeking to support the continuation of funding for existing Aboriginal resource agencies working in the child care field.

There are a number of existing Aboriginal resource agencies such as ARMSU in South Australia, VAEAI in Victoria, and RACSSU in Northern Territory that have many years experience in providing professional development and management support to Indigenous child care centres and services.

FaCSIA have agreed that this work should continue and is in discussion with SNAICC regarding putting in place new funding arrangements for IPSUs for each state and territory as current funding contracts expire on 31 July.

Supporting a Queensland state peak-body

SNAICC and QAIHC (Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council) co-facilitated a two-day workshop in Brisbane in early April to assist Queensland's Child Protection Partnership to form the state-wide peak-body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services and programs.

The participants agreed to set up a peak-body that will initially cover Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child welfare services. In its early years the peak body will consolidate its position amongst child protection services and programs, and then seek to extend its coverage to early childhood services in subsequent years.

The Queensland government has announced its commitment to fund the formation of a State peak-body for up to two years. The Partnership has appointed an interim Committee of Management to oversee the peak-body's formation. For more information, contact Alf Davis at QAIHC on (07) 3360 8444.

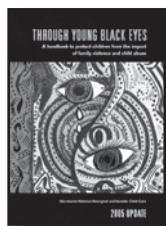
National Indigenous Child Care Plan

The consultation stage for the development of a National Indigenous Child Care Plan is now complete and in May the consultants that have been working on the development of the plan will present their findings to a national stakeholders' workshop. SNAICC first proposed the development of a National Indigenous Child Care Plan two years ago to provide a clear statement of the Commonwealth's commitment to fund and expand child care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

SNAICC believes that it is critical that the Commonwealth plan for the proper provision of flexible, culturally relevant and community based child care services and programs across the country. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have much lower access to Commonwealth funded child care than other children. This situation will worsen due to the high birth rates in communities unless there is a major increase in funding for new services and expansion of existing services.

Publications

Requiring a massive logistical effort from our staff, in March SNAICC mailed out multiple copies of our recent publications to over 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services across the country.



This included the Legal and Health Services, AICCAs, MACS, child care centres, pre-schools and kindergartens, resource agencies, mobile services, family and domestic violence services, family support initiatives, and women's groups.

We sent these organisations the new edition of the *Through Young Black Eyes* handbook, leaders' booklet and community pamphlet; the resource manual *Footprints to Where We Are*; and our policy document *Achieving Stable and Strong Out of Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children*.

SNAICC publications distributor

As you can imagine this was a difficult logistical process, which has convinced us to turn to a commercial distribution company for such work from now on.

After an extensive search, SNAICC selected Melbourne Mailing Pty Ltd to take on the mass mail-out and warehousing of our publications and resources. This also means that all our current and future publications will be able to be ordered online through our website, or by order form via fax, and sent to you directly by the distributor. We expect this start from May.

SNAICC Projects

NAICD – 4 August 2006

The theme for National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day this year will be 'My Culture is Me: I'm proud and strong'.

The SNAICC Publications Committee selected this theme in a teleconference in early March. The theme continues to highlight the centrality of culture to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's identity, but has one important difference: it speaks directly to the children!

This year, SNAICC wants to see many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services across the country celebrating Children's Day. Carmen Isherwood (nee Dunn) will be taking on a new project to promote NAICD to all our members and to develop a number of resources and activities to help you get involved.

These include a children's artwork project, where we are requesting our members to get the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their services to draw, paint or create artworks in a range of media for Children's Day.

The theme for the children's artwork will be 'What my culture means to me', and SNAICC will publish a selection of the artwork on our website on Children's Day, 4 August 2006.

Other initiatives the Publications Committee introduced for NAICD this year include an activity kit for services to use with the children on the day itself.

We also sought expressions of interest from our members to provide up to six high quality photographs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children with their families for SNAICC to use in its NAICD poster, promotional material and publications. Details of these NAICD initiatives are available from Carmen at the SNAICC office.

This year's theme for National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day is 'My Culture is Me: I'm proud and strong'.

Risk and Protective Factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

SNAICC is working on a project with University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to develop a Risk and Protective Factors Framework appropriate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. SNAICC and UTS conducted focus groups with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers in ten locations in seven states and territories last year.

The project aims to document what critical factors within a family or community can work to keep children safe, promote their development and encourage strong healthy family relationships. Early themes emerging include the importance of children's culture as a source of strength and resilience for children and knowledge of family history and connections to land as a key factor in strong healthy family relationships. We will update *SNAICC News* readers on the project's development in the next edition of this newsletter.

Report on Australian and international approaches to Indigenous child welfare and protection.

The Victorian Department of Human Services has contracted SNAICC to prepare

a report that documents the legislative and policy frameworks for Indigenous child protection in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

SNAICC is working on this with the University of Technology Sydney, who have carried out an extensive literature review of the different models for Indigenous child welfare in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The report, due for completion by the middle of this year, will provide a detailed overview of the strengths of different systems including the success Indigenous communities are having in taking control of child protection at the local level. SNAICC believes that holistic community based approaches to child protection that rely on families and community leaders to work together and protect children will prove more effective and sustainable than centralised government-run child protection systems.

SNAICC and the Department of Human Services intend to publish the final report later this year.

Foster Carers' Resource

Moira Ross-Rayner, the SNAICC Project Officer taking on this project, has been consulting widely with SNAICC members and other stakeholders across Australia in the development of this important resource.

Funded by FaCSIA, this project will produce a national resource for non-Indigenous foster carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It will help carers to keep the children in their care strongly connected with their community and culture.

– Julian Pocock
SNAICC Executive Officer

Correction:

In the last edition of *SNAICC News* we did not publish the full list of those elected to SNAICC's National Executive.

Sharron Williams from AFSS in South Australia, Kathleen Pinkerton from Yorganop in WA, and Lisa Coulson from TACCA in Tasmania were also elected to the National Executive.

We apologise for this error.

Changes:

Please also note that the RACSSU (Darwin, NT) representative on the National Executive is now Vernicoa Pompei, instead of Veronica Johns.

The full, updated list of SNAICC's National Executive members is on our website: www.snaicc.asn.au/news

The role of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Child Protection Partnership

by Alf Davis, QAIHC Policy Officer

At a meeting held by QAIHC (Qld Aboriginal and Islander Health Council) in Hervey Bay in May 2004, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Partnership (QATSICPP) was established through a signed partnership agreement. The Partnership was formed as a response to the significant CMC Inquiry into the QLD Child Protection system in 2003 and to ensure members had a Peak body to advocate on their behalf.

The Partnership members are the remaining AICCAs in QLD and are

“A major task facing the sector will be the coordination and roll out of ‘Recognised Entity’ funding for our services.”

all independent community controlled organisations. AICCAs in QLD have an important role in the Child Protection system and this is enshrined in Legislation and also highlighted through Policy.

Of the 10 QATSICPP members, half are auspiced through Aboriginal and Islander Health Services and half are auspiced through community controlled organisations. The Partnership members include Cairns Wuchopperen Health Service, Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service, Mackay Alternative Care, Central Qld AICCA based at Rockhampton, Barambah AICCA based at Cherbourg, Wide Bay AICCA based at Bundaberg, Kambu AICCA Ipswich, KIPA AICCA Caboolture, Kalwun AICCA Gold Coast and IFACSS Brisbane.

Since June 2004 QAIHC has been funded by the Department of Child Safety to provide a secretariat function and support to Partnership members and to represent members as the Peak body. Rachel Atkinson (CEO of Townsville Health Service) is the Chair of the QATSICPP.

The development of the QATSICPP into its own Peak Body/Secretariat is now progressing to be established by June 2006.

With the support of QAIHC, the QATSICPP has had significant input into the current reforms in child protection as they impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people their

families and communities. Key areas that the QATSICPP has focused on include:

- legislative reform – review of Section 6 of the Child Protection Act 1999
- rollout of \$9.4 million in funding to the sector
- service system planning
- practice and policy reform (including Matters of Concern, SCAN, Statement of Commitment, Structured Decision Making, Therapeutic Care for children with extreme and complex needs.
- Alternative Care Steering Committee
- Cultural Competency

QATSICPP has made strategic linkages across both the Government and non government sector. These linkages are critical to ensure the safety, health and overall well being of our most vulnerable children. Key linkages have been established with the following:

- SNAICC
- Peakcare
- Foster Care Queensland
- Australian Government (Family and Community Services)
- Directors of Child Safety (including Queensland Health, Department of Communities, DATSIP, Education Queensland, Department of Premiers and Cabinet and the Queensland Police Service)
- Legal Aid Queensland
- The Aboriginal and Islander Legal Services based in Brisbane and with service centres throughout the southern ‘half’ of QLD
- The Commission for Children and Young People and Office of Child Guardian.

The QATSICPP Secretariat also plays a significant role in providing Member Support Services to members. This has been a major role for the Secretariat since mid-2005. Member Support can entail providing practical support regarding case management to providing assistance with

funding and resourcing issues.

The Department of Child Safety is rolling out a statewide Quality Assurance Strategy for all NGOs who work within Child Protection and this process is expected to start in June. With Partnership Members providing either statutory child protection consultation and/ or placement services; the Secretariat has a dedicated Quality Assurance Officer to ensure that our services will be well placed to meet prescribed standards.

A major task facing the sector will be the coordination and roll out of ‘Recognised Entity’ funding for our services. QATSICPP has worked very closely with the Department of Child Safety to ensure that this process will be equitable and also provide much needed enhancement funding.

All our member services work very hard in a very difficult area. The under-funding and under-resourcing of the sector has been well documented and the QATSICPP works hard with the Department to ensure better outcomes for our children from the policy area to the practice area.

Key challenges facing the sector will be the roll out of Recognised Entity (AICCA) funding throughout the state and continuing to work in close partnership with government to ensure that quality services are provided throughout the state.

Editor’s Note:

SNAICC and QAIHC jointly facilitated a workshop of the Partnership in early April to discuss forming a Statewide peak body for Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s services, childhood services and AICCAs. Please see the report on this meeting on page 4 of this newsletter.

National Roundup will be back next edition

Contributions are welcome

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

Email your news to:
publications@snaicc.asn.au
or telephone: 03 9489 8099

NRS Evaluation Workshop

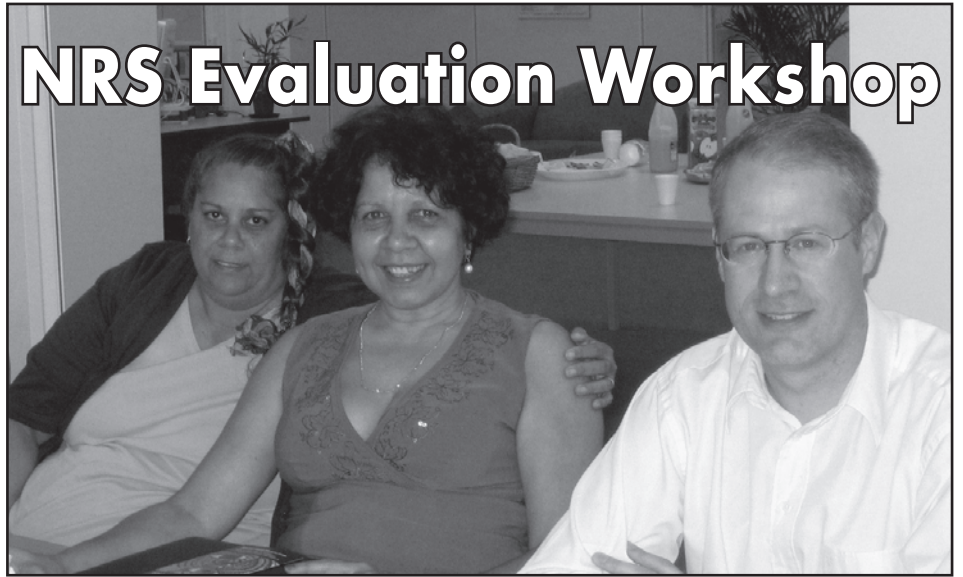
SNAICC's National Indigenous Family and Children's Resource Service (NRS) Reference Group and the SNAICC Executive held an Evaluation Workshop in Melbourne on Thursday 16 March and Friday 17 March.

Report by Liz Orr, NRS Program Manager

There was a great response to the invitation to the planning workshop for the evaluation of the National Resource Service by SNAICC executive members. Twenty seven people, including staff and government representatives from the reference group, attended the workshop. The beyond... evaluation team, Sharon Gollan and Kathleen Stacey, facilitated the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for members of the NRS reference group and the SNAICC executive to have a voice in the early planning stages of the evaluation; to gather general ideas and feedback about the action research approach being used for the evaluation; and to gain specific ideas about the evaluation of two of the current NRS projects – Father's Posters and *Through Young Black Eyes* (TYBE).

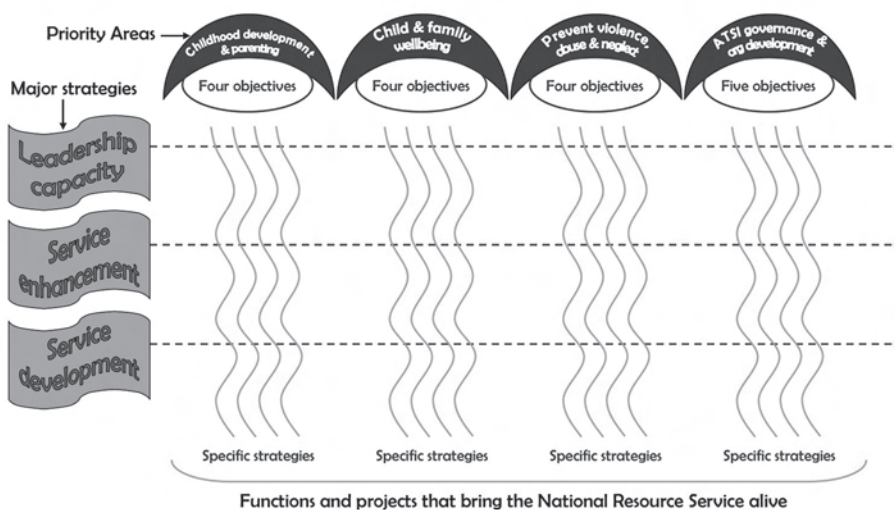
The diagram below is a pictorial snapshot of the NRS developed by the evaluators to assist us all in understanding what the focus of the NRS is and how it is planned to implement and achieve its goals. The first progress report of the evaluation team is due in July 2006.



As a result of the interest and support by members of the SNAICC executive, it was agreed to develop an evaluation project as part of the NRS work plan. This project will facilitate the ongoing involvement and participation of the executive and community members in the evaluation of the NRS and develop pathways to accredited training, and recognition for prior learning, in evaluation and action research.●



A snapshot of the National Resource Service



Top: Veronica Johns and Natalie Hunter, SNAICC Executive members from the Northern Territory, with David Brundenall, FaCSIA.

Middle: Kathleen Stacey from beyond..., Liz Orr, SNAICC NRS, and Lisa Coulson, SNAICC Executive member from Tasmania.

Bottom: Sharon Gollan from beyond... with Sharon Williams, SNAICC Executive member from South Australia.

All photographs copyright SNAICC 2006

For inquiries about the NRS's initiatives please contact Liz Orr by email: project3@snaicc.asn.au or call SNAICC's office: (03) 9489 8099

In the News

Former AHL residents sought for history project

Did you stay at an Aboriginal Hostels place while you were studying? Do you know anyone who did, family, friend, community member?

To celebrate our 33rd birthday this year, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd is putting together a book of short personal stories of Indigenous people who have stayed at one of our education hostels while studying at school, TAFE or Uni, and we'd love to hear from you. We want your story, photo (past and/or present), artwork, etc.

All you need to do is contact Jennifer on (02) 6212 2007, or email jennifer.martiniello@ahl.gov.au, and we will do the rest. So don't be shame, put it out there and celebrate your successes with ours.

Contributor: Jennifer Martiniello
Special Project Officer, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd; Ph: 02 6212 2007

Child support payments to be revamped

The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Mal Brough MP, announced on 28 February that the Australian Government would reform

aspects of the Child Support and family payment systems. The new system will aim to "better protect the best interests of children, while balancing the interests of parents and reflecting community expectations".

The proposed changes are in response to the report by the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support led by Professor Patrick Parkinson.

The reforms are expected to affect around 1.4 million parents and 1.1 million children and will be introduced in three stages from 1 July 2006.

The new system seeks to be better integrated with the family law and income support systems. This is expected to reduce conflict between parents about parenting arrangements, encourage shared parental responsibility and ensure child support is paid in full and on time.

The proposed changes are not yet law, and will be subject to the passing of legislation. Parents involved in the Child Support Scheme will be notified before any changes take place.

When the changes do become law, the Child Support Agency and Centrelink will provide information and support to assist parents with their new child support obligations. Until then, parents should maintain their current child support arrangements.

Under the proposed Scheme:

- child support payments will be calculated based on the actual costs of children

- the combined income of both parents will be used to calculate child support payments, treating the incomes of both parents in the same way
- both parents' contributions to the cost of their children through care and contact will be recognised
- children of first and second families will be treated more equally
- the minimum child support payments will rise from \$5 to \$6 per week and will be indexed annually to ensure it keeps pace with inflation
- the Child Support Agency will increase its actions against parents who fail to support their children, and
- parents will be able to have child support decisions reviewed by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal; for many parents this will mean not having to resort to the courts when a dispute occurs.

The new Child Support Scheme will be introduced in three stages over a two-year period. The first stage is expected to be implemented in July this year.

This is an edited version of Government materials and fact sheets. Further information about reform of the Child Support Scheme can be found on the website of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at www.facs.gov.au or by calling 1800 050 020.

Please note: the above is for general guidance and should not be treated as a complete or authoritative legal statement.

Contributor: Brian Babbington, CEO, Families Australia

Email: checkquery@dcd.wa.gov.au
Web: <http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au/default.htm>

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Victoria's Working with Children check rolls out

More information about the Working with Children checks in the various states is available from the relevant authorities:

New South Wales: The NSW Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for the laws that involve people working with children in NSW, including the 'Working with Children Check'.

More information:
Telephone: (02) 9286 7219,
Email to: check@kids.nsw.gov.au

Queensland: The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian promotes and protects the

rights, interests and wellbeing of all Queenslanders under 18, including administering the 'Working with Children Check'.

Further information: Employment Screening on 1800 113 611 (Free call)

Western Australia: The Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 became law in December 2004. This Act established 'compulsory criminal records checks' for people involved in 'child-related work' in Western Australia. Further information: Working with Children Screening Unit
Telephone: (08) 6217 8100 and
Freecall: 1800 883 979

A 'tip sheet' providing an excellent overview of the Working with Children checks across Australia and the various obligations of services working with children has been produced by Tom Reisner of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (Australian Institute of Family Studies).

It was published in the Clearinghouse's *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, vol. 14 no. 1 Summer 2006. A copy of the clearinghouse tip sheet can be viewed online:

www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/nl2006/summer.html#tr

Or download it as a PDF from:
www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/nl2006/summertr.pdf

Welcome to new SNAICC staff

SNAICC continues to grow! Angelique joined us mid-March to provide full-time admin support, Nicole came on board in early April to take on project work for SNAICC and the NRS, while Ian has just joined us to develop our governance policies and practices.

Angelique



Hi to all and everyone!! My name is Angelique Davis and I am very happy to join the team at SNAICC as Administrative Officer. I have lived in Melbourne for a short number of years, having relocated from Central Queensland, Darumbal country. I am proudly of Aboriginal descent, namely Kuku Yalanji of Far North Queensland and Munaldjali Bundjalung of South East Queensland.

I believe that I am at the onset of an exciting journey of positive growth and learning that in the long-term will allow for me, personally, to flourish into a strong, independent, self-sufficient professional Aboriginal woman and also professionally; to enable necessary contribution towards

effecting positive change in Indigenous Affairs for Aboriginal and Islander families and communities.

I look forward to fostering strong working partnerships and working proactively with SNAICC members, the National Executive and wider community in future undertakings, opportunities and challenges. ●

Nicole



Hi, my name is Nikki Butler. I am the new project officer with SNAICC. I am a Larrakia/Wadjigan and Eastern Arrente woman born and bred in Darwin. As a cadet with Danila Dilba (Darwin's Aboriginal Health Service) I completed my first year of tertiary studies at Northern Territory University (NTU).

I moved to Melbourne in 2002 to complete a Bachelor of Social Work at RMIT University. I then went on to work for the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) as the long-term supervisor/caseworker for the Lakidjeka program.

A key project I will undertake at SNAICC is to develop cultural audit/assessment tools for mainstream agencies to assist them in enhancing the cultural relevance of their programs and services. I look forward to the experience and knowledge that I will gain through working at SNAICC. ●

Ian



Hi, my name is Ian Horne. My initial connection with SNAICC was through one of my children being friends with the son of Julie, SNAICC's Policy Officer. In due course, this has led towards my taking up the newly created role of Governance Project Officer.

The objective of the role is to support staff and the organisation towards ensuring that appropriate policies and practices are in place or being developed across the broad range of issues that a growing organisation such as SNAICC has to address in the current environment.

For most of the past 12 years I was employed in finance and administration by Hanover Welfare Services, an organisation involved with homelessness relief across greater Melbourne.

Having decided that I need a new and different challenge, I am pleased that the SNAICC position lets me remain within the not-for-profit sector (because its much more interesting to be involved with people rather than beans).

I look forward to working with and learning from the SNAICC team and finding out about everyone who makes a contribution to it. I have appreciated the welcome and support I have received from everyone so far. ●

Artwork by Rishiheeda, aged 7, Umbakumba. Reproduced with permission from RACSSU



National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day 4 August 2006

Calling for children's artwork

SNAICC invites Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to contribute artwork for Children's Day this year. We will publish a selection on our website on the day.

We encourage children's services to facilitate children's drawings, paintings or other artwork on this year's Children's Day theme: **'My Culture is Me – I'm Proud and Strong'**.

Please send the artwork to SNAICC's office by 30 June.

Details are available from Carmen Isherwood on (03) 9489 8099.



DVD/print

Journey of discovery



Going Bush
DVD

SBS/Lonely Planet Publications

Rating: G

Cost: \$19.95 (incl. gst) + p/h

ISBN: 6000165676

Also available:

Going Bush: Secret Journeys in Indigenous Australia (Companion book – paperback)

By Deborah Mailman & Cathy Freeman

Lonely Planet Publications

Cost: \$34.95 (incl. gst) + p/h

ISBN: 1741047366

I must say I don't know if I am the right person to do this review because I am biased – I thought this series was just

brilliant but too short.

For those who are not aware of the series shown just recently on SBS television or who do not receive SBS or those programs, Deborah Mailman the actress and Cathy Freeman the athlete took a four thousand kilometre trip from Broome to Arnhem Land. Along the way they stop at many communities and have many adventures.

The series shows that part of the country in all its splendour and glory and it also shows the communities and families in all their glory. It shows working people, whether it be running a station and droving cattle, and gives a glimpse of the fact that most properties were established by Aboriginal labour.

It shows women weaving from natural bush products the most amazing baskets, mats and various other items, which they sell to sustain themselves. It shows the various artists at work with their paintings. It also shows on the flip side how when labourers finally asked for proper wages they were locked out of their lands for up to periods of forty years.

The delight of all in the DVD is so obvious from start to finish. The grins were from ear to ear and they virtually just lined

up to see Cathy. In fact one community keep on saying we can't believe that she is here with us. In that sense watching the DVD showed that for Aboriginal people, even as remote as these lot, Cathy filled them with pride – in her and themselves.

Both women are natural and delightful, the scenery is spectacular, the people are warm and loving. Positive images abound. The DVD costs \$19.95 and it is well worth obtaining for young children all the way through to old adults.

Distribution:

The DVD and the book can be bought from your nearest Dymocks store, or online from Dymocks at:

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

Reviewer: Michelle Moloney

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

Contact Mark Lawrence at SNAICC to discuss your contribution.

Telephone: 03 9489 8099

email: publications@snaicc.asn.au

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Child Sexual Assault Training for Aboriginal Workers

by Moira Ross-Rayner,
SNAICC Project Worker

In early March Michelle Moloney, SNAICC's NRS Project Worker, and I travelled to Nowra, NSW, to participate in the 'Child Sexual Assault Core Workshop for Aboriginal Communities' that was delivered by the Education Centre against Violence.

Two highly knowledgeable Indigenous women, Mareese Terare and Auntie Melva Kennedy, delivered the training.

It was through their expertise and culturally appropriate delivery of this workshop that makes it possible for many Koori Workers within the state of NSW to receive accredited training in an area that affects many of our children and communities.

This four-day training program allowed participants to learn what sexual assault is and how common it is. It covered explanations and theoretical perspectives, offender tactics and the grooming process. It also covered indicators and disclosure (what to do) and the reporting process.

The conclusion discussed a review of the expectations of the training and the importance of community action, networks and current relevant resources.

Overall this training was an overview of the issues surrounding child sexual assault and left us feeling drained but wanting to know more.

It has the ability to raise awareness for our communities and also provides workers

with the tools to devise strategies to bring this important but disturbing issue to the forefront. Only then will we be able to tackle this very prevalent concern.

Michelle and I have a passion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's rights, and felt this training to be important to our work. Professional development opportunities like this are important for SNAICC staff members and provide us with a chance to update our current skills and keep in touch with the current issues surrounding our communities.

Training provider: The Education Centre Against Violence – a NSW statewide health service administered by Sydney West Area Health Service

Venue: Various courses available at various NSW locations – see website for details

Website: www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au

Address: Locked Bag 7118 Parramatta

BC, NSW 2150

Tel: (02) 9840 3754

Fax: (02) 9840 3754

Email: ecav@wsahs.nsw.gov.au

CONFERENCES

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Men, Women and Community – Partners

2–3 May 2006
Mackay, Qld

The theme of this third annual forum, 'Men, Women and Community – Partners', acknowledges the value of men and women's collaboration within communities to address domestic and family violence, as well as men and women working in partnership with government agencies.

Other areas of focus include: partnerships with community and courts; community justice groups; working with male offenders; and practice models for ensuring effective inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in mainstream services.

Presented by the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

For information:

CDFVR
Tel: (07) 4940 7834
Email: a.webster@cqu.edu.au
Web: www.noviolence.com.au

Parenting Imperatives II – Second National Parenting Conference

25–27 May 2006
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, SA

Hosted by South Australia's Children, Youth and Women's Health Service this conference includes leading international and Australian research and keynote speakers on issues such as:

- involving fathers
- supporting parents where families have undergone trauma, from domestic violence to fleeing their own country as refugees
- putting into practice current research that shows the importance of the early years to children's education
- managing children and young people's aggression
- cultural influences on parenting

For information:

Mel Wood, Conference Secretariat
Tel: (08) 8303 1622
Fax: (08) 8303 1656
Email: wood.melanie@cyh.sa.gov.au
Web: www.cyh.com/parentingconference/index.htm

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

Brighton Beach, Sydney, NSW
21–23 May 2006

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

Themes/topics will include:

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

For information:

Conference Organisers
Tel: (07) 4957 5400
Email: croccs@bigpond.net.au
web:www.croccs.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Conference 2006

*'Raising the Standard and Vision:
The Voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Social Workers'*
3–4 June 2006
Australian Catholic University, Signadou
Campus, Canberra

Presented by the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers, students, and our colleagues are invited to attend this exciting two day conference.

This will be an excellent opportunity to meet, network, share knowledge and experiences and address together the issues of raising the standard and vision of social work practice in an Australian context, from the vantage point that we as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners hold.

For information:

Web: www.atsisw.org
Email: info@atsisw.org

ACWA Conference incorporating the 7th International Looking After Children Conference

'Positive Futures'
14–16 August 2006

Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre,
Sydney, NSW

The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) 2006 Conference will bring together Australian and international practitioners, managers, carers, young people, researchers and policy makers committed to strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or in care.

The Conference program will present and debate the most up to date research, practice and policy in child, youth and family services.

For information:

ACWA Conference Secretariat
Tel: (02) 9254 5000
Fax: (02) 9251 3552
Email: info@acwa06.com
Web: http://www.acwa06.com

From Babies to Blokes: the Making of Men – Men's Advisory Network Inc. National Conference

29 October–1 November 2006
Fremantle, WA

MAN, the Men's Advisory Network is Western Australia's peak men's organisation, affiliated with the Western Australian Council of Social Service. The conference aims to serve as a catalyst for a shift in men's culture, which is seen as a necessary step to improving the wellbeing of the whole community.

Web: www.promaco.com.au/
conference/2006/man/

More conferences listed online

AIFS: There is an extensive listing of conferences relevant to *SNAICC News* readers on the Australian Institute of Family Studies website. Go to: www.aifs.gov.au/institute/conf/confmenu.html

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



Have you moved or changed your address details?

Has your organisation changed its name?

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

Send this form to SNAICC at:

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

Please tick :

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

OR

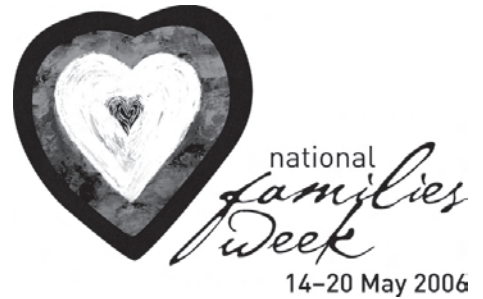
Please remove us from the SNAICC database.

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

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National Families Week

14–20 May 2006



Each year, tens of thousands of people and hundreds of organisations celebrate National Families Week – Australia's annual celebration of the vital role of families.

This National Families Week you're invited to take time to do something special to appreciate and strengthen your family and those around you. Maybe take an extra hour for that bit of extra family "t.l.c." – talking, listening and connecting.

We're giving special emphasis this year to families with young people aged 12 to 18 years, and to the important role of parenting. Young people are Australia's greatest resource. Effective parenting and encouragement are important ways to help young people reach their potential.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, is sponsoring National Families Week 2006 with Families Australia. Centrelink is also promoting National Families Week and providing support through its national network.

Why 14-20 May 2006?

National Families Week is timed to coincide with the United Nations International Day of Families on 15 May. This day is observed by the United Nations to mark the importance that the international community places on families as the most fundamental units of society, as well as concern about their situation in many parts of the world.

How to participate in National Families Week

There are lots of ways for community groups (large and small) to get involved. You could:

- **Plan an event or activity:**
Make National Families Week your own! You can participate in any way that is appropriate for you. Here are some National Families Week ideas:
 - Erect a National Families Week display in your work foyer highlighting what your organisation provides for families
 - Arrange a picnic for your organisation and people who use your services
 - Hold an open day or morning tea

Promote your services, events and activities to families in your area through local media outlets

- Promote the achievements of local families through recognition awards
- Promote the diversity of families in your local area
- Have a family breakfast before work and/or school
- Hold a photographic display or competition
- Have a family fete or carnival.

Let your imagination run wild but be sure to check whether you need public liability insurance. More ideas for activities can be found on our website at www.familiesaustralia.org.au.

Here are some other ways to be involved in the week:

- **Use the National Families Week logo**
Use of the logo is free, all you need to do is cover the costs of running your event and register your event with us.
- **Put out a media release**
- **Promote it!**
Spread the word about National Families Week and your event - use websites, display posters in public places, send e-newsletters. Let's make National Families Week really great!
- **Visit the new national Australian parenting website**
Go to www.raisingchildren.net.au
- **Get help with events**
Register your event with Families Australia before 7 April 2006 and we will send you National Families Week promotional products such as balloons, posters and stickers.
- **Register you event – it's easy**
Go to www.familiesaustralia.org.au or contact Families Australia.

Contact Families Australia for more information on how you can celebrate National Families Week this year:

Tel: (02) 6273 4885
Fax: (02) 6273 4886
Email: familiesweek@familiesaustralia.org.au

Contributor: Families Australia