

POSITIVE IMPACT! SHOWCASING THE EVIDENCE

FRSA National Conference 2012

Darwin Convention Centre, 13 - 15 November

What works?

A report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery best practice models in child protection and their applicability to the NT for SAF,T, the NT peak body for Aboriginal children, youth and families.

A joint presentation to
the Darwin 2012 Family Relationship Australia national conference.



By

Josie Crawshaw – CEO SAF,T

Rosie Elliott – Black Wattle Consulting



SAF,T – the NT peak body for
Aboriginal children, youth & families

- This FRSA conference presentation started with an introduction to SAF,T, the NT peak body for Aboriginal children, youth and families.
For details see:
www.saft.org.au
- The second half of the presentation presented here was told by Black Wattle Consulting. It presents some learnings from the SAF,T research tours and a national history of ACCAs (Aboriginal child care agencies or ACYFS) and their peak bodies.



Why a research tour for SAF,T?

The 2010 Board Of Enquiry into the CP system recommended:

- Establishing a peak body for the Aboriginal child and family sector
- Establishing 2 ACCAs – Aboriginal child care agencies

An ACCA (Aboriginal Child Care Agency) is an Aboriginal community based and controlled child and family welfare agency. In the NT and SA these are now called ACYFS – the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Families Services

Seeking best practice directions, BWC organised a national tour for SAF,T of 40 key services & supporters

We wrote four reports ...





See www.saft.org.au





Key participants over 4 tours

Margie Furber – Chair SAF,T
Josie Crawshaw – CEO SAF,T
Victoria Pollifrone – Policy
Manager SAF,T
Rosie Elliott – Black Wattle
Consulting

**SAF,T staff, Chair & BWC
visited and talked with services and supporters**

Melbourne, October 2011

Perth and Broome, March 2012

Adelaide, March 2012

Brisbane and Far North Queensland, April 2012

NSW, (via teleconference), April March 2012





SAF,T talked with these services & advisors



Victoria Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Berry Street, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), Parenting Research Centre, SNAICC, Professor Dorothy Scott, Professor Marie Connolly

WA Department for Child Protection West Kimberley, the former CQAICCA CEO, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre, Yorganop, Djooraminda, Department for Child Protection Perth, WA Commissioner for Children and Young People, Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation, Indigenous Psychologist Society

SA Aboriginal Family Law Service, Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS), Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth and Family Services (MAYFS), Nunkawarrin Yunti, Dulwich Centre

NSW Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec), KARI Aboriginal Resources Inc., Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network Inc., NSW Children's Guardian, Burrum Dalai Aboriginal Corporation, Great Lakes / Manning Aboriginal Children Services (G.L.M.A.C.S.), Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services Inc., Terri Liebesman

QLD Kalwun South East Queensland Recognised Entity and Family Support Service, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Indigenous Family and Child Support Service, Children of the Dreaming, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition, Kummara Association, Karbul Indigenous Placement Agency, Cape York / Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Advisory Association Inc. (RAATSICC), GenX Enterprises, Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Corporation, Coen Wellbeing Centre, Chuulanga Outstation, Wuchopperen Health Service, Remote Area Child and Youth Mental Health Service, Safe House – ACT for Kids

We asked based on their experience, if they were starting from scratch in delivering Aboriginal child and family services, what would THEY do?

We were inspired by these services and we thank them all for their time, patience, vision and hospitality.



**What works (nationally)
for Aboriginal children and families in
early intervention, intensive family support, out-of-home care,
foster care support, community outreach, cultural support?**

We have lots of evidence!



Our research tells us (1)

Creativity and dedication – locally developed services, adapting to community circumstance, based on dedication of staff and flexible recruitment strategies.

Practice informs policy – our sister state peak organisations QATSICPP & AbSec, both provide CP services as well as peak functions. VACCA & AFSS, which both have such a breadth of service they act state peaks, combining advocacy and service provision.

Long term, respectful relationships between departments & Aboriginal NGOs – ongoing work between Depts & Aboriginal services in SA & Victoria continues to deepen; out of home care case management is evolving to NSW NGOs – AbSec services like KARI, Burrun Dalai, Ngunya Jarjum, G.L.M.A.C.S. are meeting the mark!

Good relationships between NGOs & Children's Commissioners/Guardians pays off – WA/NSW

State accreditation processes matter – NSW services resisted & now praise it



Our research tells us (2)

Some regulatory demands have a negative impact on recruitment of potential kinship and foster carers

Aboriginal kinship/foster care & alternative accommodation services are achievable – WA services

Aboriginal kinship/foster care works with early childhood training services – Yorganop WA IPSU & ACCA

Locally driven, community-based solutions to keep kids safe in an unsafe environment & in community. FNQ Pormpuraaw Child Safe House is built in the heart of the community, staffed by community, overseen by an Elder's Justice group.

A holistic approach works best. Separation of family support from statutory advice services is not best practice, where QLD changed from a local AICCA model to a Recognised Entity model with a separation of family support from statutory advice services, compared to the VACCA Lakidjeke model, where the statutory function is embedded in the wider service.



Our research tells us (3)

Central messages

Recognise the central role of children's rights and promoting the cultural wellbeing of children – urban to remote – Yorganop, AFFS, VACCA, Children of the Dreaming, RAATSICC, Fitzroy Valley, Chuulanga Outstation & Pormpuraaw.

The best cure for child maltreatment is prevention and early intervention.

The development of relationships, in particular respect for Aboriginal and Islander organisations, communities and families ways of understanding and responding to vulnerability and risk is central to culturally appropriate and effective collaborations.

In self-determination & human rights frameworks there are two levels of advocacy – the individual & the community/structural.

Organisations work best when built around longer term goals. Don't rush, build stepping stones one by one.

International learnings

Internationally, Indigenous children's organisations focus within a human rights framework are:

- Cultural support for communities
- Re/building community norms
- Understanding the systemic causes of abuse and neglect
- Building respect for representative and expert peak bodies across government and the non-government sectors.

from T. Libesman – see NSW report



A history of Aboriginal children's services 1



1976 Mollie Dyer visits Canada/USA native & black American family & children agencies. Sets up Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) with advice from VIC Aboriginal Legal Service. First Aus. Conference on Adoption advocates culturally relevant Aboriginal child placement

1978–79 Fed. Dept. Social Security Office of Child Care funds 6 VACCA workers & Vic. Social Welfare Dept. recognises VACCA as official Aboriginal consultants
VACCA hosts 1st Aboriginal Child Survival Conference – resolution *all states enact the Aboriginal Child Placement Welfare legislation*

1979–81 Canberra ACCA meet Sen. Margaret Guilfoyle, Minister for Social Security who says she will consider funding all ACCAs given failure of states to take sufficient action for Aboriginal children (credit to Marie Coleman, Office of Child Care). Fed/state conflict over rights in family & children services. Fred Chaney of WA replaces Margaret Guilfoyle as Minister – no new ACCA funding

A history of Aboriginal children's services 2



1982 SNAICC conference argues low funding restricts ACCAs to band-aid work; calls for a writ against federal govt for not using powers to override discriminatory welfare legislation; recognition Aboriginal skills = academic quals

1983–84 Standing Committee of Social Welfare Administrators, Aboriginal Fostering & Adoption recommends jurisdictions enact ACPP but rejects federal legislation. Two SNAICC conferences reject this Report & call for national Aboriginal child welfare legislation; PM intervention in NSW advertising Aboriginal children for fostering; for all levels of government to adopt ACPP; for an emphasis on prevention / family support
VIC & NT govts begin legislative recognition of ACPP

1997 Holding-Grimes Ministerial Agreement at Social Welfare Minister's Conference freeze ACCA funding & propose ACCA review on grounds the Comm. provided enough & it was a state matter (cf. Sen. Guilfoyle)

A history of Aboriginal children's services 3

1990–91 Barbara Cummings *Take This Child*. Brian Butler calls for national inquiry into removal of children at Australian CP Conference
Joint National Review of ACCAs by Graham Atkinson

1989–90 Total ACCA funding \$3.5M – 59% federal, 41% state

1998 Some AICCA's in financial stress. SNAICC submission on *Impact of Competition Policy on Aboriginal Services* with non-Aboriginal organisations receiving tenders for services to Aboriginal communities
Stolen Gen recs fail to address contemporary removals in any depth

2002–03 37 ACCAs Australia wide – only 11 receive fed support

2010 After 10 years of enquiries & no increase in support, QLD family support services put out to tender with loss of funding to all free standing ACCAs & breakup of long standing services & loss of skills
MoU Absec and NSW government on better collaboration
BoI Into CP In the NT – recommends establishment of 2 ACCAs in NT

Some peak stories



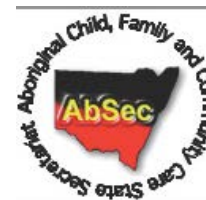
1977 on Over the years, **VACCA** (est 1977) & **AFSS** (est 1978) grow so stable & expert they act as peaks

1981 National peak **SNAICC** formed 'to ensure the survival of the present generation and the well being of future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children'

2002–03 NSW peak **Absec** auspiced by ACWA (*Aus. Community Workers Ass.*)

2004 QLD peak **QATSICPP** auspiced by QAIHC (Qld. Aboriginal Islander Health Council)

2010 NT peak **SAF,T** auspiced by AMSANT, incorporated Feb. 2012



Expectations

‘Organisations such as VACCA have gained a high level of participation and input both formally through legislative recognition and an MoU with the Department and through informal relationships. VACCA’s role therefore extends beyond service provision to participation in decision making in child protection and policy development. This has led to a growing cultural awareness across Victorian children’s organisations.’ *Teresa Libesman (see NSW Report)*

‘High, sometimes unrealistic, expectations can be placed on new peaks. This is often the case with Indigenous organisations which are established to address deep and sometimes intractable problems. It is crucial that the historical context, its contemporary legacy and the enormous structural impediments to change are not blurred, when evaluating what a new peak in a neglected area can achieve. Problems entrenched through decades of government neglect, paternalism and intergenerational trauma are often present.’ *Teresa Libesman (see NSW Report)*

Learnings from our ACCA stories

‘All the ACCAs did was to carry on from what our grandmothers and grandparents had already started years before, struggling to achieve recognition of Aboriginal and Islander child care issues’ *Brian Butler 1997*

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities & friends have never ceased to fight for the rights of children and seek their care and protection.

Long term fights between Commonwealth & State rights over control of the child & family sector has been at the expense of Aboriginal children & families & long term resourcing of the sector. This must change!





SAF,T principles

- Aboriginal children, families and communities matter
- Aboriginal self-determination and self-management matter
- Effective and transparent Aboriginal governance matters
- Aboriginal cultures matter
- Strong Aboriginal leadership matters

In memory, in recognition

We think about the passing this week, 11 November 2012, of

NSW Wiradjeri Elder, Isabel Coe

- 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy campaigner
- 1978 Helped establish Aboriginal Children's Service Redfern, with branches in Wagga Wagga, Cowra, St Mary's & Sydney metro
- 1979 A first SNAICC executive member

A true Children's Champion





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