

update

Issue 72 • Winter 2015 •
**Respectful Relationships with
 Aboriginal & Torres Strait
 Islander Peoples in the ACT**

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Respectful relationships

By Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)

Reading these journal articles has demonstrated to me the rich wealth of knowledge that is held in the ACT community—in community services, in community controlled organisations, in academia. These articles have also showcased some important partnerships that are building between government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and between non-government organisations and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with whom they live and work.

What also comes through these articles is the need for deep and long relationships. It's difficult to build these relationships because they take time, courage and persistence. Trust has been identified as a critical component of respectful relationships but trust is such a rare commodity. It's a hard one to build up and it's an easy one to lose.

These articles provide some really practical advice about what we can all be doing to build trust, to prioritise relationships as a resource and to find opportunities to develop

shared understanding. If we can follow this advice we will be making a valuable contribution to building better futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTCOSS recently updated and renewed our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our RAP has helped focus our efforts and keep us on track with building and retaining relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. We thank the community leaders who have supported us through our reconciliation journey.

As we embark on NAIDOC Week, 5-12 July, please take the time to attend an event where you will meet new people and learn something about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in our city and region.

If you would like to build connections with others in the community sector who are working on building respectful relationships, please join the Reconciliation Peer Network (RecNet):

www.actcoss.org.au.

Can we save Aboriginal affairs in the ACT?

By Kim Davison, Executive Director, Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

When we talk about respectful relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT one thing comes to mind. What is a respectful relationship?

“**Respect is recognising our own worth and the worth of others.**”

Other major indicators may include:

- Proven ability to listen
- Acknowledgement of individuals' skills and contributions
- Honouring boundaries
- Showing consideration

Respect begins between individuals, having the ability to effect open, transparent and honest communication. This should transform into the basic understanding of mainstream services to realise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the ability to identify and address their own needs.

Some things for mainstream services to consider when forming partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services could be:

- Is your organisation credible?
- Does your organisation deliver quality service?
- Is the organisation able to establish culturally effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and, where necessary, families?
- Does your organisation have shared values with Gugan Gulwan?

- Is there a willingness by your organisation to work **with** not **for** Gugan Gulwan?
- Are you approaching the partnership as an expert or as a partner?

Whether you are in the business sector, government, service delivery or the broader community, the ingredients for working effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the same. Integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives in whole of society strategies is imperative in achieving a healthy, inclusive community for all people.

It is important to be able to reach the people who are going to give you the correct information about a certain issue or update within the community. As you listen to people you will gradually learn who knows most about the community. Taking time to listen to various viewpoints and understanding that we all have different views about our community is important.

In closing, I encourage all services to take the time to get to know each other, drop in for a cuppa and have a chat, attend community events and share resources. Let's all work together to ensure our communities are receiving the best possible outcomes. One of our richest assets in Canberra is that we have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experience, skills and commitment to the community – don't waste this valuable resource!

www.gugan-gulwan.com.au



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Want to find out about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in the ACT and region?

ACTCOSS' *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource for Community Sector Workers* contains a directory of contacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, services and programs in the ACT and region.

You can download the resource from the ACTCOSS website: www.actcoss.org.au

Nannies' perspectives on how services can foster respectful relationships

Interview with ACT Nannies Group by Kim Peters, Sector Development Officer, ACTCOSS Gulanga Program. Article written up by Suzanne Richardson, Communications Officer, ACTCOSS

Kim Peters, Gulanga Program Sector Development Officer and member of the local Nannies Group, had a chat with three other Nannies on their views around respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ACT Nannies Group consists of a small number of Aboriginal Elder women who originate either locally or from other areas of Australia but who live within the ACT community. The group provides a safe environment where Nannies can come together once a week and share stories while providing emotional and spiritual support to each other in a peer setting. The gatherings also provide the opportunity for enhancing personal growth and knowledge in areas affecting the lives of Aboriginal families in the ACT.

We thank the Nannies for chatting with us and sharing their views. What follows is a summary of some of the main points that came up in the conversation on respectful relationships. Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

Learn about community titles like "Aunty"

One nanny, let's call her Aunty Bella, shared her story about the time she visited a loved one in hospital. The attending nurse said the patient was in the shower, so asked who she should say is calling in.

"Just tell him Aunty Bella called."

"Alright, Aunty Bella, I'll give him that message," the nurse said.

The nurse did not insist on finding out Aunty Bella's last name or the exact family relationship; instead, she had the cultural awareness to know that "Aunty" was Aunty Bella's title within the Aboriginal community as an Elder, and that it was how Aunty Bella wished to be referred.

"I was really pleased with that. That made me feel good, you know? Things like that, the respect that they give to our loved ones and family."

Welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users into your service, and treat them as equals and individuals

The Nannies all shared how important it is for community services to treat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking assistance as equals:

"When I seek assistance from anybody, I don't want to be looked down on. I want them to treat me as an equal – To know that I do have issues about things in my life. And basically I'm looking for assistance to help me dealing with these issues. But you get some places where they just, they do look down on you."

"And try to talk down to us."

The Nannies also expressed frustration at mainstream services judging people seeking assistance by their race, rather than treating them as individuals:

"It's almost like when black people turn up, you just get the vibes from it. It's like they look at you and think, 'Oh God, blacks again'. You know? It's been happening for years. And I mean, I'm one of these people, I don't often go look for assistance for things, but when I do, I expect to be treated like everybody else. If it's available to me, then I should be able to access it without feeling like, you know, I'm another in a long line of black people who come in for assistance."

The Nannies also discussed how mainstream services often refer them to Aboriginal services simply because they're Aboriginal, regardless of whether the service is appropriate to their requirements. They expressed that they wanted their choices to come to mainstream services respected.

When asked how service providers could improve their relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users, one Nanny said:

"Well, I don't think you should go in there with any preconceived ideas to begin with. To start off with, forget about what you might've heard or whatever, you judge each individual separately."

Give the right advice at the right time, and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users' choices about what they do with the advice

The Nannies were disappointed that sometimes professional staff think they need to keep repeating the same advice, even if a person is seeking support for a different issue:

“And it’s all to do with that smoking, and telling them, you know, they need to lose weight. We all know that. That if something’s wrong with us, we have to lose weight or we give up smoking when we’re ready to.”

It is important that professional staff do not assume the person can’t make their own judgements or make change at a time that works for them and fits with their circumstances and responsibilities.

Hire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

One way the Nannies suggested mainstream services could foster better relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users is by hiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers:

“My own personal view is that a lot of services that are around don’t have enough Aboriginal people working in that service. And to deal with people like us, who are quick to retaliate, we feel that there’s a bit of a, you know, attitude problem about us being black and coming into their services for help. They should probably employ more Aboriginal people, and we can sit there and say, ‘Yeah brother, you know? I’m sick,’ or whatever. And let that black person deal with us, because we know we’re on equal footing.”

Be genuinely interested in learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

The Nannies expressed varying opinions about the value of cultural awareness training for community service workers. Some believed it was a waste of money as they hadn’t seen any improvement in how workers treat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

“They’re not going to learn because they don’t want to learn.”

Others wondered how else non-Indigenous people are going to find out about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures:

“If we don’t have it, are they ever going to learn?”

From the discussion it was clear that cultural awareness training is essential but not enough on its own for service workers to improve attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Rather, workers must genuinely engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples to build a foundation of shared understandings from which respectful relationships can grow.

More information

If you would like to find out more about the Nannies Group, please contact Kim Peters at kim.peters@actcoss.org.au or call 02 6202 7200.

For resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness, visit the Gulanga Program webpage on the ACTCOSS website: www.actcoss.org.au.

Workplace communications & protocols

Kerry Reed-Gilbert provided Aboriginal Culture, History and Heritage Training until her retirement in 2014. Here are some of Kerry’s suggestions around good workplace communications and protocols:

- Learn about Aboriginal people and their communities to develop effective communication and service delivery strategies.
- Promote your organisation to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Work with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and/or community members when dealing with First Nations Australia specific issues and interests.
- Support your staff to attend First Nations Australia training, seminars and events e.g. NAIDOC Week events.
- Be aware of your own stereotypes, and those of other staff, when working with Aboriginal peoples.
- Do not get involved in “Koori Politics” within the Aboriginal community; stay neutral.

Keeping OzHelp's training relevant & respectful for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities

By Tony Holland, CEO, OzHelp Foundation

Our purpose at OzHelp is to prevent suicide by supporting and resourcing men to be resilient and confident in meeting life's challenges.

Much of what we do is very practical and low key, involving BBQs on worksites and short presentations at workplaces about topics covering physical and mental health.

During the course of our work here in the ACT and further afield in our Pilbara and Darwin offices, we are mindful of the need to build and maintain respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We recognise that there can be barriers to connecting with services, support and training like ours, and we recognise that understanding cultural attitudes to social and emotional wellbeing improves access.

With this in mind we have recently begun research into making our "Conversations for Life" suicide prevention short-course more accessible and meaningful to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We engaged consultants to engage in the program itself and gain an understanding of the course content and to then look at its potential to be effective in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We recognised at the outset that it could indeed be ineffective offering "Conversations for Life" to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people without first consulting with stakeholders in the community and gauging the cultural appropriateness of the content.

In order to ensure this we gathered information through surveys, focus groups and personal interviews, as well as holding workshops for written and verbal feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Through these consultations we learnt we would need to engage facilitators with knowledge and understanding of trauma and intergenerational trauma with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. We also learnt it would be beneficial to have local involvement in the workshop of a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support person.

In addition to this, the feedback was clear that we would need to show respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through identifying community entry protocols to create a culturally safe space for the workshop to occur; selecting the appropriate location in consultation with representatives of the local area; collecting background information on

local Elders and significant sites; learning a brief history of mental health and suicide in the area and any recent traumas; as well as keeping in mind flexibility in the dates as participation may be severely impacted upon by community incidents around the time of a scheduled workshop.

We are also now looking at changing the title of the workshop and length to allow more time for the activities, as well as editing of some of the content to be more culturally appropriate.

Ultimately we recognise that if we are to successfully undertake our work and prevent suicide of working-age men in the ACT community, it is vital to provide culturally sensitive and relevant information in our training and to nurture respectful relationships with all groups within our community.

www.ozhelp.org.au



Supporting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples: Enhancing connectedness

By Abigail Pittman, Communications Coordinator, Carers ACT

Australia's history has played a large role in how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently connect with the community and access community services, which is an important consideration for Carers ACT in the context of the services they supply.

Carers ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program coordinator, Donna Maritz, says that the past has had a dramatic impact on the identity of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For many non-Indigenous people, 1788 was the year British settlement took place. However, for most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it marks the date that white settlers landed on Australian shores and devastated the lives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inhabitants.

Past government policies, such as forced relocation from traditional lands, the taking of mixed race children (the Stolen Generations) and a lack of rights and decision-making power, have negatively affected the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. These events and the results of the policies are still very vivid in the minds of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not homogeneous and their communities comprise of a large number of diversities with each community having its own unique customs, cultural belief and associated ceremonies.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have strong traditional connections, their traditional knowledge and customs guide everyday living. For others, there has been a significant loss of culture.

"I think a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are hurting and there is still a lot of anger; an anger that may never leave. Because of this, many Indigenous people are wary of mainstream services and feel like this is just another way of 'white' people trying to force their culture onto them," Donna said.

She went on to explain that due to the actions of the past, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are reluctant to use respite services, as they

fear—perhaps only subconsciously—that their family will be taken away from them.

"In my program, the word 'respite' means anything that can assist and support the day-to-day difficulties associated with being a carer."

The concept of community, the importance of the land and family obligations are common underpinning values within and across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Family extends to distant relations, with obligations and responsibilities to all members and others within the community.

"We see many Indigenous carers looking after people who do not conform to the mainstream notion of family, where they need to be blood relative, rather through traditional kinship or cultural groups," Donna said.

She also explained the importance of Carers ACT attracting and retaining the correct staff.

"Trust is a big thing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is very much a deterrent for a lot of Indigenous people seeking assistance – especially if it is a mainstream service. To maintain and cultivate relationships I find that I need to provide stability, give my upmost respect and work with the people I am helping rather than against them."

For more information on the service we provide to many Indigenous people in the Canberra and Southern Highlands area please call 1800 242 636.

www.carersact.org.au



Supporting Family Carers

Bringing child protection decision making closer to families & communities

Lessons from New Zealand

By Mary Ivec, Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian National University

Direct and meaningful engagement with Maori, quality family group conferencing (FGC) and strong, engaged, supportive and trusted operational and practice leadership, are just some of the positive examples of statutory child protection practice shared at the Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect held in Auckland at the end of March. The conference, cohosted by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development and the Australian Institute of Criminology was attended by over 500 delegates, some 120 from Australia.

In front of peers, their managers and outside observers, including international colleagues and keynotes speakers, workers shared numerous snapshots into their child protection practices and processes. Australian practitioners and researchers were inspired by the honesty, transparency and innovation seen through the work being done in New Zealand where child protection authorities are opening up their systems and processes to the scrutiny of community members. Embracing Maori perspectives, enabling conversations, trust is growing. A shared understanding of the role of statutory authorities and an increased enrolment of community resources, capacity building and commitment to improving child safety is

unfolding. In the past twelve months child protection reports have gone down in New Zealand.

Also shared through conference sessions were the disappointments, frustrations and areas for improvements in the mechanisms designed and legislated to ensure the best outcomes for children when safety concerns exist. Judiciary members joined in workshop conversations with practitioners and community members to tease out how to achieve quality family group conferencing as the main decision-making tool in child protection. Maori have successfully utilised family group conferencing, a model of restorative justice and welfare for thousands of years. It is a model that has been positively evaluated in over 30 countries.

One family court judge gave her story of her early experience as a lawyer participating in a family group conference. She spoke of how the then, Maori child protection worker, now Dr Leland Ruwhiu, Senior Cultural Advisor to Child Youth & Family Services, brought together one hundred people connected to a child of concern. They assembled in a room to go through their own processes for one full day, in Maori, to develop a plan to ensure that the child would be safe and looked after by her own community. The lawyer sat, listened and allowed for the process to take its course, one

which, on the surface she did not understand. What she did understand was that this child had bonds and connections to a wider family and community. A space had to be made for community voices and members for collective decision making and care arrangements. That same family court judge expressed that she would be delighted to see such practice in her courtroom on a daily basis.

Statutory authorities and judiciary members were keen to see increased involvement of families and communities in addressing child safety concerns, acknowledging the limitations and weaknesses in their own formal decision-making processes. They knew that families and communities can and do come up with their own solutions. The falling numbers of youth in detention was cited as proof of the efficacy of family group conferencing. When informal care systems are called together and provided with an opportunity to develop a plan that works to keep a child safe, there is a much greater likelihood of compliance with that safety plan according to the international evidence. The principle is an easy one to follow. You are more likely to abide by a plan that you have played a part in developing. When formal care systems (state authorities and the judiciary), and informal care systems (families and their wider

communities) are able to openly and honestly acknowledge weaknesses and limitations in their own system, the strengths of one, work to address the weaknesses of the other. Neither system on its own is perfect. This is also a solid principle in good regulatory practice.

Moving from state-centred and judiciary-centred decision making to family-based decision making has been shown in FGC evaluations to result in acceptable care plans for children by courts and statutory authorities alike, in terms of keeping children safe. The need for induction, training and ongoing evaluation is fundamental to ensuring quality family group conferencing and especially important for culturally competent child protection practice.

Strengthening family-based decision making processes that directly and meaningfully engage family and community members as active and equal participants in the solution to child protection concerns diverts families from the heavy reliance on professionalised services and costly court proceedings. Creating spaces in a system for family and community voices, conversation and decision making requires professionals to step back from the crowded space that they currently occupy. What we see in New Zealand are courageous practice and operational leaders in statutory and court settings examining their own roles and re-imagining and implementing more relational and restorative approaches in their respective

child protection areas of responsibility.

Restoring trust through respectful listening and a commitment to community engagement through participatory and inclusive processes, the heavily weighted formal systems of authority are letting go of their muscular regulatory responses and resetting the relationships between themselves and informal systems of care, those occurring naturally in the community. More than convincing empirical evidence on responsive regulation can back this approach. Further exploring restorative justice approaches in child protection and developing webs of dialogue through multiple levels of conversation can only strengthen



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New Zealand's traditional lead in restorative justice.

Hopefully, Australian authorities will embrace and act upon the learnings of those delegates returning from NZ, including the incredible engagement with Maori contrasted with the lack of such engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Family group

conferencing remains a marginal practice in child protection in Australia, despite provisions in legislation across the country to include such a mechanism as a way to engage with a child's family and community. New Zealand's mandatory family group conferencing takes away professional discretion and forces FGing to occur before

ever going to court. Mandating FGing in Australia by all state and territory jurisdictions would be a good starting point to respectful engagement with communities.

For more information:
mary.ivec@anu.edu.au

Do you employ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff?

ACTCOSS Gulanga Program staff host regular bi-monthly network lunch meetings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the community sector. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector (ATSIComSec) Network meetings provide participants with a space to network, share and receive information, and the opportunity for peer support and mentoring with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

A recent survey (December 2014) provided feedback around what workers found useful about attending the meetings:

"I like meeting up with our people working in the community, but for lots of reasons, we might not get to see one another that often. We need to have that connection, very important for connection and laugh."

"The connections made with other organisations can benefit my office and program. Extremely beneficial for me."

"Meeting everyone and finding out what everyone does in the community. It was great that everyone was included in the discussions. It was such a friendly environment. Love the food!"

"Meeting other Indigenous workers. Catching up with already known Indigenous workers. Having a yarn over lunch. Guest speakers."

The survey also indicated that 80% of workplaces supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to attend meetings. Workers indicated that their work commitments can sometimes mean they cannot attend. Where practical, Gulanga Program

staff encourage employers to support workers to attend.

The 2015 schedule of meetings can be obtained by contacting gulanga@actcoss.org.au.

Gulanga Program staff also moderate and facilitate the ATSIComSec Email Network. Membership is limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in, working with and volunteering in the community sector in the ACT and surrounding region. The aim of the network is to facilitate discussion, information sharing, networking and inform members of job vacancies, training and community sector news.

If you are interested in posting any information to members of this network, Gulanga Program staff can facilitate this.

Gulanga Program staff aim to reach as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector workers as they can in the ACT and surrounding region through the email network.

For more information, and to join the network, please visit: www.communitylists.org.au/mailman/listinfo/atsicomsec

If you are an employer of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait staff, we encourage you to provide information to them about the ATSIComSec Network meetings and the email network.



**Gulanga
Program**

ACT Whole of Government Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Agreement

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, media release, 23 April 2015

The Chair of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body) and ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA, have today co-signed the ACT Whole of Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.

“The signing of this Agreement is a momentous occasion because it is the first time an understanding of this type has been executed between the ACT Government and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,” Mr Little said.

The Agreement is a commitment between the ACT Government, its service partners, the Elected Body, and most importantly the community, to work together to recognise and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT.

The Agreement outlines the ACT Government’s assurance to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Canberrans to improve the delivery of health, housing, economic development and social services.

Mr Little said that ATSIEB and the ACT Government have worked tirelessly and collaboratively to ensure the Agreement became a reality.

“I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Minister Rattenbury in realising this momentous achievement. It demonstrates that the Elected Body is prepared to strengthen working relationships to initiate change for the benefit of families and the whole community.

“Community engagement has been invaluable in providing key priorities and a central focus for the Agreement.

“The Agreement embeds and supports the community priorities as an integral aspect

to ensure realistic, practical and equitable outcomes are achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans”.

Mr Little is available for interview on 0434 838 361 (media enquiries only).

For more information on the Elected Body visit www.atsieb.com.au

ACT Whole of Government Agreement: www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia



ACT | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body



Signing of the ACT Whole of Government Agreement.

NAIDOC Week 2015: 5-12 July

In 2015, NAIDOC Week will be celebrated around Australia from 5-12 July.

The 2015 National NAIDOC theme “We all Stand on Sacred Ground: Learn, Respect and Celebrate” was selected by the National NAIDOC Committee to highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ strong spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea.

The National NAIDOC Committee encourages all Australians, young and old, to embrace the 2015 National NAIDOC theme and to respect and celebrate local and national sites of significance or ‘sacred places’ and to learn of their traditional names, history and stories.

As the oldest continuing culture on the planet, the living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is intrinsically linked with these sacred places. Long before European arrival, these places had traditional names that reflect the timeless relationship between the people and the land. Often they are connected with Dreaming stories or tell of the meaning of an area.



We all Stand on Sacred Ground: Learn, Respect & Celebrate

5 – 12 JULY 2015

For more information visit the national NAIDOC website: www.naidoc.org.au

For more information on ACT NAIDOC Week 2015: www.facebook.com/naidocACT

2015 Canberra & District Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Worker of the Year

Since 2006, the ACT Council of Social Service has coordinated the Canberra & District NAIDOC Award for the Canberra & District Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Worker of the Year.

Nominations for the award are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the ACT & region, who are employed

in the community sector and non-government agencies who work with the local community. The award is presented at the ACT NAIDOC Awards on Saturday 4 July 2015.

Nominations close

COB 18 June 2015

Nominate

For more information and nomination form, please visit the ACTCOSS website: www.actcoss.org.au

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ACTCOSS would like to thank **bankmecu** for sponsoring this award: www.bankmecu.com.au



We all Stand on
Sacred Ground:
Learn, Respect & Celebrate

5 – 12 JULY 2015

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NAIDOC Community Celebration: Land & Learning, 9 July

This year's NAIDOC theme, "We all Stand on Sacred Ground: Learn, Respect and Celebrate", highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' strong spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea. This theme is an opportunity to pay respects to country and honour those who work tirelessly on preserving land, sea and culture, and to share stories.

Join us as we celebrate NAIDOC through storytelling, artwork and a yarn with our respected Elders and future generation.

Traditional Torres Strait Islander food and a BBQ will be provided.

When:

Thursday 9 July, 11 am – 2pm

Where:

The Smith Family, Office- Cnr Launceston and Easty Streets, Woden

Contact:

Keith Brandy, keith.brandy@actcoss.org.au,
02 6202 7200

This event is proudly supported by YWCA Canberra, Northside Community Service, Karralika, The Smith Family, Woden Community Service, and ACTCOSS.

Join the Reconciliation Peer Network

By Samantha Quimby, Learning & Development Officer, ACTCOSS

The Reconciliation Peer Network is an informal group designed to bring together ACT community organisations who are interested in reconciliation, including the process of developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Many organisations have shown their commitment to reconciliation by developing a RAP. The network offers an opportunity for organisations to collaborate with others to achieve goals set out in their RAP. Organisations starting their reconciliation journey are also encouraged to connect with the network and may be interested in downloading the Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit from the ACTCOSS website as a first step.

ACTCOSS is committed to facilitating peer networks as they bring together individuals who are facing similar challenges or working towards a common goal to provide a space for sharing their thinking, resources, lessons learned, innovative ideas and developing best practices in order to build capacity and increase effectiveness.

The Reconciliation Peer Network is one such network that is working toward developing

respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The network provides an opportunity for organisations to share and learn from each other and to develop partnerships for future collaboration on events and activities that develop relationships, show respect and increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In the future, we hope the network will also provide an opportunity as a group to meet with, and seek the advice of, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and other Aboriginal community Elders and leaders.

At the end of June, the Reconciliation Peer Network will have its second quarterly meeting for the year and new participants at any stage of the reconciliation journey are welcome.

The network has recently launched an email network (RecNet) to support the quarterly face-to-face meetings that commenced in 2014. For more information, or to subscribe to this group, please follow the link on the ACTCOSS website:

www.actcoss.org.au.

Resource: National Disability Coordination Officer Program

Information from 'About this resource', www.ndcoaware.net

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program and website were borne of the need for services and their staff to better understand the culture and customs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly around the subject of disability, how that is seen within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context and how best to engage with individuals, their families and their communities.

Service provider staff who will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will normally undertake Cultural Awareness Training as part of their induction process. The content of this website is meant to strengthen and supplement that Cultural Awareness Training and offer more depth by giving an insight into the feelings and aspirations expressed by a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their family and carers and by those service provider staff that have

worked alongside people from those communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture within Australia is both unique and diverse. No single resource can hope to accurately portray everything contained within this diversity. This Toolkit is a starting point to assist with improving the understanding and interaction between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and service provider staff working to support them.

The content of this resource has been created and contributed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, sharing their lived experience and providing a brief introduction into their culture and how contemporary issues impact their daily lives. Other content has been sourced from publicly available material produced by other organisations.

This site has been created specifically to allow ongoing

input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, who will be able to add more and more stories that will provide added insight into the ways for improved service provision and interaction with a goal of empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to achieve improved educational and employment outcomes.

Topics on the website include:

- Disability & Culture
- How To Engage & Network Effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Advice & Information
- Education & Employment
- Positive Stories
- Linking Families with Services
- Increasing Knowledge
- Further Learning Resources

Visit the resource:

www.ndcoaware.net

NDIS support for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT

Do you know an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person living in the ACT with a disability?

Brendan Richards and Amber Bootle are NDIS support workers who can assist the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to connect with the NDIS.

Brendan and Amber are based at Gugan Gulwan Youth Centre and can be contacted on 02 6296 8900 or 0403 335 425.



Gulanga Program

Gulanga Program

The Gulanga Program is designed to **support ACT homelessness service providers** and the **children, youth and family sector** to develop and/or improve upon good, **culturally appropriate practice** standards. The program employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and **aims to provide better engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** and their families to access the services that will best meet their needs.

Support & Networking

- Consultancy support for organisations & Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander workers
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community sector workers email group, network meetings & online exit survey
- Mentoring for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander workers

Training

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Recruitment & Retention
- The Effects of Racism Within the Workplace
- Engagement of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples

NAIDOC Award

- ACTCOSS & the Gulanga Program coordinate the NAIDOC Award for the Canberra & District Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Worker of the Year

Contact Us

Interested in Gulanga resources and services? Please contact us!

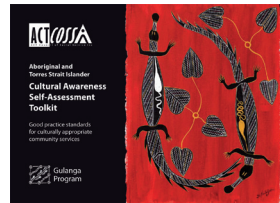
www.actcoss.org.au

gulanga@actcoss.org.au

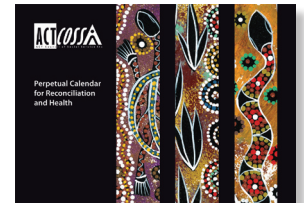
02 6202 7200

Tools & Resources

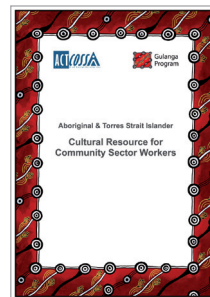
To assist services to better respond & deliver culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples:



Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit (CASAT)



Perpetual Calendar for Reconciliation & Health



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Resource for Community Sector Workers

Gulanga Information Sheets on topics such as recruitment & retention, & racism

Gulanga Good Practice Guides

Gulanga Activity Book

The Gulanga Activity Book was developed as one of the many ways you can assist your organisation to support your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.



Find these resources on our website: www.actcoss.org.au

Learning & development calendar

Training / Forum	Date / Time	Cost: Member / Non-member / Corp. or Govt.
Reconciliation		
Reconciliation Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 25 Jun 2015 10am - 11.30am	Free
Cultural Integrity Reflection Program Facilitated by Rod Little	Fri 31 Jul 2015 9.30am - 4.30pm	\$176 / \$250 / \$325 (incl. GST)
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Recruitment & Retention Presented by ACTCOSS	Fri 14 Aug 2015 9.30am - 12.30pm	Free for ACTCOSS members
Community Sector Managers		
Leaders and Managers Learning Circle Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 23 Jul 2015	\$60 / \$70 (incl. GST)
Emerging Leaders Development Program		
Agile Management Presented by YellowEdge	Wed 19 Aug 2015 9.30am - 4.30pm	\$180 / \$250 / \$300 (incl. GST)
Developing Teams & Managing Performance Presented by YellowEdge	Thu 29 Oct 2015 9.30am - 4.30pm	\$180 / \$250 / \$300 (incl. GST)
Introduction to Grant Writing Presented by YellowEdge	Wed 18 Nov 2015 9.30am-12.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Improving Quality and Impact of Services		
Social Impact Measurement: Evaluating Evolving Programs Presented by SIMNA	Thu 16 Jul 2015 4.30pm - 6pm	Free
Financial Viability Presented by RSM Bird Cameron	Thu 6 Aug 2015 9.30am - 12.30pm	Free / \$50 (incl. GST)
Activity Based Costing Presented by RSM Bird Cameron	Tue 27 Oct 2015 9.30am - 12.30pm	Free / \$50 (incl. GST)
People Powered Services		
Community Development Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS & CDNet	Tue 30 Jun 2015 9.30am - 11.30am	Free
Human Resources Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 3 Sep 2015 9.30am - 11.30am	Free

Find out more about our learning and development opportunities and how to register at the ACTCOSS website: www.actcoss.org.au

Next issue:

Update Issue 73, Spring 2015 edition

The Role of Non-Government Human Services in Building Social & Economic Capital

Members are welcome to contribute articles on the theme.

Copy deadline: 10 August 2015

Space is limited! To guarantee your spot, let Suzanne know as soon as possible.

Email: suzanne.richardson@actcoss.org.au

Ph: 02 6202 7235

Issue 73 will be distributed in September 2015.

Advertise in Update

Would you like ad space? Or a loose-leaf flyer insert? Contact us!

Size/Type	Member	Non-member
1/4 page	\$30	\$90
1/2 page	\$60	\$150
Full page	\$100	\$225
Flyer insert	\$70	\$100

ACTCOSS committee

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Vice President

Camilla Rowland, Karralika Programs Inc.

Secretary

Darlene Cox, Health Care Consumers' Association

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Lucy Mitchell,
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Family Centre

Martin Fisk, Menslink

Roger Munson, ACT
Disability, Aged & Carer
Advocacy Service

Miranda Garnett,
Koomarri

Jill Kelly, Inanna
(Nov 2014 - May 2015)

If you would like to
contact the Committee,
please contact
ACTCOSS and we will
put you in touch.

Fiona MacGregor,
YWCA Canberra

Alexa McLaughlin,
Associate Member

www.actcoss.org.au



The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for people living with low incomes or disadvantage, and not-for-profit community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory.

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

ACTCOSS

Address: Weston Community Hub,
1/6 Gritten St, Weston ACT 2611

Phone: 02 6202 7200

Fax: 02 6288 0070

Email: actcoss@actcoss.org.au

Web: www.actcoss.org.au

ACTCOSS welcomes feedback. Please visit the 'Contact' page on our website for our feedback form, or contact us using the details above.

ACTCOSS staff

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Samantha Quimby

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Keith Brandy
Kim Peters

Tara Prince
Ruth Ragless

Update is a quarterly journal that provides an opportunity for issues relevant to ACTCOSS' membership to be discussed and for information to be shared. Views expressed are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy views of ACTCOSS.