



# ACCAP

## newsletter

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### National Child Abuse Prevention Awards 2001 Special Edition

#### Message from the Chair



It is hard to believe that the year is drawing to a close and this is the last newsletter for 2001.

ACCAP held its last meeting for the year in Melbourne in November, in conjunction with the 8th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. The meeting

was also organised to coincide with the presentation of the National Child Abuse Prevention Awards, at a very successful and enjoyable gala dinner held on the second day of Conference proceedings.

These biennial Awards reflect in part ACCAP's commitment to the prevention of abuse and neglect of children, and acknowledge the outstanding work of so many who are working to make lives safer and happier for our children across Australia - and often under very difficult circumstances.

As a special tribute to them, and as encouragement

for others to work for the well being of children in their communities, we have devoted this edition to the Awards - the winners in the various categories, their stories and photographic records of the smash-hit presentation. It was a night to remember!

We have received many positive comments about our "A Happy Childhood Lasts a Lifetime" campaign and we would be very interested to receive **your** feedback on the effectiveness of the campaign messages.

We look forward to an active and productive year ahead and we look forward to working with many of you to achieve the desired goals for children in Australia.

Season's Greetings to all our readers and good wishes for a happy and peaceful 2002.

Rosemary Sinclair  
Chair

## Introduction

The Awards presentations were made on 21 November 2001 at the gala dinner of the 8th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.

The Awards were given in six categories: Valuing Cultural Diversity; Innovation; Indigenous Culture; Volunteering; Rural and Remote; and Excellence. As the field of child abuse prevention is incredibly diverse, these categories allow services to compete against other services of a similar nature. One winner was selected in each category. A number of services, whose efforts were judged to deserve formal acknowledgment, received Highly Commended awards.

If you would like more information about the Awards night, or the winning organisations, please contact the ACCAP Secretariat on [accap@facs.gov.au](mailto:accap@facs.gov.au), phone (02) 6212 9199 or fax (02) 6212 9299.

## the Award Winners 2001

### Valuing Cultural Diversity

#### Winner

#### **Education Centre Against Violence “Big Shame” video and booklet**

The Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) is a state-wide training organisation of the NSW Health Department. ECAV developed “Big Shame” in response to a lack of culturally appropriate material dealing with issues of child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities. The video and booklet enable professionals working in Aboriginal communities to raise the issue with families, and to open up discussion about child sexual abuse.

Ms Pam Swinfield, Director of ECAV, said that the video demonstrates the seriousness of child sexual assault



Winner Valuing Cultural Diversity - ECAV Melva Kennedy and Mailin Suchting with Ms Pam Swinfield

and difficulties facing a family and community where sexual abuse is occurring.

“‘Big Shame’ builds a story of an Indigenous family as they experience child sexual abuse issues,” Ms Swinfield said.

“To finish the video, we deliberately left the ending of the story open to promote discussion.”

The booklet provides practical tools for the workers on how to deal with the possible responses from families and children, and on how to generate discussion. It also provides guides on what behaviours children might exhibit, offender tactics, their own legal responsibilities and information on issues facing adult survivors of abuse.

“The biggest impact of the video is that it creates a vehicle for discussion. It is a starting point for Aboriginal communities to begin to talk about these issues.”

The video has received very positive feedback from the communities and workers alike, and is now being used across Australia, in remote communities as well as urban centres.

"We love our work and have a dedicated team. We feel it's really important to address the issues of child sexual abuse and ensure service providers and all communities have resources and information to help them work with these issues," Ms Swinfield said.

### Highly Commended

#### **Education Centre Against Violence "Who's the Loser?" video and booklet**

The Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV), winner of this category with their package "Big Shame", has also released a partner video and booklet package called "Who's the Loser?". It is a training resource for professionals working in Aboriginal communities to help them address the issues of family violence and child protection, and to demonstrate how practical violence prevention strategies can be implemented.

### Marymead Child and Family Centre

The Marymead Child and Family Centre in the ACT is helping migrant groups face the reality of their children growing up immersed in Australian culture. A

six week parenting program covers the Australian school system, sharing cultural practices and beliefs, exploring non-physical discipline techniques and Australian child abuse laws. A balanced approach to parenting is encouraged by developing a strong ethnic identity and positive aspects of Australian ways of parenting.



Winner Innovation - CSAPP Dr Reina Michaelson with Rae Walter and Rosemary Sinclair from the Council

### Innovation

#### **Winner**

#### **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program Inc.**

The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (CSAPP) began in 1995 and aims to reduce the incidence and impact of child sexual abuse among Victorian children. Winner of a highly commended award in this category in the 1999 Awards, CSAPP has expanded their services, and is continuing to address child sexual abuse in an holistic way by providing programs for teachers, parents and carers, as well as children.

"With the adults, we teach them how they can best protect their children and support the children who have been abused," Dr Reina Michaelson, founder and Executive Director of CSAPP, said.

CSAPP also spends much of their resources working directly with children, which involves school-based workshops for children from lower primary to upper secondary school, small group discussions, creative art workshops and a retreat near Ballarat called "Tuloy".

The workshops for both adults and children provide information on the extent of child abuse and techniques

to deal with it, as well as providing preventative information on how to avoid unsafe situations and the signs that indicate a child may have been abused.

The workshops have proven to be very useful, with many children applying the skills they have been taught to avoid potentially abusive situations. It also provides a catalyst for children and adults to come forward about their own sexual abuse. Due to its success, CSAPP is also now working internationally to replicate its model in developing countries.

"In this job you see the darkest side of human nature. But to see the little lives whose potential could have been stolen from them, regain that potential and become happy and have a childhood—it makes it all worth it," Dr Michaelson said.

## Highly Commended

### **UnitingCare Burnside New Parent Infant Network**

UnitingCare Burnside, an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, provides services, advocacy and research which focus on care and protection of vulnerable families, young people and children in NSW. The New Parent Infant Network is an innovative, centre-based and home visiting child

protection program that aims to break the cycle of abuse and neglect by giving parents and young children 24 hour support, therapy and education services.

## **The Mofflyn Intensive Family Services Program**

For over 80 years, Mofflyn Intensive Family Services Program (IFS) has been providing emotional and counselling support for Penrith families whose children have been at risk of serious harm. This support is provided within the families' own home to reduce the risk of harm to children. IFS is currently helping families reconnect with their children through two programs, Family Connections and the Building Strengths Program.

## Indigenous Culture

### **Winner**

### **Port Augusta Aboriginal Families Project**

This project offers support to Indigenous families in Port Augusta, and began in 1998 as an undertaking of Family and Youth Services (FAYS), South Australian Housing Trust and the Port Augusta Hospital. Families who seek help from the Project do not seem to be able to improve their circumstance through current intervention and support services, and struggle with multiple problems such as poverty, lack of



Winner Indigenous Culture - Port Augusta Aboriginal Families Project Muriel Cadd, Rosemary Sinclair, Maxine Sultan Forbes, Christine Keogh and Monica Snowden

housing, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and behavioural problems of children.

According to Monica Snowden, Coordinator of the Project, these families need a different approach and independent support to change the patterns of their lives.

"The success of our program is due to the wonderful dedication of the Project staff and the ability of families to decide their own approach to fixing their problems," Ms Snowden said.

"We don't pass judgement. We don't say that the family has to do this or that to get our help, as some other agencies have to do."

The staff work closely with families and take a hands-on approach to helping them to solve their problems. This includes picking them up for appointments with agencies, going with them to the doctor, or helping them in any other way that the families asks. As a result, children of families involved in the Project have notably improved their attendance at school, and staff have observed improvements in their general health and wellbeing, and behaviour. Also, fewer children have needed to be removed from their parents' care than would likely be the case without the Project's involvement, and many children, who had been removed previously, have now returned.

"To see them work hard to make changes in their lives is really amazing," Ms Snowden said.

### **Highly Commended**

#### **Rekindling the Spirit Project**

The Rekindling the Spirit Project provides programs and support for Aboriginal families in the Lismore region of NSW that have been affected by abuse. They focus on educating the community on the vital role Aboriginal men have in raising their children, and

provide support programs for young people affected by or at risk of physical, emotional or substance abuse.

#### **The Muthi Miah Aboriginal Family Preservation Program**

The Muthi Miah Aboriginal Family Preservation Program (MMAFP) assists Aboriginal families whose children are at risk of harm from abuse or neglect. MMAFP provides The Message Stick tools, which help strengthen already existing family practices and enrich Aboriginal culture. It is one of the few services throughout the country reaching Indigenous members of the community with traditional methods of communication.

#### **The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect**

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organisation that was formed to create a national focus on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. For Child Protection Week 2000, NAPCAN worked collaboratively with artist Tex Skuthorpe to create a series of six posters that highlight the importance of child protection, respect, diversity, tolerance and learning.

## Volunteering

### Winner

#### Aunties & Uncles Co-operative Family Project Ltd.

Aunties & Uncles began in the 1970s in Sydney, and now also operates in the central coast, Wollongong, Nowra and Brisbane, with plans to extend the Project to further states of Australia. It links volunteer "aunties and uncles" with socially and emotionally disadvantaged children, who spend one weekend a month together, doing everyday things such as going to the movies, going shopping, or doing homework.

According to Ms Dorothy Hall, Chief Executive Officer of the Project, the children benefit by having access to a stable relationship, which provides them with respite, friendship, guidance and support.

"Many of the children are third or fourth generation welfare families and don't know anything else," Ms Hall said.

"When they're with their aunty or uncle, they get help with their homework and do normal things. They pick up positive behaviour and skills like osmosis."

Aunties & Uncles have helped hundreds of children with over 26,000 volunteers giving their time and energy to the success of the Project. Long-term relationships have been formed between the volunteers and the children, with the majority lasting many years



Winner Volunteering - "Aunties and Uncles" Dorothy Hall

after the one-year requirement. In many cases, the children really become a part of the volunteers' family, with some children, long after they've grown up, bringing *their* children to meet their aunties and uncles.

"Our aunties and uncles help the children to move from what they've known through their lives, to something different. The Project has successfully proven to break the welfare cycle and to reduce child abuse and neglect," Ms Hall said.

### Highly Commended Macarthur District

#### Temporary Family Care

Macarthur District Temporary Family Care has been operating in outer south west Sydney for almost 22 years. It offers programs that provide respite for parents when needed, and support for children, young people, adults and their families who have special needs or are in crisis. The service would not be able to continue without the dedicated volunteers who give their time and open their homes to children and families in need.

#### Foster Parents Association of Queensland

The Foster Parents Association of Queensland (FPAQ) is the peak body for foster carers in Queensland. The organisation has worked for over 25 years to help foster carers provide high quality care to children and young people who have been abused, neglected, or who are at risk.

## Rural and Remote

### Winner

#### **Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation, Domestic Violence Service and Nutrition Support Project for Young Mothers and Children**

The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPY) is a resource, support and advocacy service for Aboriginal women and their families in the cross border communities of NT, SA and WA. They cover 350,000 square kilometres and deliver a number of social services to hundreds of families.

The Domestic Violence Service and the Nutrition Support Project for Young Mothers and Children, two services of NPY, provide a unique and innovative style of service delivery that addresses the specific needs of the families and children of the region. These families often receive poor or limited assistance from mainstream children's services.

"Our communities rely on the local Aboriginal Police Aides, and it's hard for them. Sometimes you have

to wait for a police officer to arrive and they can be up to seven hours drive away," Ms Mary Anderson, NPY Child Nutrition worker, said.

"Our children matter. A child who has been abused in an isolated area is entitled to the same support and protection as a child in an urban area."

NPY adopts a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children who have been abused or are at risk of abuse. The service works case by case with children and their families or carers to assist them access support services that will ensure their ongoing safety. These include housing, financial support, counselling and education.

Historically, child abuse hasn't been widely reported in the region, but NPY is slowly breaking the silence on the issue and encourages families to seek help and develop strategies that will help to prevent child abuse occurring in their homes and communities.

"Anangu (Aboriginal people) in our communities live with these problems everyday and it's time that people started listening to us when we talk about the need to protect and look after our kids."

"It feels great to be recognised by the whole of Australia, as we don't get that sort of recognition for the work we do in central Australia," Ms Anderson said.

### Excellence

### Winner

#### **NSW Department of Community Services Parenting Campaign**

The NSW Parenting Campaign was launched in 1999 and aimed to provide advice, tips and techniques on parenting children of different ages. It was developed in response to the number of



Winner Rural and Remote - NPY Women's Council Rae Walter and Rosemary Sinclair from the Council with Liza Balmer, Daisy Ward, Jane Lloyd and Mary Anderson

calls DoCS received from people seeking information, advice or help with the task of parenting.

"DoCS developed the campaign to acknowledge the difficulties faced by parents and carers and to

provide them and the wider community with practical information on parenting," Ms Kerryn Boland, Deputy Director-General, said.

The campaign was developed by drawing on existing research and materials operating in other states. As a result of the research, and by drawing together the best information from experts in the

field, four magazines were developed:

- *Parenting the most important job in the world;*
- *Caring for babies and toddlers (0 to 5 years);*
- *Caring for children (6-12 years); and*
- *The teenage years (13 to 18 years).*

Over 2 million magazines have been distributed since the campaign launch, with care professionals such as general practitioners and child care workers applauding the materials. Parents have also been equally as supportive, with research indicating that the campaign has been extremely successful. For many parents, the campaign has resulted in improved parenting techniques, an opening-up of family discussion, and recognition of the role they play in their children's lives.

"Parents are telling us they have implemented tips from the magazines and have found them very useful. This campaign has helped parents realise they are not alone, and that help, support and advice is out there," Ms Boland said.

## Highly Commended

### **The Looking after Children Project**

The Looking After Children Project is a collaborative project between Barnardos and the University of New South Wales, which began in 1997. It aims to reduce the chances of system abuse in 'out-of-home' child care, such as when children have been removed from their families and placed into care by the State. Individuals are made openly accountable for their actions by having to meet the Looking After Children requirements, which focus on normal development and increase the safety of children in care.

### **The Samaritans Foundation Creative Times Program**

The Creative Times Program is an initiative of the Samaritans Foundation in the Hunter district of NSW. It has had proven success with "at risk" children who are experiencing behavioural and emotional challenges, and with families who are living in disadvantaged communities. Its Groupwork Program targets children aged 7-13 and their families who are unwilling to be involved in conventional intervention, helping them to experiment and learn new ways of coping with difficulties.

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