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RAATSICC *focus*

Message to our Members:

RAATSICC is a non for profit community organization delivering child, youth and family programs in Far North Queensland..

Welcome to the 6th Edition of the *RAATSICC Focus*. The October to December quarter, was a buzz of activity for the RAATSICC Team. All new service agreements were signed, which resulted in the review of all position packages and the alignment of the PD's to the new investment specifications. This was crucial for the organisation as in November RAATSICC rolled out its largest recruitment round in its history. I am also pleased to announce that after 12 months in the acting CEO position, RAATSICC Management offered me a 12 month contract as the official CEO of RAATSICC, which I accepted. RAATSICC also held a successful Members Forum and AGM, under the revised constitution and a new board was elected. The results are as followed: President: Stuart Marquardt, Vice President: Louisa Miskin, Treasurer: Peterson Opio, Secretary: Emma Schuh, Non-Executive Management Committee Member: Paula Neal, Non-Executive Management Committee Member: VACANT. The end of the quarter RAATSICC held a Organisational and Program Induction forum for all new staff, which ensured that staff were fully aware of the organisation and the programs prior to their commencement in January 2015.



Unfortunately there was an extremely traumatic and sad end to 2014, where 8 children lost their lives. This event affected not only our staff, but the whole State, especially the communities of Cairns, NPA and the Torres Strait. RAATSICC in partnership with various Government Agencies and Non- Government Agencies , especially Wuchopperen Health Service and Apunipima Cape York Health Council collectively provided support and assistance to the immediate and extended families. This response will continue well into 2015 to ensure all affected families are supported in the most respectful manner.

Overall RAATSICC had an extremely productive and successful year, considering the circumstances. I am very pleased with all the efforts from all the staff, especially the senior mangers, Karen Roger, Larissa Walker and Peter Pilot. Next year our focus will be on PRODUCTIVITY and ACHIEVING QUALITY OUTCOMES.

Emma Schuh

Chief Executive Officer.

Spreading the word.... STRONGER FAMILIES

The Queensland Government has announced it's commitment to building a new child and family support system over the next 10 years that will have a greater focus on supporting families to provide a safe and secure home for children. The **Stronger Families** reform program will aim to:

- ◆ reduce the number of children and young people in the child protection system;
- ◆ Revitalise frontline services
- ◆ Refocus on learning, improving and taking responsibility for a better child protection system.

To keep up to date with announcements and have access to resources from the project, go to www.qld.gov.au/strongerfamilies



" OUR CHILDREN, OUR YOUTH, OUR FAMILIES AND OUR COMMUNITIES ARE SAFE, RESILIENT AND EMPOWERED "



CAFS FORUM, DECEMBER 2014

The RAATSICC Community Awareness, Resource and Support Unit organised a forum for child and family support workers and other human service providers in Cairns in December 2014.

Workers came from Napranum, Cairns, Cooktown, Atherton, Yarrabah, Torres Strait, Coen and NPA and took part in a range of professional development activities.

Topics covered included:

- ◆ Child Protection Reforms
 - ◆ Child Protection Act
 - ◆ Domestic Violence Act
 - ◆ The Office of the Public Guardian
 - ◆ Worker Self-Care
 - ◆ Early Childhood playgroups and resources
 - ◆ Apunipima Maternal Child Health and Mens Programs
- Thank you everyone for your contributions and commitment to working with our children, youth and families.



Cooktown Early Intervention Network (CEIN) members were lucky enough to get a tour of the newly completed Cape York Family Centre with CYFC staff, Oriel and Max in November 2014.

Oriel let the group know that the centre should be ready to welcome their first families to the centre in January 2015.



NEW NAPRANUM OFFICE

RAATSICC staff in the Weipa cluster now have a new office thanks to the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council.

Recognised Entity, Family Support and Child Witness of Domestic Violence Child Counsellor will be based at the new office in 2015, providing more accessibility for the community.

Roy and Cairns staff are planning another RAATSICC Meet and Greet in early 2015 so stakeholders and the community can come and see our new office.

You are more than welcome to visit the office at the Napranum Community Hall during work hours, Monday to Friday.



+ Keriba Omasker (Our Children) +

On December 19, 2014 the lives of eight Torres Strait Islander children were tragically taken. The families of the children had requested that the memorial and funeral service be named "Keriba Omasker - Our Children" to honor their loved ones. "Keriba Omasker" means "Our Children" in the Erub dialect of the Torres Strait Islander language of Meriam Mir, a language of the children's heritage. This particularly sad event touched the hearts of the whole nation, which saw an overwhelming response of donations (both monetary and material) from various agencies and individuals to the families of the children.

The Far North Queensland Human and Social Recovery Group was established directly following the incident, to support the immediate needs of the impacted community. RAATSICC which is one of the 3 lead Indigenous NGO's will commit to continuing this support



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2014-2015

- President** STUART MARQUARDT
- Vice-President** LOUISA MISKIN
- Secretary** EMMA SCHUH
- Treasurer** PETERSON OPIO
- Member** PAULA NEAL
- Member** VACANT
- EX-Offico** VACANT
- EX-Offico** VACANT

Become a member today... and help make the change you want to see in the lives of your children, families and in your community!!!

THANKS

To KACEY MITCHELL, MARYANN SAVAGE, ELIA WARE and ASHLEY MONKLAND for your work with RAATSICCC over the years. We wish you all well in your future endeavors and am sure you all will be an asset wherever you go.



Tips for guiding children through tragedy

Local police, other government and community agencies are working closely to provide support to vulnerable people in our communities.

A death, in particular a traumatic death, may leave children feeling insecure and vulnerable to overexposure of information more suited to adult maturity.

As their maturity and understanding of the world is still developing and coming into focus, it is easy for them to develop exaggerated fears and distorted beliefs of their own safety and security.

What is important is that parents and caregivers guide their children through this time by considering the world through children's eyes.

As parents and guardians we want to protect our children from sadness. So sometimes we can avoid addressing the issue directly.

Unfortunately it is unavoidable that sadness and death will be apart of children's lives at times. In realising this, children can be guided in a way that can build their understanding and acceptance of these difficult aspects of life.

Therefore things to consider are:

- Check with your child if they have heard about the tragedy and what they understand about it. You might be surprised what they will come back with.

- You need to understand what they are thinking so you can guide them. Remember children have powerful imaginations. The combination of low levels of security and high levels of traumatic activity can see children imagine and dream frightening and confronting events and stories.

- Be honest with children about the incident. While parents want to protect children, telling them non truths will only confuse them and will ultimately add further complications and possible trust issues within the family.

- Being honest with them doesn't mean they need to know all aspects surrounding the incident. Its truthful to say we will know more as time goes on.

- If children ask difficult questions its OK to say "I don't know why". If you need to, come back later with a considered response.

- When talking about death to children don't assume they understand what it means. Its not unusual for children to think death is just sleeping or the person has just left.

- The use of the word "dead" is best. The explanation for what it means is usually best couched in terms of "their body has stopped working and they don't feel or think anymore"

- Questions children have should be answered in an age appropriate way and in no more in depth than what is being asked for. Children will likely ask more in depth questions as they grow older and their understanding and maturity grows. Don't be tempted to over answer what may be a simple question.

- Parents are teachers as well as nurturers and as tough as it feels, children should be taught what death is. When explaining it use gentle questions to get a clear picture of what they understand.

- Take proactive actions that remind children that they are secure, safe and loved. Having family and friends around them for the coming weeks can help.

- Don't transfer your anxiety to them. Let them experience normality with some additional love from their family.

- Try to maintain usual routines to reinforce the message of security where possible.

- Monitor their access to social media as it can present damaging view points.

- Don't overexpose children to adult conversations or TV. They are more likely to be negatively effected by over exposure.

If your child exhibits prolonged behaviours such as fear and anxiety you should consider engaging your GP or health care worker for a referral to a specialist service.

For additional support services, contact:

Life Line 13 11 44

Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800

Parent Line 1300 30 1300

Special thanks go to Tony Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of **Supportlink** for providing the above information and tips for families.

Anyone with information which could assist with this matter should contact Crime Stoppers anonymously via 1800 333 000 or crimestoppers.com.au 24hrs a day.



We Are Here For You

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

RAATSICC staff attended the RESPECT ME workshop, The Sexual World of the 21st Century Adolescent - how pornography is harming young people in Cairns on 16 October 2014.

Speaker, Melinda Tankard Reist presented information for workers who support young people around issues of relationships, sex, abuse and violence. Melinda highlighted what current research says about the impact of early pornographic exposure on young people which was of interest to staff to ensure that we have appropriate skills and knowledge to provide the best advice, referral and support to children, young people and their families when this is an issue.

Respect Me is a great website that young people can access to help them create healthy, happy relationships whilst decreasing sexual & intimate partner violence. Respect Me answers young peoples questions about Relationships, Sex, Porn, Abuse and more! Respect Me is an initiative of Vocational Partnership Group, a community organisation proudly sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Please take a look and let young people know about this website:

www.respectme.org.au



This past year has been very trying of us all, and I am extremely pleased and proud of the whole team, as it has been a instrumental team effort to successfully achieved what we have achieved:

- ◆ Successful audit
- ◆ Continued confidence and support from our funding bodies
- ◆ Continuation of funds which resulted in 3year funding agreements
- ◆ Healthy relationships with Department of Child Safety and stakeholders
- ◆ Increased profile within communities of the Far North
- ◆ Increased membership base
- ◆ Constitutional changes have been successfully registered
- ◆ Successful AGM
- ◆ Met all Management Committee and operational compliances that were set by the Grant Controllers
- ◆ Increased outcomes achieved across all RAATSICC programs

And much much more...

These positive accomplishments have re-confirmed RAATSICC as being a PEAK body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Youth and Families in our region, and has enabled us here at RAATSICC to continue to do what we do best "Protecting Kids Our Way".

2015 no doubt will be exciting, at times challenging, but always rewarding. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

Emma SCHUH—CEO



CHRISTMAS PARTY 2014



PICTURE OF THE NIGHT!

SAVE THE DATE:
Child & Family Support
Forum,
23-27 March 2014
(TBC - Torres Straits)

staff birthdays

June Kellermeier 7/01
 Allira Wasiu 13/02
 Monica Josiah 14/01
 Norah Bagiri 15/01
 Daphney Clarmont 16/01
 Yvette Carter 24/01

Julie Maru 06/02
 Ani Seravatu 14/02
 Vera Landis 25/02

Francis Jose 19/03
 Emma Schuh—23/ 03



WORKER PROFILE



Zanna Gibson
 Recognised Entity Advisor
 Cooktown

I am originally from HopeVale but live at Archer Point Cooktown. I have one daughter currently completing university on the Gold Coast. I love to unwind by going fishing, hunting and family time.

What I enjoy about working at RAATSICC:

I like that it keeps me busy and I am constantly learning something new. I like that the work I am doing is contributing to helping people.

FUNDRAISING FOR RESOURCES

RAATSICC BBQ's were held 1 at Autobarn and 1 outside of the RAATSICC office to fundraise for some much needed community resource.

Elia Pai Pai and family couldn't avoid a quick bite whilst on their morning shopping run.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

26 Survival Day / Australia Day/ Day of Mourning / Invasion Day

FEBRUARY

13 National Apology Day

MARCH

- 1-7 Foster and Kinship Care Week
- 8 International Women's Day
- 20 National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence
- 9 National Close the Gap Day
- 21 Harmony Day
- 23-29 National Playgroup Week



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