

The Networker

Volume 2 Number 1

Free to SA children's services



June 2007

Published bi-monthly

network sa

Our Vision

A strong and viable children's services sector that enhances the lives of children, families and communities

Our Mission

Our mission is to make a significant contribution to the well-being of children, families and communities through supporting excellence and equity in children's services.

We develop, interpret and disseminate information that strengthens the capacity of children's services to deliver quality programs.

We support the operators of children's services to make informed and sound decisions about the governance, management and administration of their organisations, with a focus on personal, social and fiscal responsibility.

We uphold the Indigenous cultures of Australia, seeking to support the inclusion of Aboriginal children in all children's services and to deepen community understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal family and community values.

We are committed to the provision of services that foster community spirit and help to create a humane and productive society.

It's all about perspective

From time to time at Network SA, we have queries and comments from members of the community seeking child care, and from other visitors to children's services.

Mostly we hear good news stories from contented service users: the great care provided, the rich learning environments offered, happy and contented children enjoying their experiences and so the accolades flow. To this we say "congratulations!"

We know from our own experience how much valuable work is done in the sector by a lot of very committed people.

By the same token, we know children's services staff members work in extremely busy environments. Although they accept the mantle of super-being, occasionally some things slip by unnoticed. Things that are only evident when someone draws attention to them.

People seeking child care do so for a variety of reasons and their focus may differ substantially. Interestingly, one recurrent focus appears to be "the general look of the place".

When a parent has seen several services and is reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of each, details can become blurred.

What often remains is the overall picture the parent associates with a service.

In the current economic climate, with reports of reduced attendances in many South Australian services, it is important to look inward and critically evaluate what others may see on entering the premises of a children's service.

What lingering memory might they take away with them as they decide where to place their child or as they discuss their search with others?

(Continued on page 2)

2 Resource Papers
enclosed

Protect Your Service & Staff - Checks & Balances

Using Check Disk (to protect your computer)

**Step back and
take that
critical look at
your
children's
service.**

**It's a
challenging
thing to do.**

(Continued from page 1)

Consider this list of general comments (heard over time), as lingering memories:

- 'The place felt airless (or too hot or cold)'
- 'Nothing looked inviting at the entrance'
- 'There was clutter everywhere'
- 'The noise level was uncomfortably high'
- 'The walls and doorframes were grubby'
- 'The office had things piled all over the place'
- 'There was an unpleasant residual smell'
- 'The passageways weren't clear'
- 'Several notice board messages were curled up and out of date'
- 'Some posters were ripped and tacky'
- 'The curtains were dusty and looked dull'
- 'The carpets had several stains'
- 'There was a stack of broken equipment in a corner'
- 'The staffroom was really uninviting'
- 'The yard was very bland and treeless'
- 'The shade cloth was tattered'

Now, wait a minute, some might say! What about all the good things? This list doesn't mention the important aspects of children's services. Parents want to know about the care, happiness, safety and education of their children. That's what's important!

Exactly! Parents do want to know about the good things available for their children. In order to assess what's good for children adults often return to their own security zone and tick off the familiar first. What makes adults feel secure? Comfort, safety, nourishment, wellbeing, health and enjoyment form the basic feel good zone. If these seem OK, then bring on the rest!

So, if adults first have to satisfy themselves that the basic things are in place, how does the previous list of general comments stack up? What inner-thought questions might arise from that list, to signify doubt about service visits? Such questions may include:

Does this place feel good overall?

Why are my senses feeling overwhelmed?

What is causing that smell and airlessness?

Is safety an issue here with blocked passageways?

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

If curtains and carpets aren't clean, what about other things?

Does clutter mean activity or mess?

Why doesn't someone care enough to look after things?

Does grubbiness indicate time constraints or unhygienic practices?

Does stacked paperwork indicate priorities or inattention?

Is broken equipment replaced or ignored?

If the staff area is dismal, how can they feel good?

How can I leave my child in this outdoor environment?

How can I know what's happening if information is outdated?

Clearly what services may anticipate visitors might see and value, may be quite different to what they actually see and value. It's all about perspective and the information people have at hand to help them make judgements.

Staff members know the care and educational opportunities available to families and understand the various benefits of the service from a pedagogical and professional viewpoint. They operate from this perspective.

Parents may have some understanding of this viewpoint but will mostly rely on their own perceptions of what makes them feel safe about leaving their children in a care and educational environment. They operate from this perspective.

Now, back to the 'general look of the place' as a criteria for selecting a children's service! Most of the items listed as comments made by parents and visitors are reasonably simple to address, at minimal cost and effort. Regular clean ups, fresh air at reasonable temperatures and safety checks are manageable.

Step back and take that critical look at your children's service. It's a challenging thing to do. It's quite easy to dismiss what isn't seen as central to quality service delivery.

There's always an impressive array of really important things happening to help people see the advantages of children's services, isn't there? This is true. There are essential elements that contribute strongly to the quality of service delivery.

However never underestimate, in this ever increasingly competitive environment, the importance of first impressions. Unless people leave their first visit to a service with a positive overall impression and a sensory memory that invokes security and wellbeing, there's a good chance they won't return.

Bev Pope
Senior Management Consultant
Network SA
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***It's quite easy
to dismiss
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service
delivery.***

Siblings Australia

Siblings Australia is the only organisation of its kind in Australia, the only organisation to focus entirely on the needs of siblings of children with special needs. The incorporated body grew out of the work of the Sibling Project, established in 1999 within the Department of Psychological Medicine at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

The work of Siblings Australia is increasingly recognised nationally and internationally. Our director, Kate Strohm, has presented workshops around the nation and, more recently in Italy, the US, UK and Canada. Her book, *Siblings* (Wakefield Press) has also been published in the US and the UK.

Our work focuses on three main areas: ensuring peer support for siblings, strengthening families through enabling parents to be more able to support siblings, and improving the capacity of organisations to support siblings and the whole family.

Some key activities over the last 7 years have included:

- Internet discussion groups for young siblings, teen siblings and adult siblings
- Presentations to parent groups and professionals around Australia and overseas
- Development of a brochure for parents, which includes sibling support strategies
- Establishment of an internet discussion group for service providers
- Training workshops and development of a manual for facilitators of sibling groups
- Collaboration with educational services to promote sibling support in schools
- Collection of extensive reference library, including books, journal articles etc
- Website established – www.siblingsaustralia.org.au
- Contribution to undergraduate health professional training
- Support of research into sibling issues and sibling support
- Extensive networking and advocacy for sibling support

The Siblings Australia Vision

*Siblings -
acknowledged,
connected,
resilient*

Why siblings need support

There are over 200,000 young people under 25 years in Australia with a severe or profound disability or chronic illness. We can assume that each of these has at least one sibling. We can also assume that these relationships will be the longest of any.

Understandably a large amount of time and resources are spent on a child with special needs. As a result, parents and professionals can inadvertently overlook the significant issues that healthy children can face when a brother or sister has special needs.

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(Continued from page 4)

Siblings can experience a range of feelings and reactions to having a brother or sister with disability or chronic illness and these can vary over time. Often there is confusion about those feelings. On the one hand, a child may feel loving and protective toward their brother or sister. At the same time, they may feel resentment, embarrassment, guilt, sorrow and fear.

Without the cognitive skills and emotional maturity to understand and deal with those feelings, a child's self esteem can suffer. Anger and guilt can turn inward and lead to shame and a sense of worthlessness. Without support, these children can develop a range of emotional and mental health issues.

Support for siblings allows them to feel empowered and less isolated, and it helps them build resilience. As a result, not only will they be more likely to develop to their full potential, but also more likely to contribute support to their brother or sister with special needs.

Implications for children's services

More than anything young siblings need to know that it is ok to have a mix of feelings about their brother or sister and to also know that there are other children out there experiencing challenges. Often pre-school siblings will cope well with experiences but, once they reach school, the reactions of other children can have a greater impact.

Many of the services and resources developed by Siblings Australia are relevant to the needs of young siblings. Sibling peer support groups are a great way to enable these children to share experiences and learn coping skills. Our manual for running sibling groups, *SibWorks*, has received very positive feedback. We welcome registrations of interest by families for the sibling groups we run for 8-12 year olds.

We also provide training for professionals and run information sessions for parents. If anyone is interested in finding out more, or would like to contribute to our work through consultation groups, please contact the office on 08 8361 8361 or email info@siblingsaustralia.org.au.

Kate Strohm
Director
Siblings Australia



Government of South Australia
Children, Youth and Women's
Health Service

PARENTING SA GRANTS

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service through Parenting SA assists parents in their important role by providing opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence.

One-off grants up to \$4000 will be provided to groups of parents, community organisations and voluntary agencies to develop activities and resources to improve the quality of parenting.

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORMS:
Parenting SA
Phone 8303 1660 **Fax** 8303 1653
Email michelle.gordon@cywhs.sa.gov.au
www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Closing date 22nd June 2007



Parenting SA -
'helping parents be their best'

Q & A—your questions answered

SALARY SACRIFICE INTO COMPLYING SUPERANNUATION FUND

We have had several enquiries recently from services where employees are wanting to Salary Sacrifice into a superannuation fund. Clarification was sought from WorkChoices, SafeWork SA, ATO and private consultants. The following is an overview of how the salary sacrifice could work and areas of concern.

An employee is able to salary sacrifice under NAPSA, Child Care (SA) Award and Clerks Award providing both the employer and employee are in agreement.

An employer who does not wish to enter in this arrangement cannot be forced to do so.

If the employer and employee are in agreement, there are specific matters which are required to be adhered to. All of the following provisions must be met:

1. A workplace agreement or contract of employment binding the employer and the employee provides for the employer to pay an amount in respect of the employee under a salary sacrifice arrangement
2. The employee gives the employer written notice (quite separate from the workplace agreement or contract of employment) for a salary sacrifice arrangement
3. The amount sacrificed and the balance not sacrificed when added together must be equal to or greater than the amount of salary or wage ordinarily received had the salary sacrifice not been made.

If a new employee seeks salary sacrifice then it must be included in the workplace agreement or contract of employment. If an employee does not have a workplace agreement or contract because they are paid under NAPSA, Child Care (SA) Award or Clerks Award they must commence a new workplace agreement or contract of employment PRIOR to salary sacrificing into a complying superannuation fund.

This information was confirmed by all of the above sources.

Other considerations and areas of concern:

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

It is *essential* independent advice is sought regarding FBT matters and salary sacrifice. Key areas of concern include:

1. The workplace agreement or contract of employment **MUST** be legally binding otherwise if found not to be legally binding then it may be deemed that no agreement actually exists, and FBT may be incurred by the employer
2. The superannuation fund to which the employer is contributing into **MUST** be a complying fund otherwise the employer may be liable for FBT
3. The superannuation fund must be in the individual's name and not in the name of a spouse or jointly held. If the superannuation fund is not solely in the employee's name then FBT may be applicable

It is vital you seek clarification on these matters to avoid possible liability of FBT. It is recommended visiting the ATO website at www.ato.gov.au and type in salary sacrifice or telephone them on 1300 130 248 for clarification on each individual case.

This information was confirmed by all of the above sources

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Superannuation Guarantee Charge (9%)

Currently eligible employees receive the superannuation guarantee charge at the rate of 9%. Salary sacrificed superannuation contributions under an effective salary sacrifice arrangement are considered to be employer contributions which, when paid in respect of an employee to a complying superannuation fund does not attract the 9% superannuation guarantee charge – only the amount not sacrificed does. As an example, if an employee's wage rate is \$700 and they salary sacrifice \$200 into a complying superannuation fund then the 9% superannuation guarantee charge is only paid on the \$500 portion not salary sacrificed – not the full \$700.

This information was ambiguous with varying opinions however re-affirmation was sought from the ATO who quite clearly stated that the 9% SGC does not apply to the amount sacrificed.

Penalty Rates

Under WorkChoices an employee cannot receive a reduction in the benefit that they would have received if no salary sacrifice was done. Therefore if an employee's wage rate classification is \$700 and \$200 of that is being salary sacrificed into superannuation and the employee works overtime (which attracts a penalty rate), then the overtime is calculated on the \$700 and not the \$500 after salary sacrifice. The overtime payment cannot be salary sacrificed into superannuation.

This point was made by an independent consultant

Leave

The ATO has advised that leave entitlements accrued before the arrangement was entered into cannot be part of an effective salary sacrifice arrangement.

This point was made by an independent consultant and confirmed by the ATO

It is recommended that prior to salary sacrificing payments into a superannuation fund full particulars of each individual case should be explained to the ATO, Workchoices and other relevant Government Bodies where clarification can be sought.

Services should also access www.workchoices.gov.au and follow the 'Legislation' link.

Sub regulation 7.1(4) of the Workplace Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) outlines the requirements regarding salary sacrifice arrangements for employees of constitutional corporations.

It is my personal opinion that there are areas which cause concern especially in respect of FBT. My concern is one of inadvertent non compliance. Unless there is certainty that these matters are thoroughly dealt with, employers should consider whether the risk warrants offering salary sacrificing into superannuation.

Gail Gullickson
Management Consultant
Network SA
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Contacts regarding salary sacrifice

ATO:
1300 130 248
www.ato.gov.au

SafeWork SA:
1300 365 255
www.safework.sa.gov.au

WorkChoices:
1300 363 264
www.workchoices.gov.au

*Introducing Gail
Gullickson
Management
Consultant,
Network SA*

Gail is an accountant with a passion for children's services.

Gail can advise and support services on budgeting, financial record keeping and reporting, leave entitlement calculations, financial policies, procedures and risk management, audit requirements, insurance, interpretation of financial statements, asset management & provisions, superannuation, payroll and termination payments.

Change is in the wind

Workplace Ombudsman

The Prime Minister announced recently that the Office of Workplace Services (OWS) would be renamed the Workplace Ombudsman. He said that the Workplace Ombudsman would take on a greater role in ensuring that employers complied with their legal obligations. For instance, it would conduct regular random audits to ensure employers are meeting their obligations to young people. The Workplace Ombudsman would be a statutory appointee, guaranteeing independence, he said.

Workplace Authority

Agreements will now be lodged with the Workplace Authority (the former Office of the Employment Advocate - OEA), where they will continue to operate from the day of lodgement as is the case with Work Choices.

However, whereas previously they were not vetted for compliance with minimum conditions, the Workplace Authority will conduct the new "fairness test" - effectively a no-disadvantage test, though with some differences to the pre Work Choices model and taking into account both monetary and non-monetary compensation.

The Prime Minister said that the Authority, in establishing what was "fair compensation", would "consider the work obligations of the employee, for instance whether the employee would be required to undertake shift work at weekends".

"The Authority will also consider, where appropriate, other factors such as the industry, location and economic circumstances of the business and the specific employment circumstances or opportunities of the employee. It will take into account all relevant working arrangements and entitlements, including family friendly conditions," he said.

Workplace Infoline

The Federal Government is deleting references to Work Choices from its public information services, changing the name of its telephone advice line from the "WorkChoices Infoline" to the "Workplace Infoline."

SACOSS is moving!

From Friday the 25th of May, our changed contact details are:

South Australian Council of Social Service Inc

Marjorie Black House

47 King William Rd

UNLEY SA 5061

Ph 08 83054222

Fax 08 82729500

Federal Budget 2007/08

Child Care Overview

Child Care Benefit (CCB)

This subsidy will increase by an extra 10% on top of the usual Consumer Price Index increase on 1 July 2007. Overall this is an increase of more than 13%. Families on the maximum rate with one child in full time approved child care will receive an extra \$20.50 per week.

Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR)

Currently eligible working families can claim back 30% of their out-of-pocket child care costs (up to \$4 000 per child per year indexed annually) in the form of a tax rebate. From 1 July 2007 this will be a payment through the Family Assistance Office rather than a claim through the tax system. Families with a low or no tax liability can now also claim back 30% of their out-of-pocket child care expenses.

20 new Innovative Child Care Service Hubs

Hubs are going to be established in regional and remote locations with high Indigenous populations. They will provide child care, but also offer a link with other local early childhood services (such as playgroups, health services etc), for the benefit of families and their children.

Assistance for Long Day Care Services

There are three measures to support Long Day Care (LDC) in outer regional and remote areas.

Sustainability Assistance, which helps services support families and their children in regional and remote locations, has received increased funding.

Private LDC services will now be able to receive Sustainability Assistance.

Up to 20 LDC services in outer regional and remote areas will be able to apply for capital funding to expand or upgrade their centres.

In Home Care and Outside School Hours Care

These services in outer regional and remote areas will also receive additional funding.

Family Day Care

Eligible individuals becoming a Family Day Care carer and living in remote and very remote locations will be able to apply for a Family Day Care Start Up Payment of \$5000.

Inclusion Support Subsidy

In order to provide more support for children with additional needs to access mainstream child care, the Government is committing an additional \$71.3 million over five years for funding to the Inclusion Support Subsidy. This funding will allow an additional 3000 children to be supported each year.

Ensuring quality of approved child care services

An additional \$10.7 million over five years will be spent to continue the Government's commitment to simplifying the quality assurance process across the child care sector and reduce the regulatory burden on services. There has also been \$0.9 million allocated over two years following an agreement by the State, Territory and Australian Governments to establish a taskforce to investigate the feasibility of a national approach to monitoring the quality and safety of all child care services.

Where can I find out more information on the child care measures?

The Government has a range of fact sheets on child care assistance available for families and services available on the web site at www.facsia.gov.au.

Alternatively you can contact the Child Care Budget information line on 1800 220 425 until the middle of June 2007.

Information provided by the Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs

Children's breakfast cereals

A CHOICE investigation of the leading kids' cereals on supermarket shelves has revealed only five cereals meet all the requirements for a healthy breakfast.

A good kids' cereal should contain a 'high' to 'moderate' amount of fibre and not too much salt, sugar or fat. The five cereals are Sanitarium Weet-Bix Kids, Nature's Path Envirokidz Organic Amazon Frosted Flakes, Nature's Path Envirokidz Organic Gorilla Munch, Sanitarium Honey Weets, and Nature's Path Envirokidz Organic Orangutan-O's

Some of the 29 kids' cereals CHOICE assessed were closer to a confectionary than a health food.

Around 70% of kids' cereals have too little fibre and of the ones that make the grade on fibre, only five aren't spoiled by being too salty or sugary.

To help parents choose the healthier foods, CHOICE has set up an interactive database called the 'Food For Kids' website:

www.choicefoodforkids.com.au.

All products listed on the site will be given a red, amber or green light for their sugar, fat, and salt content. This will help parents cut through the marketing hype and misleading labels that some food manufacturers often use to dress up bad kids' foods as good choices.

CHOICE May 2007

CHOICE is the official publication of the Australian Consumers Association, a non-profit organisation based in Sydney, funded by consumer subscriptions.

NORTHERN AREAS LOCAL HUB GROUPS

'This hub group is funded and supported by the Inclusion and Professional Support Program an initiative of the Australian Government'

Report from Gawler Hub

held on 28th March

The Gawler hub held on Wednesday, 28th of March was very successful and your feedback was invaluable. Thank you for your participation and networking that provided all in attendance with some very valuable information.

Firstly I would like to share with you the feedback and suggestions that you all shared in your written feedback and evaluation sheets.

- All of you thought that the Hub Group Meeting was very to extremely useful.
- You rated the overall quality of the Hub as Good to Excellent
- Your impression of the venue and catering was good to excellent.

I have collated all of your comments and suggestions and will be using it as a guide for future hubs. There were a lot of comments regarding the lack of relationships between health, care and education and knowledge of how to access the services within health.

There were also a number of suggestions on information regarding "Learning through Play".

From this information I have developed the next hub agenda and look forward to your continued commitment and participation.

Debbie Grose
Northern Areas Local Hub Groups Coordinator

Right from the Start 2007

Inspire : Connect : Celebrate

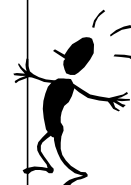
Early Years Conference Thursday 19th & Friday 20th
July at TAFE SA Gawler and the Gawler Arms Hotel.

Keynote speakers will focus on the neurosciences & early brain development, attachment theory & emotional learning.

Accommodation available for \$40 per night at
Roseworthy College - no need to drive home.

Contact Janet Pedlar 8256 8205 for details.

A joint education, health & care venture with DECS, TAFE SA,
Gawler Health Service & Barossa Health



Policy Briefs: translating childhood research to inform policy and practice

Policy Briefs is a publication produced by the **Centre for Community Child Health**, Melbourne. To date, 6 briefs have been released, addressing topics such as Effective community based services, Childhood mental health, Quality in children's services and Work and family life balance.

The Policy Brief series is aimed to stimulate informed debate about issues that affect children's health and wellbeing. The series draws on current research and international best practice and now commands a national and international readership.

Each Brief looks at:

- Why is the issue important?
- What does the research tell us?
- What are the implications of the research?
- Considerations for policy and programs

You can subscribe free to receive e-alerts and links upon the release of each Brief at [Www.rch.org.au/ccch/list/index.cfm](http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/list/index.cfm)

For back issues, references and further information about the Policy Brief initiative please visit www.rch.org.au/ccch/policybriefs.cfm

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Email: natalie.debono@mcri.edu.au

Website: www.rch.org.au/ccch

Healthy Active Australia Community and Schools Grants Program

The Department of Health and Ageing is seeking proposals from eligible organisations to undertake projects or activities that promote healthy living at the local level. Grants from \$10,000 up to \$200,000 are available for projects or activities which encourage and increase physical activity and healthy eating in communities and schools across Australia. Funding will be provided for up to 18 months. Application forms are available from the web site. Applications are closing on 26 June 2007.

Not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply including community, non-government organisations; schools; peak bodies; and Aboriginal controlled health organisations.

For more information contact the HEALTHY ACTIVE AUSTRALIA Info line on (02) 6289 4381 or email healthyactiveaustralia@health.gov.au

Web <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/grantgranthaacs07>

I could not resist sharing this report from the Daily News Journal, Rutherford County Tennessee USA

Editor

April 25, 2007



Public invited to child care lottery drawing on May 4

Rutherford County Schools will host a lottery-style drawing for its new Employee Child Care Program on Friday, May 4 at 9 a.m. The drawing is open to the public and will be held at the Rutherford County Board of Education office, 2240 Southpark Blvd., Murfreesboro.

Beginning next school year, the school district will begin offering a child care program for employees at six school sites, which will accommodate 16 children each.

The service is being offered as a way to retain and recruit the best and brightest teachers for Rutherford County. Operating costs for the child care program are completely self-funded through fees employees will pay for their children to be in the program.

Each site can have up to five infants (6 weeks to 30 months old) and 11 toddlers (31 months to five years old), according to state guidelines. The drawing will begin by picking four certified employee applications for employees that work at each school site. Then, four classified applications will be drawn for each site. Additional certified applications will then be drawn for all remaining spots. Children who do not get selected will be put on a prioritized waiting list.

The drawing will be overseen by the Rutherford County Schools Human Resources Department. For additional information, please contact James Evans, Community Relations, at (615) 893-5812 or at evansj@rcs.k12.tn.us.

The material contained in this publication is of a general nature only and not intended to be advice on any particular matter.

Please share this newsletter with others in your service:

- Director / Assistant Director
- Staff
- Administration
- Committee members
- Principal
- Line Manager
- Owner
- Parents

network sa

Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc. (Network SA) is a non-profit community organisation providing information, support, resources and training to the children's services sector in South Australia.



ARMSU is a specialist unit within Network SA. ARMSU operates SA's Indigenous Professional Support Unit, funded through the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Services provided to the children's services sector by Network SA & ARMSU include:

- Advice and support for Directors, managers, office staff, committee members, operators and other people responsible for effective management of child care and OSHC services
- Training and professional development services
- Specialist advice, support and training for Aboriginal services
- Aboriginal cultural awareness activities for children, and training for staff teams

The Networker is published bi-monthly in August, October, December, February, April and June.

Closing dates for each edition are 20th July, 20th September, 20th November, 20th January, 20th March and 20th May.

Contributions are welcome.

The Networker is part-funded through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

'If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail'

Abraham Maslow