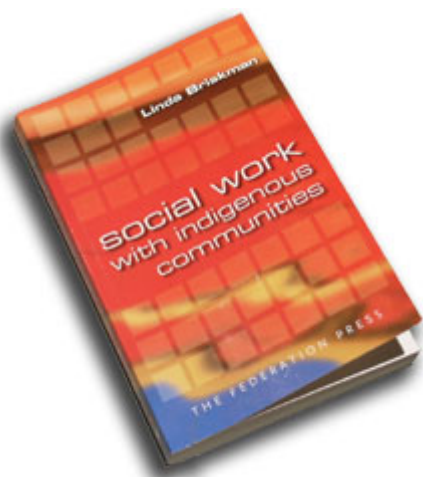


August 2007 – Vol 1-1

Welcome to the first edition of our bi-monthly newsletter (VOICES). Our Major focus as an Association is the emotional and social well-being of our people, we need to maintain our focus through all that might happen so that we can assist our people enhance their resilience and empower them to deal with what is happening around them. It is anticipated that VOICES will provide a regular forum for us to exchange ideas, develop open and honest dialogue, provide service delivery and service provision information, and allow us to share new developments and innovations in practice settings and share creative ideas to advance our objectives. Additionally, the newsletter will comprise reports concerning community activities that are helping Indigenous Australians in particular our children, innovative practice, research opportunities, book reviews, poems, student placement information, and employment opportunities. We invite our fellow aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social workers around Australia to support us and contribute articles to this newsletter.

Author supports NCATSISWA



Briskman, L. (2007) *Social work with indigenous communities*. Federation Press.

The health and welfare of Australia's Indigenous population is marked by recurring and seemingly intractable issues such as poor access to services, family violence, and significant health problems. More than 200 years of historical, cultural and political factors have shaped Indigenous lives – and the perceptions of social workers.

Linda Briskman, social worker, academic and author of the acclaimed book *The Black Grapevine – Aboriginal Activism and the Stolen Generations*, throws down the gauntlet to practitioners and students of social work, challenging them to pursue a better, more

informed way of meeting the unique needs of this community.

She covers the issues that Indigenous communities face, with specific chapters devoted to the areas of children, youth, family violence, health and criminal justice. Case studies are supported by literature and research to provide practitioners and students with a good understanding of the circumstances they will be presented with when working with Indigenous communities.

Good practice is marked by recognition of the strengths of communities and an understanding of how to acknowledge and facilitate these. This book shows social workers how they can develop their knowledge and skills in this area and how they can excel in their work with Indigenous communities.

Linda Briskman holds the Dr Haruhisa Handa Chair in Human Rights Education at Curtin University, Perth.

In solidarity with the never ending struggle of Indigenous peoples in Australia, Linda has made available the royalties from the sales of this book to the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association, to further our work in exchanging information and ideas, and networking for the benefit of communities.

We acknowledge this gift and thank Linda for her generosity.

“A loving heart and generous spirit make the path we walk in these troubled times easier to traverse and gives us hope for the future. We invite all those of good heart, who believe in social justice, to show cultural courage and stand in solidarity with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, in our continuing struggle for recognition of our unique rights as the first peoples of our homeland now called Australia”.

Christine King
Chairperson - NCATSISWA
August 2007

Report form the Executive

At NCATSISWA's recent executive meeting, held on 21-22 July 2007, we looked at current issues affecting Australia's Indigenous Peoples and possible ways forward.

Topics included...

Journal of Australian Indigenous Social Work Practice - NCATSISWA - claiming our ground and having our voices heard

An exciting new challenge for us is the undertaking by the Coalition to develop a bi-annual Journal of Australian Indigenous Social Work Practice as a part of having our voices heard. The inaugural edition will have eight articles. It will be practice and solution focused and identify innovations and theory as it relates to practice. At this stage, it is anticipated that it will not be a research journal. If you are interested and wish to contribute a research article the National Indigenous Researchers Forum would appreciate hearing from you.

If you are interested in contributing to the NCATSISWA Journal of Australian Indigenous Social Work Practice please contact via email.....At this stage, the frequency of the Journal has not been determined and will depend largely on the level of interest obtained from the readers of the newsletter. The Australian Catholic University has kindly offered to publish the Journal and the Executive has accepted this offer.

National Aboriginal Code of Ethics and Practice Principles (consultation through our national networks)

The Executive is keen to develop an Australian Indigenous Social Worker Code of Ethics and Practice Principles to help guide the work with our peoples. It is intended that the Coalition enter a phase of consultation through national networks to gain input from as many practitioners as possible into this significant endeavor. Please send us your thoughts and comments. We'll keep you updated.

NCATSISWA National Conference 2008

The Coalition has confirmed that the next national conference will be held in Canberra in 2008. The conference has been named Consolidating, Stabilization and Empowerment of Aboriginal Families and Communities. The predominant theme will be *Empowerment for the here and now*.

Further information about the conference will be made available in forthcoming newsletters. If you are interested in assisting in any way please email us at info@atsisw.org

Acknowledgement of Country speeches

It was agreed by the Coalition that the practice of Acknowledging Country Speeches could be improved by recognising a particular old person or family that is connected to that country, who have shown leadership and strength from the past. This would provide scope for our children, youth, and families to raise their heads proudly and build their self-esteem through recognising their connection to positive ancestral role models who helped us to get to where we are now as strong Aboriginal people. There should be a positive response when a welcome to the country is given. Instead of sitting quietly and saying nothing, elders who are present should acknowledge the welcome and safety enjoyed and where appropriate offer the same welcome, and safety to those whose lands they are visiting when they change places.

Rallying our people

In these trying times the Executive felt that a song was needed to unite us, lift our hearts and give us hope and direction for the future. Do we dream and write a new song or do we raise the profile of an already existing song for example 'Treaty'. The Coalition is endeavoring to write to the Koori Mail, to put the question out to the community and ask them to contact us so that we can do a quick survey of what people think. If a new song is needed, we can invite Aboriginal songwriters and poets to take up the challenge.

Student Placement

Hello, my name is Melissa Huber. I am 26 years of age and am an Aboriginal single mother. NCATSISWA has kindly given me the opportunity to complete my student placement and gain an insight to the issues, struggles and threats effecting our communities. I am currently undertaking a Diploma of Community Welfare with the Canberra Institute of Technology, and aim to eventually attain the Bachelor of Social Work Degree.

I was born in Canberra and raised predominantly in a traditional Anglo-Saxon family. It was not until 1990 that my mother was informed that her grandfather was of Aboriginal decent. This had been a family secret up until this time. As a family, we continue to struggle with the loss of culture and community. This has left a void and I have a strong desire to achieve a greater understanding of the cultural values, beliefs, needs, achievements and challenges that face our communities.

My grandfather (who I never had the good fortune to meet before his passing) was a Ngoorable man who was raised on a mission. His father (my great grandfather) and many members of my family were involved in the Myall Creek massacre and it is has been said that he was one of the two young boys who survived the massacre. My grandfather served in World War II and received medals of commendation even though he, at that stage, he was not recognized as an Australian citizen. If it were not for the leadership, courage, and strength of my grandfathers (like so many of our ancestors) I would not be here to share the numerous opportunities that we have before us now.

I have previously been employed with the ACT Child at Risk Assessment Unit and the ACT Legal Aid Office as an administrative assistant. However, I think the learning journey with the NCATSISWA, will be the most exciting path I have ever traveled. Over the coming months I will be involve in developing the Newsletter (Voices), the inaugural Journal of Australian Indigenous Social Work Practice and other community development projects the association is undertaking. From a personal point of view, I believe this placement will help me in gathering more knowledge about my Indigenous background and identity. I intend fully embracing this chance of a lifetime and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association for taking me onboard.