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If you would like to contribute an article to this publication, please email: nacbcsc@cccinc.org.au
For more information on NACBCS visit our website: www.nacbcsc.org.au

In Action

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National Convenor's Report

Lynne Wannan, NACBCS National Convenor

NACBCS is currently focussed on the imminent Federal election, an event that regularly sharpens our focus on NACBCS' core business – providing a vision for Australia's response to the needs of our young children.

Every time we gear up for an election or ready ourselves for new Government policy developments, I am heartened about how right we have been from the very start. That probably sounds a bit arrogant but the fact is it's true.

NACBCS grew from the community child care movement which articulated and advocated for government funding for non profit services that would provide a range of supports for children and their families in the context of community. NACBCS' early advocates knew we needed strong communities to ensure children were well supported in their early years. NACBCS members knew early childhood experiences made a difference to a child's development and that families needed locally accessible support to do parenting well. NACBCS members also knew that to achieve strong communities with well support families in which children's development was fostered, Australia needed a universally accessible range of children's services. NACBCS also knew that these needed to be high quality and properly funded. NACBCS was indeed

ahead of its time.

Now, in 2007, our vision is the same and because of our effective and never tiring advocacy, thanks to you all, others share our vision. Governments of all kinds in Australia now accept our fundamental proposition that the early childhood years are critical and that quality services are needed. So we've come a long way, however, the details are still in need of resolution. Questions about how to ensure quality, debates about the importance of not for profit services and a failure by Governments to recognise the harm the for profit sector does to community service provision, mean NACBCS' work is still not finished.

So for now the NACBCS Secretariat will continue to pursue NACBCS' vision on your behalf; meeting with politicians, developing policy reform proposals, participating in and critiquing Government programs such as approaches to quality assurance, service funding and defining how services should be provided. We'll continue to form alliances with others who share our vision, such as unions, ACOSS and early childhood organisations. Our upcoming conference will be important, we'll have had the election and will need to once again review the Australian context for early childhood services and share views on how to continue to make improvements. I look forward to the discussion and debates and catching up with the NACBCS network.

STOP PRESS

Minister Brough has finally released the Indigenous Child Care Plan

Go to http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/minister3.nsf/content/focused_planning_21sep07.htm

National Secretariat Report

Barbara Romeril, National Secretary

Welcome to our newest branch - NACBCS ACT

NACBCS has had a major win in the campaign to protect high standards in the merger of the Quality Assurance systems – this week the Minister agreed to keep the word ‘Quality’ in the title of the new accreditation system, and to investigate graded accreditation to offer incentives for continuous improvements.

These are two of the key demands in the NACBCS campaign – so congratulations to all members who asked the right questions at the consultation forums and to those who prepared the excellent briefing paper for members – but particular thanks to Prue Warrilow, Deputy Convenor of NACBCS for her role on the National Advisory Group which took these issues to the Minister and won these important concessions.

Now it remains to ensure that the accreditation system not only refers to ‘quality’ in its title but also requires good quality service delivery in every children’s service it accredits. Members are urged to comment on the draft framework – and now you have until October to get your responses in, again thanks to an extended consultation period won by the NAG – well done! See elsewhere in this newsletter for a reminder of the NACBCS policy on quality assurance that you can draw on in your response.

NACBCS is gearing up for the imminent federal election – we are in discussions with the major parties about their child care policies and are preparing an active campaign to engage our members in ensuring the parties contesting these elections know that children and children’s services are important electoral issues.

Registrations are coming in for the NACBCS National Conference in November which will mark our 25th Anniversary with a dinner and a commemorative publication.

Our representatives and nominees continue to work hard at the moment with the multitude of government reference groups seeking advice and assistance with policy initiatives; see the updates elsewhere in this newsletter.

National Children’s Services Forum

The National Children’s Services Forum meeting in July was disappointing – the other national peak bodies were not interested in discussing or supporting the NACBCS campaign to prevent watering down of the QA systems – they appeared to be deeply pessimistic about their ability to have any influence. Also the NCSF did not address some of the key questions we agreed to at the March meeting – ECA decided to defer a presentation and discussion on OSHC for children over 12 with a disability and on taxation solutions to child care affordability.

Instead the agenda included a presentation from the SA Government on its health support planning policy for children in child care – ECA suggests that each peak body examine the system and decide if they support it and then the NCSF can write to the Australian Government asking that it be applied nationally.

ECA agreed to provide a short summary of the system to circulate to NACBCS branches – this has not yet arrived.

The Forum also had a presentation from Julian Pocock of SNAICC about the Government’s interventions in remote Aboriginal communities – they are positive about the Minister’s willingness to visit remote communities in NT and the shifts they are seeing in his attitudes as a result (eg he no longer characterizes indigenous-run services as ‘apartheid services’).

In response to proposals for more MACS, playgroups and innovative services, the Minister says ‘it is like pouring water onto sand’ and we need to correct community dysfunction before funding more community services; SNAICC agrees that this is the case for some indigenous communities and welcomes the Budget initiative of 20 new indigenous children’s centres.

SNAICC is asking Government who is planning for more early childhood services, schools etc and asking how indigenous organizations are to be involved in this planning. SNAICC is also proposing a 10 point plan (set out elsewhere in this newsletter) and asked that all national peak bodies consider writing to the Minister supporting their key demands. NACBCS is consulting its branches to seek agreement to the SNAICC plan.

OCCA National reported that they have won a 16 month extension to the old funding formula for occasional child care; the new utilization-based funding formula is still under consideration.

OCCA, SNAICC and NAMS all reported on problems associated with 12 month funding agreements. NCSF agreed to lobby for improved resourcing of rural and remote services including multi-year funding agreements, equipment replacement every 2 years and changes to the efficiency formula.

FaCSIA provided a detailed update on the Child Care Management System which will be set out in the next Child Care News – as well as the Budget initiatives. In response to questions from NCSF regarding inordinate delays in payments to some agencies FaCSIA suggested that their computer systems are malfunctioning and that agencies experiencing delays should ask their state/territory office to escalate it to national office who will organize manual payment.

**Registrations for the
NACBCS Conference
close Monday 29th
October 2007**

**Go to
<http://www.cccinc.org.au/nacbc.htm>**

Don't forget that all NACBCS members are entitled to a 15% discount on all purchases from Educational Experience. For every purchase by a NACBCS member, 2% of the value of the sale will be given to NACBCS.

Phone your order through to
Free Call 1800-025 270 or online at
<http://www.edex.com.au/products/index.cfm?action=order>

Want to build strong, positive relationships with your families and support their parenting?

Early Childhood Australia is offering, in conjunction with NACBCS, a special deal on the Everyday Learning Series, where part of the purchase price is returned to NACBCS.

Early Childhood Australia also knows that parents want information that is up to date, dependable, credible and easy to read. Early Childhood Australia's Everyday Learning Series was developed by early childhood experts specifically to meet these needs. Each year the four books in the series cover topics of real interest to parents such as: brothers and sisters, making friends, maths, imagination and talking.

Having strong relationships with our families is crucial to the quality of a childcare service and to its success. Supporting parents in their parenting is an essential part of that relationship.

'The majority of parents are concerned about the level of confidence in their parenting and the community pressure to get parenting right.' Australian Childhood Foundation.

To find out more information about the Everyday Learning Series, or to obtain a subscription for your families visit:
http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/everyday_learning_series/special_offer_for_services.html.

When ordering the Everyday Learning Services please make sure that you alert Early Childhood Australia that you are a member of NACBCS. For every purchase, 2% of the value of the sale will be given to NACBCS.

Federal Government

Government Intervention in Indigenous Communities

SNAICC's 10 Point Plan – A Way Forward

As was reported in the Winter edition of NACBCS In Action, NACBCS participated in the development of an open letter to the Minister Mal Brough, detailing the sector's concerns about the Government's misguided intervention and the need for a way forward that involves the Government and the sector working together so that we can achieve the best outcomes for Indigenous children and families.

The Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) has developed a Ten Point National Action Plan for all levels of Government and the community. NACBCS supports the work of SNAICC and will continue to advocate to Government the need for the Ten Point National Action Plan to be developed.

NACBCS delegates will be attending the SNAICC National Conference in September in Adelaide. There will be a report on the outcomes of the conference in the Summer Edition of NACBCS In Action.

SNAICC's Ten Point National Action Plan

1. Safety is paramount - responsive child protection. Allegations of child abuse and neglect must be investigated in a child centred way. Ensure child protection systems are well resourced to respond when called upon to properly investigate and intervene where children are at risk of abuse or neglect.
2. Support for children – remove perpetrators not the children. Focus interventions on removing the risk and perpetrators from children rather than children from their families and communities. This requires extra funding and support for local community family support and counselling services and working in partnership with a child's extended family, family friends and local community services.
3. Effective policing - speak up against violence and abuse. Ensure the appropriate levels and forms of policing within communities are in place to enable people to speak out against violence and abuse without placing their own safety at risk.
4. Early intervention. Improve access to Indigenous community based early childhood, childcare, family support and child welfare programs to support families to access help early and promote children's well being.
5. Connections to culture. Maintain children's rights to be connected with their extended family and community and their cultural and spiritual heritage – child removal is a last resort.
6. Build on strengths. All Aboriginal families and communities have strengths and capacity to support and nurture their children. Governments must do things with local communities not to local communities. Recognise and build on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and kinship

systems and develop workforce and community capacity.

7. Healing and restoration. Victims and perpetrators need access to a range of healing and therapeutic programs including alcohol and substance abuse rehabilitation, counselling and healing programs and family restoration programs to rebuild family relationships across generations.

8. Safe and Healthy communities. Disempowered communities with woeful housing, extreme poverty, chronic alcohol and substance abuse, few early childhood programs or health services, no economic base and inadequate schools are likely to have high rates of abuse and neglect. Well planned large scale investment over generations is required to create safe and healthy communities for all Australian children.

9. Listen to and do what works. Evidence on effective child protection systems from Australia and overseas demonstrates that community based and managed child protection systems achieve the best results. Governments should act on the best evidence and advice available – children deserve nothing less than a thorough response.

10. A national response for a national emergency. The Prime Minister has called child abuse in Aboriginal communities a national emergency – but the government has only developed a short term response for the NT. The problem requires sustained national commitment from all states, territories the commonwealth and non-government agencies planned and monitored through a National Indigenous Children's Well Being and Development Taskforce.

From Quality Assurance to Accreditation – Update on the Changes to the System

In the last edition of NACBCS In Action! we reported on the proposed changes to the Child Care Quality Assurance system and provided a fact sheet and questions for NACBCS members to ask at the consultations.

NACBCS has taken the position that we support an integrated QA system if and only if it contains an assurance of expert validators with specific detailed knowledge of the service types they validate and service specific principles and indicators with long day care, family day care and outside school hours streams in separate documents. We urge all members to respond to the current consultation on the Draft Guide to the Child Care Accreditation System Standards and include this position in your response.

In the meantime our campaign and our direct advocacy to the Minister in partnership with other peak bodies has paid off – the Minister has decided to include the word 'Quality' in the title of the new system and also to look at a graded system to provide incentives for continuous improvement.

NACBCS' online survey has provided some useful results:

- 93% of practitioners believing that continuous improvement has played an important part in their participation in the existing QA system.
- 82% of respondents (parents and professionals) do not agree with the exclusion of the word 'quality'.
- 92% of parents would prefer to be told if their service was

unsatisfactory, satisfactory good or high quality rather than accredited/not accredited.

The FaCSIA Child Care Accreditation System discussion forums have recently occurred across the country and NACBCS members have not only been attending, but also posing the difficult questions about the changes to the system. NACBCS members have been able to articulate clearly the concerns about the new system, as well as highlight to FaCSIA the flaws in the consultation process.

Thank you to all NACBCS branches and members who have been actively involved in this campaign – whether it was by asking questions at the forums, circulating the NACBCS fact sheet or participating in the NACBCS online survey.

In a recent briefing given by FaCSIA at the National Children's Services Forum titled 'Quality Assurance – Development of an Integrated Child Care Accreditation System (CCAS)' the following issues were highlighted by the Department:

- Key features of the new system include:
 - Removal of standards on health and safety in line with academic review;
 - Development of 17 standards and 61 indicators to replace the 600 to 700 indicators in the current system; and,
 - A focus on children, not the care setting.
- Feedback to date is positive and includes support for:
 - Development of an integrated system;
 - Reduction in the number of quality standards services are assessed against;
 - Implementation of sanctions within a shorter timeframe on services that have repeatedly not met the conditions for accreditation; and,
 - Removal of health and safety aspects from the standards and better alignment between the standards and state and territory licensing regulations.
- Concern has been expressed about:
 - The removal of 'quality' in the system title;
 - The loss of the tiered rating system.

So FaCSIA heard the concerns in the NACBCS campaign and now the Minister has responded – once again, thanks to everyone who participated in the campaign.

FaCSIA recently released Draft Guide to the new CCAS Standards and have been holding focus groups on the document. NACBCS delegates attended these focus groups and the central issues that were raised about the Draft Guide and Standards were:

- The document needs to be clearer and more specific;
- There needs to be an increased focus on inclusion and children with additional needs;
- There needs to be 3 documents that are relevant to the specific service types (long day care, family day care and outside school hours care);
- The validation criteria need to be made available;
- There needs to be an increased focus on quality and continuous improvement;
- The standard and indicators concerning Family and Community Partnerships need to be strengthened;
- Should emphasise more age specific information; and
- The document should highlight play-based and child-directed programming.

NACBCS is currently developing a submission to the consultation on the Draft Guide to the CCAS Standards.

NACBCS continues to participate in the National Advisory Group, a group of key peak bodies and stakeholders who have been informing the development of the CCAS. It was the joint letter from this group to Minister Brough about the incredibly tight timelines that have been established around the CCAS consultations and the subsequent meeting with the Minister which has resulted in the timelines being extended until the end of October.

NACBCS will continue to keep NACBCS members informed about the development of the CCAS.

Message from Minister Brough - Meeting with National Advisory Group on Quality Assurance

17 September 2007

I met today with members of the child care quality assurance National Advisory Group (NAG) to discuss the ongoing development of the integrated Child Care Accreditation System.

Clearly there is broad support from NAG members and the sector as a whole for the direction the Government is going with the changes we are proposing, particularly with regard to the measures to integrate and streamline the process of accreditation.

There has been concern that the absence of the word "Quality" in the title of the system somehow indicated diminished importance on services providing quality child care. That is simply not correct and to dispel any ongoing concerns I have agreed to rename the system – the Child Care Quality Accreditation System (CCQAS).

Development of the integrated system implements the Government's desire to provide a greater focus on children than on service type. It also ensures that the areas of duplication with state and territory responsibilities for health and safety are no longer included in the system of accreditation. This has seen development of standards with a significantly fewer number of indicators, and these clearly represented a major improvement for the provision of quality child care.

The draft standards have been developed in consultation with the sector. Further work was undertaken by academic experts in early and middle childhood development to determine that they are appropriate indicators of quality. As you would be aware, services currently are only required to meet around 50% of the indicators in order to be accredited. However, we are raising the bar with the introduction of the integrated system and services will have to meet 100% of the new standards in order to maintain approval for Child Care Benefit (CCB) purposes. Parents deserve to know that their children are receiving good quality care whenever they attend an accredited child care service.

I therefore do not believe that the accreditation system should also include a grading system such as satisfactory, good and high quality for services. However, that does not mean that the Government is not interested in providing incentive to the sector for quality improvement. Nor does it mean we are not interested in providing tools for parents to assist in their selection of appropriate child care. I have asked my Department and the NAG to examine the possibility of establishing a complementary system for rating services, and to provide me with advice and options. A rating system might, for example, build on the existing

processes around licensing, compliance and accreditation and provide services with a road map to quality improvement. Similar systems already operate in other countries such as the United States. Implementation of a rating system would not necessarily be tied to the commencement of the accreditation system, but it is appropriate that the two are considered in parallel.

Crucial to the success of the CCQAS will be perceptions about whether the accreditation process is rigorous, transparent and equitable. Therefore I have asked my department to consider options to address concerns about possible bias and inconsistency. This may include the introduction of validation visits by two validators.

It is important that we develop a system that is robust and provides the best outcomes for children. The Government wants to get this right, so I am allowing more time for the sector and for families to provide input and contribute to the development of this important system.

I have therefore agreed to extend the current consultation on the draft Guide to the Standards until 31 October 2007, with field testing of the system to occur in February 2008 and implementation in July 2008.

NAG members will meet again in October 2007 to discuss the issues further, and again in November 2007 to assist with the analysis of feedback and to workshop completion of the system documentation.

Please continue to send all feedback to CCQA.Feedback@facsia.gov.au.

NACBCS Election Campaign

Rhiannon Williams, RMIT Social Work Placement Student working on the NACBCS Election Campaign

The key focus of the 2007 campaign is quality because NACBCS believes that children's services should be based on continuous improvement and best practice, not minimum standards. Our sector requires ongoing investment to ensure long term benefits for Australian society.

The NACBCS campaign will look at four key areas:

- Growth of community building early childhood services
- High Quality Children's Services
- Affordability for all Australian families
- Workforce Development

NACBCS believes that growing the community sector will offer greater opportunities for families and parents to be actively involved with decisions regarding the care of their children. A stronger community is also able to offer a sense of connection that provides invaluable support for families and creates a healthy foundation for society.

Research shows that community owned and managed child children's services offer higher quality care and that community owned children's services are the service of choice for Australian families. The campaign will highlight the role the Australian Government has in ensuring such choice is provided through emphasizing the need to invest in capital and sustainability funding across the nation. Australia needs a system that allows

and encourages the development of community owned services that aid the building of strong communities.

NACBCS will further campaign for funding that will ensure equal access to children's services for all Australian families. Merging the 30% tax rebate into the Child Care Benefit would allow a greater amount of the subsidy to be directed towards those families who are on lower incomes and in most need of support.

The 2007 campaign will also emphasize the need to increase wages and offer attractive, innovative career pathways in the children's services sector. This would encourage recruitment and retention of quality staff in a sector which is facing a predicted shortfall in labour by 2013.

The campaign policy will be available as a lobby kit and due to the success of the NACBCS website during the last election, the lobby kit will be available online. From the website you will be able to download activities and information to share with families and to keep them informed and interested in the election and aware of what they can do to be involved. A snapshot of each of the major political parties' policy platforms regarding children's services will also be provided in the leadup to polling day.

We happily invite any ideas or feedback you may have on the campaign. It can be sent to Rhiannon Williams at policy@cccinc.org.au. Make sure you keep your eyes peeled in the lead up to the election and keep quality child care on the agenda!

Child Care Management System (CCMS)

Karen Morley, NACBCS nominee on Reference Group

The Child Care Management System (CCMS) is a national child care computer system which aims to provide accurate information, on the child care supply and usage for service providers, government agencies and families. The CCMS will go online in January 2008. The transition will be complete by July 2009.

As part of the FaCSIA consultation a reference group was established early 2007. NACBCS has two representatives, Vicky Stuttered and Karen Morley.

The first meeting of the reference group was more about informing the group of proposed changes in the system. However, it has since become a two way conversation where FaCSIA have actively engaged with members of the reference group and used the information gained at meetings to implement change to the system of CCMS.

With the introduction of CCMS parents will be able to access online statements from Centrelink to obtain details of the CCB payments made on their behalf to their child care service(s).

The CCMS will bring all approved child care services online. Services will provide information directly to FaCSIA via the internet to allow calculation and payment of CCB fee reductions on behalf of children in their service.

Eligibility for CCB remains unchanged for families. Families will continue to report any changes to their circumstances to Centrelink. The CCMS will improve the transfer of relevant and timely information to child care services about a family's eligibility. This information will be transferred electronically to the service

from FaCSIA.

The relationship between FaCSIA and the reference group has been both constructive and positive. The reference group represents a variety of stakeholders who have been provided with ample opportunities throughout the process to express concerns and clarify issues relating to this new system.

FaCSIA has engaged and clearly understands the impact this new system will have on the children's services community.

Community Services Training Package Review

Bruce Hurst, NACBCS representative

NACBCS is participating in the Industry Liaison Group for children's and youth services for the review of the CHC02 Community Services Training Package. The CHC02 training package guides the content of the Diploma and Certificate level courses for children's services professionals.

Draft 1 of the revised package was released earlier this year. Community Child Care Victoria provided one of over 350 responses to the first draft. The issues raised by CCC included:

- Arguing for the retention of a separate Certificate IV in OSHC which was proposed to be absorbed into the Certificate IV in Children's Services
- Arguing for a separate Diploma of OSHC which was proposed to be absorbed into the Diploma of Children's Services
- Arguing for the retention of the term "Children's Services" in the names of qualifications
- Arguing for "Outside School Hours Care" as a consistent, recognised term for OSHC services
- Support for the proposed competencies that may comprise a separate skill set for Inclusion Support Facilitators at Advanced Diploma level

Unfortunately NACBCS was not able to submit as no other state/territory branches were able to comment.

The majority of submissions received by the Industry Skills Council on the first draft were received from representatives of children's services. There was a substantial amount of feedback received on the proposed changes to qualifications for Outside School Hours Care.

The ISC are now analysing the feedback to Draft 1 and it is anticipated that Draft 2 will be released in December 2007. Bruce Hurst from Community Child Care Victoria is representing NACBCS on the Industry Reference Group which is expected to meet in December to discuss Draft 2. Bruce is eager to hear from NACBCS members about potential changes to the package prior to the next meeting. The participation of NACBCS in the review of the training package is important. The revised training package will determine how future child care workers are trained. This, of course, will impact upon the quality of care for available for Australian children.

Please send comments to Bruce Hurst, Community Child Victoria at bhurst@cccinc.org.au or you can call Bruce on 03 9486 3455. For the most current information on the review of the training package, visit the Industry Skills Council website <http://www.cshisc.com.au>

NACBCS 25th Anniversary Conference

NACBCS 25th Anniversary Publication

CHILDREN NOT FOR PROFIT

Community Ownership For A Better World

REGISTER NOW FOR THE NACBCS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Registration Forms Available at
www.cccinc.org.au/nacbc.htm

Friday 16 & Saturday 17 November 2007

Melbourne Functions at Caulfield Racecourse

An action-packed program has been planned for the NACBCS Conference including a keynote address on 'The Politics of Child Care in Aotearoa / New Zealand: The Wins & Compromises of successful advocacy for government investment in community early childhood services'.

There will also be pre-conference visits to integrated child and families services, as well as services with innovative governance. Social events including a pre-conference cocktail party and conference dinner are also planned, as is a lively debate on the topic 'are children really too precious for profit?'

There is a mix of workshops for experienced directors of children's services, child care practitioners, local government employees, bureaucrats, parents and social policy workers.

There are also exciting panel presentations on:

- Changing the World – Past, Present and Future
- Theory and Practice of Integrated Children's Services – What Do We Really Mean?
- Practitioners Panel – What Inspires Children's Services Workers?

Registrations for the NACBCS Conference close on Monday the 29th of October. Registrations are available for download at www.cccinc.org.au/nacbc.htm.

For further information on the NACBCS Conference, or for information about the travel subsidy for NACBCS members living in remote communities or distant States & Territories, please contact the conference administrator at recept@cccinc.org.au or 03 9486 3455.

Barbara Romeril, National Secretary

As part of our 25th anniversary celebrations, NACBCS is producing a publication that will document its remarkable history. Here is a sneak preview of the introduction I am writing for this important book.

Like most women who came to political consciousness during the 1970s, I encountered child care as a major political issue. Before the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s child care was seen as a 'women's issue' best solved by individuals, not a collective issue with broad social implications.

In Melbourne in the early 1970s, child care was right up there with the other key political issues of the Women's Movement – abortion, rape, domestic violence, equal pay. I remember in 1972 while some friends were off getting arrested at the local pub for insisting on entering the so-called public bar which was in fact off limits to women, others were occupying Melbourne University Council chambers demanding child care for students and staff. And we all sang the rallying song with the words 'Are you coming to the demo on Saturday morning? What's it about? Child care!'

Coming to work in the children's services sector nearly 30 years later I was delighted to find the national peak body set up in the 1980s to co-ordinate national effort for community based child care was still going strong. The National Association of Community Based Children's Services (originally National Association of Community Based Child Care) had survived when many grassroots political organizations and peak bodies had come and gone during a time of funding given then withdrawn, unsympathetic governments, growing political apathy and even an ill-informed view that women's liberation had been achieved and we could all go home!

Even within NACBCS in the early 21st century, some were saying we should be pragmatic about the facts of life in regard to commercial provision of child care and perhaps our best efforts should be directed to making 'private' child care as community friendly as possible. But the leaders in NACBCS never wavered in their belief that community based children's services are fundamentally different to commercial services, and that NACBCS is the vehicle to carry that belief into national policy debates.

And of course, this is the lived experience of children, parents and staff working in community owned not-for-profit services – the culture is one of mutual support, decision-making is uncluttered by the pursuit of profit and the experience is empowering – being part of community owned children's services is a political act.

This book will document and celebrate the remarkable story of NACBCS, the progressive community peak body that wouldn't go away, that insisted on saying the unpopular things and that bravely carries the flag for a philosophy of engagement and empowerment through community ownership – a philosophy which has a very real presence in the lives of tens of thousands of families across Australia into the 21st century.

Keeping an Eye on Corporate Child Care

Making money can be as easy as ABC

The Age, August 28, 2007

ABC Learning Centres, the world's biggest publicly traded owner of child-care centres, increased second-half profit 88 per cent as it expanded services across the US, Britain and Australia.

Net income rose to \$81.5 million for the six months ended June 30, from \$43.4 million a year earlier.

ABC Learning spent more than \$US700 million (\$A846.7 million) last year buying centres in the US, Australia, New Zealand and Britain to tap rising demand for day-care services. The company added almost 1000 centres last year and said yesterday it "will continue to acquire and develop" child-care centres this year.

"This result has been fuelled by contributions from across our business globally and we are exceptionally well positioned for continued growth," chief executive Eddy Groves said.

ABC Learning shares rose 21¢ to \$7.07, paring this year's loss to 16 per cent.

The company gets more than 60 per cent of sales in Australia and New Zealand, including contracts with Singapore Telecommunications and Commonwealth Bank.

Mr Groves, who started with one child-care centre in 1988, now oversees more than 2200 centres and day-care operations in four countries. The company's centres look after children from six weeks to five years old.

ABC Learning is the second-largest operator in the US, yet holds only 1.5 per cent of the market.

Full-year profit was \$143.1 million, or 36¢ a share, compared with \$81.1 million, or 28¢ a share, a year earlier. The result beat the median estimate of \$139.1 million in a survey of six analysts by Bloomberg.

Revenue more than doubled to \$1.7 billion, from \$790.8 million last year.

ABC Learning has forecast earnings per share growth of more than 20 per cent this year.

About 40 per cent of ABC Learning's Australian sales come from government subsidies, with 25 per cent in the US. The Australian government is tipped to spend \$11 billion on child-care services by fiscal 2012.

Groves shows the ABC of expansion

Sydney Morning Herald, August 28, 2007

THE child-care provider ABC Learning Centres is promising more fun times this year, with further acquisitions in the US.

ABC is already the largest provider of child care in Australia and New Zealand, and with the \$US330 million (\$420 million) acquisition of La Petite became the second largest child-care provider in the US. Its business in Britain is also booming. Two weeks ago ABC announced the \$74 million acquisition of Britain's Leapfrog Nurseries.

Should shareholders in Nord Anglia Education approve the buy-out next month the deal would make ABC the largest child-care provider in Britain.

The business includes 88 child-care centres and a freehold and long leasehold property portfolio of 41 centres valued at £40.9 million (\$99.4 million).

As at June 30 ABC had 1015 centres in the US, 35 in Britain, and 1188 in Australia and New Zealand. From just 43 centres in 2001, the year it listed, ABC has made acquiring new businesses look like child's play.

In calendar 2006 the company took over its local rivals Kids Campus and Hutchison's Child Care Services, but Mr Groves said there would be little in the way of large-scale acquisitions in Australia and New Zealand this financial year.

No shortage of childcare places: Brough

AAP, The Age, August 22, 2007

Up to 30,000 childcare vacancies a day now exist in Victoria, despite Labor claims that places are hard to find, the federal government says.

Federal Minister for Families Mal Brough admitted there may be some Melbourne "hot spots" where parents had to compete for childcare places, but he said places in Victoria had more than doubled in 10 years to 152,494.

In the past year, he said, Victorian childcare places increased by 12,594.

"Unfortunately, too many parents have been told, by the ALP in particular, that there just simply aren't any vacancies in Victoria," Mr Brough said at ABC Learning Centre in Blackburn South on Wednesday.

Mr Brough said he did not have a problem with Mr Groves earning millions of dollars from a business that now had 20 per cent of the childcare market.

"I'm certainly not here to be an apologist for ABC," he said.

"But there is nothing wrong with any of the local councils around here starting a childcare centre if they believe it serves their community well.

"They will be supported and funded by the commonwealth government, just like anyone else would be, so it is a very diverse market and people should get away from the fact that the only childcare options are long day care."

NACBCS will be launching a publication to celebrate our 25th anniversary!

Branch Reports

Queensland

Recently the Queensland Branch has written to FaCSIA regarding concerns regarding the draft Accreditation System - the main concern being the short time frame that has been given by the government to respond to the draft paper. The branch has also been involved in collating and responding to ideas for the Federal campaign which has been forwarded to the National Secretariat.

NACBCS QLD has had representation on the Child Care Skills Formation group and also has been invited to be part of the reference group looking at the issues that have arisen recently regarding teachers' registration for those teachers choosing to work in the early childhood centers. Also over the last year one of our committee members has been involved in the SEEDS project which was funded by the government to look at the social and emotional wellbeing of infants and young children. This project is now complete and an evaluation has been submitted.

**Workshop places
are filling quick
for the NACBCS
Conference**

**Get your
registrations in
TODAY!**

**Go to
<http://www.cccinc.org.au/nacbc.htm>**

South Australia

Tanya Plibersek MP visited Adelaide on 19th April 2006. Approximately 34 people attended the child care consultation Tanya is interested in quality, availability and affordability of child care.

The State Government are conducting a :- Have Your Say: Improving Health & Well Being – Subjects include:

- Quality of life
- Sport & recreation
- Safety at work
- Infant mortality

Regional planning day: Have Your Say invitations to attend. Review strategies for strategic planning in our state. Objectives eg building community.

Child Care Reference Group Meeting:

- DECS is now a registered CRIMTRAC agency. Eventually all police checks will go via this process. All child care staff in all services will be required to go through the process every 2 years. This is due to changes within the Child Protection Act.
- Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs) Model – the same as rural integrated services. The majority of ECDC Directors will be paid by DECS and most will run a pre-school programme. Child care places & child care staff will be integrated.
- Apparently Assistant Directors where Directors have 12-weeks annual leave will be paid as Director for that 12-week period. DECS claim they are working in conjunction with Unions.
- A governance model will have a local community members group; stakeholders group; management group & user group.
- DECS may co-locate services but not integrate them.
- DECS Licensing – query re-number of visits in 2-year licensing period as large number of services and no additional DECS project officers. DECS have developed a Risk Assessment Tool. They look at the history of a service. Minimum of 2 visits in a 2-year period – 1 unannounced. Country services receive more visits. New services receive 4 visits. DECS to write to Districts to get feedback as to how this was working. Most members of the CC Reference Group felt that the Districts probably wouldn't know.
- OSHC – 80% on school sites. 70% on DECS public school sites. OSHC are expected to comply with National Standards in regard to space & staff. OSHC has grown rapidly in the past 10 years.
- OSHC in LDC Centres is not accredited by NCAC at all – not under LDC QIAS & not under OSHCQA.

New South Wales

The third quarterly NACBCS meeting will be held on Monday 17th September, 2007. Our ever increasing membership reflects the need for the sector to have a political voice for the sustainability of Community Based Services, resulting in membership more than doubling. Additionally NACBCS NSW has been actively updating its promotional material in order to reflect its new vision for community owned children's services in NSW.

NACBCS NSW has been actively involved in advocacy. This has included the involvement in the recent Commonwealth Government consultations relating to the proposed Accreditation System. In collaboration with NACBCS Victoria a fact sheet to promote the event plus lobbying tips were distributed to all members and during the consultations. The aim of the fact sheet was to raise awareness of the proposed changes, plus provide individuals with questions to ask whilst at the public forums. Combining these efforts was successful in raising both concerns and strengths of the proposed changes. The representation of NACBCS members at the pre meetings was an indication of the high interest in the association and how united we can lobby to support those within the community owned children's services sector.

NACBCS has been collaborating with a range of peak organisations in lobbying the NSW State Government to improve staff ratios for babies. Prior to this new round of advocacy, NACBCS was involved in assisting to organise a successful political rally. On the day over 700 people flocked to the city streets in support of better ratios. For those who attended, the buzz of hitting the street for the rally has been one of the political highlights of their careers.

So what came from the rally? Following the success of the rally, the NSW Department of Community Services established a reference group to further explore the impact and benefits of a 1 to 4 ratio. You can download the taskforce report at www.ccccnsw.org.au/ratios/pages/taskforce.html. Information pertaining to the recent round of lobbying can be found at www.ccccnsw.org.au/ratios

An official launch of the campaign is set for Wednesday, 24 October 2007 10:30 AM-12:30 PM. at Mia Mia, Macquarie University.

Those wishing to contact NACBCS NSW can do so on 02 89226434 or email us at nacbcns@bigpond.com



Western Australia

Carewest WA

Regulations / Licensing : The Discussion Paper prepared by the Departmental Policy officer and in consultation with the Child Care Consultative Review Committee, was launched on 16 July 2007. Since then an independent facilitator has been conducting focus groups in both metropolitan and regional areas. These have proven to be very successful to date and there has been a very good response to the on-line surveys. To date, the only initiative that has not been implemented is the parent & staff focus groups.

The Child Care Licensing Unit has been officially transferred to the new Department for Communities.

Strategic Plan: The Constitution has been reviewed, amended and adopted. It will be launched at the AGM to be held on 18 September.

The Research in Stress in Child Care, conducted by Margaret Sims, of Edith Cowan University and which Carewest sponsored, will be officially launched on 27 November. After that the final report will be available on a number of websites, including NACBCS.

Changes to Support Agencies & Sponsorship: There have been a number of key people change positions over the past few months. Tony Morley has resigned as CEO of RUCSN to take up the position of CEO of Noah's Ark. Marcelle Psaltis-Saratsis has left the Gowrie and is currently working for ECU.

The Gowrie is no longer producing a calendar of Professional Development and the cost of the workshops has increased since July.

The Long Day Care Centre which Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation sponsored has been sold to a WA Chain operator.

Children's Services Industry Development Council (C.S.I.D.C.). This group has recently reviewed its role and after consultation and debate, it has decided to pursue its work, especially its advocacy for children's services as a valuable career.

Children's Services Conference: This conference brought together the different sectors of Children's Services via an exciting program. It was primarily sponsored by Family Day Care Association which extended invitations to all. Attendees came from far and near to be reenergised, engaged and dined in plush surroundings. It was held on the last weekend of August, with good attendance. Both keynote speakers and workshop presenters were inspirational. The theme, "Connections" proved to be very successful in enabling individuals to literally connect and develop networks.

Carewest & Child Care Association WA: We joined forces with the Private Association to attend a meeting with the Minister, Sue Ellery, to express our concern for the lack of planning for Children's Services. Whilst not wanting to set up yet another committee, the Minister did agree to ask the Children's Services Advisory Committee to establish a working group to explore that issue. She did say that this group could co-opt industry representatives

to assist them in their work.

The LHMWU has also convened a number of meetings to try and develop a plan to address the concern of many after the closure and sale of community based Centres, especially in low socio economic areas.

Finally we are trying very hard to have a WA cohort attend the National Conference in November.

ACT

Kerry Fitzroy, Chair Person, NACBCS ACT

The Australian Capital Territory branch of NACBCS has officially commenced with our focus on building our profile and membership in the ACT.

We have held monthly meetings to develop the branch constitution and have had regular attendance of members to each meeting.

We will continue to network and promote NACBCS in the ACT with an aim to attract new membership and interest.

The ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support holds regular Children's Services Forums with our Minister to discuss current issues in the children's services sector. I will be attending to represent NACBCS in the ACT.

One of the current issues in Canberra is the licensing of after school care services to accept preschool children. We have some concerns with this proposal and myself and other agency representatives will be discussing this at the next Children's Services Forum.

Victoria

Barbara Romeril, Executive Director Community Child Care

The Victorian Government announcement of the new super department of Education and Early Childhood Development took us all by surprise. Community Child Care's initial response was cautious – we have seen how combining the administration of early childhood programs and schools has delivered some very unfortunate outcomes in other states and overseas – so we issued a press release warning against these outcomes and led a group of organisations in writing to the new Premier of Victoria suggesting a transition working party to enable the government to benefit from the wisdom of the early childhood sector in bringing schools and early childhood services together in this way.

The new Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development wrote assuring us that the Victorian Government intends to use this new administrative structure to strengthen the existing community base of the children's services sector and that the Office for Children is retained in the new super department. So now we are convinced that the establishment of the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is in fact a positive opportunity; and we will be vigilant in ensuring that no babies are thrown out with the bathwater as the new Ministers and the bureaucrats work out the new systems and structures.

CCC held a joint forum on integrated service models organised in collaboration with KPV and VCOSS. Over 100 participants from across Victoria and NSW heard a number of case studies showcasing the current experience of integrating early childhood education and care with other child and family supports – the learnings from this forum will be carried forward into the NACBCS national conference.

CCC is pleased to note that at last we have achieved equal funding for kindergarten programs delivered in long day care settings with that for standalone kindergartens.

The CCC Annual General Meeting will be held on 11 October with the theme 'United Under The Banner Of Community Ownership! A celebration of the power of solidarity'. It will include a celebration of the revamped Community Ownership Endorsement Scheme, a presentation by Yappera Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service – soon to be the first MACS to be endorsed by CCC as 'Proudly Community Owned' – and the launch of research into parent experiences of community management.

Don't forget to Register...

NACBCS 25th Anniversary National Conference

Friday 16 & Saturday 17 November 2007

Melbourne Functions Caulfield Racecourse, Victoria

<http://www.cccinc.org.au/nacbcs.htm>

*Happy 25th Birthday
NACBCS!*

ABOUT NACBCS

The objective of NACBCS is to advocate and assist the development of community owned children’s services providing good quality care, to initiate public action to promote and defend community owned children’s services throughout Australia and to act on behalf of community owned children’s services in relation to governments and other bodies.

NACBCS is the peak representative body for all Australian community owned children’s services including Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care services. NACBCS is an unincorporated association, which operates as a non-profit organisation. The Association is democratic in structure and relies on participatory and inclusive processes to achieve our goals.

Each state and territory has a NACBCS Branch, which brings together individuals and organisations at a regional level to work toward achieving our goals. Each Branch nominates delegates to the National Executive, which in turn nominates Office Bearers.

Community Child Care Victoria manages the National Secretariat function for the Association from its offices in Melbourne. To facilitate the maintenance of strong working relationships NACBCS holds two national meetings a year for the executive and interested members. Other discussion and communication occurs through electronic processes.

For information about our national activities contact the NACBCS Secretariat on e-mail: nacbcsc@cccinc.org.au

There is no individual membership of NACBCS at the national level. To join NACBCS, contact the branch in your state or territory.

How to contact NACBCS

State and Territory Branches:

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| VICTORIA | Barbara Romeril | bromeril@cccinc.org.au |
| NEW SOUTH WALES | Prue Warrilow Carol Lymbery | p.warrilow@familiesatwork.com carolymbery@cccincsw.org.au |
| QUEENSLAND | Frances Sneddon Julie Pearce | fs.csmg@gmail.com ecmanager@qld.lca.org.au |
| WESTERN AUSTRALIA | Josique Lynch Kathy Holt | joonccc@iinet.net.au cobcccslv@iinet.net.au |
| SOUTH AUSTRALIA | Deb Chernoff Robyn Geisler | deb@econ-outlook.com.au lurra.childcare@internode.on.net |
| TASMANIA | Susan Nolan Tracy Bradley | oceanview@bbchildcare.org tbradley@warwyn.tas.gov.au |
| AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY | Kerry Fitzroy | kerry.f@adfact.org and childdir@adfact.org |
| NORTHERN TERRITORY | Irene McCarthy | grayccc@bigpond.net.au |