



QRA Display at Peel Resource Expo.



QRA Resource Centre.

- **Small focus groups** QRA participated in co-facilitating an initial small focus group meeting in partnership with the Community Builder at Coodanup. This opportunity enabled a number of young people of Coodanup to begin to identify and express some of their ideas towards fostering the building and strengthening of their particular local community.
- **Childrens Art Festival Exhibition** QRA also participated in the local Children's Art Day coordinated by the Central Mandurah Community Builder. A big thank you goes out to our Administration Assistant Theresa, who put her many talents to use in setting up and running an information stall. This again provided a wonderful opportunity to raise public awareness about the value of quality relationships and the role modelling of the community development principles of collaboration and cooperation.

QRA are also delighted to be able to work in partnership with the City of Mandurah, Coodanup Community Builder, during Harmony Week, through providing the resources for a drumming workshop and hire of equipment to raise awareness and celebrate the diversity that exists within our particular community and to promote harmony.

QRA also worked in partnership with a number of other government and non government organisations during Child Protection week. These included a feature in the QRA newsletter on "Strengthening Relationships with Children" provided by the local Mandurah Parents Place, a display at the QRA office of information on parenting and other related articles and brochures.

Peel Resource Expo QRA participated in the local Peel Resource Expo. This provided the opportunity to raise public awareness on the value of quality relationships and the sharing of information on relationship education and training opportunities happening locally. QRA also took this opportunity to consult with human service providers and the wider community to identify what relationship/professional development opportunities they want and value. A number of QRA members willingly and enthusiastically volunteered their time throughout the day (see picture).

Professional Development and Training: QRA have run a successful professional development and training opportunity for human service providers, on group facilitation; for which they received a favourable response from the participants with 90% indicating they were highly satisfied with the workshop and 100% indicating they would be interested in attending future professional development/training opportunities.

Strategic Planning QRA have recently undergone a period of strategic planning and consolidation and have many more professional development and relationship educational opportunities planned from now until the end of June 04.

QRA resource Centre is coming together well and at present our 150+ resources have been catalogued and are currently being labeled and covered with the assistance of our wonderful volunteers. QRA are also currently consulting with other agencies, groups and organisations to identify particular resources they would like to see housed at the QRA resource centre (see picture).

ILLAWARRA CHILD & FAMILY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP, NSW

The three project workers from the Illawarra Child and Family Community Development partnership reflect on their progress to date and look at some of the themes emerging from their partnership. The Illawarra region, which includes the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama, is located approximately one hours drive south of Sydney on the East Coast of New South Wales. This project consists of three project workers working in separate public and private housing estates with vulnerable families with varying levels of need. These estates are based in Bundaleer, Albion Park and Flinders.

There are three partners in this project. One partner is a large non-profit charity (Barnardos South Coast in Bundaleer), one is – Albion Park Neighbourhood Association - a small community-managed non-government organisation and the other – the Flinders Child and Family Centre - is local council based (Shellharbour City Council). An action research model is being used to look at the disparities of service delivery between the three project partners, and to develop a model that helps articulate ways of working with communities that have varying levels of strengths and pressures.

What has the project been doing since its last Bulletin report?

All three project workers have been building participation and trust within their communities and have been working with issues and needs identified by them. Residents are being supported to engage with their broader community in a variety of ways.

Bundaleer has been using a family strengths approach in addressing issues such as housing problems, financial issues, and child protection issues for people living on the estate. A focus has been on the active participation of adults and children in community development models and practice as well as a mix of direct service delivery, outreach services and information/referral.

Albion Park is also working to improve the response of government and non-government agencies to the estate, by involving residents in tenants meetings to advocate for outreach services to the estates. This has recently resulted in outreach drug and alcohol counselling services being made accessible for this community.

Flinders Child and Family Centre has evolved into a thriving centre providing much needed group-based activities and counselling and referral services for the new estate.

Responding to the need for playgroups, there are 2 sessions on a Monday, one on a Wednesday and a supported play-session on a Friday. The supported play-session has proven to be very popular with an additional session to be introduced next term.

Flinders and Bundaleer are both facilitating a number of playgroups for parents and pre school age children. In Bundaleer a new model of a facilitated playgroup has been developed on the estate and is a joint project with Wollongong City Council and the Department of Housing. The facilitated playgroup, Kids Time Express, incorporates an element of story time with the aim of developing children's literacy skills and encouraging parental participation. The group runs in safe areas on the streets of the estate due to the reluctance of parents with children under five years to attend the community centre.

Other activities provided in the projects include: a Family Breakfast program to emphasise at the nutritional value of children's breakfasts and the importance of having a healthy breakfast before school; after school programs; a children's homework program; a taxation assistance for people on low incomes; a Job Skills program; the Food-Share program; a quarterly newsletter; and the commencement of Odd Jobbers.

What has been learned since the last report that may be of interest and value to other developing projects?

The project has an innovative research component which in the past six months has produced a draft model of child and family community development. It has identified the practice differences between community

development in communities with high strengths and low pressures (private estate) and those with high pressures and low strengths (public housing estates in the project). The project has delineated the differences in staging of strategies with these communities. It has identified similarities in practice strategies; identified the facilitation needs within communities and the levels of intensity required between differing communities; and identified policy implications of the research for community development and child and family policy.

A conference paper on the research is available on the Australian Institute of Family Studies website following the project's presentations at the ACOSS Congress and at the Third Australian Family and Community Strengths Conference at the University of Newcastle in November to December 2003.

Project workers have been able to unpack a range of insights relating to building trust and relationships at community, organisation and personal levels:

- When working with vulnerable communities you need to demonstrate that there is a level of trust between the organisation providing the service and the community.
- The value of building relationships with services, government departments and the community cannot be overestimated.
- It is important to make an effort to be inclusive.
- Workers must be seen to have a presence in their community and also be accessible for their community.
- It is important to acknowledge the residents' wants/needs versus the agency's/workers' perceptions of those needs.

At the *Flinders Child and Family Centre* regular contact with the parents and children in the playgroups gives scope to be able to determine if things need changing or adapting to better meet

the needs of the community. Support for the parents is a big issue, and it is important to sit in on the sessions at least once a month to see how things are going. If something is not working it pays to be adventurous and change it, asking the parents continually what they want and not presuming that you know this as the worker.

The introduction of excursions into playgroups are a good alternative to the norm at Flinders. Even a BBQ is something quite different and provides an opportunity to listen, look and learn of the changing trends in community thoughts. These changes have led to the community participating regularly



Community mural, Flinders Child and Family Centre

in the activities, contributing to sustainability. If one part of the activity fails, I have found that it is not necessarily all of the activity that is problematic, it just means that a little flexibility can often iron out any issues.

How has the community responded to the projects so far?

At both the Bundaleer and Flinders Community Centres participation and involvement is steadily growing from the community and from outreach services. Participant numbers have increased significantly since the beginning of the project. Flinders Child and Family Centre is now operating at 85 per cent capacity, achieved since its opening in March.

At both centres more people are feeling comfortable in dropping into the community centre to ask questions about different matters. The children on the Bundaleer estate have gained a great deal from the children's activities in terms of building on existing skills and developing new skills. During the last

six months there has also been an increased number of people from Pelican Shores (a pensioner unit complex on the estate) using the service. Because participation has increased in programs like Family Nutrition, parents' capacity has also become evident. Adults seem more positive in their abilities and their role as parents.

At Albion Park the community development worker has worked closely with a number of families who have responded positively to the support. This support has paid off with a "ripple effect" as some family members are now acting as role models or mentoring for others around particular issues. Nick has worked hard to build links between the private residents and public tenants in Albion Park. There has been a groundswell of interest and support for the Tongarra Spring Festival (an initiative of the public tenants) and is proving to bring these two groups, along with local business, together.

At Flinders, a community arts project, designed with strong involvement of Aboriginal elders and the young population of Flinders, has strongly supported community ownership of the centre. The resulting mural that is inlaid on the outside of the building, was achieved with the cooperation of the Flinders Primary School, after school care, and the broader community. Workshops were held during the January vacation asking for expressions from the community as to how they would like to see the mural developed. From this concept we have produced an outstanding mural incorporating the land, the community and the future.

The *Flinders Child & Family Centre* is now operating at 85% capacity, this has been achieved since it's opening in March.

The Flinders Community has responded positively to seeing regular faces around the centre. Trust and rapport is building and community members often drop into the Centre to have a chat and to find out what activities or groups are happening next term. This suggests that the efforts put into raising the profile of the centre are starting to pay off.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN THE NGAANYATJARRA LANDS PROJECT MURKURLA WALYJUMUNU KANYILMA, NT

What has the project been doing since its last Bulletin report?

When we look back at our last report we wonder what we *weren't* going to do! Six priority issues were identified all of them worthy of their very own project! After much discussion with the Community and Steering Committee and numerous drafts and redrafts of the Strategic Plan and Evaluation framework the Project objectives are to:

- improve the health of children 0-6 through improving nutrition;
- provide preschool children with a supportive environment and activities that promote their health, education opportunities and social development;
- provide the parents of preschool children with a supportive environment and activities that enhance their knowledge and skills in parenting;
- increase the community's awareness of services that are available, how to access these services and influence how these services are delivered;
- build participation and involvement in the project; and
- develop a growing understanding and demonstrate the capacity to make collective change.

The Project plans to address the objectives through four spheres of action: Playgroup; Growth assessment and action; Stores; and Women keeping strong. Rhoda Watson started working with the Project in October on Playgroups and Growth assessment and action.

Playgroup

Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma is providing support to a number of communities who have set up Playgroups and to communities who are planning to do so. At the start of the project there was a Playgroup in Blackstone. There are now playgroups in Warburton and Tjirrkarli and keen interest in getting Playgroup started from Warakurna, Cosmo Newberry

and Jameson. In the true spirit of partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma is working with DCD to implement the "Best Start" Program in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. We are in the process of recruiting a Best Start Coordinator who will be based in the Lands.

Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma was asked to investigate child care training opportunities. We met with Yorganop Childcare Aboriginal Corporation in Perth. Yorganop has developed a Certificate 3 in Childcare in Aboriginal communities. This course is nationally accredited by the Australian National Training Authority. Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma Ngaanyatjarra College and Yorganop are in the process of signing a MOU for the delivery of this course at Warburton.

Growth assessment and action

Growth Assessment and Action (GAA) is the regular measurement, recording and interpretation of a child's growth in order to counsel, act and follow up results. The measuring is not an intervention but a strategy that generates action.

Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma has requested support training and resources from GAA Territory Health to implement a GAA program in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The Ngaanyatjarra Health Service is an enthusiastic partner of this initiative. Yarnangu will be encouraged to use their knowledge to address specific nutrition and development issues in the community and then develop action strategies to promote child growth. Growth Assessment and Action is in the process of being implemented in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Staff from four communities underwent GAA training in Blackstone in March 2004.

Stores

Mukulyanytjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma, as one of the community development units of the Ngaanyatjarra Health Service, participates in the Store Policy Working Party. The Store Policy will cover a wide range of issues from guidelines for best retail practice to training and employment.