

# PROJECT PROFILES

FIRST GLIMPSE

COMPILED BY ELLEN FISH

One of the major themes that has emerged from our work with Stronger Families and Communities Strategy projects is the sheer diversity and complexity in the work that projects do. In this section of the Bulletin, as in previous Bulletins, we are pleased to publish project responses to a series of questions about their work.

## Koori Link Project

### *The project setting?*

The Koori Link Project, which began in September 2004 and is located in Orange in New South Wales, works with Aboriginal families and young people. It is a support, advocacy, case management and referral service and provides living and work skills programs, where needed. We have two full-time workers and one part-time worker.

### *Why is the project needed?*

Research with the local community identified that the needs of the Aboriginal community were not being met. In particular, there were

difficulties for Aboriginal families in accessing appropriate services. Koori Link is a program developed in response to these issues to assist, refer and support clients and families to access services. For example, mentoring, advocacy and support are provided to clients who need to access such agencies as the Department of Housing and Centrelink. Koori Link will also deliver early intervention programs as part of developing skills and a continual support approach.

### *What are you trying to do in this project?*

The purpose of the Koori Link project is to help the Aboriginal community through support, training and skills development, advocacy, mentoring. Using this approach clients are

empowered to take positive action in their lives.

### *How are you going about it?*

Initial work has involved letting the local Aboriginal community know that we are available anytime and even if it is for a chat. We have also been meeting local services and informing them about the Koori Link Project. We are also developing understanding of the scope of other services and where the project can fit in without duplication of services.

Through linking in with local community/government organisations and building up a working relationship, we will be better placed to work with the Aboriginal community. We will also be developing flexible, culture-friendly programs.

## Moree Family Support Services

### *The project setting?*

The project began in February 2004. It is auspiced by Moree Family Support and is situated in the Warialda Street Office in Moree in New South Wales. We share the office space with other services who are family based such as the Family Support Worker and the Volunteer Home Visiting Service. Our project is based on early intervention for children aged up to eight years, living in the Moree Plains Shire also within a 60 kilometre radius of Moree. We are going about our work in a variety of ways and taking the programs to the communities.

### *Why is this project needed?*

Our belief is that families are the starting point for significant change in our community and form the foundation for this project. By supporting and strengthening families, long term change will be positive and long lasting. Few services in Moree are working with an early intervention

and prevention model.

### *What are you trying to do in the project?*

Our project is aimed at providing an early intervention and prevention model of service delivery to families, youth and children. Our goals are to develop the capacity of families and communities, reduce significant disadvantage and develop strong service and support networks for families, youth and children.

### *How are you going about it?*

A work plan has been developed which encompasses a wide range of tasks. These tasks include: the facilitation of opening a parents room which is sorely needed in this area; running of playgroups in isolated areas; creating a mobile service for the Toy Library; recruitment and training of volunteers to assist with some of the projects; a leadership program for youth and newsletters have been produced and distributed to communities. Some of the goals are dependent upon consultation with communities and what they see is needed.

### *What has the project been doing in the last six months?*

In the last six months the project has been able to recruit all of the staff required. The last staff member came on board in May 2004.

There are seven supported playgroups now operating out of the project's office: three Indigenous playgroups, three rural and one that is held at the Family Support Offices. We have further identified more areas for the rural playgroups and are negotiating to begin holding them in those areas.

The Toy Library has become mobile and a catalogue has been developed. We are currently talking with families about memberships and the benefits of joining the Toy Library. A couple of families have indicated that they will become members.

Moree Council has a parents room in the local town hall that is only used for private functions. We are negotiating with them in relation to opening it during the day for a parents room - we are assured that the negotiations are a