

NCNS NEWSLETTER

2000 ABORIGINAL KIDS & THEIR FAMILIES FROM OVER 30 SCHOOLS CELEBRATE 12TH ANNUAL NAIDOC CUP



On Tuesday 20th June at the Hunter Fields in Emu Plains over 2000 Aboriginal kids and their families from more than 30 schools attended the 12th Annual NAIDOC Cup, a celebration gala day combining sports, culture, and connection to country. Students attended from schools from the lower mountains to Mt Druitt. In addition, we had 200 high school students from a number of local high schools, who have been participating in NAIDOC Cup since they were in primary school, come back every year and help us to run the event. They help with umpiring and refereeing the Oztag and Netball competitions, delivering food to the students and a part of the logistics of running such a huge event!

On the day we had a huge sand circle which we drop onto the Hunter Fields to create a major focus of the day where we hold an important welcome opening ceremony that involves Aboriginal Elders and Cultural leaders. The children get to watch and participate in dances from various Aboriginal tribal nations. The NICE circle with Evans High School and Eastern Creek High School hosted Jessy's **Nulungu Dreaming** and Kooly Deadly Kids Dance crew alongside of Doondoch South Coast dancers. NCNS Team Leader Aboriginal & Youth Projects, Bronwyn Nuttall, exclaimed, "Watching the different *corroborees* from different nations was so powerful!"



After the welcome and opening ceremony, we all break off. The joeys go to have lunch and the Oz-tag and Netball competition commences. After lunch the 900 joeys, who are the younger children who are not participating in the sports competitions begin a round robin of traditional Indigenous games, cultural workshops including firestick practice, didge, artifacts and art, lots of dance as well as cultural art and craft. The traditional Indigenous games is always a huge hit as the kids get to burn off some of that excited energy by playing some incredibly fun games!



The day is not possible without our partners JK Williams, Westfield, Platform and the Emu Plains Lions Club. Thank you so much to our partners. The support of the schools has made this event one of the most important dates on the calendar for Aboriginal kids across the Nepean area. The day is so important as it is one of the few times that Aboriginal kids can get together and celebrate their culture, connection to country, each other and to kin and spend time with Aboriginal Elders and cultural leaders in a relaxed and informal setting. This is such an important day for our community.

Congratulations to the winners of the Netball competition Whalan Public School and to the winners of the Oz-tag Competition Cambridge Gardens Public School!

We look forward to seeing you all next year!



RECONCILIATION WEEK IS A TIME FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS TO LEARN ABOUT OUR SHARED HISTORIES, CULTURES, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING RECONCILIATION IN AUSTRALIA

On the 30th May we celebrated Reconciliation Week at Cranebrook Neighbourhood Centre with the local community and service providers. The morning started with a smoking ceremony to open the event, invite participants to the space and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of this land. Jie Pitman, opened the event with important words and reminders to walk this country with respect, honor and remembrance of the people past, present and our future generations that are emerging.

Joy, NCNS, General Manager, also addressed the audience, sharing with us the importance of reconciliation. This year's theme is 'be a voice for generations', encouraging all Australians to be a voice for reconciliation in tangible ways in our everyday lives - where we work, live and socialise.

Reconciliation is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. The date remains the same each year; 27 May to 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey— the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds, and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Community and Service providers had the opportunity to walk through the smoke from the ceremony, reflecting on what was, what is and what always will be Aboriginal land. We all enjoyed a lunch together which gave us a further chance to have a chat, share stories and our own experiences in our journey for Reconciliation.





PARENTS CORNER

INFANT MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK: CAN YOU SPOIL A BABY

The short answer is “no”! Even though this has long been a worry for new parents, the current science reassures us that there is no way to spoil baby. Babies who receive warm, sensitive, and responsive care from their parents get a much better start in life.

You may have been told it’s wrong to give “too much attention” to a crying baby. You are not the first parent to receive this advice! In 1894, a popular guide to parenting instructed its readers that “Babies under six months should never be played with: and the less of it at anytime the better for the infant.” But, as the science of attachment and child development has advanced, this myth has been totally de-bunked.

To the contrary, the more a child can rely on the emotional and physical availability of caregivers, the more independent they become in the long run. A child who knows their parent ‘has their back’ is unburdened to explore their world with full curiosity, tenacity and zeal. Exploration and play support children’s emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development.

On a physiological level, separation from a primary caregiver triggers a stress response in the baby’s nervous system.

This stress response occurs not only in situations of physical separation. When a caregiver is close by physically, but their attention is elsewhere (e.g. staring at a screen), a baby’s stress hormones will naturally spike. Babies can withstand some separation, but prolonged exposure to stress without recovery is toxic to a growing body and brain.

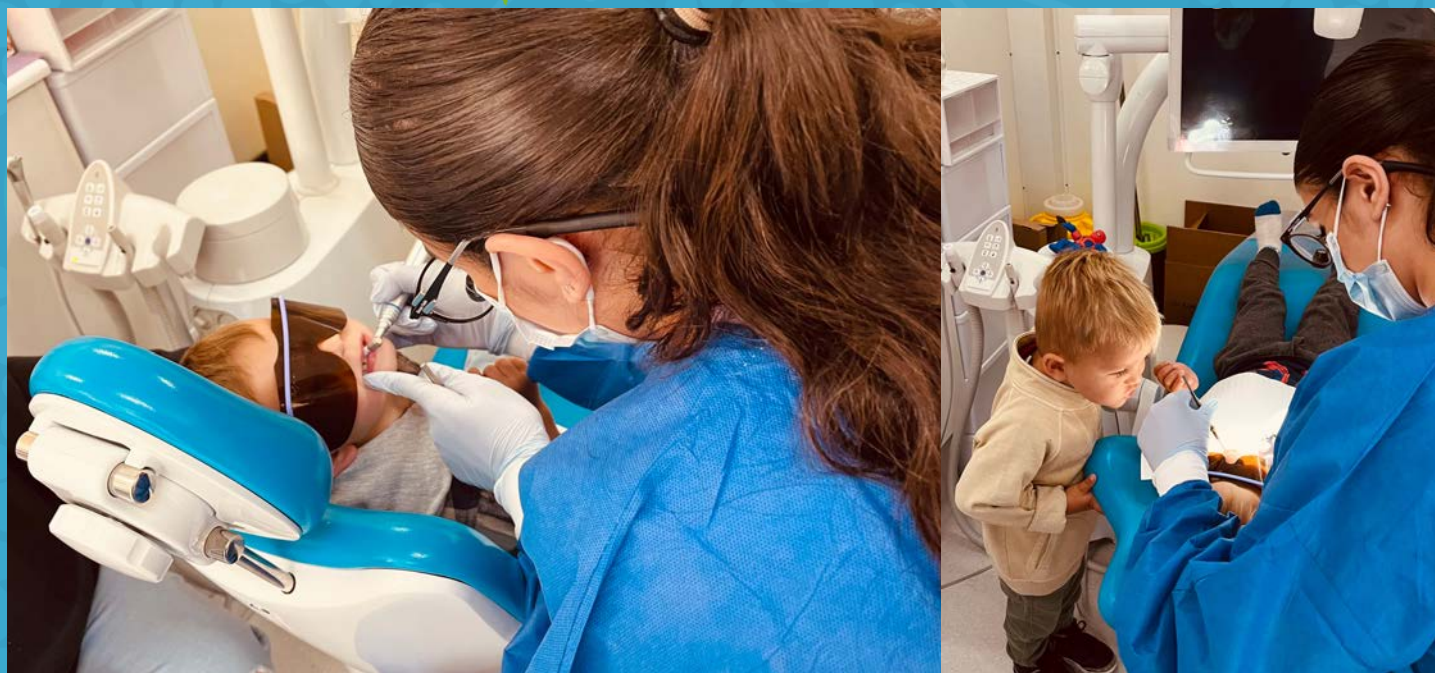
When distressed or uncomfortable, crying is a baby’s way of reconnecting with a safe adult who can attend to their needs. These needs may be physical (e.g. hunger, tiredness) or emotional (e.g. the need for safety, security, comfort).

Beyond having immediate needs met, a baby needs consistency in knowing their needs will be met in the future.

That’s why the current advice is to respond to your crying baby as much and as often as you can.

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week runs every June to highlight the importance of babies’ emotional wellbeing and development. Find out more at aaimh.org.au.

Article written by Monica Purcell, Family Facilitator



ONE IN THREE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN EXPERIENCE CHRONIC OTITIS MEDIA

The Developmental Outreach Day was a great flowing day, we had many families come through and gain access to these services within the comfort of their community. We have received positive feedback from families, as well as the organisations who joined us on the day.

We had HAPEE Ears for Early Years program, who saw 8 children, each appointment takes 30 minutes for bubba a little less. All the children did so well with Tiffany, who coordinated the check ups. One in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience chronic otitis media (HHSC 2019) and associated hearing loss that can make it hard for them to listen, learn and talk to others. Evidence shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience up to thirty-two months of conductive hearing loss in their first five years of life, compared to just three months among non-Indigenous children (Coates et al 2020; and Kong & Coates 2009).

We had Michelle and Sue from the Building Strong Foundations for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities services come out and provide culturally safe child and family health services for Aboriginal children from birth to school age.

We had 1 child come through for their regular child health checks and it was documented on their Blue Book.

Bounce Mobile Dentistry is a mobile dental van who are focused on promoting healthy oral hygiene, leading to improved oral health within our community. It is a fully equipped van, with dental worker Meriam and Benita on board for check-up and cleans. We had 9 children get their teeth checked and some fillings were done, and they were also provided with a free mini dental kit to kickstart their oral hygiene practices at home.

All in all it was a highly successful Outreach Day, with many families joining us on the day having gained access to these services to further improve their children's health and wellbeing. There were many refreshments supplied to families, and parents were forwarded onto other services run by NCNS as per their individual requirements.

The next Outreach Day is planned for Friday the 20th September 2023, please keep an eye out on the NCNS website for our flyers and more information.

GETTING CREATIVE IN CRANEBROOK DURING MAGNETIC PLACES PROJECT



The art works for our Magnetic Places Project, called Pathway to Connection, have now been completed.

We had children from Tamara and young people from Kooly Youth Drop-in making and decorating the ceramic masks. They will be installed on the fence in the Neighbourhood Centre backyard. The designs to go on the figures were created by Braddock Public OOSH, Kooly Youth Drop-in and the Kooly Art Group.

We were lucky to have Uncle Bryan come and help some playgroup families and Women's Group participants to paint the designs onto the figures which are now ready to be installed on the Neighbourhood Centre fences. It's been a great project and we saw a lot of happy faces and artistic talent at the workshops facilitated by Diamando Koutsellis.

When the works are installed, we'll have a launch event to celebrate. Watch this space!



JK WILLIAMS ARE MAKING A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF BREKKY CLUB WITH VOLUNTEERS COMING ON FRIDAY MORNINGS



JK Williams are making a great contribution to the success of Brekky Club with volunteers coming on Friday mornings to make hundreds of toasties, play footy and walk with the kids to school. They have also donated a table tennis table which is proving to be a great success. It means the high school kids are coming in and hanging around rather than just grabbing a toastie and leaving which gives us the opportunity to get to know some of them and make those valuable connections.

The primary kids are also enjoying having them around and it means there will be some familiar faces when they make that big transition to high school.

It's such a valuable program and wouldn't happen without our faithful NCNS staff who get up early to come and help.

THE REFUGEE WEEK THEME FOR THIS YEAR IS 'FINDING FREEDOM' RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES AFFECTING REFUGEES.

On the 21st of June at St Marys Memorial Hall the Penrith Multicultural Interagency celebrated Refugee Week. This is an interagency that NCNS proudly supports and works alongside.

The Refugee Week theme for this year is – Finding Freedom, this has a number of important functions: It raises awareness of the issues affecting refugees. The theme aims to highlight aspects of the refugee experience and help the broader community to understand what it is like to be a refugee. It helps to make Refugee Week a national celebration. The theme provides a focal point for events across Australia, uniting separate activities into a single nationwide celebration. It promotes harmony and togetherness. The theme unites individuals, communities and organisations from many different backgrounds behind a common cause.

The common theme is a reminder that, regardless of our differences, we all share a common humanity. It broadens the impact of Refugee Week. The theme provides a common, cohesive message which can be promoted across the country, helping to maximise the effectiveness of awareness-raising activities.

With a turn out of 170 people from all different cultural backgrounds, the event was an amazing success and display of multiculturalism.



