



Aboriginal Family Support Services Newsletter

May - June 2020

Aboriginal Kinship Care Pilot

AFSS is very excited about being selected as one of three agencies chosen to deliver an Aboriginal Kinship Care Pilot. Funded by the Department for Child Protection, AFSS Aboriginal Kinship Care Pilot will deliver a state-wide, culturally responsive service model that provides for the assessment, training, advocacy, support and referral services to kinship carers who are caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Through this program, kinship carers will be well supported and well placed to keep the Aboriginal children in their care safe, healthy and connected to their Aboriginal cultures and communities. With an expected start date of 1 July 2020, AFSS is looking forward to working closely with DCP and the other successful agencies to ensure Aboriginal children and young people in care can remain with kin.



Local Winery Donates Hand Sanitiser



During the first part of the COVID-19, AFSS was finding it very difficult to find hand sanitiser, as we were not able purchase any from our regular supplier. We eventually found a company in New Zealand (which still took around 2 months to arrive). However in the meantime we were pleasantly suprised with a donation from Calabria Wines who generously donated 3 x 2 litre bottles of Sterile Alcohol Hand Sanitiser. They made a large batch and were also donating to other local community organisations and charities, as a way of giving back to the community. On behalf of AFSS, we would like to extend our thanks for this generous donation, as it has provided us with a great amount of relief throughout this difficult time. Thank you so much for your kindness and generosity.

A message from the Chief Executive

I continue to be amazed by the way that our staff and carers have risen to this challenge. It is great to see life slowly returning back to normal here in SA. We have been holding morning meetings with the management team up until now, as we have established all precautionary routines, arranged our emergency supplies and implemented (where possible) the working-from-home provisions, and we feel considerably safe and prepared for the time being.

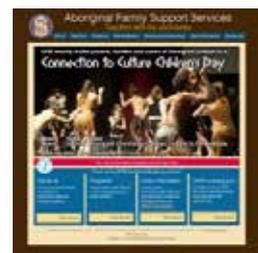
I'm also very glad to confirm that, to date, none of our staff and young people in care have had any positive test results for COVID-19, however the virus is still out there and we need to remain vigilant and careful.

Our usual celebrations for events such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week have been cancelled, however I am pleased to hear that new dates have been set for NAIDOC Week, which will be held during the second week of November. AFSS still holds strong values towards Reconciliation Week, as it marks two very important anniversaries; significant changes to the Australian Constitution in 1967 and the historic Mabo decision that recognised land ownership and rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

As business is slowly getting back to normal, it is good to also see some new developments on the rise here at AFSS. We welcome back Olivia King, who has returned from maternity leave, and who is currently working on the NDIS project. The project is part way through an accreditation process, and will focus on assisting Aboriginal families and children living with disabilities through community participation, assistance with daily living, travel, education and employment.



*Sharron Williams
Chief Executive*



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New dates for NAIDOC Week announced

National NAIDOC Week 2020 celebrations will be held from the **8-15 November**.

The November dates follow the decision by the National NAIDOC Committee (NNC) to postpone NAIDOC Week from the original July dates due to the impacts and uncertainty from the escalating Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic across our communities and cities.

The postponement was aimed at protecting our elders and those in our communities with chronic health issues from the disastrous impacts of COVID-19.

With the cooler weather, the need to protect our most susceptible remains extremely important.

Further announcements regarding the National NAIDOC Awards and the reactivation of the 2020 NAIDOC Local Grants Round will be made within coming weeks.

The NNC understands that the July dates for NAIDOC may still be acknowledged by communities and organisations, however we are mindful that those celebrations and physical gatherings will still be impacted by the various State and Territory COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing measures. We acknowledge the commitment and tireless work of the many State, Territory, regional and local NAIDOC Committees, organisations and individuals whose passion each year makes NAIDOC Week an outstanding success.

AFSS will provide more information about local SA NAIDOC events as it becomes available.



Snapshot of South Australian Aboriginal Children and Young People in Care and/or Detention from the Report on Government Services - May 2020

Aboriginal children and young people as a proportion of the South Australian population:

Aboriginal children and young people comprise approximately 5 per cent of the total population of children and young people aged 0-17 in South Australia.

Aboriginal children and young people in care:

Information from ROGS 2020 allows us to say a number of things about the profile and situation of Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in care in South Australia

- of the 3,988 children and young people in care services at 30 June 2019, 34.2 per cent were Aboriginal and 65.2 per cent were non-Aboriginal (0.6 per cent were not identified) (see graph below)

Proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal 0-17 years out-of-home-care only care services South Australia at 30 June 2019

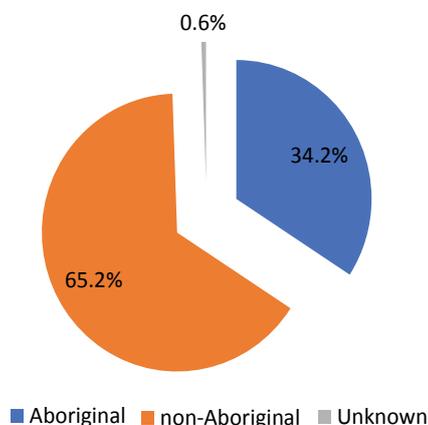


Chart 1

- Aboriginal 0-17 year olds continue to be over-represented of all those in care services

- there is a worsening proportion of Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal children and young people being drawn into the child protection system. The rate of Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in care services per 1,000 children increased from 49 to 76.7 compared to 5.6 to 7.4 for non-Aboriginal 0-17 year olds between 2014-15 and 2018-19

- the 2018-19 disproportionality ratio between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and young people in care services was 7.3, the highest recorded ratio since 2014-15

- the proportion of Aboriginal children and young people who were placed in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle at 30 June 2019 was 62.7 per cent (a significant decline since 2009 when 76.4 per cent were placed in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle)

- 208 Aboriginal children and young people comprised 36.6 per cent of all children and young people in residential care at 30 June 2019

- 38.5 per cent of the 1,363 Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in continuous care services placements at 30 June 2019 had been in that situation for five years or more, a lesser proportion than that of equivalent non-Aboriginal

children and young people (43.7 per cent)

- Just under one-third of the 1,363 Aboriginal 0-17 year olds who had been in continuous out-of-home care at 30 June 2019 had been in that situation for less than two years

Aboriginal 10 to 17 year olds in detention-based youth justice supervision

Some features of the participation of Aboriginal 10 – 17 year olds in detention-based youth justice supervision in South Australia are that -

- the daily average proportion of Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal 10 to 17 year olds in detention in 2018-19 was 60.7 and 39.3 per cent respectively

- the rate of Aboriginal 10 to 17 year olds in detention per 10,000 young people in South Australia in 2018-19 declined to its lowest rate in five years to 22.3

- the average rate of 10 to 17 year olds in detention per 10,000 young people in South Australia was 22.3 for Aboriginal compared with 0.7 for non-Aboriginal children and young people in 2018-19. This means that Aboriginal children and young people are 32 times more likely to be in detention than non-Aboriginal children and young people

- there has been a relatively consistent relationship between the average daily number of

Aboriginal 10 to 17 year olds under community based supervision orders compared to those who are held in detention

- South Australia spent less per child or young person aged 10 to 17 years in the population on detention-based youth justice services compared to the national average.

Overview of Aboriginal children and young people in care

For the purpose of ROGS 2020, child protection services “provide supports and interventions to promote child and family wellbeing, and to protect children and young people aged 0-17 years who are at risk of abuse and neglect within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to provide care and protection.”⁸ Child protection services are presented within four program areas –

- protective intervention services
- family support services
- intensive family support services; and
- care services.

Information from the ROGS 2020 allows us to say a number of things about Aboriginal children and young people who receive such services as they appear within the overall cohort of 0–17 year olds in care in South Australia.

Chart 1 (page 4) demonstrates that of the 3,988 children and young people in care services at 30 June 2019, 1,338 (34 per cent) were Aboriginal and 2,437 (65 per cent) non-Aboriginal. Another 22 individuals were shown as ‘unknown’.

Chart 2 below shows the continued over-representation of Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in care services over time.

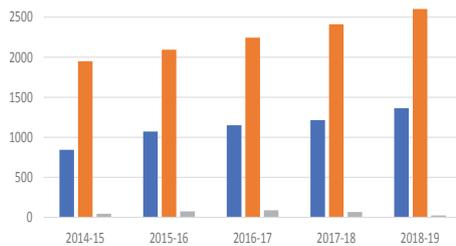


Chart 2 Aboriginal non-Aboriginal Unknown

The rate of Aboriginal 0 to 17 year olds in care services per 1,000 children increased from 49 to 76.7 compared to 5.6 to 7.4 for non-Aboriginal 0 to 17 year olds between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

This illustrates the continued worsening proportion of Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal children and young people being drawn into the child protection system.

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

The Productivity Commission urges caution about interpreting references to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, warning that it is reporting the placement outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children rather than compliance with the principle.¹²

Chart 3 (below) shows the number of Aboriginal children and young people placed in accordance, and those not placed in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in South Australia from 2015 to 2019.

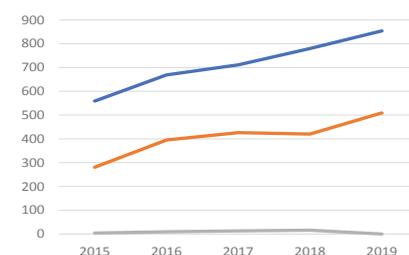


Chart 3 number placed in accordance with ACCP number not placed in accordance with ACCP Independent living unknown

Chart 3

At 30 June 2019, only 62.7 per cent (854 of a possible 1,363) of eligible children were placed in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

Over the last 10 years, there has been a decline in the proportion of Aboriginal children and young people placed in out-of-home care (not including other supported placements) in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in both South Australia, and nationally. Please note that data for NSW was not available under the category of care services (out-of-home-care and other supported placements), so for the sake of comparability, charts eight and nine use data of those in out-of-home-care only.

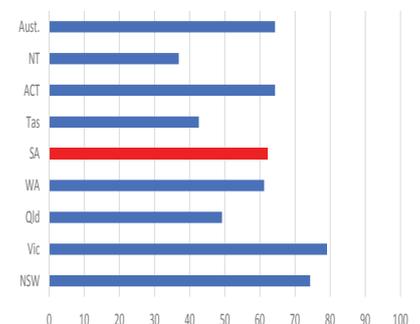


Chart 4

Chart 4 (above) shows that the rate of out-of-home care placements in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in South Australia was exceeded by New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. South Australia has dipped further below the national average at 30 June 2019 (62.3 compared to 64.3 per cent).

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Current and new staff updates



Warren Guppy, Senior Manager Metropolitan Services, Adelaide.

A 10 year Celebration for Warren Guppy

Our Senior Manager Metropolitan Services, Warren Guppy, has struck up 10 years of service here at AFSS. He started his role as Senior Manager Regional Services in 2010 and moved into his current role in 2016. His position oversees programs and services throughout sites and facilities located across Adelaide - including Foster Care Services, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Child Protection Reform, Homelessness, Gambling, Youth Services and Connection to Culture.

Warren is known for his practical approach, sense of humour, and also his love of Port Power. Previous to AFSS, he has worked for the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM), Department of Aboriginal Affairs(WA), as well as the Adelaide City Council, and he has 25 years experience working in Community Services and Management.

Congratulations on your 10 years of service Warren, from all of the team at AFSS!



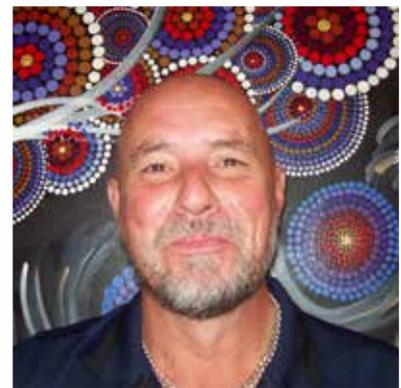
Sarah Pellen, Carer Liaison Officer, Adelaide.

I am a 40-something-year-old wife, and Mum of 2 boys who are 14 and 11 years of age, and feeder of 2 cats. Our family moved from Mount Gambier 4 years ago, and I can recognise that I'm still very 'country' about a lot of things - like paying for parking! We moved to Adelaide in search of more options for our family and we love how much we are able to immerse ourselves into, by way of community events, activities, parade's and festivals etc.

I have been working in Community Services for the last 6 years focusing on homelessness, domestic violence, working with youths, parents and supporting Aboriginal families. Prior to that I worked at Centrelink for 10 years. I am passionate about supporting individuals and families and walking alongside them during their journey. I am a Carer Liaison Officer with the Foster Care Team and am excited about supporting carers and their families and advocating for their needs. So far I have loved being a part of

a huge team of knowledgeable staff with lots of laughs.

I have a passion for travelling, and am always thinking about where I want to holiday next. COVID-19 obviously put a damper on any travel plans, and am excited for the world to open back up again so that tourism can start supporting the small places and businesses and keep things moving.



Mark Griffiths, Carer Liaison Officer, Adelaide.

Born and raised in Broken Hill, I am 53 years of age and I have worked most of my adult life in the motoring industry. For the past 8 years, we (Sharon & myself) have been carers in the AFSS system for firstly 2 children, and also another child for the past 6 years, and we have all 3 children long term. I have come from a sporting background and growing up in the country I have played and coached Football, Basketball and raced Motocross for around 15 years. I am looking forward to my new challenge with AFSS as a Carer Liaison Officer, as it has been a passion for some time.



Jo Caruana, Coordinator of Residential Services, Port Lincoln.

My name is Jo Caruana, I am a mum of two daughters and a doting nanna of 3 amazing grandchildren.

I am so happy to be working in my new role as Coordinator of Residential Services, Port Lincoln and have enjoyed meeting so many great new people.

I have always worked within the community sector, my last role being regional team leader of the Lower Eyre Peninsula Carers SA office.

I look forward to catching up with you all.



Millie O'Neill, Program Facilitator - New Dreams, Smithfield.

Hello, My name is Millie O'Neill. I have recently started with AFSS in the New Dreams program at

Smithfield. I am originally from the Mid-North, from a small country town called Wilmington and moved to Adelaide in February of this year.

Before starting my journey in community services, I worked in agriculture, working in shearing sheds and cattle stations across Australia. My fondest memories are working cattle, especially in the summer - early morning starts and watching the sun rise above the hills or flats, depending where we were. Or spending all day in the yards and watching the sunset behind the hills and watching the cattle settle in the paddocks.

I have had previous experience working in community services in Port Augusta in residential care, domestic violence services, and low income support. I thoroughly enjoyed my time working in Port Augusta and can't wait to implement what I have learnt here in Smithfield .

I am very passionate when it comes to my work and can talk about behavioural analysis and neuroscience all day if given the chance. I hope to one day become a qualified social worker and move to Darwin. I do also enjoy a good laugh and a yarn. I love the beach and you can usually find me down at Glenelg, patting all of the dogs.

I look forward to working and learning with everyone here at AFSS.

FOSTER CARERS URGENTLY WANTED!



Aboriginal Family Support Services is looking for foster carers who are committed to providing safe and culturally appropriate homes for Aboriginal children.

Please Contact

Adelaide: Peter Dyer
peter.dyer@afss.com.au
8205 1500

Ceduna: Michelle Naylor
michelle.naylor@afss.com.au
8625 3466

Coober Pedy: Amanda Zelenko
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8672 3066

Murray Bridge: Rebecca Hansch
rebecca.hansch@afss.com.au
8532 1790

Port Augusta: Deb Merchant
deborah.merchant@afss.com.au
8641 0907

Port Lincoln: Toni-Lee Miller
toni-lee.miller@afss.com.au
8683 1909





Around The Houses



Port Lincoln Residential Services

Our young people in Port Lincoln residential services have been keeping themselves busy during the COVID-19 restrictions, by producing these great pieces of art work. We have created a wall to display their unique talents and currently

looking into art classes, to further develop their skills.

Port Lincoln is very proud of their efforts and creativity throughout this time.

Kids get creative

During the school holidays we have been working really hard to keep the children and young people busy in Residential Services. With the COVID-19 situation we have been educating the young people and children on germs and how to keep safe, clean and healthy. The children have grown to be expert hand washers, as well as being very intrigued with why everyone is wearing gloves, face masks and keeping their distance. We saw the creative side of the children come out when they designed and made their very own face masks. Each child's mask was a different colour and had it's own special touch with the first letter of their name on the front. It was a great way to help the children understand what is going on in the world.





tips and info for foster carers

3 Mindfulness Activities for Kids



1. Have some breathing breaks

Breath can be a great tool used to reset your mind and physiology. The simple act of focusing on your breathing can help you to unwind and relieve anxiety. One way to help children calm their thoughts is to have breathing breaks throughout the day. You can take them through a simple 10-minute breathing exercise. Start by encouraging them to join you in taking deep, full breaths and exhaling slowly. Focus on counting as you go to help slow the breathing process down, and observe the rising and falling sensation that it creates in your bodies.

It's completely normal for kids minds to wander. Acknowledge that they may have gone off track, but slowly bring their attention back to their breath. Once you've finished, encourage your children to congratulate themselves, and ask them how they felt throughout the activity. The morning can be a great time to complete this exercise as it sets them up with a positive outlook for the rest of the day, and may also help with their concentration, attention and self regulation at school.

2. Play a mindful game

It can be hard to think of ways to keep your children occupied, especially without resorting to screen time. One way to occupy their time during the day, and help them feel calmer at the same time, is to play games that involve the senses. This can help them bring their attention back to the present moment and create a feeling of groundedness.

Here are some quick, simple, mindful games you can get your children involved in, without much preparation time and hassle:

Touch: Put a bunch of mystery items in a paper bag and take turns feeling one object at a time and guess what it is as you describe the texture and shape.

Sight: Look around the room in silence for one minute, and point out all of the things you never noticed before.

Sound: Set a timer for one minute and count how many different sounds you can hear with your eyes closed, and then share what you heard with each other.

3. Cooking time

When the children are home all day, there will be more cooking to get through and mouths to feed, which offers the perfect opportunity to get children stuck into some mindful cooking and baking – while learning multiple new skills at the same time!

Encourage your children to help you out with the daily cooking, teaching them small skills and keeping them engaged in the process of turning ingredients into meals. Focusing their attention on tasks such as stirring, mixing and weighing, can be an active, fun way to help them concentrate and keep their minds in the present, allowing stressful thoughts to leave the mind.

To further use the senses, encourage your children to describe the colours of the ingredients, the texture of the food during different parts of the process, and notice the different forms the meal has taken, from start to finish.

Baking in particular, can be a fun activity for children, whilst also being a grounding and therapeutic experience which relaxes the mind.



AFSS NDIS roll out - 2020



Did you know that AFSS is in the process of becoming an NDIS registered provider?

We are part way through the accreditation process, with hopes that we will be ready to commence services soon.

We are focused on providing culturally safe supports the AFSS way to the community. We are aware that there is an area of unmet need and a lot of people looking to find a service which can provide them with supports in a way that they feel comfortable with. We know that the NDIS can be confusing – there are a lot of options and a lot of questions that can be difficult to answer. Our goal is to be partners with our community in this process.

What does this mean? People who have an NDIS plan will be able to choose AFSS to provide them with supports to achieve their goals. We intend providing services that are person-centred and goal-focused.

What services will AFSS be providing? AFSS is looking to provide Support Coordination, Early childhood supports and a range of core and capacity building supports.

These include community participation, assistance with daily living, travel and supporting with education and employment. In total there are 14 areas we are hoping to be registered to provide supports.

What is the process? AFSS has a business action plan that will inform our steps to being thorough in our preparation and successful in our application, we will provide updates to the AFSS community as we hit milestones. At the moment our focus is making current areas of the organisation able to meet the requirements to provide services funded by the NDIS.

If you have any questions about the process, suggestions or you would be interested in using AFSS as an NDIS provider once we are set up to provide services please contact Olivia King



Olivia.King@afss.com.au

0499 966 614

AFSS Information Linkages & Capacity Building (ILC) Project

It is with great pleasure that we have been invited to write a story for the AFSS newsletter regarding the AFSS Information Linkages & Capacity Building (ILC) Project, funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

We would like to thank our employer, Aboriginal Family Support Services, for the opportunity to administer the ILC project in the Iron Triangle region. We believe that we have managed this project to meet its objectives well beyond its expectations, engaging successfully with the Aboriginal communities (including elders) and building strong relationships with service providers to link the two together. During the period of the project, we have conducted community forums and events typically around a "yarning circle", to introduce and build capacity between the Local Area Coordinators (LAC) and the Aboriginal communities, as well as Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO).

To be successful in our role, we had to produce a number of resource materials to simplify the NDIS with language that is culturally appropriate and easy to understand in our communities. The resources are also getting translated into Pitjantjatjara language to accommodate those in the region who may not speak

English or whose second language is English. The AFSS NDIA team partnered up with Menzies School of Health Research to develop the following resources:

- Brochures x 3 "Stay Strong" Yarning about NDIS
- "Stay Strong" Yarning about NDIS Poster
- "Stay Strong" Yarn Up tool
- ECEI Fact Sheets
- NDIS Fact Sheets
- NDIS Short Videos x 2
- Cultural Awareness Training Package

The resource materials have been given out to the community, LACs and service providers along with being displayed in medical health

clinics and local members of parliament offices. The AFSS NDIS resource materials will be there long after our project ceases, as we are pleased to learn that they caught attention at a national level and will be featured on the NDIS website.

It is with sadness that this project concludes by June 30, so please be advised that we will no longer be working on this project, but we have enjoyed the challenges it has presented to both of us. We thank you all for your support, particularly our team in the Port Augusta office, it has been greatly appreciated and we will miss working with you all.

We look forward to our paths crossing again in the future.



From Left: Charles Jackson (NDIA Coordinator) and Emily Nistico (NDIA Project Officer).

Just for KIDS

Did Ya Wash Ya Hands?



We have stolen 8 words, can you find them all?

a	p	f	g	s	h	s	i	p	t
b	q	g	e	r	m	i	a	z	a
i	e	p	z	b	c	n	r	y	p
h	e	a	l	t	h	k	b	q	z
l	p	u	w	r	u	b	h	a	e
w	z	b	t	y	p	s	a	p	i
a	b	c	p	q	e	n	r	e	d
t	p	i	w	r	z	i	d	c	a
e	o	a	p	c	l	e	a	n	w
r	i	t	o	w	e	l	c	b	q

Those dirty germs have stolen all the hand washing words. could you help us get them back?



We are the Elders of tomorrow,
**HEAR OUR
VOICE**

#EldersOfTomorrow
#StrongInCulture



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
CHILDREN'S DAY

4 August 2020

www.aboriginalchildrensday.com.au



Stronger Families - Trying times made easier when we all work together

The restrictions and challenges presented by COVID-19 have been deeply felt by many of us. For many of the families supported by the Stronger Families Team there was a great deal of worry and stress around being able to access food and essential items from supermarkets. For some of our families the buying limits were a huge challenge – big families need a lot of food. For others, the lack of stock on shelves meant they were just unable to buy what their family needed.

AFSS and the Stronger Families major funding partner, the Department of Human Services, (DHS), worked together to help these families.

Initially DHS supported our Adelaide team to source food and other essentials so we could support families with enough to get them through.

DHS then undertook a massive, co-ordinated shipment of food hampers and other essentials to all of AFSS sites around the state,

and many other services as well. DHS worked closely with AFSS to understand the needs of families in both the Adelaide area and around the state and provided amazing support that has assisted so many families during this really challenging time.

The great news is that DHS is working on another round! This will mean AFSS is out and about again very soon to deliver more hampers and to continue to support vulnerable families through these uncertain times.



Community Safety & Wellbeing - A new way of delivering programs through using ZOOM platforms

The facilitation team was no longer able to deliver programs face-to-face with clients due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, facilitators explored new ways of delivering and have since delivered the very first Zoom session in CS&W facilitation team history!

An existing group of seven women completed the Healthy Homes, Resilient Families, Growing Up Healthy course. This existing group of energetic, engaged, and motivated women was the perfect test group for the first ever Zoom delivery.

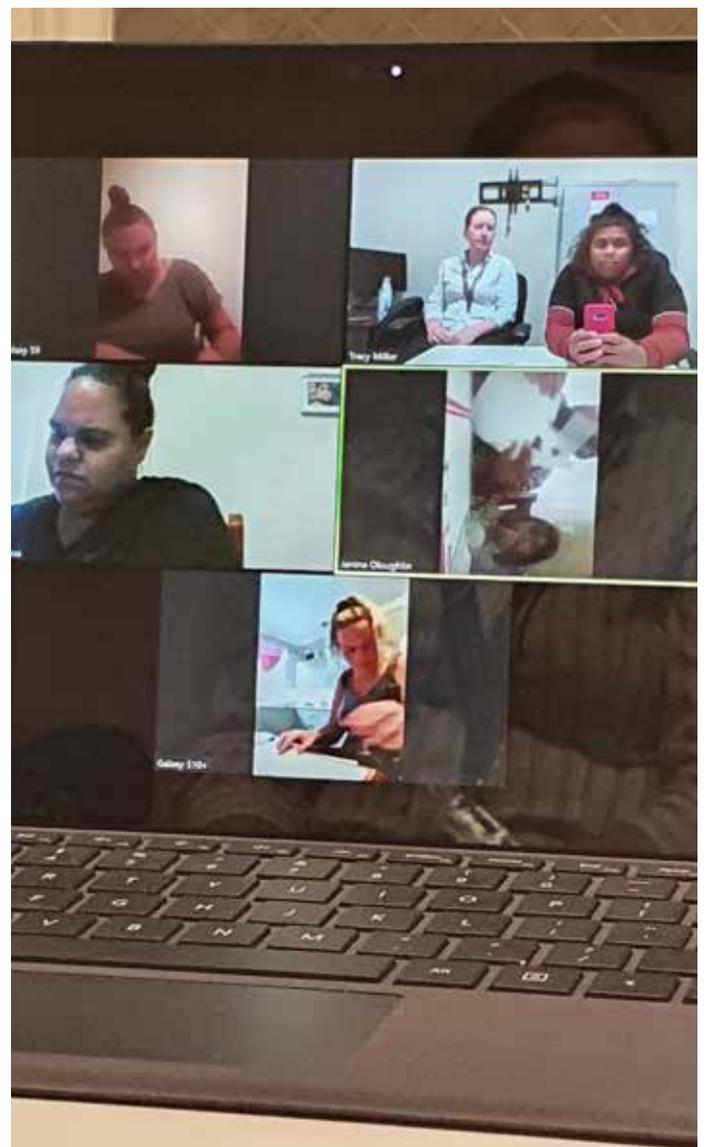
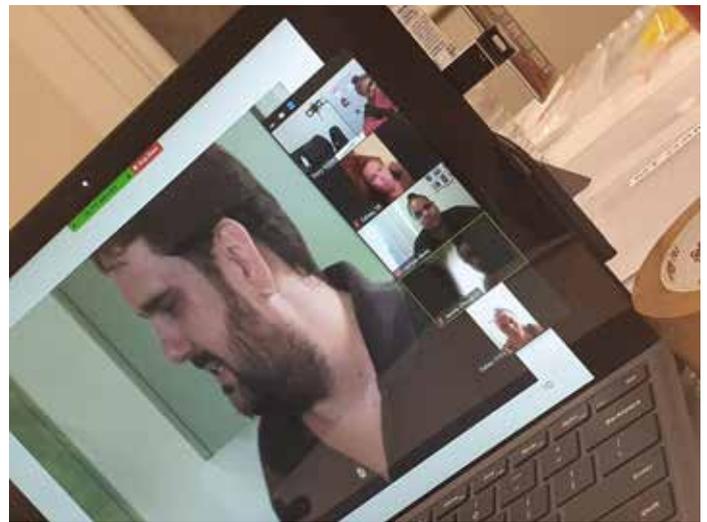
As this is a resource-heavy course, facilitators delivered hand outs and necessary materials to participants' homes in the day prior. (With no contact with clients! Material was left at the clients' doors.)

The facilitators helped participants with their new technology (using Zoom for the first time on their phones, computers, or laptops). This involved phoning the clients and teaching them how to join a meeting and connect. They also quickly learnt how to 'mute' their sessions to minimise the noise of children and activities in the background. There was some technological problems, but for the most part, these were resolved easily.

The participation in the group was on-par with that of face-to-face delivery! This was enhanced by the participants having existing relationships, and having already learnt together over the five week Growing Up Healthy sessions.

The participants were able to hold their new routines and rules up to their cameras, showing the group their efforts over the session. Four participants will receive certificates for their contributions to the group.

Overall, this delivery style can be considered a success, and the facilitation team looks forward to experimenting more, especially regarding the use of Zoom for delivery to remote communities.





Where to find us

Adelaide

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Adelaide SA 5000
Phone (08) 8205 1500

Berri

23 Denny Street
Berri SA 5343
Phone (08) 8582 3192

Smithfield

39a Anderson Walk
Smithfield SA 5114
Phone (08) 8254 1077

Ceduna

28 Poynton Street
Ceduna SA 5690
Phone: (08) 8625 3466

Coober Pedy

Lot 1991 Aylett Street
Coober Pedy SA 5723
Phone (08) 8672 3066

Mount Gambier

C/- Pangula Mannamurna
191 Commercial Street West
Mt Gambier SA 5290
Phone: 0499 889 729

Murray Bridge

4a, 17-19 Adelaide Rd
Murray Bridge, SA 5253
Phone: (08) 8532 1790

Port Augusta

8-10 Victoria Parade
Port Augusta SA 5700
Phone (08) 8641 0907

Port Lincoln

21 Washington Street
Port Lincoln SA 5606
Phone (08) 8683 1909

Aboriginal Gambling Help Service Saving during COVID-19

Research shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Australians have saved themselves \$1.5 billion from gambling losses in just one month and if you add casinos' that amount could potentially be \$2 billion. The shutdown of pubs and clubs has improved lives for many people for the better and we are hearing many stories how people are no longer worrying about how to pay their bills because they now have money in their bank accounts.

Unfortunately, the down side to this good news is research shows there has been a 300% jump in online gambling. The risks with online gambling are potentially higher as there are no real limits.

When betting starts to cause trouble in your life such as debts, relationship problems, stress or feeling down, you may have a problem with gambling. If you continue to gamble despite these negative consequences, or if you know you need to stop but can't, then you may benefit from having a yarn with your local gambling help services.

Did you know that many banks can also help if you are experiencing gambling problems? Banks are working on plans to help customers restrict their spending on gambling, offering gambling block solutions, with some banks allowing customers to turn off payments to gambling services. Blocks are available on debit and credit cards. Primary card holders, additional card holders, people who hold a Power of Attorney and people who have third-party access to another person's internet

banking can all apply for a block. Give your bank a call and check if they are offering this service.

Talk to a financial counsellor for free advice if you would like some money tips to protect your money when gaming venues re-open. Visit: <https://www.safca.org.au/find-a-financial-counsellor.html>

Starting the yarn with someone who gambles can be hard, especially if they don't think they have a problem or do not want to stop. A lot of people find it very hard to talk to someone close to them about gambling problems because they often don't know what to say or it can be shame.

Simple things like listening when they want to talk and checking how they are feeling can help them feel safe so they can feel OK yarning about their gambling. Using a connecting statement can be a useful way to start the yarn. A connecting statement is a truthful statement about something positive between you and the other person. An example of a connecting statement is: 'I really care about you and what happens to us and because of that I feel have to talk about what I've been noticing'.

If you would like help for yourself or someone you know with gambling problems, contact your local, free, confidential, gambling help service.

Contact AFSS Gambling Help Service on 8205 1500

