



**RUCSN**

**Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs Inc.**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2005**

# ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

RUCSN's MISSION is to promote, support and enhance the inclusion of children with additional needs and their families in appropriate children's services and associated community activities.

## RUCSN PHILOSOPHY

We value:

- the intrinsic worth of all people and their right to develop to their full potential;
- children and childhood;
- diversity, and respect its contribution to our community;
- the rights of children and families to equitable access and participation in the community;
- mutual respect, empowerment and support in all relationships;
- a collaborative and co-operative approach to achieve goals;
- a high level of relevant expertise and ethical practice;
- an open and accountable organisational culture which is committed to flexibility and responsiveness through appraisal and development.

## RUCSN's VISION IS:

To achieve by leadership and example:

- the empowerment of children's services in skilled, inclusive practice;
- the acceptance by the community of the value of inclusion, and
- the increased access and participation of children with additional needs in children's services.

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## REPORT FROM CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Zelinda Bafile - Chairperson



Tony Morley – Executive Director

The year 2004/2005 has been such a busy and successful year: every area of service delivery has increased its outputs and staff have worked hard to explore opportunities to further increase their services without compromising the quality of that service. RUCSN's hard-won reputation goes from strength to strength – we are constantly hearing directly from families and caregivers, or in meetings (both in this State and on the Eastern side of the country) about the quality and value of the service that RUCSN delivers. What also comes through in these comments is the respect and passion shown by every member of RUCSN staff when working with children, families and caregivers.

With the growth of the organisation we have implemented cost efficiencies and synergies, and used business strategies to ensure that RUCSN is in a strong financial position in preparation for the expected changes in the children's services support sector. Organisational structure, policies and procedures and staffing have also been strengthened ahead of new opportunities that will be available to the organisation. A highlight of the year was the Strategic Planning Day in February when all staff met to review the organisation's capabilities and consider our future. The day was a resounding success with many staff being pleasantly surprised that they had been given the opportunity to share ideas and contribute to planning direction for the next five years. At the end of this day, all staff left with a positive and upbeat attitude, high expectations for the organisation's future and a sense of ownership of our strategies.

From its narrow focus of supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities into children's services, RUCSN has developed a strategy of diversification and reduction of its dependency on one source of funding. As can be seen in the Team Reports, RUCSN has retained its core role and expanded into managing mobile children's services and family support programs (Midwest and 7then West Pilbara); delivering the Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS) program in Early Years sites (Carnarvon, Bayswater/Maylands, Clarkson/Merriwa, Kalgoorlie, Gosnells, Mullewa); supporting playgroups (Murchison and Pilbara); providing 'fee-for-service' training on topics such as Inclusion, Language Development, Makaton, Support for Challenging Behaviours, etc; supporting carers in various regions of the State; and taking on a range of projects with funding through the Department of Education. RUCSN has always taken pride in organising and delivering training and professional development opportunities for its staff – a highlight this year was the private audience with Dr Fraser Mustard. This was a great opportunity for staff and selected colleagues (Ngala, Coolabaroo, etc) to share ideas with the world renowned expert on Early Childhood and to ensure that we are all working to 'best practice' standards.

The Board and all staff have been waiting patiently for the outcome of the FaCS Broadband Redevelopment and the consequent impact on services currently provided by RUCSN. The environment of challenge and uncertainty has continued throughout the year and it was a relief

when the tenders for the new Professional Support Coordinator (PSC) and the revamped Inclusion Support Agency (ISA) regions were announced and then conducted from April to September 2005. We cannot predict the outcomes of these tenders, but we are comfortable that we have worked hard and prepared solid and professional submissions that meet the needs of both the funding body (FaCS) and the various communities. We take this opportunity to thank our many supporters from the child care sector who provided referee reports and letters of support for the various tenders. We would also comment on the strong working relationship that RUCSN (and all staff) have built with the Ngala organisation (our partner in the PSC Tender).

### **THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL RUCSN SCHOLARSHIP**

RUCSN was fortunate to have Anne Russell-Brown (CEO of Mission Australia WA) to present the 2004 RUCSN Scholarships. We take great pleasure in congratulating this year's recipients:

- Alexandra Shaw studying Law and Politics at Notre Dame University
- Peter Darch studying Psychology at Murdoch University
- Kylie Forth studying Psychology at UWA
- Vanessa Pepe studying Legal Studies at Murdoch University

We hope that our small measure of support will assist them to accomplish their goals. Each of the recipients is a wonderful role model for young people with a disability and indeed for ALL young people.

### **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

For any organisation to be successful it is essential that the Board of Management, Executive Director and Staff share a common and clear understanding of the Vision, Mission and Values of the organisation. RUCSN works hard to ensure that all of its people are valued and are dedicated and committed to its goals.

We thank them all, but particularly the highly qualified Board of Management who freely volunteer their time, support and expertise to provide leadership during these times of change.

We remain confident that we have positioned RUCSN to be able to move towards these goals in the interest of providing better outcomes for children and families, through the provision of better support to children's services.

During this (financial) year we said farewell to some of our longer serving Board Members:

- Jane Roberts
- Anne Anderson
- Dr. Susan McKenzie
- Christina Santini

We take this opportunity to warmly thank them for the valued contribution that each of them has made to the success of the organisation.

We recruited some highly qualified and experienced people during the year (profiles can be found in the next section):

- Graham O'Neill
- Yvonne Hateley
- Bronwyn Frazer
- Tony Morley (co-opted as Executive Director)

We thank them for freely giving their time and experience to guide RUCSN along its journey of challenges and opportunities.

*Zelinda Bafile and Tony Morley*



**2004 RUCSN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Vanessa Pepe, Recipient (L) and Anne  
Russell-Brown, CEO of Mission Australia



**2004 RUCSN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Peter Darch, Recipient



**2004 RUCSN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Kylie Forth, Recipient



**2004 RUCSN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Alexandra Shaw, Recipient

## **THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2004 - 2005**

### **ZELINDA BAFILE LLB, FAICD, FCIS – CHAIRPERSON**

Zelinda was elected to the Board in October 1999 and appointed by the Board as the Chairperson in 2000.

Her law degree and years of experience as the Company Secretary, General Counsel and Manager of Risk & Compliance for Home Building Society Ltd, a listed company in the finance and customer service industry, provides governance and other business skills to the Board.

She was appointed in 2004 as a Member of the Council of Curtin University of Technology and is also Chair of the Perth Area Consultative Committee; Member of the Finance Committee of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW); and a trustee of the Australian Federation of University Women (Inc) Education Trust. In June 2005 she was appointed to the Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee.

She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Fellow of the Institute of Company Secretaries and a member of the Law Society of WA and numerous other professional associations.

### **BARBARA MACNISH – VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Barbara was appointed to the Board in 2001. Since February 2005 she has worked for the Department of Culture and the Arts as Executive Director Portfolio Coordination with responsibility for corporate affairs, organisational performance, strategic and operational planning and audit and facilitating cooperative arrangements across the culture and arts portfolio (comprising the Art Gallery, WA Museum, State Library and ScreenWest). Prior to taking up this role Barbara was the Assistant Prices Commissioner at the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection with responsibility for fuel pricing regulation in Western Australia. She has extensive experience at an executive level in a variety of organisations. Barbara has a Master of Business Administration and Graduate Diploma of Business, received a Telstra Business Woman of the Year Award in 2003 and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is also on the Board of the Perth Area Consultative Committee.

### **JOHN ANNAND - TREASURER**

John was appointed to the Board and elected Treasurer in June 2003. For the past 8 years he has worked at Woodside Energy Ltd where he has gained experience in management accounting and budgeting, strategic and business planning, people management, performance measurement and risk management.

John is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, the Securities Institute of Australia and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries.

He has 3 young children, one of whom has a genetic condition resulting in a developmental delay.

John brings to the Board both financial expertise and experience in raising a child with a disability.

**ANNE ANDERSON**

Anne trained as Mental Health Nurse in her native Denmark, Europe. She worked in Denmark and Sweden with children with special needs before migrating to Australia. She has always had a commitment to working for children. She started a crèche, a playgroup and ran holiday activities for children in Tennant Creek, while raising her own family and working with Aboriginal children in a hostel.

Now the Director of a community based Long Day Care Centre she has a special commitment to inclusion for all children. Anne is also a Validator for the National Child Care Accreditation Council. She was elected to the Board in October 1999.

**BRONWYN FRAZER**

Bronwyn Frazer is a Communications Specialist with over 12 years experience within the Communications industry. She has experience in various fields including advertising, promotions, marketing, public relations, media and journalism. Her experience includes media liaison, sponsorship management, special events, community liaison and freelance journalism. She has written annual reports, media releases, newsletters and strategic communication plans, brochures, advertising copy, advertorials, feature articles, fundraising and promotional material.

Bronwyn is currently self employed with her business Kiscomms. To date she has worked with Peters & Brownes, The West Australian newspaper, Channel 7 Perth, the WA Royal Agricultural Society, Community Newspaper Group, the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, Australian Family Circle, Woman's Day, The Sunday Telegraph and the Sunday Times.

Bronwyn has a Communications Degree from The University of Canberra, a Public Relations and Promotions Diploma through The Australian School of Journalism, a Direct Marketing Certificate through the Australian Direct Marketing Association (ADMA) and various other professional qualifications.

**CHRISTINA SANTINI – SECRETARY**

Christina qualified with a Diploma of Children's Services and has worked in long day care centres for a number of years with different age groups. She frequently has utilised the services of Inclusion Support Workers to assist children in her care and values the support given to families, children and staff.

She is Director of a Community Based Long Day Care Centre which is implementing the Reggio Emilia approach to child care and is a strong advocate of emergent curriculum incorporating child initiated learning. Christina also undertakes validation visits to other Long Day Care Centres in Australia, on behalf of the National Childcare Accreditation Council. She was elected to the Board in October 1999.

**GRAHAM O'NEILL**

Graham holds an Accounting and Finance Business Degree from Edith Cowan University and a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Deakin University. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Banking and Finance and a senior associate of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants.

His business experience involves significant roles in 'people', 'management' and 'lending' during a career with Bank West that spanned 22 years. His final executive role with Bank West was as Chief Manager - Property Finance & Asian Banking.

He assumed a senior executive role as Group Manager – Credit, at Home Building Society in December 2003 and has recently been given increased accountability for the Information Systems and Operations teams within Home Building Society under the new title of Group Manager - Lending & Technology.

Graham is married with two daughters.

### **JANE ROBERTS**

Jane was elected to the Board of RUCSN in 1997 and appointed as Vice Chairperson in 2000.

Over many years Jane has worked in child and family support programs as a child development officer, co-ordinator trainer and manager. Her experience also includes time as a project officer with the Department for Community Development, lecturer at both TAFE and university and several years with Meerilinga in various roles.

Jane currently is President of Young Media Australia a national advocacy organisation and Secretary to the WA Branch of Early Childhood Australia. She has a strong commitment to working in partnerships with families through her role as a trainer with the Family Partnership Training Program.

### **MARGARET SIMS**

Dr Margaret Sims is the Programme Director for the School of International, Cultural and Community Studies at Joondalup campus of Edith Cowan University. She has many years' experience working in community settings with children and families. She has been Junior Co-ordinator for the Tamaki Branch of the New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped, National Co-ordinator of the Community Living Programme for the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, a clinical psychologist in the Auckland Early Intervention Programme and Co-ordinator of the Family Support Programme for the Pacific Foundation. She has research interests in children and families with diverse needs (including parenting in marginalised groups), services for children who have experienced refugee or war-related trauma, and quality service delivery particularly in child care. Current projects include researching the relationship between children's stress levels (using biomarkers of stress) and the quality of the environments in which young children participate. She has three children and four grandchildren.

### **RUSSELL SIMPSON**

Russell was appointed to the Board in 2002. He has extensive experience in Indigenous affairs and is currently the Regional Manager for the Department of Indigenous Affairs in the Murchison Gascoyne region. At present, Russell is the only Indigenous representative on the Board and is a strong supporter of and promotes the RUCSN ethos of "*inclusiveness*".

Russell has a strong personal commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous children. He has mentored troubled youth, volunteered in a homework centre setting and is currently the Chairperson of the Government's Strong Families Management Group in the Murchison Gascoyne region. The Strong Families process strives to bring together families and government through a coordinated approach to case management to support vulnerable children and their families.

Russell advocates strongly for child-focussed approaches to policy and program development affecting the lives of Indigenous children. Russell is an active father to four young children and two step children.

In 2004, Russell was appointed to the Board of the Midwest Region Apprenticeship and Traineeship Company, which employs apprentices and trainees and places them with host employers to complete their respective accredited training requirements.

In 2005, Russell was appointed the inaugural Chairperson of the Government's Midwest Gascoyne Human Services Regional Managers' Group, which is designed to administer the State Government's social policy agenda at a regional level (and involves Local, State and Australian Government Regional Managers and Chief Executive Officers).

Russell previously held the position of Executive Officer to the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal Education and Training, which focussed heavily on early childhood education for Aboriginal children in 2000-2001. This coincided with the change to school starting age as implemented by the Education Department and required support to ensure that Aboriginal children were not further disadvantaged. He has also been a Principal Policy Officer and Senior Policy Officer for a number of years, managing portfolio areas such as employment, education, training, youth, family, alcohol and drug abuse and youth suicide.

#### **DR SUSAN MCKENZIE**

Susan is a lecturer in Education at Murdoch University with interests in the fields of special education, inclusive education, early childhood education and family-school collaboration. She is an experienced early childhood teacher who has worked extensively with families who have children with special needs/disabilities. Her research focuses on inclusive early childhood practice, curriculum adaptation for children with disabilities, parent consultation, quality of life for families and collaboration between parents, families and education services.

#### **YVONNE HATELEY**

Yvonne is a qualified Childcare worker (Nursery Nurses Examination Board - UK qualification). Yvonne owns the Fremantle Early Learning and Child Care Centre (previously known as A.B.C.) and a new service in the UK. She is the president of the Childcare Association of Western Australia, Vice Chairperson of the Management Committee of C.S.S.U and a committed provider of quality care. Yvonne has previously facilitated training for The Gowrie and Meerilinga and has been a validator for National Childcare Accreditation Council.

#### **TONY MORLEY – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Tony joined the Board in April 2005 and has been given the title of Executive Director. Tony's qualifications include a Bachelor of Business from Edith Cowan University and an Advanced MBA from University of Western Australia. Tony has been RUCSN's CEO since April 2001.

Following a successful career in commerce with such organisations as Argyle Diamonds (Rio Tinto), Shell Petroleum, GKN Chep and Mobil Oil, Tony has more recently worked and/or volunteered with Activ Foundation, YMCA, Kids' Camps, Catholic Care and CLAN supporting children with disabilities and their families.

Tony is passionate about Quality in child care – not the least because he has a two year old daughter who uses child care two days each week.



*Ben (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) is joining in on a mat session by signing the words*



## RUCSN STAFF

The following staff have contributed to RUCSN's achievements during the past year.

STAFF NAME	JOB TITLE	JOINED RUCSN
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### INCLUSION SUPPORT

#### Great Southern Inclusion Support Team

Fiona Garland	Inclusion Support Manager	2002
Lisa Hassell	Inclusion Support Worker	2003

#### Midwest Gascoyne Inclusion Support Team

Nicola Riley	Inclusion Support Manager	2001
Sharyn May	Family and Community Support Worker	2002
Tracey Medhurst	Administrative Assistant	2004 (to 2004)
Leonie Bartlett	Family and Community Support Worker	2005 (to 2005)
Paula Hicks	Family and Community Support Worker	2004 (to 2005)

#### North Metropolitan Inclusion Support Team

Cathy Hewick	Inclusion Support Manager	1996
Alison Price	Inclusion Support Worker	1994 (to 2004)
Grace Smith	Inclusion Support Worker	2004
Jackie Goodsman	Inclusion Support Worker	2003
Jo Robins	Inclusion Support Worker	1996
Kerrie Phillips	Inclusion Support Worker	1995
Maggie Heynemann	Inclusion Support Worker	2004
Margie Edwards	Inclusion Support Worker	1999
Maria Turoy	Inclusion Support Worker	1997
Pauline Spicer	Inclusion Support Worker	1997
Sharon Gamble	Inclusion Support Worker	1998

#### Pilbara Regional Support Team

Carol Warren	Inclusion Support Manager	2001
Narelle Coyle	Inclusion Support Worker	2004

#### South East Inclusion Support Team

Jané Hansen	Inclusion Support Manager	2004
Corinne Chiverton	Inclusion Support Worker	2003
Edna Riley	Inclusion Support Worker	2002 (to 2004)
Gillian Muir	Inclusion Support Worker	2004
Julie Cooper	Inclusion Support Worker	2003 (to 2004)
Moya McHenry	Inclusion Support Worker	1999

#### Goldfields Children's Inclusion Unit

Kellie Goes	Inclusion Support Manager	2002
Helen Press	Inclusion Support Worker	2004 (to 2004)
Alinka Spencer	Inclusion Support Worker	2004

**SUPS RESOURCE AND ADVISORY AGENCY**

**Resource and Advisory Services**

Shirley McInnes.....	Manager, Resource and Advisory Services .....	1992
Elly Hayes.....	Librarian .....	1998
Helen Illich .....	Library Assistant.....	2004
Sue Hollingsworth .....	Library Assistant.....	2002 (to 2004)

**Training and Support Services**

Lee Jeffery .....	Manager, Training & Support Services .....	1996
Stephanie Brozicevich .....	Administration Support Officer .....	2003 (to 2004)
Kath Menck .....	Project Officer .....	2004 (to 2005)
Jill Mason.....	Project Manager.....	2005 (to 2005)

**MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

Tony Morley .....	Executive Director .....	2001
Alisa Guillory .....	Administrator .....	1999
Hayley Brandreth.....	Administration Assistant .....	2003
Ngaire Bell .....	Administration Assistant .....	2005
Sue O'Byrne .....	Bookkeeper .....	2002



*Children participating in a PALS session, identifying feelings*

## **SUPS RESOURCE AND ADVISORY AGENCY**

RUCSN's Resource and Advisory Agency (R&A) is responsible for providing support in the form of advice, training and resources to the eleven Regional Inclusion (or SUPS) Teams in Western Australia.

The type of support offered is determined by the Priorities set by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. RUCSN's R&A tailors its funded services within these parameters, but in the past year has also worked in other areas on a fee-for-service basis. This has enabled the R&A to reach a wider audience and meet training needs that are not otherwise addressed.

Within the organisation, the R&A role is managed in two separate sections: Resources and Training. However, these two teams work closely together to ensure that the materials and information provided complement each other. For the purposes of clarity, the activities of the teams are presented separately.

### **RESOURCES**

As reported last year, the library services have continued in a mode of consolidation in preparation for the changes in resource provision foreshadowed in the restructuring of the SUPS programme.

During the year, the library staff re-assembled the Browse Boxes that had circulated for many years through the Inclusion Support Teams. The resources were re-packaged in smaller kits, Rucksacks, which teams could provide to children's services to assist their inclusive programming. In total, the library has lent out over 5,000 resources, including books, videos, toys and equipment, in the past year.

The Chatter Boxes (collections of children's books and information on language development) were complemented by the introduction of 20 Story Boxes. These had fewer play resources but contained the same relevant information. Both these forms of language kit are in continuous circulation in child care services, under the direction of individual Inclusion Support Workers (ISWs), and meet the identified need for more language support in childcare.

The library staff were pleased to complete and distribute 10 'Show Me, Tell Me' (SMTM) Kits to Inclusion Teams. Each of these collections contained a variety of practical resources and information to assist caregivers in introducing augmentative communication into their programmes. Many children with disabilities require extra cues and supports to express their needs and understand verbal communication. The SMTM Kits contain examples of Makaton signing, Boardmaker pictures, children's books with "signing" added and schedules for childcare routines. These kits are proving a valuable resource and with RUCSN's acknowledgement, some Inclusion Teams are now copying the format.

'Show Me, Tell Me' was also the name given to a project funded by Special Education Non-Government Centre support for the production of a video, DVD and CD on book-sharing using Makaton (key word signing). RUCSN's Lee Jeffery and Alison Price worked with caregivers to show how story telling could be enhanced for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers by the addition of signing.

The most recent resource package to be developed is the 'E-Box', an abbreviation of its theme "Exploring Emotions and Empathy". Many of the enquiries directed to the library relate to children coping with trauma, stress and the acceptance, or challenge, of diversity. The library staff has added ideas and information for caregivers to use when sharing the children's books contained in the 'E-Box'. There is also information for adult readers on the importance of recognising and responding to children's emotional needs.

The present library collection appears to be meeting Inclusion Workers' needs, although we continue to update our resources, especially when made aware of new trends or interests. We also discard information as it becomes dated in its content or style. We receive a variety of journals and newsletters, the contents of which are circulated to Inclusion Teams.

Equipment provision for children with high and ongoing support needs continues to be a significant resourcing role. RUCSN's Occupational Therapist works with therapists from disability agencies to ensure that the equipment, e.g. seating, meets the child's physical needs and those of social inclusion within the group.

Funding for specialist equipment is limited by FaCS to a total of \$1,000 per child and to date we have managed to meet this limit. We acknowledge with thanks the WA Medical Students' donation towards the purchase of a special chair, which could not be totally funded by the Commonwealth.

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

The RUCSN R & A is responsible for providing Professional Development in the area of disability to ISWs. As the Inclusion Teams are spread across the state, RUCSN combines with ECCRU to deliver two days of SUPS training quarterly, at a metropolitan venue. This is deemed the most cost effective way of meeting the ISWs' professional development needs, whilst also promoting networking and information exchange between the teams.

In the past 12 months, the topics have included 'Inclusive Programming in Outside School House Care' and a series of disability specific sessions. These covered topics such as Autism, language delay, augmentative communication and responding to challenging behaviour in children with disabilities, and were also presented in RUCSN's fee for service training. For both audiences, that is, SUPS and child care workers, these sessions have been well attended and well received. The February training focused on issues relating to the Special Needs Subsidy Scheme and we welcomed the valuable contribution made by Cheryl Martin from FaCS to this presentation.

The SUPS Conference was held in May 2005 and whilst RUCSN was involved in the initial planning, we did not contribute to the final programme. This was due to ISWs indicating their preference to attend a workshop following the conference where Louise Porter was the keynote speaker. Dr Porter is regarded as an expert in the areas of additional needs and the ISWs found her presentation very valuable.

RUCSN's R&A has continued to distribute a newsletter containing disability information and updates to ISWs. The R&A also provides an information and advisory service to Inclusion Teams, offering both telephone and written communication. Requests range from advice on toileting, to children's books on grief and loss, to toys to promote inclusion.

At the request of FaCS, RUCSN developed an Orientation Manual for those new to the SUPS inclusion programmes. Lee Jeffery compiled a comprehensive booklet, including the history and philosophy of the programme, together with examples of how inclusion principles can be introduced to child care programming. The final document was warmly acknowledged by FaCS,

and the Department has considered recommending it as the Australian prototype for the inclusion programme.

Another FaCS priority was the development of a set of protocols to formally determine the relationships between the SUPS R&As (RUCSN and ECCRU), Inclusion Support Teams and their Sponsors. The two R&As worked together on the protocols, and following their scrutiny by Inclusion Teams and Sponsors, they were accepted by FaCS.

A further joint project between RUCSN and ECCRU has been an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander programme which will continue until December 2005. RUCSN undertook a training and resource needs analysis for the project, preparing reports from feedback from both Inclusion Teams and child care services. Kath Menck was the RUCSN Project Officer for this work and we thank her for her excellent contribution.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the commitment and enthusiasm of the library staff, Elly Hayes, Helen Illich and Susan Hollingsworth during the past year. It is also important to thank Stephanie Brozicevich and Jill Mason, both of whom made significant contributions to our advisory and training responsibilities. Thank you also to the Inclusion Teams and the many agencies with whom the R&A staff are privileged to work, for their support, interest and inspiration.

***Lee Jeffery, Training Manager***  
***Shirley McInnes, Resources Manager***



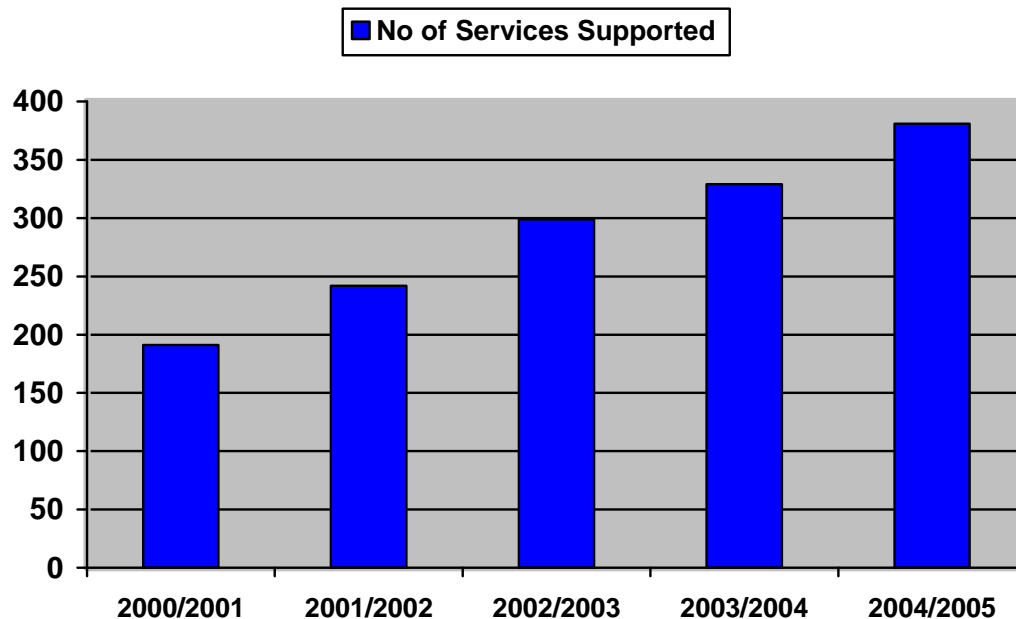
***Elly Hayes, Librarian, in the RUCSN Library***

## INCLUSION SUPPORT TEAMS

### INCLUSION (RUCSN'S SIX TEAMS)

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
No. of children supported	518	732	1129	975	878
No. of children with high support needs	116	255	216	431	381
No. of services supported	191	242	299	329	381

The table above demonstrates a 100% increase in support to children's services across a four year period; and the number of children supported has also doubled during that time. The number of 'children with high support needs' has increased from 2000/2001 to more than three times that number by 2004/2005. The staggering increases in services and children supported go a long way to explaining the ongoing and increasing pressure that Inclusion Support Workers have to manage. During the same four-year period funding to the Inclusion Support Teams has been increased by 5% in total.



**Note:** RUCSN took on sponsorship of Goldfields Children's Inclusion Unit (GCIU) from September 2002. (The numbers from 2002/2003 include GCIU whereas the numbers for previous years do not, however GCIU makes up less than 5% of the 2002/2003 totals so the distortion is not significant).

Each Inclusion Support Team works differently in response to the needs and priorities of their region. Some regions have a stable population of caregivers which allows them to concentrate on wider community development, while in other regions a high turnover of caregivers dictates that the Team spends its time in the child care services. All the regions are different and each team has adapted to meet the needs of the area. For the country Teams in particular, travel is a big issue. Travelling distance and time impact significantly upon what are tiny budgets in comparison with the job to be done. Also, some country Teams are 'one-man bands' employing only part time staff. This means that whilst they are away from their base, visiting remote areas, their work builds up until they return. By expanding our role in the country regions to include new activities (separately funded), RUCSN has managed to reduce (but not eliminate) this problem. Using synergies and cost-sharing across the projects, and sharing resources and travel with other agencies, has allowed RUCSN to provide a more comprehensive service to our clients, as well as making the RUCSN role more fulfilling and enjoyable.

As in previous years the common concern across all of the RUCSN Teams is the poor level of Quality Care in many of the services that we support. While many services provide excellent care and education opportunities for children, this unfortunately is not the case with all service providers. RUCSN is working with the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to find better ways to improve quality in child care. The outcomes of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program and installation of Professional Support Coordinators is one of the initiatives that FaCS is implementing to address these concerns. RUCSN is also supporting FaCS and NCAC with the implementation of the new Assisted Inclusion Readiness Plans and linking of these to the Quality Accreditation process.

The challenge of meeting the needs of our clients while striving to remain within individual budgets, continues to be an issue. RUCSN has proposed that the support agencies look at alliances, partnerships or mergers in order to simplify and streamline the support that we provide to children's services – this should result in a more "joined up" process and a better outcome for families and children.

The following reports from each region were written by the Teams themselves. While this reflects the diversity of style of the writers, the overall picture allows the sense of inclusion and the RUCSN culture to shine through.

## **GREAT SOUTHERN INCLUSION SUPPORT TEAM**

The Great Southern Inclusion Support Team (GSIST) consists of Fiona Garland and Lisa Hassell working from the Albany office (co-located with Wanslea Children's Services). Throughout the year the team has contacted, visited and worked with all 23 services in the region. This involvement with services has been enhanced by the team's attendance at the Upper and Lower Great Southern Childcare Network meetings. These network meetings provide an excellent opportunity to maintain regular contact with services, discuss current issues and disseminate information to all those involved. The team has also been active in assisting staff in services to liaise with therapists, health services and relevant agencies.

The team maintains regular contact with local agencies in order to promote the services provided by RUCSN in the region. Attendance at Professional Development opportunities, networking events and community activities assists us to further foster links between childcare, government and other community groups. Ongoing contact with the Resource and Advisory agencies, in particular RUCSN and ECCRU, has enabled the team to more effectively meet its own resource and training needs, whilst also meeting those of the child care services. Resources and support from RUCSN and ECCRU have been invaluable and their prompt response to our requests is appreciated.

In recent years our Annual Reports have noted, with concern, the continual requests for assistance from the State funded Occasional Child Care and Mobile Services, particularly in the Lower Great Southern region. The only support these services have typically received is from the Department for Community Development Children's Services Officer (CSO) who works in a part-time position. CSO's are now responsible for all licencing enquiries, issues and testing, thus reducing the time available to visit and support Occasional Care services. With the assistance of RUCSN management, GSIST was successful in securing short-term funding through Non-Government Centres Support (NGCS) to pilot a programme, 'Inclusion Support for Occasional Care services in the Lower Great Southern Region'. With the additional hours and funding, the team has been able to successfully include four children with high support needs in remote Occasional Care services and assist the staff with information and advice.

In our last report it was noted that the majority of referrals were for children with language delay. GSIST accessed Early Years funding to facilitate two puppet making workshops, one in the Upper Great Southern and the other in the Lower Great Southern. These workshops were aimed at promoting children's language and social development through the use of puppets. The participants made their own puppets and were then shown how to use them to model appropriate language and social skills to children, staff and parents. In addition to this, the team organised Makaton workshops for parents, centre staff and carers in the Lower Great Southern. These were well attended, reflecting the interest and need amongst local people for more skills in the area of augmentative communication for people with disabilities.

Quality of care continues to be an issue in the region due to the lack of trained, experienced or mature staff and the difficulty of retaining staff, especially in remote towns and rural centres. One new service has been unable to open, and another two will possibly close, due to lack of trained staff. However, there will soon be a significant increase in childcare places in the Albany area, as three new services are due to open in the next six months (approximately 190 places). These figures will be further augmented by the growing number of Family Day Carers in the three schemes which operate in the Great Southern.

The number of children with high support needs who are supported with SNSS funding has increased in the past twelve months. Thanks to support from Family and Community Services (FaCS) personnel, one remote Long Day Care service was able to access additional hours for a child during the school holidays. Unfortunately, another remote service had to cancel SNSS funding, as it was unable to afford the gap between the funding provided by SNSS and the amount to be paid to the extra staff member. Having cancelled the funding, the service is now reliant on volunteers for support. This tends not to be a satisfactory solution. Many services comment that although the SNSS allowance for wages has risen, there is still a significant gap in the cost of employing an extra worker.

The new Albany Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) will commence operation in July 2005. This service will provide settlement services, information, referral and advocacy for refugee and humanitarian entrants, family stream migrants and the dependants of skilled migrants with low level English proficiency, in the City of Albany and surrounding region. There has been an increase in families from different cultural backgrounds moving into the Albany and Katanning areas, although the children are not yet utilising the child care services. We look forward to working with this new migrant service in supporting the inclusion of the children and their families in our communities.

The Great Southern Inclusion Team feels it has accomplished a great deal in the past year and looks forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

***Fiona Garland***  
***Inclusion Support Manager***  
***Great Southern Inclusion Support Team***



***Children at a Three Year Old Kindy “inclusion in practice”***

## **MIDWEST-GASCOYNE AND MURCHISON RURAL CHILDREN'S SUPPORT NETWORK**

The Midwest, Gascoyne and Murchison team has continued to promote its role to agencies, families and children's services in the region, through networking meetings, collaborative service delivery and its newsletter. In addition to providing advice and support to all childcare services through the Supplementary Services Programme, the team has continued to promote inclusion to existing playgroups through the Rural Playgroup Support Service. The Family Support Service funded by the Local Answers Project ended on 30 June 2005, and we are exploring the possibility of a partnership with another regional organisation to continue the service.

The team has had some significant staff changes over the last twelve months, with Jenny Allen resigning from her position as Manager to take up a management role with another local agency. Nicola Riley was appointed Manager and continued to work with families and playgroups across the region. Sharyn May was appointed Co-ordinator of Inclusion Support in Childcare and also continued to support playgroups and families. A new staff member, Paula Hicks, was appointed as a Family and Community Support Worker, and her role provided a strong focus to supporting communities through the mobile playgroup. In February, Paula obtained entry into the University of WA and she moved to Perth to further her studies. Leonie Bartlett was then employed on a short-term contract until the end of June 2005 (coinciding with the end of the Local Answers Funding). Leonie's role focused on the mobile playgroup and promotion of Aboriginal inclusion in playgroups and childcare.

Over the last twelve months we have had a steady flow of referrals from childcare services, with a noticeable increase in referrals for children with high support needs. The other particular area of need has been in support for children with challenging behaviour. The team continues to be concerned by the high staff turnover and the numbers of unqualified staff in childcare services, as many of the challenges to caregivers in including all children are related to the caregivers' inexperience and stress. Training facilitated by RUCSN and the Child Development Team has had an overwhelming response. We can only assume this is because we have the opportunity to be 'on the ground' with services and thus able to respond to their needs at the time and identify specific issues of concern.

On a positive note we have noticed an increase in service utilisation by families from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background, particularly in centres which have employed staff from an ATSI background. The utilisation of child care services by families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds has remained relatively low and whilst we would like to address the issue, time constraints have prevented this.

The Rural Playgroup Support Service and Family Support Service are closely linked and have significant synergies. In these programmes the team provides Resource Kits and responds to requests for support, ranging from funding applications to activity sessions for existing playgroups. However, the main focus is on conducting family play sessions, using our RUMPAS mobile playgroup facility. These sessions combine aspects of both projects as we provide parenting information, advice and support, whilst promoting the development of social links and networks through playgroups.

We have continued to support families who have children with special needs through the Stepping Stones playgroup, which meets on a weekly basis. We are fortunate to have input into the running of this group from local therapists, thus supporting the children's physical, cognitive and communication development in a social setting. The development of children's social skills has continued to be an area of concern for many families and agencies. This led to regular requests for

play sessions to address this problem through the Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS) programme. To meet this need, we ran two ten-week PALS programmes within a local pre-primary school. The team also introduced the PALS programme to Mullewa, which is an Early Years Site. The focus of this group was to train community members in the delivery of PALS, thus contributing to the development of early childhood skills and knowledge amongst community members.

Support for an already established indigenous playgroup organised by the Geraldton Aboriginal Street Workers Corporation, was one of our focus areas for the second half of the year. Visits were made on a weekly basis with the RUMPAS van and resources, together with input from the team's Family Support worker, providing a valuable boost to this group.

Over the past year the community has accessed fewer RUCSN parenting workshops than in previous years. Since the beginning of this year, a parenting officer has been available through the Department for Community Development (DCD) to support families with parenting issues, and this may account for the change in demand.

We have continued to access funding from the Early Years Strategy to provide a number of different services throughout our region, including an Early Years networking session for all agencies involved with families of young children. This was attended by representatives of 18 agencies and acknowledged as a valuable community venture.

We continue to work closely with many agencies throughout the region, particularly Health Services and DCD. Their support, together with that provided by the SUPS Resource and Advisory Agencies, the Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs (RUCSN), and the Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit (ECCRU), has been invaluable.

***Sharyn May***

***Acting Manager***

***Midwest-Gascoyne & Murchison Rural Children's Support Network***

## NORTH METROPOLITAN REGIONAL INCLUSION TEAM

The North Metro Regional Inclusion Team (NMRIT) has had a busy year with participation in several new projects. Our primary focus continues to be our inclusion support role, whilst maintaining well established links with community services within our region.

Our 12 member team has seen a few changes this year. We said a sad farewell to Alison Price, a long term stalwart of the team, in January 2005. She and her husband took a 'seachange' and moved to the south west - we wish them well. We have since welcomed to the team, Julie Bloor, who has a professional background in social work and child care. Her expertise adds to the team's already strong and diverse skills repertoire, and further enhances our ability to provide quality support and inclusion advice at all times. Gillian Muir (now Lonsdale) transferred to NMRIT from SEIT in mid 2004. She became the proud mother of a son in December 2004 and is currently on maternity leave. Jo Robins and Cathy Hewick both reached a significant milestone this year, becoming eligible for and taking Long Service Leave.

### NMRIT SUPPORT

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
<b>Number of children's services supported</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>258</b>
This is a 21% increase in the past 12 months			

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
<b>Number of children supported</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>429</b>

This includes 214 new referrals and indicates a small increase in the past 12 months.

This year we have implemented the practice of linking all strategies, advice and support to the children's services Quality Assurance systems. These promote good quality childcare and enhance the inclusion of all children. Although most referrals to our team are for children with disabilities, the team decided to increase its focus on inclusion practices for children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds this year. A 'one person' model has been introduced to promote and provide information to services in the area of cultural diversity. One Inclusion Support worker now has the responsibility for undertaking information sessions in children's services on cultural inclusion and refugee issues. In addition, all CALD resources owned by NMRIT have been collated and catalogued so team members can have easier access to them. This has proven to be of great benefit to the whole team. A number of 'Diversity Bags' have been developed, each bag including everyday objects that reflect the diversity of our community. Services are encouraged to use this kit as a way of recognising the ease and importance of inclusive programming.

Inclusion of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background (ATSI) has been increased this year through growing links with community groups in the Clarkson/Merriwa region. These networks have identified that many Aboriginal families in the area require assistance to meet the needs of their children in the local community, including access to childcare. Ongoing development of ATSI networks will further increase NMRIT's access to, and support of, children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

The ongoing high rate of staff turn-over and lack of qualified trained staff in childcare continues to impact on the delivery of inclusion support. We have noted significant changes in ownership of many services in the region over the past 12 months, with many becoming part of corporate childcare chains.

We are often privileged to see rewarding inclusive practices that reinforce our philosophy and values. In 2003 we provided inclusion support for a 17 month old child who presented with multiple medical conditions, including global delay and a high level of stress. Special Needs Subsidy Scheme funding was organised, and with regular contact from therapists and the implementation of strategies, a holistic approach was developed. Although this child still requires ongoing support to monitor his condition, it is rewarding to see him so inquisitive and happy. Staff continue to include him with acceptance, enthusiasm and spontaneity. The use of Makaton is fully incorporated into their program enabling staff and children to communicate with him. The collaborative approach used in the inclusion of this child was initiated by the parents and the childcare service, with the end result of seeing a child who is full of joy.

### **EARLY YEARS STRATEGY GROUPS**

NMRIT has actively participated in the Early Years Strategy groups in the two sites of Clarkson/Merriwa and Bayswater/Maylands. Through these groups we obtained funding to conduct the Playing and Learning to Socialise program (PALS), which focuses on helping young children to develop their social skills. Seventeen diverse settings were selected to deliver this program including the Kora Aboriginal Children's Service, local primary schools, playgroups and childcare services within the regions. Further sessions will be delivered in the coming year as this valuable program has been positively received by all who participated. Our ongoing involvement in these Early Years Strategy Groups promotes inclusion and development of inclusive practices in children's services, particularly for children with additional needs.

### **THREE YEAR OLD KINDY**



**NORTH METRO REGIONAL INCLUSION TEAM**  
(Minus Cathy Hewick, Maggie Heynemann and  
Gillian Lonsdale)

An unmet need identified in the northern suburbs was the lack of support available to children with disabilities who are accessing community based 'Three Year Old Kindy' programs. RUCSN supported this issue by allocating some funds from the Western Australian Medical Students Society (WAMSS) to support a child who attends the 'Three's Plus Kindy' in Joondalup. This funding enabled the service to employ an additional staff member 1 day per week to support the child's inclusion. This unmet need has prompted both NMRIT and RUCSN to seek further funding, on a more permanent basis, to support children with disabilities in these programs in the future.

Having reflected on the activities of the past year, NMRIT now looks forward to the challenges and changes ahead. Finally, thank you to all the NMRIT staff who have continued to shine as individuals and together as a team, to make all of the above happen!

***Jo Robins***  
***Acting Inclusion Support Manager***  
***North Metro Regional Inclusion Team***

## **PILBARA RURAL CHILDREN'S SUPPORT**

This year has been an exciting, rewarding and busy one for the Pilbara Team. Narelle Coyle in Karratha and Carol Warren in South Hedland have been joined by Peta Watson and Ursula Wilson. Our current services of Inclusion Support and Playgroup have been extended to include Aboriginal Bi-Cultural Worker Support and the West Pilbara Mobile Children's Service.

### **INCLUSION SUPPORT**

There have been a number of changes in the child care field in the Pilbara. New community based services opened in Karratha, Wickham and Newman, while a private service closed in the Hedland area. The Children's Services Support Unit (CSSU) has taken over the management of a number of services in the region with positive effects, giving greater stability and professional support to the staff in these centres.

Over the past 12 months the Pilbara team has supported a total of 52 children, 16 of whom have been in receipt of Special Needs Subsidy Scheme funding. Inclusion support has been provided to 24 services, across all eligible service types including Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care, Vacation Care, MAC services, Occasional Care and the Pilbara Family Day Care and In-Home Care Schemes.

### **PLAYGROUP SUPPORT**

Ongoing funding from the Department for Community Development has enabled the team to support playgroups in the widely spread towns of Onslow, Pannawonica, Karratha, Dampier, Wickham, Roebourne, Port and South Hedland, Newman, Tom Price and Paraburdoo. We have also regularly visited the Aboriginal communities at Yandeyarra and Marble Bar. Narelle has been able to give considerable support to the Best Start Playgroups at Karratha and Roebourne. These playgroups are part of a Department for Community Development programme aimed at supporting Aboriginal families during their children's early years and they fit well with our brief of supporting playgroups in the region.

### **BI-CULTURAL SUPPORT**

The Pilbara Regional Inclusion Team was fortunate to receive extra funding for a 6 month period to employ an Aboriginal Bi-cultural Worker. The money for this project has been made available through a joint ECCRU and RUCSN programme, funded by the Commonwealth, to facilitate access for Aboriginal families into child care. The team chose to offer this position as a job-share and have been joined by two new members, Peta Watson and Ursula Wilson. Their role will be to visit children's services and involve staff and children in activities that reflect Aboriginal culture. It is hoped that their presence in child care, together with activities in the community, will encourage Aboriginal families to consider child care as an early education option for their children. Both Peta and Ursula have lived and worked in the Hedland region for some time and RUCSN feels privileged to have them join our organisation.

## WEST PILBARA MOBILE CHILDREN'S SERVICE

This new programme has been funded by Family and Community Services (FaCS) and is the realisation of a project that has been dear to the heart of the PRIT team leader for two years. We acknowledge the efforts of Sue Maher from FaCS in initiating this programme and thank Sue Finnegan, WA State Manager of FaCS, for launching the project by cutting the red ribbon on our new all terrain vehicle. Thanks are also extended to the RUCSN staff in Perth for their assistance in organising resources for the service and to Narelle who helped in preparations for the launch.



*Staff and dignitaries at the launch of the West Pilbara Mobile Children's Service*

This project will provide early childhood play and learning opportunities for young children and their families living in isolated or remote locations. We plan to visit Aboriginal communities and station families living within a 300 kilometre radius of Port Hedland, offering them playgroup activities and information on typical child development. Our initial Mobile Playgroups will be nearer to town, at Shay Gap Park and Cemetery Beach. These locations have been chosen as ideal places for families with young children to meet, share morning tea, join in supervised play activities and make use of playground equipment.

The Strelley Aboriginal Community, two hours from Hedland will be one of the first to receive weekly visits and we have great visions for extending the service in other outlying areas as the year progresses. The programme has been initially funded for two years and we look forward to reporting more fully on it in the next Annual Report.

## GENERAL

The Pilbara Rural Children's Support Network has continued to maintain partnerships with like-minded agencies, in order to provide and obtain mutual support in the delivery of its service. We are also proactive in seeking new collaborative relationships, and look forward to expanding our network as we offer a greater range of services.

We wish to acknowledge the support provided by Cate Eastcott, the Children's Services Officer for the region and Irene Kelly from Parent link. The staff at the Department for Community Development in Newman, Tom Price and locally in Hedland and Karratha are also thanked for their assistance in facilitating our service delivery. The Commonwealth Childcare Links staff, have been particularly supportive of our mobile service, helping to identify potential venues and participants for our initial playgroups. Our strong ties with the Pilbara Family Day Care Coordinator, Ros Bowers, are of great value to the team, both personally and practically, and we continue to share travel and accommodation costs as a means of providing more cost effective services.

The team looks forward to the coming year. It promises to be both challenging and rewarding.

*Carol Warren  
Inclusion Support Manager  
Pilbara Rural Children's Support*

## **SOUTH EAST INCLUSION TEAM**

The South East Inclusion Team (SEIT) began this year with a new team manager, Jané Hansen, who brought to the team valuable skills and experience from her years with other inclusion support agencies.

SEIT has struggled for many years to meet the demand for its services. It was therefore necessary to restructure the team and the support it provided, so that outcomes could be met from the funding available. To this end, the team was reduced in size from six to three staff and efficiencies were introduced in the handling of referrals. Improved time management and the encouragement of more assertiveness from team members enabled a focussed approach and ensured that all services were visited during the year. At the same time, service coordinators were informed of the rationalisation of SEIT's service delivery and they responded positively.

The current SEIT team members are Moya McHenry, long serving and highly treasured Aboriginal Bicultural Inclusion Support Worker; Corinne Chiverton, dedicated and skilled Inclusion Support Worker (ISW); and Jané Hansen, Manager. Moya and Corinne are thanked for their support throughout the year. A "thankyou" is also extended to Julie Cooper and Gillian Lonsdale (both ISWs), and Edna Riley (Aboriginal ISW), for their invaluable contributions to the South East region.

During the past year, the team has visited all 46 services in the area, including the 2 Family Day Care Schemes. A total of 174 children have been supported, including 67 children with high needs who are in receipt of Special Needs Subsidy Scheme funding (SNSS). The team has also provided regular newsletters and 'Inclusion Files' to all services and 'Vacation Care Files' to relevant services. These files were a new initiative and designed to provide a central collection point for information related to relevant topics, rather than for specific children. Such resources include Professor Margaret Sims' research on stress in children and child care; information on completing SNSS applications; explanations of SEIT and RUCSN services; ideas to promote culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) inclusion; Aboriginal cultural information; inclusive practices for babies; and the RUCSN Speech and Language Kit. These resources were aimed at promoting quality care and inclusive practices across all target groups in child care through a positive strengths based approach. The information has been widely used and has assisted inclusion processes.

The role of SEIT's Aboriginal Inclusion Workers, Moya and Edna, has been to support the inclusion of individual children from an Aboriginal background, provide relevant cultural information and distribute SEIT's Aboriginal resources to services. Moya and Edna have also been a great support for the SEIT team, RUCSN and other SUPS workers. Moya, with Margie Edwards from NMRIT, also ran a successful Carers' Support Group (funded by WA Carers' Association) at Orchard House in Armadale during the year.

SEIT's main concern in the region is the long waiting lists for speech pathology. It is becoming evident that many children do not access early intervention for speech therapy in the SEIT region. Access to initial assessments for speech services take up to 12 months in the public system and many families are from socio-economic groups who cannot afford private services. In response, SEIT has provided RUCSN's speech and language packages to services and now works closely with staff in developing strategies to promote children's speech and language. In some cases, referral for a full developmental assessment is also made, as many speech problems stem from other delays.

Furthermore, SEIT has forwarded to Gosnells Early Years Action Group (GEYAG) an application for funding to support a children's speech and language group so children can gain some early intervention in language development while waiting for an assessment. This project is likely to take place during 2006.

A need for more CALD information was also of concern to SEIT, and led to ECCRU and SEIT working in partnership with child care services in the area. Two information sessions were held at Wirrabirra Child Care Centre for parents of children with a disability, or from a refugee or Aboriginal background. These groups are typically reluctant to access child care. The project was funded by the Office for Women's Policy. Also, in an effort to meet the needs of children from a CALD background in child care, SEIT invited ECCRU's shop to become mobile and visit five services. The co-operation between the team, ECCRU and the services was significant to the success of this project.

### **NEW OFFICE**



*Moya, Corinne and Jané outside the office at Mission Australia*

It is with pleasure we announce that SEIT has a new regional office, located in Maddington. This has come about through a partnership with Mission Australia, an organisation which has great plans for the region, including the development of a new service centre in 2006, with offices and facilities for SEIT. This is exciting news as we enter the next phase of funding and planning.

### **EARLY YEARS ACTIVITIES**

SEIT was successful in obtaining funding to run Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS) programs in 5 centres. The sessions were funded by the Early Years Project Funding from the Department for Community Development through Gosnells Early Years Action Group (GEYAG). The project also involved local agencies, such as dental services, dieticians and librarians who visited the child care centres to speak about their services.

Early in 2005 SEIT also facilitated an open information session on PALS. The participants were from many different areas of child support e.g. parenting, child health, Aboriginal and CALD programs, library services, Children's Services Officers, Long Day Care and Family Day Care. Services report that they are still running the program from time to time.

Finally, SEIT would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of its sponsor RUCSN, and to thank the SUPS Resources and Advisory Agencies, ECCRU and RUCSN, for their contribution to the team's professional development and resource acquisition. SEIT would also like to thank child care staff and the relevant disability and health services for their support, as such relationships and partnerships are essential to provide better outcomes for children in child care.

***Jané Hansen***  
***Inclusion Support Manager***  
***South East Inclusion Team***

## **GOLDFIELDS CHILDREN'S INCLUSION UNIT (GCIU)**

This year, the Goldfields Children's Inclusion Unit (GCIU) has again enjoyed its role of providing support and assistance for children with additional needs in local child care services. The team continues to maintain its reputation for delivering a high standard of quality and strives to be innovative and responsive in meeting services' needs.

The Unit is managed by Kellie Goes, who has been in this part-time position for the past six years. Kellie is supported in her role by Inclusion Support Worker, Alinka Spencer. Both team members have lived and worked in the Goldfields area for some time and are well regarded by colleagues and community members.

This region continues to see growth in the child care industry with two new services opening in the past year. One of these is a Long Day Care Centre and the other is an Outside School Hours Care programme which specialises in services for children in the 5 – 8 years age group.

Referrals from all services have been primarily for children with disabilities, with few centres seeking support for children from an Aboriginal or other cultural background. Of concern is the continuing high numbers of children who need inclusion assistance due to language delay and/or challenging behaviour.

Areas of concern within the childcare industry continue to be very similar from year to year, with recruiting and maintaining staffing levels one of the most pressing issues. As a regional area with a transient population and limited access to quality training, services struggle to obtain and retain staff. Training for existing staff is also an issue that appears not to have been addressed adequately by existing service providers. We are hopeful that this will improve with a more streamlined structuring of childcare support services in the future.

Distances from the regional centre to outlying services remain an issue in the provision of inclusion support. Towns such as Esperance (4 hours drive) and Leinster (3.5 hours drive) are a considerable distance away, and inclusion support is therefore often provided via telephone and email contact. However, we visit such places at least twice per year and provide resources and information on a regular basis.

We continue to maintain and build upon the strong links and networks that we have here in the region, and maintain excellent relationships with particular agencies such as the Paediatric Allied Health Team and Goldfields Individual and Family Support Agency.

The Goldfields Children's Inclusion Unit Manager has continued for a second year as the Chairperson of the Kalgoorlie – Boulder Early Years Strategy Group. This has provided an opening to become involved in assisting child related services and groups to provide developmental and social opportunities for children aged 0 – 8 in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area. Two of the activities that have been supported are described here.

### **PLAYGROUP AT KALGOORLIE REGIONAL HOSPITAL**

This programme has provided play and learning opportunities for Aboriginal children who are sick, have a disability or live in isolation. Some of the children who attended this playgroup were from extremely remote areas of the Goldfields region and for many this was their first experience of activities such as finger painting, play dough and book sharing.

## **FUN IN THE PARK**

These structured play sessions in the local parks in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area have been facilitated by Bega Garnbirringu (Local Aboriginal Health Service). The sessions have encouraged a collaborative approach to community development, building on strengths within the existing services and individuals. Families and children are invited to 'Play in the Park' and facilitators offer activities that provide opportunities for children, families and carers to grow and learn in, and about, their respective roles.

A highlight of this year has been the Goldfields' participation in the Early Development Index Study which GCIU was instrumental in facilitating in the region. All schools in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area participated in the collection of data. The results were presented early this year and have had a motivating influence on many community organisations. Children in the area will continue to benefit from the information collected in this invaluable study for some time into the future.

Finally, the Goldfields Team would like to acknowledge the support provided by their sponsor, RUCSN, and the SUPS Resource and Advisory Agencies, ECCRU and RUCSN, for their ongoing assistance during the year.

*Kellie Goes*  
*Unit Coordinator*  
*Goldfields Children's Inclusion Unit*



*Children sharing play and turn taking experiences at the Kora Children's Centre*



**RESOURCE UNIT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INC.**

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S  
COMMENTS ON FINANCES 2004/2005**

- RUCSN's financial basis has again been strengthened this year, setting the organisation up for any future expansion into projects that are compatible with our philosophy and culture; and awaiting the outcomes from the new Child Care Support Program (old Broadband) that might expand and enhance the role of the Inclusion Support Teams.
- The surplus of \$268,396 is higher than budget as our processes have been made more efficient, and new projects have allowed synergies and reduction in overall administration costs. The uncertain future has also caused some delays and restraint in spending on infrastructure, eg because we are waiting to hear the outcome of several large tenders we are not able to set the size of new premises, even though we know we have to move. This has also restricted our opportunity to update our IT systems and other office equipment. (in the first months of 2005/2006 we have needed to spend some \$20,000 on replacing outdated IT equipment). A further \$30,000 cost has been incurred on submitting tenders to the new Child Care Support Program.
- The contingency provision for \$50,000 that we made last year to cover re-location costs for the Perth office has been removed (generating a surplus this year of \$50,000). Our auditor recommended that we reflect this as a reserve against accumulated funds. We have added a further \$50,000 to this reserve in this financial year.
- Provisions for employee entitlements (including redundancy entitlements) have been maintained in line with staff agreements.
- Three of the eight RUCSN vehicles were replaced early in 2004/2005 and two new vehicles were purchased for specific programs, meaning that we have a relatively new fleet of ten vehicles on our assets register.
- At the end of this financial year we have allocated \$500,000 into a New Building Fund. In the coming year we will explore the opportunity of purchasing a building and thus having a permanent base for the organisation.

*Tony Morley*  
*Executive Director*























## **THANK YOU**

RUCSN is indebted to its many supporters, including the:

- Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services for their ongoing funding, support and confidence;
- State Department for Community Development for funding of the Rural Playgroups Support Service and the various Early Years Strategy programs that RUCSN is delivering;
- Lotterywest for ongoing support;
- State Department of Education and Training for funding and supporting the various projects that RUCSN is delivering;
- West Australian Medical Students Society (WAMSS) for selecting RUCSN as the major beneficiary of various fund raising initiatives, including their annual 'Bed Push' project;
- Disability Services Commission (DSC) for their ongoing support and advice with many of our projects;
- Individuals who support us through donations of time or money;
- Our partners and "sister agencies" who have joined with us in many collaborative ventures across Western Australia;
- The Western Australian children's services field for their willingness to include children with additional needs; and the
- Many other professional groups whose wisdom we draw upon in providing our services.

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