



# NORTHERN TERRITORY COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC. Newsletter - November 2011

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## *From the Executive Director's Desk.....*

It has been a busy 2nd half of the year for all at NTCOSS. We are 12 months into the new positions being funded at NTCOSS and I continue to be amazed at our increased capacity in policy and sector development.



We provided our pre budget submission to Government Ministers in October. This submission is a culmination of much consultation throughout the sector and is to influence the budget priorities determined by the government for 2012 – 2013 which will be announced next May. The 6 key recommendations are

- The Northern Territory Government must fund any pay increase that is awarded from the current pay equity case
- Make a substantial investment in housing in remote and regional centres to meet the needs of people living in those areas and community sector staff
- Establish a justice reinvestment approach by committing to initiatives that strengthen the community to keep people out of the justice system and break the cycle of crime
- Fund an Alcohol and Other Drug Peak Body
- Fund an evidence-based application of a hub and spoke model for larger communities (including Territory Growth Towns), homelands and other communities to ensure that families and children in all communities have improved access to services
- NT Government to give a long term commitment to the development of the National Disability Insurance Scheme

We are pleased to have the asylum seeker project up and running. Some NTCOSS members have financially contributed to the project. Primarily we will be looking at mapping services currently provided by NGO's to asylum seekers at the Darwin Detention Centres. Tracy Worrell has provided more information about the project in this edition.

The Sector Development team has provided some fantastic training opportunities for sector workers over the past few months in Darwin and Alice Springs. The skill swap breakfasts have continued to be very popular in Darwin and next year will start up in Alice Springs and Katherine. The mentoring service has continued to assist many of the smaller organisations across the NT and it is such a pleasure to meet people who tell me how much NTCOSS has assisted them. It may seem a long way away now but the NTCOSS conference for 2012 will be in Alice Springs on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. It will be a great 3 days with a focus on relevant issues such as alcohol, child protection, building sector capacity and lots, lots more – so put the dates in your diary now.

NTCOSS will close over the Christmas season from the 22<sup>nd</sup> December and reopen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January. I hope you find the newsletter both interesting and useful.

**Wendy Morton**  
Executive Director

## The Transport Challenge

The continued unavailability of accessible and affordable transport across vast areas of the NT impacts on people's ability to access essential daily services and forces many people on low-incomes to rely on very expensive forms of transport to meet their everyday needs. This issue was brought home in mid-October when the only bus service in an area servicing the remote communities of Beswick, Barunga and Manyallaluk was cancelled. The Federal Government had funded a three-year trial bus service from the Aboriginal Benefits Account, and now says "it's up to the Northern Territory Government to decide whether it wants to continue the service, but the Territory Government says it's never been involved"<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile Barunga residents no longer have reliable and affordable transport to get to Katherine for high school, medical appointments, work and shopping. Residents are now forced to pay \$200 for taxis to get to Katherine from Barunga (one way) or to hitchhike<sup>2</sup>. NTCOSS has also been informed that it can cost \$1200 to catch a taxi from Baniyala to Nhulunbuy and \$1000 from Gapuwiyak to Nhulunbuy. Urgent action is required! For too long now, remote communities have suffered from a lack of transport options both within communities and between communities and the major centres.

It has been encouraging, therefore, to see the roll out of transport consultations across all of the growth towns in the NT, as part of the NT Government's Regional Transport Strategy. However, we believe that there must be a sense of urgency in terms of a response to these consultations, and ways must be found to resource effective and affordable transport solutions in each of these communities. The principle of 'no survey without service' must be adhered to here, given the critical nature of the transport needs and the investment of time and energy by community members and Government in the consultation process. This opportunity must not be wasted. Further to this, if we are to create a socially inclusive Territory, the transport needs of other towns cannot be forgotten. NTCOSS believes that one way forward is through the development of community transport systems across the NT, where under-utilised local transport resources are pooled together and deployed to meet the transport needs of specific community groups for whom existing transport systems do not meet their needs (due to cost, availability, access).

If you have any stories about transport issues, please contact [jonathan@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:jonathan@ntcoss.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> "Residents angry after bus services scrapped", by Kristy O'Brien, ABC Online **October 17, 2011**

<sup>2</sup> The Country Hour, ABC, 17 October 2011.

## Stronger Futures - School Attendance and Centrelink payments

NTCOSS shares the concerns in the general community that too many children are missing out on a good education either because they don't attend every school day or because schools don't offer what they need. However, we are concerned that the Federal Government is considering extending programs that take a punitive approach by suspending parents' income support if their children don't attend regularly.

The Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Measure (SEAM) trials in the NT and Queensland, have not yet been evaluated and there is no solid evidence they have been effective. In addition the scheme is very costly to administer, with the trial costing \$28.2 million for only 44 schools across the Northern Territory and Queensland<sup>1</sup>. A similar trial in Halls Creek was evaluated, and failed largely due to a lack of engagement between the school and the local community. It therefore would be premature to roll out further measures at this stage, similar to this one.

The suspension of income support payments, like the Income Management scheme, discriminates against the poorest and indirectly against Indigenous Australians, who are the most impacted by these policies. Truancy problems are not confined to families on social security payments only, and low income and Indigenous parents are not the only ones with responsibilities to get their children to school.

NTCOSS believes there are alternatives to punitive measures. A fairer and more effective approach requires communities and schools to find solutions to this complex problem that match the needs of each community –including intensive case management, with workers closely connected to both school and community. Policies in this area should recognise that parents, communities and Governments are all responsible to ensure children get a good education, not the parents alone. Community members in the Stronger Futures consultations suggested a raft of measures to improve school attendance, including introducing Aboriginal culture into the curriculum, involving elders and parents more in school activities, developing mentoring programs for parents, and doing more to attract and retain good teachers.

For more information contact [pru@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:pru@ntcoss.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> National Welfare Rights Network President Maree O'Halloran: "At a cost of \$28.2 million, the schooling requirements trial must be close to...one of the most expensive social policy experiments in Australian history", Parents taken off welfare for failing to get children to school, P Karvelas, The Australian 21.2.11

### NTCOSS Training Round-up

NTCOSS has completed it's series of NT wide training for 2011. The past six months has been packed with advocacy, media, governance, new manager, performance management and supervision for the community sector training opportunities.

There has been a mix of local and interstate facilitators presenting the training. An innovative approach to Governance Training required a commitment from each organisations' manager and at least one board member. This training was delivered in a group format and each organization has follow-up support.

We have seen many community sector organisations take up the discounted member rates and positive feedback from training participants has been overwhelming. Suggestions for training in 2012 are most welcome, please contact [janine@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:janine@ntcoss.org.au)



### Homelands, Outstations and Other Small Communities

The issue of homelands has been given some prominence of late with the release of the Amnesty International Report into homelands with 6 key recommendations. NTCOSS supports the push for support, funding and recognition in policy development of the importance of homelands by a range of peak bodies in the Northern Territory. Evidence shows that living on homelands is associated with a range of economic, social, cultural and health benefits. Appropriately resourced homelands provide a means to ameliorate social-economic disadvantage.

To achieve a 'closing of the gap' adequate and appropriate services need to be accessible to all Aboriginal children and families to support the growing Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Aboriginal people living in discrete remote communities (approximately 45 per cent), with 81 per cent of its Aboriginal population living in remote or very remote areas. Within this population the importance of homelands is clear from the number of homelands and the number of Aboriginal people who live in or utilise them.

In the NT there are 73 large to smaller communities, and around 560 homelands with an estimated 10,000 Aboriginal people living in them. The evidence base for the benefits of decentralised living is strong. In order to grow the NT fairly it is important to ensure that families and children living on homelands have genuine access to services so that the range of benefits that stem from Aboriginal people living on their homelands can be maximized.

NTCOSS welcomes the additional services and resources for 21 communities (Territory Growth Towns, including 15 Remote Service Delivery sites). However concerns are consistently raised by organisations in the Northern Territory regarding the significant impact on other discrete communities, including homelands, if the withdrawal of Commonwealth financial support for homelands in the Northern Territory is upheld. For more information contact: [pru@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:pru@ntcoss.org.au)

### NTCOSS Asylum Seeker Project



Official figures released by the Department of Immigration state there are currently 5597 people in immigration detention in Australia. This includes people in Immigration Detention Facilities, Alternative Places of

Detention and community detention. Of these 886 are children. In Darwin, people are held in the Northern Immigration Detention Centre, the Airport Lodge and Berrimah House. In addition Wickham Point is due to come on line at the end of 2011, holding up to 1,500 people.

These figures also state that 1% or 56 people have now been held in detention for over 2 years and 2035 people for over 1 year. As so clearly shown by the recent 4 Corners Program and in recent Australian Human Rights Commission Reports, mental health issues can be attributed directly to long term and in-definite detention. Guy Coffey in his recent opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald states that Immigration Department research found only 3 percent of people in detention for less than 3 months experience a mental health issue, however of those detained for more than 2 years this figure increases to 44.6 percent. Refugees settling in Australia via the Humanitarian program do not face similar rates of mental health issues.

In the face of mounting concerns about the welfare of this vulnerable group of people currently being held in detention facilities in the Northern Territory, NTCOSS is undertaking a project looking at services being provided by community sector organisations to people seeking asylum in the NT. The first stage of this project will be to map who is providing what services across the sector and who is interested in potentially providing services in the future. If you would like to contribute to this project please email:

Tracy Worrall on [projects2@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:projects2@ntcoss.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> DIAC, Immigration Detention Statistics Summary, 30/9/2011

<sup>2</sup> DIAC, Immigration Detention Statistics Summary, 30/9/2011

<sup>3</sup> Guy Coffey, Sydney Morning Herald, 27/10/11

Tracy Worrall  
Project Officer, NTCOSS



### Community Services Sector Survey

**Coming soon to your email or post boxes or even a phone call!**

We wish to know what it is like for you working in the Community Sector – what attracted you to the sector, what keeps you in it and what could be different?

The survey is anonymous; results will be available on our website and used to inform future planning and advocacy for our sector.

It will take approximately 10 minutes to fill in and if you wish to talk more about it please contact – **Mary** on 8948 2665 or [mary@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:mary@ntcoss.org.au)



### DIARY DATES FOR 2012

## NTCOSS CONFERENCE

1, 2, 3 May 2012

Crowne Plaza Alice Springs

### NT Government inquiry into youth suicide

Suicide amongst young people is a harrowing fact of daily life for too many people in the Northern Territory. That so many young people are choosing to end their lives is a clear message to all of us, particularly our Government, to change our approach. NTCOSS has heard from the non-Government sector time and again about the impact of suicide on communities, the lack of appropriate support resources, the need for place-based mental health services, and well-resourced remote youth development programs.

The NT Government announcement of an inquiry into youth suicide was the right time to share this feedback with the Government, and we put together a submission that reflected these views as we have heard them. There is a lot that can be said about this complex issue, but we chose to focus our recommendations around the following areas:

- Equitable funding of remote youth development programs;
- Place-based mental health solutions;
- NGO inclusion on any Government body charged with addressing suicide;
- A comprehensive mapping of youth services;
- The needs of young refugee and newly-arrived migrants;
- Recreation options waiting times for young asylum seekers
- Better equipping youth workers to deal with suicide
- Improved data collection methods

The full submission can be found at <http://www.ntcoss.org.au/submissions-all>

We can not afford any more time or effort wasted on empty rhetoric when it comes to the mental health needs of young people. The NT Government has made it clear that it intends to be responsive, and we look forward to hearing what recommendations are put forward and worked towards.

We are very fortunate in the NT to have the services of many tireless people who work with these issues daily, often under strained resources. Without these services things could be even worse. For some fantastic, NT specific resources, see NTCOSS member organisation Mental Health Association of Central Australia's website: <http://www.mhaca.org.au/resources-main.html>

### Review of the NT Youth Justice System

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, the then Minister for Justice, Delia Lawrie, announced the release of the *Review of the Northern Territory Youth Justice System* report, authored by Jodeen Carney. The report was long-awaited by the youth and legal organisations, many of whom made submissions to the Review. Thankfully, the report speaks sensibly and urgently of the change of approach that is needed to turn around the Territory's rates of youth detentions, and puts forward suggestions that could well result in long-term benefits for young people and the whole community.

You can find the NTCOSS and Central Australia Youth Justice submissions to this review at:

<http://www.ntcoss.org.au/submissions-all>

NTCOSS has been involved in the movement for reform to the NT youth justice system for many years, and was encouraged by the recommendations put forward in this report. While there remain details that will need to be articulated, the fact that the NT Government has supported the nine recommendations is a positive first step.

The future of young people in the justice system depends on the ability of the Government and non-Government sectors to be collaborative, creative and flexible. To share this space, the non-Government sector must be proactive to ensure that your voices of experience and knowledge are heard and valued. With ongoing advice from the community sector, NTCOSS has identified five key areas that we hope to work with the Government on in the future and will form the basis of our advocacy in this area. They are:

- The primary objective of the youth justice system should be rehabilitations of young offenders
- The need for a stronger focus on addressing the disadvantage that lies at the root of crime
- The separation of young people from adults in the justice system
- The involvement of Aboriginal leaders in the justice system to make appropriate change
- A separate Youth Justice body should be established within the NT Government

With the announcement of the new Youth Justice Unit, and the opportunities presented by the Review, there is reason to believe that the Territory is progressing towards a more coordinated, bi-partisan, therapeutic youth justice system, with more strategic investment in evidence-based models that are tough on the causes of crime. Over time, this will undoubtedly keep more young people out of the justice system, but courage and patience is required to see these changes through.

### The Alice Springs youth curfew debate

The youth curfew question continues to raise its head in Alice Springs, despite the overwhelming evidence that youth curfews do not work. There is also a significant lack of community support for a curfew. Most importantly, however, it is clear that the best interests of children are at the heart of the issue for everyone involved. In light of this, such a community debate presents an opportunity to put forward better strategies to deal with the presence of young people on the streets at night, rather than short-term, punitive reactions.

In response to a curfew petition circulated by Alderman Eli Melky, two young Alice Springs residents, Gavin Henderson and Chelsea-Lee Ponga, initiated a petition (both paper and online) to capture the views of Alice Springs residents who do not agree with a youth curfew, to ensure a more balanced viewpoint was presented to the Alice Springs Town Council. NTCOSS has been working closely with the youth-led, anti-curfew movement, and up to the time of writing, remains hopeful that the curfew idea will again be officially voted down at the next Ordinary Council meeting on Monday October 31<sup>st</sup>.

No matter what the outcome at the Town Council meeting, ensuring the safety of children and young people in Alice Springs is paramount. There are stronger and more thoughtful ways of doing this that the community can work towards, beginning with better resourcing the good work that is already happening. NTCOSS will continue to work with young people, the non-Government sector, and both sides of Government to ensure that the response is fair, appropriate, long-term and sustainable.

### ‘Our Work Our Lives’ conference in Dili, Timor Leste

Janine and Wendy were fortunate recently to be able to attend the Working Women’s Centre conference ‘Our Work Our Lives’ in Dili, Timor Leste. For both of us it was our first trip to Dili. We enjoyed great hospitality wherever we went and met many very inspiring people.

The conference provided an opportunity for international and Timorese organisations and individuals to share their experience of gender and work, with participants including academics, policy makers and practitioners.

NTCOSS presented a paper titled ‘Sector Development Strategy - Building a Strong and Sustainable Community Sector’ which was an overview of the history of the NTCOSS sector development project and how it has assisted the community sector in many practical ways that can be used as a model in different jurisdictions. A highlight was the appreciation received when tools and resources that NTCOSS have developed,, including the workforce toolkit were shared.

It was indeed a privilege to hear local Timorese Women talk about their struggle, individually and as a nation and hear their hope for the future as they increase their participation in the Timor Leste workforce. The conference was also the official launch of the Working Women’s Centre Timor Leste and we are sure they will play a key role in providing education, support and advocacy to vulnerable women workers.



## NT Women’s Services Network

In 2010 the NT Working Women’s Centre approached the NT Office of Women’s Policy to discuss the concept of an NT Women’s Services Network. It was proposed that a meeting be held of interested women’s services to gauge support for establishing a network, and discuss what format it may take. In July and August 2011 initial meetings were held and it was agreed that there is a need for a NT Women’s Services Network.

At present in the NT there is no formal structure that unites Women’s services as exists in other states. Due to this there is the risk that Women’s voices go unheard on a broad range of issues. Women’s services, most of which are small and poorly funded non-government agencies, are often working in isolation, or relying on informal or social networks to provide them with the structural support that is necessary in the sector.

From initial meetings it was decided to present a submission to Minister McCarthy (Women’s Services Minister) to fund a Women’s Services Network. In September 2011 a workshop was attended by 16 representatives from non government women’s services, NT Government women’s services and NT peak bodies where the network aim and principles were defined. In one morning of enthusiastic work, with much goodwill around the table 3 models for a proposed network with varying levels of funding was developed. Over the next week or so these were refined, and endorsed by 26 Women’s services and then submitted to the Minister for consideration. Below is a summary of the 3 models developed.

**Model 1** establishes a significant mechanism to engage, inform and support diverse women’s services across the NT, and to provide a clear and effective pathway for women’s diverse voices into government decision making and accountability processes. This network would have the capacity to provide meaningful advice to government, via formal consultation, submission writing, policy development and research.

**Model 2** establishes a network which focuses on strengthening capacity and relationships within the sector, with a limited amount of regional engagement. There would be some capacity to engage in consultation and provide feedback to government.



## Management Support Online (MSO)

**15% discount to NTCOSS members**

MSO is a integrated web based service with pathways for managers, staff and board/ committee members of NGOs - supporting and resourcing good management, governance, operations and administration – with over 160 templates, tools and resources to download; more than 50 skill building sessions, good practice guides and activities; assessments for quality management and risk assessment; a confidential advice service for organisational problem solving – up to 25 sessions per year.



*...working with you to build your organisation’s capability, performance and profile*

**Model 3** establishes a network that would enhance the sector’s current access to relevant information, and strengthen relationships within the sector. There would be minimal regional engagement possible in this model, and a nominal capacity to feed into government policy and process

It is envisaged the network will include and support all women’s services in the NT.

For more information contact Working Women’s Centre on **Freecall: 1800 817 055 or 08 8981 0655.**

## Early Childhood Services and Aboriginal Child Rearing Practices -

This article is not meant to be an academic paper on Aboriginal child rearing practices or early childhood development but instead to initiate a discussion on the provision of services to children in Aboriginal children in the NT. Do we need to increase the discussion about finding a way for mainstream early childhood services to be mindful and respectful of Aboriginal child rearing practices and to ensure that Aboriginal people are leading the way in determining how to bring up their children?

Recent research has highlighted the importance of early childhood development on future health and educational outcomes for children. Significant investment in early childhood intervention is seen as a way for Aboriginal people to finally achieve their potential. As part of closing the gap, working futures and the child protection reform, many early childhood services are being rolled out in the growth towns; from preschools to parenting courses, playgroups and children's social skills training. There has been a recognition by Aboriginal communities of the need for assistance in parenting and Aboriginal people have asked for parenting skills programs.

There has been discussion within the Department of Education and Training and Menzies School of Health about programs that are the most effective and are evidence based. There is evidence of the effectiveness of some of the programs suggested, however most of these programs have been developed in the United States or UK and the research has been undertaken overseas. It is unclear if they will work in remote communities in the Northern Territory.

While everybody within government departments and the NGO sector agrees that services should be culturally appropriate, a more comprehensive discussion about cultural differences in parenting and child rearing practices is desirable to ensure we do not commit another form of 'welfare colonialism'. Aboriginal people have brought up their children for thousands of years. We need to recognise what is working well within their communities and build on those strengths.

While the focus of the discussion is on educational outcomes, the aspect of cultural values and core assumptions about ourselves and the world we live in is not often discussed. Our cultural identity is formed in the very early years shapes our values, attitudes and behaviour. Differences in culture such as an individualistic versus a collectivist society, people dominant over nature versus people in harmony with nature; different temporal orientations, all influence our sense of self as well as our

functionality in society. We need to ask questions about how different parenting styles form cultural identity in planning of early childhood services.

As an example : the current parenting style in Australia. It relies heavily on establishing routine, sleeping and feeding patterns and controlling behaviour. Traditional Central Australian child rearing practices could not be further away from western practices. Traditionally children in the first years determine when they sleep and feed; breastfeeding is on demand.' The carer's role is to be sensitive to, observant and responsive to' the needs of the child. (Warrki Jarrinjaku Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002 *Aboriginal Childrearing & Associated Research: A Review of the Literature*. Published by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services p52,53 )

In our western child rearing and child care system we aim for constant engagement with the child and continuous supervision of our children. Traditionally Aboriginal people see their children as autonomous beings who are able to make decisions for themselves. In most traditional cultures it is normal for 10 year olds to supervise toddlers, learning family responsibility at a young age. Our small family size required a different model of relationship to the parent, but is this suitable and sustainable for a family with 8 or 10 children?

Western practices prepare children to be able to follow instructions to function in school and in the workplace. By broadly implementing western style parenting skills groups, preschools and other initiatives, early childhood experts hope to prepare Aboriginal children better for school and ultimately employment. This paper does not argue with the validity and importance of this step; however the discussion about cultural identity and the danger of the loss of it has to be part of our thinking and our discussions. If early childhood services just place western orientated parenting and education over the top of existing practices, without taking years of expertise of traditional culture into account, will we end up with another form of colonisation? Is this the point where we need to revisit the old discussion around assimilation and loss of cultural identity?

We need to ask questions around how to provide services which can be respectful and strengthen traditional values and ways of living. Take for example the notion of self control, which has been identified as an important predictor in health,

wealth, substance misuse and criminal behaviour. (NT Government: Early Childhood Series No.4 2011 p2) Traditionally Aboriginal identity is very strong and successful on the ability to control impulse. However the way this was achieved was very different to the Western way of controlling infant behaviour. The capacity to self regulate only became a problem when traditional culture broke down and children were in between traditional and western culture experiencing a lack of leadership and role modelling. This raises the question of how much traditional culture is intact to provide functional child rearing. We do not want to use the argument of culture to blind us against evidence of neglect and lack of engagement by parents due to trauma and the feeling of disempowerment.

For all of us, including those living in communities, ways have changed over time. Many external factors impact on our daily lives and issues such as alcohol abuse, lack of housing and financial pressures are relatively new to be recognised as contributing factors to keeping children safe. Aboriginal people often express the wish for their children to be able to function in both cultures. In our work with children and families, we need to continually ask ourselves how our programs impact on culture and the future well being of the individual and the community. We all need to be mindful of the fact that Aboriginal people have brought up their children for thousands of years and find a way to integrate both aspects of parenting. There are many fantastic programs being delivered and important research being conducted however we must continue to always ask questions about the direction and relevance of our work.

For more information contact: [lava@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:lava@ntcoss.org.au)

### Somerville Community Services

The annual Somerville Christmas Gift Wrapping fundraising event will be held again at Casuarina Square, Palmerston Shopping Centre and Mitchell Centre.

This is Somerville's major fundraising event for the year raising money to support our programs.

We are looking for volunteers to help in the stalls to be held from 3 – 24 December 2011.

If you are interested in supporting this event, please contact Carolyn Cendo or Liza Metcalfe at Somerville Administration office on 8920 4100.

### Alcohol

Alcohol continues to play havoc with the lives of too many Territorians – seen in our road toll, murder rate, assault levels and hospitalisation admissions. Alcohol also directly impacts on families and young people – whose housing, education and health can all suffer as a result of other peoples' drinking.

The first of July 2011 marked a significant landmark for the NT in terms of the NT Government rolling out its 'Enough is Enough' alcohol reforms – which can see individual drinkers banned from and supply purchasing alcohol. In addition, in Alice Springs, an 'informal' alcohol floor price came into effect. In an historic development, Coles, Woolworths and six other Takeaway outlets have taken cheap cask wine completely off the shelf and have put in place a floor price on bottled wine – of at least \$8 per bottle. This is an extremely socially responsible approach from these eight retailers, who have recognised the enormous harm that alcohol causes the community.

However the struggle is far from over and it is disappointing that two remaining takeaway alcohol outlets have continued to sell cask wine. While this recent development is unprecedented, NTCOSS believes it also highlights the need for a Territory wide - and nationwide - approach to a floor price to ensure that all takeaway retailers are required to conform to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of a floor price.

For more information contact: [jonathan@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:jonathan@ntcoss.org.au)

## NTCOSS

### CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CLOSURE

**Thursday 22nd December 2011**

**until**

**Tuesday 3rd January 2012**

**NTCOSS wishes all our members and friends a happy Christmas and thank you for your continued support throughout the year.**

## Coming in 2012 for NTCOSS members:



### Alice Springs

#### Skill Swap Breakfasts

for community sector/non government managers.

Skill swaps have been running successfully in Darwin since 2011, hosted by NTCOSS.

Each breakfast has a different theme such as performance management, recruitment, retention and support of staff, pay equity issues and so on.

NTCOSS will host up to 5 breakfasts in **Alice Springs** in 2012 – at a venue to be announced on 21 Mar, 23 May, 18 July, 19 Sept, and 21 Nov.

This is a unique opportunity for managers from large and small organisations to support each other, network and share the wealth of knowledge in the community sector.

Come along for a **FREE** breakfast and build an even stronger community sector.

For more information contact Mary - 0411258993 or 8948 2665:  
[mary@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:mary@ntcoss.org.au)

## Coming in 2012 for NTCOSS members:



### Katherine

#### Skill Swap Breakfasts

for community sector/non government managers.

Skill swaps have been running successfully in Darwin since 2011, hosted by NTCOSS.

Each breakfast has a different theme such as performance management, recruitment, retention and support of staff, pay equity issues and so on.

NTCOSS will host up to 5 breakfasts in **Katherine** in 2012 – at the Smith Family on March 14, May 16, July 11, Sept 12 and Nov 14

This is a unique opportunity for managers from large and small organisations to support each other, network and share the wealth of knowledge in the community sector.

Come along for a **FREE** breakfast and build an even stronger community sector in Katherine

For more information contact Mary - 0411258993 or 8948 2665:  
[mary@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:mary@ntcoss.org.au)

## Continuing in 2012 for NTCOSS members:



### Darwin

### Skill Swap Breakfasts

for community sector/non government managers.

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Each breakfast has a different theme such as performance management, recruitment, retention and support of staff, pay equity issues and so on.

NTCOSS will host up to 5 breakfasts in **Darwin** in 2012 – at a venue to be announced on [7 Mar](#), [9 May](#), [4 July](#), [5 Sept](#), and [7 Nov](#).

This is a unique opportunity for managers from large and small organisations to support each other, network and share the wealth of knowledge in the community sector.

Come along for a **FREE** breakfast and build an even stronger community sector.

For more information contact Mary - 0411258993 or 8948 2665:  
[mary@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:mary@ntcoss.org.au)

## NTCOSS Welcomes New Staff Members

### Mary Taylor

A quick note to introduce myself; I am new to the Territory having been here for almost 2 years. I worked for 18 months in Katherine in the welfare sector.

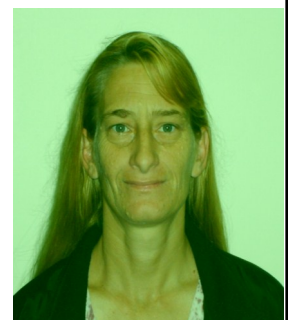


Moving to Katherine from 'down south' was an adventure to say the least. Canoeing the gorge, breakfast at the market on Saturday mornings, the weather, long bike rides, walks and the people soon won me over. However for lots of reasons I needed to move to Darwin and am now Sector Development Officer here at NTCOSS. I have worked in the Community Sector in a variety of roles in rural Victoria. I see the sector as vital to a healthy community. At present in my role here at NTCOSS I am developing a survey so we (NTCOSS) can gain a current snapshot of the sector in the NT, so please take the time to fill it in.

I am looking forward, over the course of the next few months to meeting more of you and catching up with others I have met.

### Jenelle Preece

Hi, my name is Jenelle Preece. I am a Mum and have 4 children. I was born in Alice Springs and am part of the large Arrente family. I lived in Melbourne for a few years when I was 3, but the rest of my life has been in Alice. Since completing year 12, my employment has mainly been in administration within



Aboriginal organisations. I enjoy working in a team environment and thoroughly enjoy working at NTCOSS. Returning to the workforce after 4 years off was exciting. I have learnt so many new skills and working with a great team made the transition easier. Growing up in Alice Springs for me was good, losing my sole parent at a young age taught me how to be independent. Luckily myself and two younger sisters were looked after well by my uncle. I was very active in sports in my youth, representing Alice Springs and the NT in Hockey and Basketball. I still enjoy playing hockey.

## Pay Equity case Update

NTCOSS supports the equal remuneration case currently before Fair Work Australia. Social services assist at least 6.5 million Australians living on low incomes. They also make a significant contribution by working with and in the community. Yet historically, this work has been undervalued. 87% of community workers are women and only a small number of organisations have the ability to enter into enterprise bargaining.

Achieving pay equity is crucial for the sustainability of social services. Demand for support far outstrips supply and most services are already struggling to attract and retain workers. If wages do not improve, we will not be able to sustain this vital workforce and organisations will not be able to continue their crucial work. The ageing of our workforce adds another dimension, as low salaries make it even harder to replace workers who retire.

Pay equity is critical for service sustainability. The community sector needs funding to organisations that covers the full cost of services including decent wages so workers to ensure the attraction and retention of an experienced and effective workforce.

The equal pay hearings were, unfortunately, recently adjourned. The Commonwealth sought the adjournment because it argued that there was a chance for progress to be made in the conciliation if given more time, particularly in relation to the methodology for determining gender undervaluation. The adjournment was agreed to by the Australian Services Union, who sought new hearing dates. Fair Work Australia has announced the rescheduled hearing dates in Melbourne for Monday 28 November 2011, Wednesday 7 December 2011 and Thursday 8 December 2011.

For more information visit: [www.asu.asn.au](http://www.asu.asn.au)



## Remote Employment

NTCOSS recently provided a submission to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWAR) *Remote Participation and Employment Services Review*. In this submission NTCOSS argued that to 'close the gap' in opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory, adequate and appropriate services need to be accessible to all Aboriginal children and families to support the Territory's growing Aboriginal population.

In order to support families and children to live healthy productive and strong lives, place-based responses are essential. While NTCOSS welcomes and supports the additional services and resources for 21 communities in the Northern Territory, 'Territory Growth Towns', alongside these developments the delivery of services to other communities needs to be ongoing and well co-ordinated. NTCOSS supports a best-practice evidence-based approach to remote service delivery provision and supporting Indigenous people in homelands and other communities across the whole of the Northern Territory.

One of the recommendations in NTCOSS's submission focused on the need to establish and implement appropriate training programs based on best-practice and culturally appropriate models, on communities for the range of work on remote communities. To be most effective this training would be tailored to develop people from where they are at to what is required for them to undertake local work. Local work could include, but not be limited to administration, teaching and health, repairs and maintenance, governance, construction and management work so that local people are qualified to undertake cost-effective local work rather than rely on outside contractors. Part of this, we argue, should involve Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working and learning together as counterparts to provide more opportunities for local employment.

To read the full submission, go to:

<http://www.ntcoss.org.au/submissions-all>