



# Aboriginal Family Support Services Newsletter

Sep-Dec - 2024

## Foster & Kinship Care Cultural Day

On Wednesday, October 9th, the lawns of the Living Kaurna Cultural Centre were full of excitement during the Aboriginal Family Support Services Cultural Day! Families came together for a fun-filled day with laughter, food and cultural activities. The kids had a blast playing traditional Kaurna games, getting up close with reptiles, and even patting a friendly bettong named Sabine. The children painted their own boomerangs and took turns practicing their throws, all while showing off some colourful face paint. It was a day of creativity and connection!

It was great to see some of the Residential Care teams and their young people join us and even greater that we reunited three siblings for a family fun filled day together. The boys couldn't keep the smiles off their faces and didn't leave each other's sides.

One of the highlights was when AFSS worker, Isaac Hannam did the Welcome to Country and led a smoking ceremony. He shared some intriguing insights about Indigenous culture, and the kids loved listening to him. It was significant to hear about the location we were at being an important historical meeting area for camping, palti (dance), trading with other nations, songs and gathering like we were currently doing together. It made the day feel even more special and helped everyone appreciate the heritage we were celebrating. Isaac also showed us all his didgeridoo mastery and the children loved having a guess which animal sounds they could hear while he played.

The event was also a great opportunity for carers to meet each other and chat with the Kinship and Family Based Care teams from AFSS. Building these connections is so important - it creates a supportive community for everyone.



*Continued on page 3*

# A message from the Chief Executive

As we approach the end of another remarkable year, I want to take a moment to reflect on all that we've accomplished together. This year has been filled with incredible achievements, and we have continued to strengthen our community connections. From Children's Day to Carers & Kinship Events, NAIDOC Week celebrations, camps, and so much more in between, we have made a meaningful impact. These events would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff.



It was truly wonderful to see so many of you at our AGM on 28 November, where we celebrated the achievements of 2023/2024 and unveiled our new 5-year Strategic Plan.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Harley Hall for the amazing artwork he has designed for AFSS, which beautifully represents who we are and what we stand for. Please take a moment to visit the AFSS website to view both the 2023-2024 Annual Report and the AFSS Strategic Plan, featuring Harley's artwork.

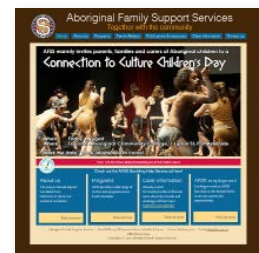
I am incredibly proud of each and every one of you for your dedication, resilience, and passion throughout the year. We have faced challenges, reached milestones, and supported one another as a family. Your commitment to excellence is what keeps us moving forward, and it has been truly inspiring.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be a year of change and new opportunities. There are exciting developments on the horizon, and we will continue building on the incredible work we've already accomplished.

As we celebrate this festive season with our loved ones, let us remember the importance of connection, joy, and gratitude. Let's take a moment to appreciate the positive impact we have on each other and our community.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your families!

*Sharron Williams*  
Chief Executive



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With perfect weather and smiling faces, it was clear that the kids had an amazing time.

Keeping our kids connected to their culture is really important. It's a big part of who they are and helps shape their personal stories. These cultural events allow kids to celebrate their heritage, fostering pride and a sense of belonging. It's all about enriching their lives and strengthening ties to the community.

We'd love to hear your thoughts! Whether you attended or not, please take a moment to fill out our short survey. Your feedback will help us plan future events that everyone will enjoy. Thanks for being part of our community and helping keep our culture alive. We couldn't do this without you!

To complete the short survey, please scan this QR code with your mobile phone.



Aboriginal Family Support Services  
Together with the community



# CHRISTMAS

On behalf of the Board, Chief Executive and everybody here at Aboriginal Family Support Services, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year!

## AFSS Christmas and New Year Operations

As the festive season approaches, we want to keep you informed about our service availability during the Christmas break. Residential houses and essential services will continue to be staffed during the holiday period, with staff on-call as needed.

However, for all other sites, the premises will be closed from Wednesday, December 25th, 2024 to Wednesday, January 1st, 2025. We will reopen on Thursday, January 2nd, 2025.

### Exceptions:

134 Waymouth Street will be open on Monday, December 30th 2024.

254 Kings Road, Paralowie will be open on Friday, December 27th, Monday, December 30th, and Tuesday, December 31st, 2024.

Port Lincoln Office will remain open as it is on-call for regional services.

Thank you for your understanding, and we wish you all a wonderful holiday season!

In the event of an emergency not related to our on-call services, you can contact:

Aboriginal Family Violence Helpline	1800 800 098
Child Abuse Report Line	131 478
Crisis Care	131 611
Lifeline	131 114
SAPOL	131 444



# Foster & Kinship Carer Dinner (Metro)

We would like to thank our Foster and Kinship Carers that attended our Carer dinner at Sunnybrae Farm on September 20th to celebrate Carers week with us. We acknowledge the dedication of our Carers and all that they do for the children and young people. With approximately 80 attendees the night started off with a Welcome to Country by Robert Taylor and Cultural dance and history from David Booth and his sons "Imbala dance." AFSS showed recognition to our carers dedicating their lives to caring with AFSS for over 10 years by Senior Manager Liv King, and Board member James Bevan, presenting them with a certificate and gift card. Thank you presents were given to all with bush medicine, candles, key rings and a delicious Haighs chocolate frog as well as a certificate acknowledging their dedication and efforts. Dale Agius the newly appointed Director of Aboriginal practice was in attendance, as well as our highly esteemed Board members. It was a great night for all and we can't wait to see you again next year.





# Season's Greetings A Special Gift for our Foster & Kinship Carers



As the holiday season approaches, we are excited to share a heartfelt gift with our dedicated Foster and Kinship carers. The Foster and Kinship Care team, along with Communications, have worked hard to put together AFSS Events and Wellbeing Calendar, along with a Christmas Card signed by the Board and CE Sharron Williams. Artwork featured on the front cover was painted at AFSS Children's Day by Samatha Napaljarri Watson Norah Nangala Watson, and artwork inside the calendar has been painted by the talented children in our Residential Care, who also shared the story behind their art.

These vibrant pieces of art reflect the creativity, joy, and spirit of the young people in care. We hope they bring you a sense of connection and remind you of the incredible impact you have.

The calendar, designed to support your wellbeing throughout the year, is filled with useful dates, reminders, and positive affirmations. It's a small gesture to show our appreciation for the hard work and love you put into fostering, day in and day out.

AFSS Board, CE and Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering commitment to caring for these children, providing them with stability, love, and encouragement. Your efforts make a world of difference, and we are deeply grateful for everything you do.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season filled with peace, love, and warmth. Thank you once again for being such an essential part of our community.



## Staff Updates



*Judith Maniapoto-Rickus  
Kinship Care Liaison Officer*

Hello everyone, I am Judith.

I am delighted to join AFSS as the new Kinship Carer Liaison Officer.

I enjoy providing high-quality care to individuals, advocating for families and children, offering guidance and support, as well as connection to community and services.

Bringing with me previous experience in therapeutic support, this role has taught me how to build strong relationships with clients, families, and healthcare professionals to ensure collaborative care.

Born and raised in New Zealand, my cultural background is Māori.

I moved to Australia 10 years ago with my Husband and our 3 children. In 2023, we welcomed our first grandchild, who keeps us on our toes.

Outside of work I enjoy camping, cooking and making memories with my family as this is what keeps me grounded spiritually, mentally and physically.



# Reconnect Holiday Activity

Reconnect Youth Worker Nyrelle took some of the Reconnect clients for a fun day bowling during the school holidays!!!

Strikes were few and far between, and gutter balls were aplenty. There were also lots of pins knocked down, laughs had, and new skills learned. The young people told Reconnect staff that they had a great time and wanted a rematch as soon as possible!

Reconnect Youth Workers were invited to attend a morning tea at Paralowie School, hosted by the SAASTA students who attend that school. This was a great honour and indicates the strong presence and relationship that AFSS Reconnect has at the school. Youth Workers also attended Nunga Tag at Avenues College and Power Cup at Alberton Oval in support of the young people engaged with Reconnect and the wider school community.

Reconnect Youth Workers have also attended many networking and cultural events, such as Rec in the South and NAIDOC in the North, over the year, which have resulted in referrals and new relationships.

Clients have also been busy creating this stunning piece of art seen in the picture below.

## What is Reconnect ?

AFSS Reconnect is a community based early intervention program for young Aboriginal people aged 12 to 18 who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Reconnect works with young people and their families to strengthen relationships, improve the well-being of children and young people, reduce the costs of family breakdown and strengthen family, community and cultural connections and relationships.

Reconnect Youth Workers provide an early intervention case management service to young people. There is a focus on ensuring young people are engaged with peers, family and community, participating in schooling, training and education or employment, developing independence and resilience and building their sense of self worth and well-being.

**For more information please contact Manager - Nick Ward**

✉ [Nicholas.Ward@afss.com.au](mailto:Nicholas.Ward@afss.com.au) ☎ 0409 993 444 📍 134 Waymouth Street Adelaide





# Emerging Minds.

National  
Workforce  
Centre for Child  
Mental Health

## Walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of- home care online course



1.5 HOURS

Start course

### About this course

*Walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care* provides ways for practitioners to be aware of their own cultural lens and the importance of connection to culture to apply to their practice. It invites you to be an ally and enhance communication strategies to align with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.

Shaped through the lens of storytelling, and based on the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) domains, this course will provide you with simple practical examples that support a strong sense of identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (OOHC). Using rich story development, children can explore SEWB through an externalising process which enables children and young people's autonomy and safety.

### Why was this course developed?

The reasons for the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are complex, such as systemic racism, the legacy of prior forced removal, and the generational effects of being separated from family and culture. The high rates of identified physical health, mental health and developmental needs support existing recommendations that children in the OOHC system need high-quality, comprehensive health care. This includes culturally appropriate referral and long-term follow-up and coordination of care. Cultural connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is essential for health and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

### Who is this course for?

This course is designed for non-Indigenous practitioners working in child protection and foster care services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in OOHC. It focuses on the types of cultural support that can be applied in everyday practice to support cultural identity and the SEWB needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care.

### What is included in the course?

This course provides tangible examples of how SEWB can be applied to equip Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care with opportunities for:

- telling their own truth story
- exploring solution-driven opportunities to enhance self-determination and empowerment
- identifying allies who will support and mentor them
- connecting with practitioners through shared understandings and building deeper connections through relationships.

It includes a series of reflection questions to:

- prompt you to think about applying decolonising trauma-informed practice when supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC
- implement culturally responsive strategies that support children's social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes.

### How was this course developed?

This course was developed with the support of a select reference group including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, practitioners and lived experience advocates under the guidance and approval of our National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultancy Group. We would like to recognise all the dedicated people who inform our work for the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and who played an integral role in shaping this course by generously offering their time, wisdom and stories.

*Walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care* was co-authored by Dana Shen, Director, DS Consultancy, and created in partnership with ac.care, Aboriginal Family Support Services Limited (AFSS) and SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children.

### Reference

1. SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children. (2023). *Family matters report 2023*. SNAICC.

This resource was co-produced with:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWC) is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program.

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# Wardli-ana (Towards Home Alliance)

The Towards Home Alliance conference was attended by a number of staff from the Wardli-Ana and Youth Accommodation teams.

The day began with the inspirational personal story of Courtney Ugle, who shared her journey through heart-wrenching moments and personal tragedies, and how she overcame these barriers to become a public speaker, AFL Women's player, and an inspirational role model for the next generation of Aboriginal youth. One key takeaway was that Courtney derived her strength and tenacity from her connection to land and family, and through strength of spirit, rather than relying on Western therapeutic supports.

Next, we embarked on a journey of self-awareness, mindfulness, and intentionality with Dana Shen. Dana guided the group through a mindfulness session that reinvigorated us, helped us understand ourselves better, and reinforced our need for social interaction and connection.

We then heard from an inspirational group of triathletes, led by Kate Rush, who shared their stories of courage and leadership, proving that age, injury, and disability are no barriers. With focus and determination, they showed that positive outcomes are achievable.

Finally, the event ended with a celebration of staff from within the Alliance, who were recognised for their outstanding work in front of their peers.

From the Youth Accommodation space, Sarah Gilbert was recognised for her outstanding contribution, receiving a 'Values Award' for her client-centered approach to working with young people within Aboriginal Youth Crisis Accommodation.

From the Wardli-Ana (Towards Home Alliance) team, Ronald Rankine was recognised for his exceptional contributions to teamwork and collaboration. He received a 'Values Award' for his willingness to help anyone from any team, highlighting that Ron is the ultimate team player.



*Pictured above: Sarah and Ron receiving their 'Values Award'.*





## Northern Nunga Network's 2024 Final Meeting & Kris Kringle Event

AFSS were so very grateful to be invited to the Northern Nunga Network, hosted by Taingiwilta Pirku Kawantila Study and Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health - SAHMRI, who wrapped up 2024 with a heart-warming Kris Kringle event to support families and children in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.

A special thanks to our AFSS staff Jasmine Guest, Nickeala Collett, Winnie Warrior, and Board Member James Bevan, who graciously accepted the generous contributions from everyone who attended. Your kindness will make a meaningful difference!



The Northern Nunga Network remains a vital safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in northern Adelaide to connect, collaborate, and advocate for better outcomes.

## AFSS Deputy Chair Connects with Teams at Northern Nunga Network Meeting

AFSS Deputy Chair Alex Houthuysen (Hill) recently met with the vibrant team from AFSS, including Jasmine Guest and Nickeala Collett from the Elder Care team, and Rebecca Wright and Annette O'Loughlin from Community Safety and Wellbeing. The meeting, hosted at the Morella Community Centre during the Northern Nunga Network, sparked great conversations about their impactful programs and the incredible work they're doing in the community. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect and collaborate on our shared goals!



*Pictured from left to right: Jasmine Guest & Nickeala Collett (Elder Care), Alex Houthuysen (Hill) (Deputy Chair), Rebecca Wright & Annette O'Loughlin from Community Safety and Wellbeing.*

# Community Safety & Wellbeing - Port Lincoln



The Bringing Up Great Kids program has been met with great enthusiasm in our community, providing participants with valuable skills and fostering a sense of connection as they share their experiences. The six-session workshop is filled with laughter and joy, making the learning process enjoyable and engaging. Participants have gained a deeper understanding of brain science and child development. One participant shared, "I didn't know how much a brain weighs and how quickly it grows from birth. Learning this has helped me understand what my child needs from me."



*Bringing Up Great Kids participants Chloe Warren, Bella Whillas, Emmalene Richards & Derryn Perriann - Term 3.*



The past few months in Terms 3 and 4 have been busy and impactful. Port Lincoln hosted a Seasons for Healing workshop, led by Annette and Mel, offering participants a safe and supportive space to share their stories and explore how grief has affected them and their families. This workshop provided individuals with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences while fostering understanding and healing. Additionally, Circle of Security continues to be available, both for one-on-one sessions and group workshops. We encourage the community to reach out and discover which workshop might be of interest.



Mel and Kayla also offered a Seasons for Healing workshop at the Paralowie office, where participants successfully completed the four sessions and gained valuable tools to help manage overwhelming thoughts and emotions.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the participants who have been part of our workshops and programs over the past 12 months. Your dedication, courage, and shared experiences have enriched our community, and we are truly grateful for your involvement. As we approach the holiday season, we wish each of you a safe, peaceful, and joyful time with your loved ones. We look forward to continuing to support you in the coming year.



In 2025, Term 1, we will be offering Bringing Up Great Kids, Financial Fitness, and Circle of Security workshops in Port Lincoln. Please register your interest by emailing [melissa.mcnab@afss.com.au](mailto:melissa.mcnab@afss.com.au) or calling her at 0417 255 724.

*Image 1: Seasons for Healing Facilitator Annette O'Loughlin, with participants Derryn Perrima and Emmalene Richards, and Facilitator Melissa McNab.*

*Image 2: Bringing Up Great Kids participants: Derryn Perriman, Emma Lang, Bella Whillas, Emmalene Richards and Chloe Warren - Term 3.*

*Image 3: The Shark Cage workshop which was held at Yarredi Services Port Lincoln.*





# Community Safety & Wellbeing – Paralowie



*Growing Up Healthy participants Ahyza and Kaitlan with their Certificates of achievement.*

Participants communicated that the Growing up Healthy program was an eye opener. Participants said it has changed their mind-set on what they purchase and eat when doing their weekly shopping. All participants actively engaged and contributed to the cooking of meals each week and learned how to cook on a budget by making mince meat meals using a variety of recipes. Participants also learned the effects of a high sugar diet and the effects it has on their bodies. 'The sugar film has changed their perspectives on the food they buy and realising how important it is to read food labels'.



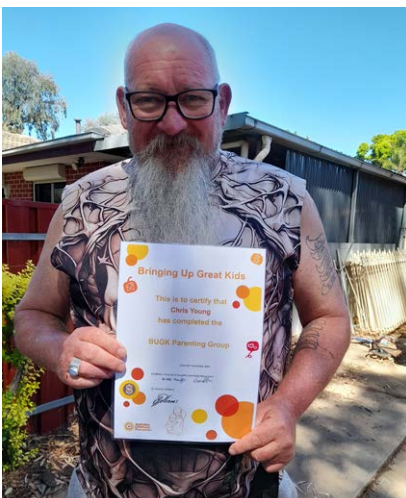
Participants were very surprised when doing the hand sanitizing exercise and commented that "I need to wash my hands properly" and "I thought washing my hands would clean them properly". The participants were very happy when they received their certificates for the Growing up Healthy program.



The Bringing Up Great Kids program at our Paralowie office, with Kayla and me, had 5 participants from the community. The six-week program provided the participants with knowledge about brain development and helped build positive and nurturing relationships between parents and children. Participants actively engaged in all activities and enjoyed the program. One participant shared, "I enjoyed the brain activity by guessing the weight and ages of the brain." Another participant also said they liked the pass-the-parcel activity and responding to the messages they had to read out. This group got along well and was very supportive of one another. There was a lot of laughter, and friendships were formed.

Kayla and I would like to thank all participants for their dedication in completing the programs they were involved in over the past 12 months. We would also like to thank them for having the courage to share their stories.

We will be delivering programs from our Paralowie office in Term 1, 2025. Please register your interest at: [annette.oloughlin@afss.com.au](mailto:annette.oloughlin@afss.com.au) or phone 8281 5440.



*Chris Young completed Bringing Up Great Kids.*



*Chris Preparing a healthy salad.*



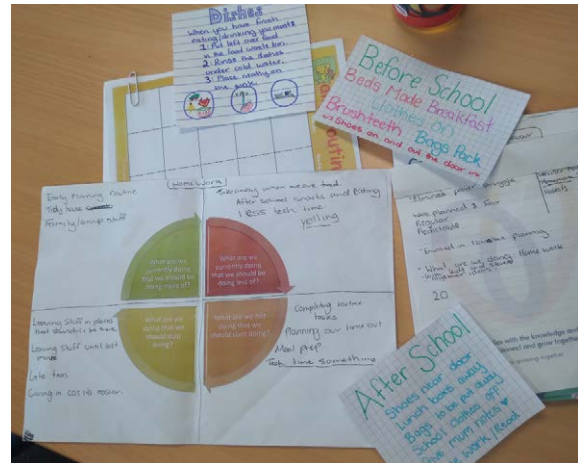
*Facilitator Annette with Bringing up Great Kids participants Benjamin and Sharna.*

# Community Safety & Wellbeing - Mt Gambier

In Terms 3 and 4, CS&W programs were facilitated to Pangula Mannamurrna Aboriginal Corporation Mens Yarning Group, Nunga Play Group Parenting Group, and AFSS Kinship Carers and Community Services staff. The programs that we delivered were Healthy Homes - Resilient Families (Growing Up Healthy & Routines and Rules), Financial Fitness, Bringing Up Great Kids, and Circle of Security-Parenting.

Dawn and Annette offered Seasons for Healing for staff working in the Community Services sector, and participants will successfully complete the program in Term 4.

It was a very exciting time facilitating the Bringing Up Great Kids program for our Kinship Carers and helping them understand more about child and brain development. The program also reflected on growing up and lifestyles, incorporating activities from yesteryear, such as pass the parcel.



In Term 1 of 2025, we are offering Financial Fitness, Bringing Up Great Kids and Seasons for Healing. If you are interested, please contact Dawn Cardona on: dawn.cardona@afss.com.au or telephone our office on (08) 8723 6110.

# Community Safety & Wellbeing - Port Augusta

During Terms 3 and 4 of 2024, we have been fortunate to use the following centres to deliver our programs:

- Learning Together Children and Family Centre - Port Pirie
- Gabmididi Manoo Children and Family Centre - Whyalla
- Merrill Street - Port Augusta (previously an AFSS Residential Home).

We have also been invited to use the Community Space at the Children and Family Centre at Pirie West Primary School.

During Term 3, CS&W Programs delivered the following AFSS programs: Bringing Up Great Kids, Seasons for Healing, Circles of Security, and Growing Up Healthy. In Term 4, we delivered Bringing Up Great Kids (x2), Seasons for Healing, My Money Dreams, and Growing Up Healthy.

Those who participated in Bringing Up Great Kids, especially, agreed that learning about their child/children's behaviour will have a big impact on the way they parent in the future. They all found the three models on the size of the brain interesting.

As we continue to deliver Community Safety and Wellbeing programs to our communities, interest grows for Seasons for Healing. After a reflective conversation with a community member from Port Augusta, this valuable program is being delivered in the three centres of Port Augusta, Port Pirie, and Whyalla – hopefully with the support of AFSS staff from Port Lincoln and Adelaide. Watch this space.



Thank you to Mel from Port Lincoln and Therese and Kayla from the Kings Road Office in Adelaide for their support during the last two school terms.





# Community Engagement and Participation by AFSS Mount Gambier Office

The Mount Gambier Office has been actively involved in participating, attending, and networking with the community at various events.

## Presentation to Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal Corporation Elder's Group

As part of our community engagement, our office provided a presentation on AFSS and our services to the Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal Corporation Elder's Group. Staff discussed their roles at AFSS and answered questions from the group. A lunch was provided, and the Elders participated in storytelling, sharing childhood games from years past.



## Active Involvement in the Working Group

We have actively contributed to and participated in the Working Group, which discusses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events and plans for the year ahead. AFSS Mount Gambier co-presents each year at the NAIDOC Community Breakfast and contributes to significant dates in the calendar year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events.



*Kylie Lovett and Judith Maniapoto-Rickus networking at a local community event.*

## Attendance at Local Events

Staff were invited and attended several events, including the Limestone Coast Round Table, Mount Gambier Prison Memorial Unveiling, Women's Wellness, and the Charter of Rights information session.

## Staff Training and Development

Three staff members completed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Training, and a staff member completed TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) Training.

## 16 Days of Activism and Community Events

AFSS participated in the 16 Days of Activism with a stall at the library and attended the annual lawn bowls event organised by Ruby's Reunification program.

These initiatives demonstrate our office's ongoing efforts to connect with and support the community.

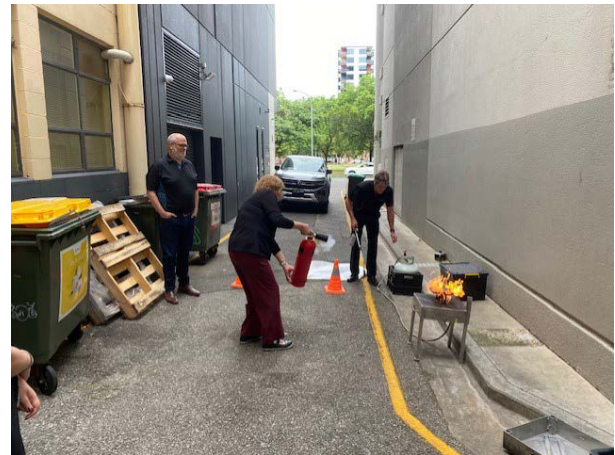






## Fire Warden Training at AFSS Head Office

VeriFire conducted Fire Warden and Evacuation training on October 17th at our head office on Waymouth Street. The session covered fire safety theory and Fire Warden responsibilities in the event of a building evacuation, followed by practical exercises. These occurred in the lane at the rear of the building and included the use of fire extinguishers and fire blankets. Here are a couple of action shots of Penny Kaur and Tania Elliot putting the theory into practice during the exercises.



## Let's Keep Kids Safe in Culture

Did you happen to see one of AFSS' Foster Care bus advertisements that were on the move in November? There were 10 circulating around Metro Adelaide, helping to raise awareness about the incredible difference you can make by becoming a Foster Carer. We spotted 12 in the Tea Tree Gully area and the city, and did laps around participating bus depots when passing by, to try and spot more. :D ...A bit more fun than expected.

Fostering isn't just about providing a safe, loving home – it's about helping children stay connected to their culture, community, and identity. As a Foster Carer, you'll play a key role in ensuring that children can thrive while remaining connected to what's important to them.

Want to learn more about becoming a Foster Carer? Call us at (08) 8297 5708 or visit [www.afss.com.au](http://www.afss.com.au) to discover more about fostering in our regional locations.



# Empowering Leadership: Bianca Ford and Jasmine Van Vught Graduate from Aboriginal Leadership Course

Bianca Ford (Coordinator of NDIS & Elder Care Support - Specialised Services) and Jasmine Van Vught (Manager Cultural Consultancy Program) were honoured to have been nominated for the Aboriginal Leadership Course, held at Tauondi Aboriginal College in Port Adelaide. The course was developed and facilitated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment; the course was designed to empower Aboriginal employees through targeted leadership development.

The program focused on building confidence and capability among Aboriginal employees working within the South Australian public sector and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). This revamped initiative created opportunities for participants to connect with peers, deepen their cultural knowledge, and develop essential leadership skills. Running over three months, the course included three core modules: Understanding Self, Understanding the Workplace, and Understanding Teams, alongside an official opening and closing ceremony.

**Module 1 - Understanding Self:** This module focused on identifying personal strengths and uncovering our "Why." As part of the session, our managers were invited to join, allowing us to collaborate on creating a personalised Leadership Roadmap for the next 6–12 months. The session dedicated to developing the Leadership Roadmap was incredibly valuable, as it provided clarity on where we, as individuals, wanted to grow and how we could build on our existing skill-sets to further our development moving forward.

**Module 2 - Understanding the Workplace:** This module focused on fostering cultural and psychological safety in the workplace and addressed the concept of lateral violence. It was facilitated by Tamara from Wonky Lines Counselling.

**Module 3 - Understanding Teams:** This module explored team dynamics, people management, performance management, and psychosocial hazards and risks. It introduced the 70-20-10 approach to learning, which emphasises 70% learning through experience, 20% learning from others, and 10% through structured education. Participants were encouraged to reflect on leadership development and their individual growth as leaders. Throughout the course, Bianca and Jasmine developed their leadership capabilities, cultural understanding, and professional confidence, enabling them to make a meaningful impact within their roles and the communities they served.

The program concluded with a reflective session on participants' learnings and achievements, followed by a graduation ceremony. Certificates were proudly presented by the Honourable Minister Kyam Maher, celebrating the successful completion of this transformative leadership journey.





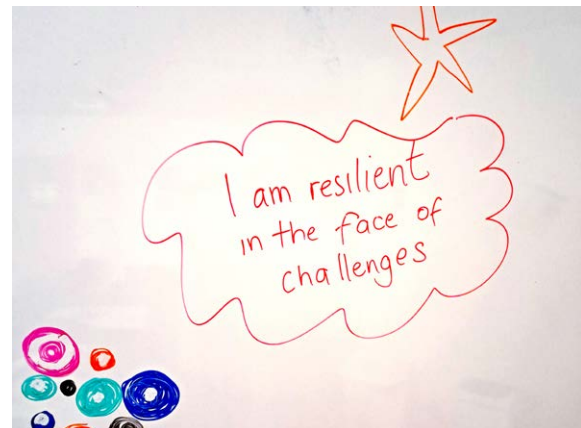


# AFSS R U Ok? Day Lunch

On R U OK? Day, staff at head office gathered to spread a meaningful message: reaching out to check on each other matters. This year, we packed around 500 bags of goodies, filled with thoughtful items to brighten the day of staff members across the state and serve as a reminder that mental health is important every day, not just on R U OK? Day.

A special thank you to AFSS Training Officer Tania Elliot, who has been a driving force behind this initiative at AFSS since 2019. Tania consistently goes above and beyond, organising various mindfulness activities for the day. Her commitment to fostering a supportive environment for mental health has made a lasting impact on all of us.

Thank you to the Corporate Services team who participated in the packing and everybody who took the time to check in with colleagues, friends, and loved ones. Together, we're making sure no one faces their struggles alone. Remember: It only takes a moment to ask, R U OK? and make a world of difference.



**STRONGER TOGETHER**

[ruok.org.au/strongertogether](http://ruok.org.au/strongertogether)

**RUOK?**

A conversation could change a life.

# Cultural Adventures in Residential Care

Residential Care recently organised a variety of engaging and culturally enriching activities aimed at connecting young people with their community, nature, and Kurna Country, as well as other Indigenous lands. These initiatives provided opportunities for adventure, learning, and personal growth, while fostering connections to Country and culture.

## 1. BBQ Catch-Up at Morialta Falls

A gathering was held on Kurna Country, where young people enjoyed playing and connecting. Some participants undertook the challenging hike to the third falls, demonstrating resilience and determination.

## 2. Fishing and Marine Experiences

Young people explored connections to Country through fishing activities, with some catching their first squid and observing large stingrays, creating memorable encounters with marine life.

## 3. Girls Group Sessions

The first two sessions of the girls' group took place across Kurna, Ramindjeri, Narrunga, and Peramangk lands. Participants engaged in diverse activities such as snorkelling, horse riding, and sheep herding.

**Cultural Enrichment:** Uncle Ivan performed a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, sharing stories of strong women of culture and their roles in the community, inspiring and empowering the girls.

## 4. Boys Group Activities

A boys' group session was held in the forest, where participants prepared hot coals and skinned and cooked kangaroo tail. One boy remarked, "I have not done this for years; last time I did this was with family," and guided others in peeling the skin from the tail, sharing cultural knowledge and practices.

## 5. Coorong Adventure on Ngarindjerri Country

Area 4 Manager and Team Leaders organised a day out on the Coorong for approximately 30 young people and staff. The group travelled on The Spirit of the Coorong, experiencing stunning views of Ngarindjerri Country. Along the way, they crossed the barrage and were greeted by local seals, adding to the memorable cultural and natural experience.

## 6. Mountain Biking Adventures

Mountain biking sessions were organised on Kurna and Peramangk Country, providing physical activity and further opportunities to connect with the land.

## Outcomes and Impact

These activities have provided a platform for Residential Care staff to engage with young people, hear their perspectives, and support them in several ways:

- Advocating for family contact.
- Encouraging re-engagement with school.
- Facilitating connections with sporting groups.

Through these culturally rich and recreational experiences, Residential Care continues to empower young people, fostering resilience, cultural connection, and community integration.









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# Kate's Gingerbread Men Recipe



150g butter, softened  
1/2 cup (110g) brown sugar  
1/2 cup (125ml) golden syrup  
1 free range egg  
3 cups (450g) plain flour  
1 tbsp ground ginger  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg  
1/4 tsp ground cloves  
330g pkt bought royal icing (optional)

## Step 1

Preheat oven to 180C. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper.

## Step 2

Combine the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, for 3-5 mins or until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Set aside for 30 mins to cool.

## Step 3

Transfer the butter mixture to a medium bowl. Add the egg and whisk to combine. Stir in the flour, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 30 mins or until firm.

## Step 4

Divide dough into quarters. Roll each portion out on a lightly floured surface to a 3mm-thick disc. Cut out your desired shapes. Place on the lined trays. Bake, swapping trays halfway through cooking, for 10-12 mins for smaller shapes or 12-15 mins for larger shapes, or until light golden. Set aside on trays to cool completely.

## Step 5

To decorate, prepare icing following packet directions. Place in a piping bag fitted with a 2mm plain nozzle. (Alternatively, place in a sealable plastic bag and snip off 1 corner). Pipe onto biscuits. Set aside for 30 mins to set.