

2014-2019



# East Arnhem Communities for Children

## Expression of Interest Activity Proposal – Application Guidelines

April 2015

### Further Information

Please refer to the Expression of Interest Activity Proposal - Application Guidelines. For further information contact Wendy Scarlett, Initiatives Manager Email: [wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au) or Phone: 08 8985 0000.

## **East Arnhem Communities for Children Seeking Expressions of Interest**

Anglicare NT is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) as the Communities for Children (C4C) Facilitating Partner for the East Arnhem site. We seek EOIs from eligible organisations to deliver inclusive and accessible activities that provide positive outcomes for children (up to 12 years of age) and their families.

Successful organisation's proposals will:

- Meet DSS guidelines.
- Be child safe and strengths based.
- Use early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Be evidence-based, or are working toward becoming evidence-based.
- Demonstrate cultural competency and engage appropriately qualified and supported staff.
- Meet contractual requirements, including data collection and reporting.
- Value add to the regional or community specific service system and address local priorities.
- Promote Indigenous employment opportunities and
- Be provided free of charge to participants.

For further information and to obtain an EOI Community Partner Application pack, contact:  
Wendy Scarlett, Initiatives Manager EA C4C (08) 8985 0000 [wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au)

**Applications close by COB Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2015**

*The community services agency of the Anglican Church in the Northern Territory and member of Anglicare Australia.*

# East Arnhem Communities for Children Activity Proposal - Application Guidelines

## Seeking Expressions of Interest for the 2015-2017 financial years

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### Introduction

Anglicare NT is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) as the Facilitating Partner for the East Arnhem Communities for Children site under the Families and Children stream of the Families and Community Program. The Communities for Children Federal initiative has been in operation for over 10 years, with Anglicare NT contracted as the Facilitating Partner since 2005.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are sought from eligible organisations to deliver inclusive and accessible activities that provide positive outcomes for children (up to 12 years) and their families and meet national program objectives and address regional and community specific priorities.

The current initiative is funded for the 2014 to 2019 period. Due to changes being introduced to the national initiative and pending changes to the regional and community specific service systems Expression of Interest (EOI) proposals will only be considered for a maximum of a two year period.

### Background

As outlined in the DSS Families and Communities Program Families and Children's Activity Communities for Children Operational Guidelines', C4C Activities are place based and develop and facilitate a whole of community approach to support and enhance early childhood development and wellbeing for children from birth to 12 years.

C4C Facilitating Partners build on local strengths to meet local community needs and create capability within local service systems, using strong evidence of what works in early intervention and prevention. They collaborate with other organisations to provide a holistic service system for children and families. As part of this process, C4Cs fund Community Partners to provide Activities which are evidenced based, place responsive, and will improve outcomes for children 0-12 years and their families.

Services funded through C4C may be universal but should proactively develop strategies to ensure all groups can access the activity, with priority given to:

- Families with children at risk of abuse or neglect
- Families experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

### Communities for Children Objectives

The national C4C objectives are to improve the health and wellbeing of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to 12 years with a focus on:

- Healthy Young Families: support families to care for their children before and after birth and throughout their early years.

- **Supporting Families and Parents:** supporting parents to provide children with secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure.
- **Early Learning:** providing high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school, early identification and support for children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems, and assistance for parents in ways to stimulate and promote child development and learning from birth.
- **School Transition and Engagement:** supporting children and parents to make a smooth transition to school, and work with local schools to assist children and families with their ongoing engagement with school.

Create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

### **Eligibility to Apply for C4C Funding:**

Organisations seeking to deliver Activities as a Community Partner must meet eligibility requirements as specified in the Australian Government Department of Social Services - Families and Communities Program Guidelines under Applicant Eligibility.

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11\\_2014/families\\_and\\_children\\_final.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2014/families_and_children_final.pdf)

In summary eligibility requirements are:

#### 1. Not for Profits that fulfil one of the eligibility criteria below:

- a) Incorporated Associations (incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' in their legal name)
- b) Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under state/territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name)
- c) Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001*-may be a proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or a public company)
- d) Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*)
- e) Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or state/territory legislation
- f) Partnerships
- g) Trustees on behalf of a Trust

#### 2. Other entities such as Local Government are eligible to apply. The Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Operational Guidelines (p.10) state that Local Government entities may be funded, but there is a strong preference that state/territory government entities are not funded unless in exceptional circumstances.

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09\\_2014/cfc\\_fp\\_operational\\_guidelines\\_-\\_v\\_1\\_1\\_5\\_september\\_2014.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2014/cfc_fp_operational_guidelines_-_v_1_1_5_september_2014.pdf)

## Funding Considerations

Funding for this EOI process is for a maximum period of two years from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017.

Indicative total funding available for the EA C4C site to be released for approved Activities is \$600,000 per annum.

Community Partner Activity/ies for 2015-2017 will be funded at a maximum of \$220,000 (GST exclusive) per annum per organisation (subject to change) for major Activity Proposals.

Organisations are also able to apply for minor Activities under \$50,000 per annum this could include one off programs for example a 5 week parenting course or a small scale community based activity.

- Activities may range from 6 months to 2 years in duration.
- In accordance with the DSS funding criteria, 30% of successful applications need to demonstrate an evidence base in the 2015-2017 funding period. Further information on this assessment criteria is provided at: <https://apps.aifs.gov.au/cfca/guidebook/programs>
- A proportion of funding may be available for establishing innovative projects.
- The Activity Proposal Application form requires organisations submitting an application to identify additional sources of funding received and/or applied for, that are or will be associated this project.

## Requirements of Funded Activities

The EA C4C site comprises ABS area 70204 East Arnhem, including Groote Archipelago and Numbulwar. Priority will be to deliver Activities in specific communities or across the site where the proposed activity meets identified needs and value adds to the existing service system in line with priorities.

*Successful Organisation's EA C4C Activity Proposals will:*

- Meet DSS Guidelines.
- Be child safe and strengths based.
- Use early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Use a DSS approved evidence based approach or is working toward meeting approval requirements.
- Engage appropriately qualified and supported staff,
- Meet contractual requirements including data collection and reporting
- Value add to the regional or community specific service system and address local priorities,
- Promote indigenous employment opportunities, and
- Are provided free to participants.

## Overview East Arnhem Communities for Children Strategic Priorities

The following four (4) priorities result from the EA C4C Community Strategic Planning process and funded Activities must demonstrate how they address community needs and the agreed regional priorities.

### Priority Area 1:-Growing Up Strong and Healthy Kids

This priority addresses the C4C FP objectives for **Healthy Young Families:-** supporting parents to care for their children before and after birth and throughout the early years, and **Early Learning:-** providing access to high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school, early identification and support of children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems; and assisting parents with ways to stimulate and promote child development and learning from birth.

Early intervention to enhance child development, particularly in the years prior to the commencement of formal schooling, makes a significant and positive contribution to children's long term health, wellbeing and overall life outcomes. Existing Child development and educational outcome data from the Australian Early Developmental Census for the East Arnhem region (North Miwatj; South Miwatj areas) highlight the critical need for increased support in this area.

Research strongly indicates that positive cognitive, social and emotional development outcomes, particularly from birth to 3 years, have a long-term impact on a child's chances in life. The brain is strengthened by positive early experiences, especially stable relationships with caring and responsive adults, safe and supportive environments and appropriate nutrition.

The opportunity to develop attachment to a consistent caregiver optimises a child's capacity for development. Critical neural connections and pathways are laid down from pre-birth and during the first 3 years in life, noting high levels of cortisol associated with stress in early childhood may impede the child's capacity for learning and the formation of memory. Continuing stressful experiences and environments can impact negatively on school readiness.

One of the NT Department of Education goals in the Strategic Plan 2013-2015 is "A Great Start for Children" this is to be achieved by "working with families so children have the best possible start in life and begin school ready to learn". Families in East Arnhem communities demonstrate a strong desire for children to learn to read and to be educated, however children in remote communities continue to struggle with this fundamental skill. Experts in the field of early childhood development argue that pre-literacy and numeracy programs play a significant part in enabling children to develop key skills during their school years. Children in the early year's prior to school need exposure to books and other age appropriate communication resources that include familiar concepts in local languages.

A recent study of selected community's reports - one quarter of total food expenditure was on non-alcoholic beverages; 15.6% on sugar sweetened drinks; 2.2% spent on fruit and 5.4% spent on vegetables; Sugars contributed to 25.7-34.3% of dietary energy. 71% of which was sugar sweetened drinks and table sugar. White bread was a major source of energy and most nutrients in all 3 communities. Poor diet continues to be a characteristic of remote Aboriginal community nutrition profiles since the earliest studies almost 3 decades ago.

Access to adequate and nutritious food and developmentally appropriate play and learning activities are critical for child development. Food security for families across the site is an issue; this is compounded by growing pressures on family financial resources. The interface between nutrition, child development, early identification of health issues, and building the foundations for learning present a critical focus point.

## **Priority Area 2:-Strengthening Healthy Families**

This priority addresses the C4C FP objective **Supporting Families and Parents** to provide children secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure.

The vast majority of families in the disadvantaged communities of East Arnhem face considerable challenges which impact on the health and wellbeing of children. Population data available through the ABS and reported on the My School site for specific school communities within the site indicate economic indices and developmental outcomes are poor relative to mainstream population centres, with the majority of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable in relation to at least one domain (physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication and general knowledge).

This is compounded by isolation, limited specialist services, and the extensive social and environmental issues faced by the remote communities combined with high incidences of current and inter-generational trauma. Indigenous children in the NT are more likely to be victims of child abuse and neglect than non-Indigenous children and are over-represented in out of home care placements.

Chronic illness combines with community and family violence to impact on the capacity of caregivers and extended family networks to ensure children's health and wellbeing potential is optimised through safe, secure and consistent environments. Consequently, strengthening the capacity of vulnerable families is central to outcomes. Feedback from stakeholders and Community Partners indicates a need for targeted support for young parents (with anecdotal evidence of an increasing prevalence of very young pregnancies).

Early intervention is critical to achieving good health and improved cognitive functioning and life outcomes for traumatised children. Successful interventions have been proven to reduce the incidence of chronic disease, antisocial behaviour, mental health problems and substance misuse. Addressing risk factors in children is enhanced when the overall functioning of the family is supported and this is aligned to improved access to adequate housing and addressing health, family violence and income management issues.

Effective interventions are characterised by a strong child focus, culturally appropriate practice, collaborative service provision and flexible delivery that takes account of the patterns of remote community life in order to ensure outcomes are achievable within the local service delivery context.

A strengths-based approach to working with families to identify solutions to child health and wellbeing issues and safety concerns based on assessing the collective and individual capacity and needs of family members has been identified as an example of a successful bi-cultural practice in NT. Support services are more effective when they can work alongside existing family resources to promote help-seeking behaviours and support the development of family skills. Effective activities enhance collaboration with other service providers in order to successfully address complex family issues.

### **Priority Area 3:- Strong Families, Strong Schools, Strong Communities**

This priority addresses the C4C FP objective of *School Transition and Engagement*, supporting children and families to make a smooth transition to school, and work with local schools to assist children and families with their ongoing engagement with school.

In each of the remote communities across the East Arnhem C4C site, the school is a critical and central hub for children and their families. School attendance and achievement in the East Arnhem region continues to be low, particularly for Indigenous students.

The Department of Education has a commitment “to creating opportunities and the environment for successful learning for every student in every school”. Various approaches have been used by the Department of Education to increase school attendance rates, these efforts combine with PMC measures such as the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy which are active in remote communities across the EA site.

The relationship between schools and parents is a key component in the transition to school process and in terms of the child ongoing engagement with school i.e. parents/caregivers can either be active supporters of education or passive detractors from attendance and educational attainment. Feedback indicates that in some communities, parents feel disconnected and disempowered in their relationship with schools and along with other measures the relationship interface must be addressed.

Feedback from Community Partners and key community members across the site combines with our own observations to indicate children benefit from investments made in building the capacity of parents (mothers and fathers)/caregivers to engage more confidently and positively with schools.

No parent intentionally wants their child to fail at school. Providing parents with safe and culturally relevant experiential learning and development opportunities which encourage participation with school, other families and services providers helps address issues of disengagement, low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Activities that build on and link existing services and support structures, and which adopt an action research approach in working to identify effective ways to strengthen communities and families in East Arnhem assist in providing children with a supportive environment conducive to optimum growth.

### **Priority Area 4: Creating Child-Friendly, Connected Communities**

This priority addresses the C4C FP objective to *Create Strong, Child Friendly Communities* that recognise the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, wellbeing and early development of young children at the local level.

Building service provider and community awareness about how to make children central to our deliberations, planning and decision making processes by hearing children’s voices and keeping focused on meeting their needs is important. We will ensure opportunities to share learning’s, embed bicultural practices, promote cooperative



approaches and address service fragmentation (where this is identified as an issue) are created along with encouraging collective efforts to work together to address issues such as limited infrastructure and resources.

Contributions to planning processes at community and regional levels focused on keeping children safe and strengthening the sense of community connectedness experienced by families will also be a feature. To be functional and economically productive communities must be safe for all members. The release of the *Little Children are Sacred Report* and the *Inquiry into Child Protection in the NT* highlight the need for communities to take an active role in championing the safety and wellbeing of their children.

The diversity of each community means that each community's perspectives and circumstances need to be respected and localised solutions and approaches to issues evolved in conjunction with the provision of relevant mainstream and tailored evidence based activities. This is an important consideration as at present there is a limited number of programs approved through the C4C Expert Advisory System that have been applied in remote Aboriginal community contexts.

### Lodgement an Expression of Interest

Please complete the EA C4C Expression of Interest Activity Proposal Application Form. Ensure answers are accurate and based on current available information.

Expression of Interest Activity Proposals must be submitted by **5pm Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015** via email to [abuxton@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:abuxton@anglicare-nt.org.au)

***\*Anglicare NT retains the right to extend the closing date and/or time at its discretion, where this is assessed as necessary.***

### Expression of Interest Approval Process

Expressions of Interest Activity Proposals will be considered by a Sub-Committee of the EA C4C Strategic Advisory Committee. The Sub-Committee is comprised of members of the EA C4C Strategic Advisory Committee and may include additional invited subject matter experts and or regional representatives from the East Arnhem C4C site.

Subject matter experts from relevant Government Departments will form part of the Sub-Committee in an advisory capacity only.

The Sub-Committee has the right to request additional information and or seek clarification of content from organisations lodging an Expression of Interest Activity Proposal.

Recommendations of the Sub-Committee will be provided to DSS for final approval.

General feedback will be provided to unsuccessful organisations if requested.

***\*Anglicare NT retains the right to negotiate Activity including scope and coverage, financial aspects and final budgets.***

### For further information

Please contact Wendy Scarlett, Initiatives Manager EA C4C on Email [wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:wscarlett@anglicare-nt.org.au) or Phone: **08 8985 0000**.