

The Top End Gathering.

A

National Child, Adolescent and Family Psychology Interest Group Initiative

Many of you have been waiting with baited breath to hear of the outcome of "The Top End Gathering" and it is a real privilege to report that it was fantastic. The weather was great dry and 25 degrees in the evenings, the sunsets were magnificent and the company was superb.



There were 50 participants and from the first evening, there was deep sharing and connections made. Many shared the need to find other colleagues who were passionate about their work with children and adolescents in a relaxed, informal and non-competitive environment. The gathering was well attended for the three days;



To quote

"I can't remember a conference where I wanted to attend every session, and I did".



After a Larrikia Nation welcome by Kathleen, the opening session started with the *Save the children, foundation* (NT). They brought their "play-van" down onto the beach, spread the toys onto the grass, and prepared to be interviewed about their work. Their presentation was inspiring since they had spent many long months negotiating with remote indigenous communities to enable them to assist community groups in small settlements. To top off the welcome and opening session, the Larrikia women had also made t-shirts and bandanas for us to remember the gathering 2004.



They were brilliant. They were worn for the rest of the gathering.



The speakers continued to be creative in their



were no



presentations, there were no power points or



overheads, instead there was; "pass the parcel" and "pick up sticks";



musical instruments with many types of drums; a harpist; a presentation using a "garden hose and thongs"; inspired aboriginal artwork and stories; discussions and musing over a long drawn out dinner (and fine wine); visual images in the park and a "glow in the dark" poster.



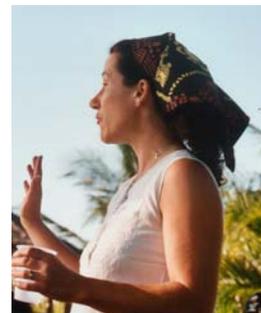
All of these occurred while the sun set, magnificently over the water (unusual for those from the east coast). The enthusiasm and motivation of the speakers and the willing participation of those attending made the gathering inspiring and energizing.

To quote " I feel like I have played for three days, and that opens up my mind to learning new things. I'm pumped."

The final session was capped by a comprehensive overview of "what works" in family services presented by Janette Stott from her current research in the Territory. This was followed by relaxation under the stars while Karen Creegan, (Music therapist) played harp and sung to us. There was an overwhelming request to hold another gathering next year.



The challenge is on to find another warm, rain free, outdoor venue that enables another FREE conference.....



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