

CCMS Training Takes Off

Training 1,400 children's services staff in a three-week period on the one topic could be a big ask, but Children's Services Central rose to the occasion when it recognised the need to offer the sector professional development around the introduction of the new Child Care Management System (CCMS). CCMS is due to be implemented in long day care services and family day care services from January 2008, with out-of-school hours services following in the latter half of the year.

So successful was our roll-out of the first round of our training to long day care services across NSW, that other Professional Support Co-ordinators have asked Children's Services Central to provide trainers in their states and territories, use our training module and/or run 'train-the-trainer' sessions for them.

So, what was the training and why did it work so well? Children's Service's Central lead agency, Community Child Care Co-operative, recognised that long day care services in NSW were suffering from change burnout – too many things changing too quickly and no matter how many newsletters and information packs were sent out about CCMS, services were unhappy about the changes and were not able to keep up with what they needed to do.

We decided that the best way to get information out to allay services concerns was by a series of briefing seminars – one per ISA region, designed to get as many people attending as possible. In the publicity for the events, directed at long day care schemes only, we suggested that the briefings were suitable for director's/owners managers and administrative staff.

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' CCMS section agreed to come with us to anywhere where more than 10 people attended... as all 18 sessions exceeded this number, FaCSIA sent a representative to each and every session that was held, from Dubbo to Blacktown to Byron Bay.



The sessions were broken into five clear sections:

- An overview of the new system by FaCSIA;
- An exploration of what processes would need to change at service level;
- Question time;
- A discussion about cash flow; and
- An exploration of computers/software and internet connections.

All of the greater metropolitan sessions had between 100 and 200 people attend them – we very quickly had over 1,600 people booked into the sessions.

And what was the feedback from the services that attended? From the eight sessions completed at the time of printing this newsletter, a huge 97 per cent of participants who handed in evaluations rated the seminars as 'excellent' or 'good'.

The standard comments received were along the lines of 'fantastic, thank you', 'presented in an easy to follow format', 'extremely helpful', 'very, very useful'.

Participants found that the trainers:

- knew the subject matter very well;
- were direct and straight to the point;
- presented the information professionally;
- used realistic examples and scenarios;
- related the material back to day-to-day matters at services.

So where to now? The sessions are now being adapted, not just for the other states but for family day care schemes in NSW (in January/February 2008) and out-of-school hours schemes (latter part of 2008).

A DVD of the long day care sessions will also be available to purchase in the new year. Please check the Children's Services Central website: www.cscentral.org.au

Welcome NSW community-based preschools

Children's Services Central is pleased to announce that, thanks to funding from the NSW State Government's Department of Community Services, NSW community-based preschools can now attend Children's Services Central training courses at the same cost as all other NSW children's services. So, a welcome to preschools to your first issue of *Central*!

What is Children's Services Central?

Children's Services Central has been funded by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to co-ordinate professional support for all Australian Government Approved Child Care Services in NSW.

That includes training courses for:

- Long Day Care Centres
- Family Day Care Schemes and carers
- In home Care Schemes
- Occasional Care Schemes
- Mobiles
- Before and After Care Services
- Vacation Care Services
- MACS
- and other Australian Government funded non-mainstream care services.

Children's Services Central is managed by The Alliance of Children's Services, which is a consortium of the seven key organisations that resource and represent the various sectors of children's services in NSW:

- **Community Child Care Co-operative (lead agency)**
- **NSW Family Day Care Association**
- **Network of Community Activities**
- **Contact Incorporated**
- **Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative Limited**
- **Child Care NSW**
- **Semann and Slattery.**

Children's Services Central, the Professional Support Co-ordinator for Children's Services in NSW, is a program of The Alliance of Children's Services. The Australian Government, through the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), funds the Professional Support Co-ordinator initiative as part of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

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Attention!

Have you seen *Exploring Multiculturalism, Anti Bias and Social Justice In Children's Services*? It offers an introduction to ideas that will assist staff in children's services to think about the importance of multiculturalism in our everyday work. It can be downloaded for free from our website at www.cscentral.org.au



★ ROUNDUP

New Calendar

Please look out in your mail for the new Children's Services Central Training Calendar. The Calendar shows all professional development that Children's Services Central will be offering in the first half of next year. The Calendar will reach services in January/February 2008. A version will be online in late December 2007 on our website at www.cscentral.org.au



CCMS

All long day care and family day care services should have received a letter of offer from FaCSIA offering \$1,000 transitional funding to help them transition to the new Child Care Management System. If you have not yet received your letter of offer contact the CCMS Help Desk on **1300 667 276**.

CCMS additional funding

By now, all long day care services should have considered the additional funding they will be applying for under CCMS. Services are eligible to apply for an additional \$2,100. For more information see the FaCSIA website at: www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/ccms.htm

Immunisation Schedule

Did you know that the Australian Government has released a new national immunisation schedule? The schedule now includes a rotavirus vaccine at two and four months.

See the latest immunisation schedule at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/living/immunisation/immunise_prog/pdf/progschedule.pdf



Order your 2008 childcare services diary NOW

Community Child Care Co-op is proud to present the perfect diary for everyone involved in NSW early childhood services.

Ideal for directors, owners, early childhood professionals, teachers, FDC carers, room leaders, administrators and management committee members.



Download your order form from

www.ccccnsw.org.au/diary2008.pdf

It's working for **FDC & IHC!**

NSW Family Day Care Association and Children's Services Central are finding the collaborative arrangement they have to provide professional support to Family Day Care and In Home Care Schemes in NSW is working well. NSW Family Day Care Association is a Professional Support Service Provider (PSSP) to Children's Services Central.

The Training Needs Analyses undertaken by Children's Services Central are a great start up process to uncovering and identifying the needs of the In Home Care and the Family Day Care sector.

Each analysis is undertaken to determine training needs for the next six months, NSW Family Day Care Association follows this up with Expressions of Interest sent to all FDC and IHC Schemes to highlight the latest trends and up-coming issues in the home based care sector.

Together, these two documents give us a true reflection of the professional development needs of the sector and ensure training is tailored to exactly suit the industry and provide the best and most appropriate programs.

Tracey Sweetman, from Port Stephens Family Day Care Scheme, welcomes such a positive opportunity to state her scheme's particular training needs. She observed that whilst the training was essentially for Carers, the effect was to provide a higher quality experience for children and indeed families. As a trainer for the NSW Family Day Care Association, she has been delighted with the training packages which are user friendly, well presented and up to date with current trends and issues.

'I noticed that the packages were adaptable to the needs of the different target groups in the industry and have been written by industry peers in the Early Childhood field. This is a refreshing focus that really taps into the participants interests and resounds across the industry'.

This year, surveys and Expressions of Interest were sent to 104 FDC schemes and 17 In Home Care Services. A massive 75 per cent of the surveys were returned which illustrates the interest from the industry in this program.

Maryanne McDonald, from Newtrain Family Day Care in NSW North, said 'I am absolutely delighted when the Expression of Interest for upcoming training reaches me on my email. This gives me time to consult with my CDOs and Carers about what training would benefit this scheme the most at the time'.

'I have found the staff of NSW Family Day Care PSSP Training section and Children's Services Central to be extremely helpful and professional. I receive confirmation about the training by email, phone and by mail. This ensures that I am well aware of whom the trainer is, the venue and any requirements needed for the training'.

She noted that her scheme 'benefited immensely from the professional presentation of training from various trainers who have brought knowledge, skills and networking to us as a rural scheme. We have found it very difficult to access training in the past due to our remote location and the expense associated with bringing trainers to the community and I express my thanks for all the assistance given to us. I look forward to future training from your association'.

The Manager of the IHC and FDC PSSP Program, Robert Barbara, had a few words to say about the collaboration with Children's Service's Central. 'We work with respect for each other's ideas and confidence about each other's skills and in this way programs progress well. This model is working well for family day care and in home care schemes'.

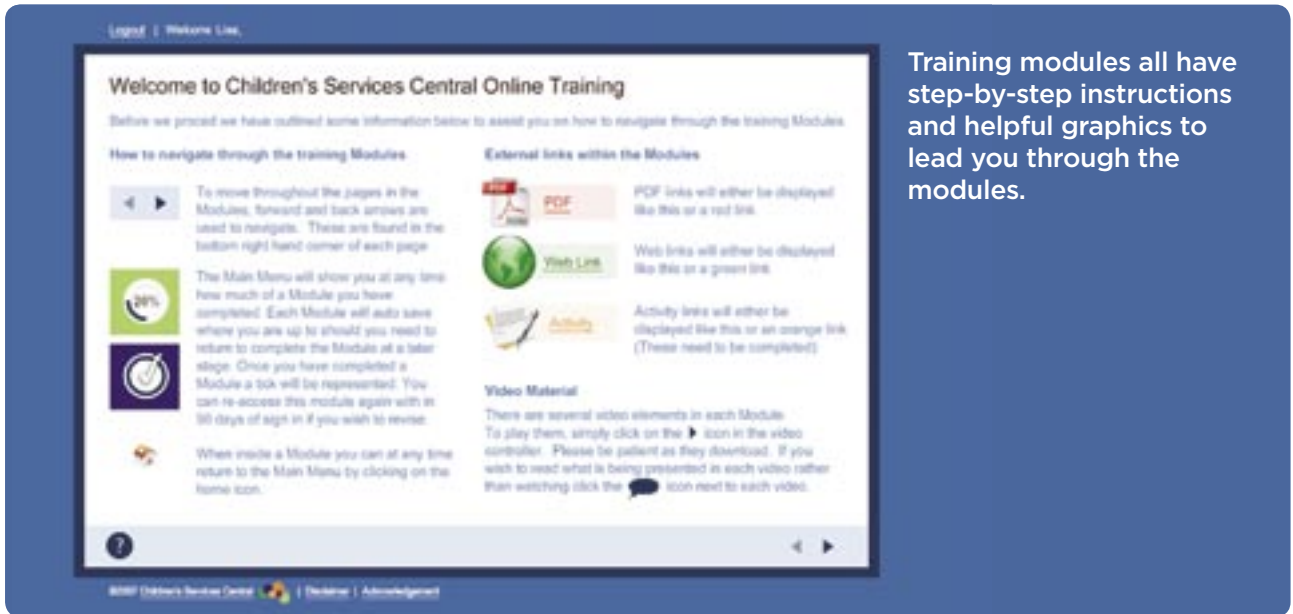


What is happening with the new **accreditation** system?

Services may be aware that the new combined accreditation system has had yet another name change. The then Minister for Families and Community Services, Mal Brough, announced a few months ago that 'there has been concern that the absence of the word "quality" in the title of the system somehow indicated diminished importance on services providing quality childcare. That is simply not correct and to dispel any ongoing concerns I have agreed to rename the system the *Child Care Quality Accreditation System (CCQAS)*'.

Mal Brough also announced that the system would not be implemented until July 2008 as 'it is important that we develop a system that is robust and provides the best outcomes for children'. All services, regardless of service type who are facing accreditation before this time will probably do so under the existing system.

It was unclear at the time *Central* went to print what changes the new government intends to make to the accreditation system.



Training modules all have step-by-step instructions and helpful graphics to lead you through the modules.

Have you tried an online training course?

Did you know Children's Services Central has developed a range of online training packages which can be undertaken by services in their own time and pace? On occasions, it is difficult for staff in children's services to attend training courses because of distance issues and the difficulty in attracting relief staff.

Our current modules include:

- Legal Responsibilities for Managers/Committee Members
- Legal Responsibilities for Authorised Supervisor
- Nutrition
- Recruitment of Staff
- Retention of Staff
- Defining and Packaging Your Business – Family Day Care
- Defining and Packaging Your Business – Centre Based Care
- Defining and Packaging Your Business – Out of School Hours
- Promoting Your Business

To find out more about our online training please go to www.cscentral.org.au

Fee-for-service training

As well as the funded training Children's Services Central offers through our training calendar, services should remember that all Alliance members (Alliance of Children's Services is the organisation that is behind Children's Services Central) also offers a range of fee-for-service training that can be offered at your service, or at one location suitable for a group of services. The Alliance members are Community Child Care Co-operative, NSW Family Day Care Association, Child Care NSW, Ethnic Child Care, Contact Inc, Network and Semann and Slattery.

If you are interested in any one of these organisations coming to your service to run a session, please contact them directly, or call Children's Services Central on **1800 157 818**.

Are you a rural and remote service?

Please look out for the range of ways we are offering professional development for rural and remote services in the next calendar.

From webinars to phone linkups, online training, special regional training events, mentoring and individual service support, there is sure to be something that meets your needs. We do try and vary the locations of all events within regions but there are some towns where it is not feasible.

Contact Inc provides Children's Services Central with specialist advice about the best way of addressing the needs of rural and remote services. If you have ideas that may also help us please call **1800 157 818**.

Family Day Care conference success

The NSW Family Day Care Association Annual State Conference is over for another year, and what a fantastic event it was! With over 160 people attending each day, the conference is obviously an event of note on the FDC calendar.

The workshops, dinners and meetings all went extremely well and Children's Services Central is sure that participants found it greatly rewarding.



Performers on the day *Drumbeat!*

Got a Problem? Call the Children's Services Central Helpline on **1800 157 818**

Bicultural Support Pool celebrates 1,000 requests

Children's Services Central and Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative Ltd (ECCFCSC) celebrated a huge achievement in August 2007 - the Bicultural Support Pool, co-ordinated by Ethnic Child Care and funded by Children's Services Central, reached its 1,000th request for bicultural support. Meni Tsambouniaris, Co-ordinator of Bicultural Support Pool, reports.

Congratulations to Clovelly Child Care Centre for being the 1,000th service and to Belinda Yeh for being the 1,000th bicultural support worker.

Celebrating this huge milestone gave the Bicultural Support Pool (BSP) the opportunity to acknowledge all the services that helped the BSP get to that point of celebrating its 1,000th placement.

As part of the celebrations, representatives from the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), staff of Children's Services Central and ECCFCSC, including the Bicultural Support Pool team and Belinda Yeh were invited to an afternoon tea celebration with staff and children at Clovelly Child Care Centre.

Congratulations and thank you to Maria Pender and her team, children and families for being part of this momentous occasion. The centre was presented with a certificate, cake and gifts, as was the 1,000th bicultural support worker, who was supporting the 1,000th inclusion of a CALD child in an Australian Government approved childcare service.

Tribute was also paid to the other 999 services that requested bicultural support along the way and were instrumental in the lead up to this event.

One thousand bicultural support pool requests equates to an enormous workload and effort by the BSP Project Officers, (*Divina Cergol, Pam Grammenos, Maria Mausia, Muberra Topcu and Tapati Sharma*) who make the whole process come together.



Children celebrating at Clovelly Child Care Centre.

A special tribute and thanks was also given to Children's Services Central and ECCFCSC (as the organisations running the BSP Program), for their ongoing support and guidance during the 1,000 requests, and to the funding body of this invaluable program, FaCSIA.

1,000 BSP requests is a significant event because it celebrates 1,000 children's services accessing the program, 1,000 Bicultural Support workers receiving employment and 1,000 CALD/Indigenous/refugee children receiving Inclusion support.

Let the countdown begin for the next 1,000th BSP request in NSW!

Looking for resources?

Check out Children's Services Central's General Resource Library!

Now with
**free
postage!**

The General Resource Library is a specialist children's services resource pool which contains over 20,000 different resources - books, articles, videos, and a range of other resources that children's services in NSW may wish to access.

Yearly membership of the library costs only \$44 (inc GST). All children's services in NSW are able to borrow from the library after becoming a library member.

The Children's Services Central General Resource Library is delivered by Lady Gowrie Child Centre for Children's Services Central.

To view the Library catalogue and to join the Library go to:
www.cscentral.org.au



Individual service support

At any time of day, a children's service somewhere in NSW is in need of individualised assistance and there are a number of ways that Children's Services Central will get this call for support. It may be a phone call from a service to the Children's Services Central call centre. Perhaps a phone call from a Department of Community Services Children's Services Advisor... a trainer may report back to us after a training session... FaCSIA may send a request by email or a name may come up in a NCAC report... It doesn't matter how, Children's Services Central will get the message.

Children's Services Central offers two separate types of individualised support to services: accreditation support to those services who have received a 'not accredited' decision from NCAC; and generalist individual service support to services that have a major issue which they need specialist assistance to resolve.

When a service is identified as one that requires specialist support, a well-oiled machine within the offices of Children's Services Central and our Professional Support Service Providers (PSSPs) kicks into action. Firstly, the service type is identified so it can be correctly referred to the appropriate PSSP. The PSSP then identifies what the core issue is and which of their consultants is best suited to supporting the service. Once the service has agreed to the support they are being offered, the consultant makes contact and arrangements to visit the service or support via phone are made.

The following stories, shared with these services approval, outline three different services experiences of individual service support.

Lots of Tots Children's Centre

Individual service support offers tailored consultancy and support to a range of children's services providers who require intensive short-term support. Lots of Tots Children's Centre is a 59-place long day care centre in Albury. The staff at Lots of Tots Children's Centre approach their work with enthusiasm and have a commitment to high quality education and care.

When Beth, the centre's owner, contacted Children's Services Central, she acknowledged that she was finding it increasingly difficult to manage the centre's finances. While understanding the importance of a budget, she found it difficult to organise a workable budget that reflected the needs of the centre and as such was concerned about the viability of the service.

Children's Services Central contracted Anthony Semann from Semann and Slattery to visit the centre and work with Beth and her management team to develop a comprehensive budget, which would see the service thrive successfully into the future.

The budget took into account the centre's utilisation numbers and ongoing expenses. In addition, Anthony worked with the management team to develop and implement a range of marketing strategies to increase utilisation numbers and ensure that the approach to teaching and learning is aligned to both the social and cultural diversity within the community.

On a subsequent visit to Albury to provide individual service support to another centre, Anthony visited Beth and her team and facilitated a professional learning program on marketing early childhood education to the community.

So, where is the service now? Lots of Tots enjoys a utilisation rate of 98 per cent, and has a budget with which Beth feels competent with. While visiting the service, Anthony

had the opportunity to walk through the centre's outstanding art exhibition, which displayed children's creative endeavours with a range of art mediums including clay, video, photography and painting.

Reflecting upon the individual service support provided, Beth comments: 'Anthony was easy to communicate with and understood quickly the type of support we needed. His approach was holistic and took into consideration the complexity associated with operating a financially viable business and providing quality care, qualified staff and an innovative curriculum. He supported my own need to understand and work more closely on the financial management of the centre with a lot of ideas and support material to read and learn from. Anthony's genuine concern to assist our service in providing the best we can offer our children and families was inspiring for management and staff alike. Anthony not only has an incredible amount of knowledge, but is that rare individual who can generously share, enthuse, motivate and uplift others. Thank you to Anthony and to Children's Services Central.'

Holbrook Children's Centre

Like many rural services, Holbrook Children's Centre is suffering from the devastating effects of the drought. Located 50 minutes outside of Albury, the centre has experienced a reduction in utilisation numbers over the years as parent struggle to pay fees given the reduction in work and crop yields.

Holbrook Children's Centre is a community owned and managed long day care offering care and education for children aged birth to school age. Anne Cox, the centre's director contacted Children's Services Central to seek support and advice. Having met the criteria for individual service support, Children's Services Central referred the centre to Community Child Care to supply that support. Community Child Care engaged Anthony Semann to provide the support. Anthony Semann visited the centre and spent time with both Anne and the management committee assessing the issues at hand.

What was required was creative thinking in order to see the centre through the drought and well into the future. Undertaking a community profiling exercise, reviewing of budgets and discussing the approaches to care and education in place at Holbrook served as a great starting point.

After much analysis a range of strategies were developed in relation to the budgeting process, staffing, and approaches to curriculum. Several months after the report and recommendations were handed to Anne and the management committee, Anthony revisited the service to spend time with the staff



Anthony Semann

seeking their perspective on the changes. Anthony was confronted with an enthusiastic team of educators willing to rise to the challenge.

Despite the adversity surrounding the drought, the staff remained committed to the children, community and early childhood education, and as such embraced many of the recommendation and changes at hand. With 2008 just around the corner, it is anticipated that Holbrook Children's Centre will continue in January 2008 with a zest for life and a team of enthusiastic staff ready to work through the changes.

Accreditation support to a Long Day Care Centre

One of the other types of individual service support Children's Services Central offers is accreditation support for those services who have received a 'not accredited decision from NCAC. Children's Services Central is informed of these services by NCAC and refers them onto the appropriate Professional Support Service Provider. Currently Network of Community Activities supports Out of School Hours and Vacation Care Services, NSW Family Day Care Association supports Family Day Care Services and Lady Gowrie Child Centre and Community Child Care Co-op both provide support to Long Day Care services.

A long day care service (who has requested anonymity) was found Not Accredited in September and referred to Children's Services Central for support. The service had no staff with previous experience undertaking or leading a QA process. Community Child Care Co-op Project Officer, Nicky Cocksedge, conducted an initial assessment and sent the service a formal offer of Accreditation Support and guidance notes. Nicky assessed the service as requiring a high level of support, meaning that the service was eligible for 10 hours support via phone, email and visit. The service is a rural service in a small town with a high Indigenous population.

Nicky reviewed the service's validation documents and commenced an Action Plan. An Action Plan lists the quality areas and principles the service is having problems with and recommends strategies for action on these areas. It also notes those responsible for the action and most importantly when the action needs to be completed. These action plans are really useful in assisting a service on the tasks they need to undertake prior to their next accreditation attempt.

The service was initially somewhat wary of receiving support. They were uncertain how the support could be most used and if the support would be enough to cover their needs. Nicky made an appointment to fly to the service and spent a day with the owner, licensee and authorised supervisor. They discussed all areas identified as not occurring in the Accreditation Decision and further developed the action plan and possible strategies to assist with service operation.

During the visit it became apparent that the service needed to work on a range of areas. Nicky offered a variety of solutions to each problem the centre was facing and helped them choose a solution that they were confident to initiate.

After the visit the service contacted Community Child Care to express extreme gratitude for the visit and acknowledge that their initial concerns were all addressed. They are now reassured they can face the next self study report and Accreditation visit with more confidence.



Can your service pre-pay for professional development?

Reminding services to pay for professional development can sometimes be a complex task. The Alliance of Children's Services has decided to encourage services to pay for training courses and other professional development up front. Children's Services Central has introduced a small invoice fee of \$5 (GST incl) per course/service where we have to invoice a service for later payment. If services choose to pay upfront for a training course (by credit card /cheque or direct deposit) they will be exempt from this fee.

The Alliance is aware that many invoices cannot be paid until they have gone to a management committee, owner or auspiced organisation. Sometimes it has taken services quite a few months to pay invoices, so the Alliance has also regretfully decided that where invoices remain unpaid after 60 days, an administrative charge of \$25 will be added to the invoice.



Discrimination and Children's Services: Confused about your role?

Network has been working with a legal consultant on a new publication funded by FaCSIA through Children's Services Central.

This new release will be available on the Children's Services Central website early in 2008. The resource is aimed at all those practitioners working in Children's Services in NSW. It provides a general overview of discrimination laws that apply in NSW and explains the concepts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and vilification. The focus is on best practice and practical guidance for children's services on operating a non-discriminatory service that promotes equal opportunity.

Services that have a culture of respect and fairness are much more likely to be free of discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation. By promoting equality of opportunity they are more able to focus on what is important – providing high quality care in a safe and harmonious environment for children.

Children cared for in an environment that promotes equality of opportunity and diversity are learning important principles for the rest of their lives.

In NSW the following state and federal discrimination laws apply;

- *Anti-Discrimination Act NSW 1977;*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975;*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984;*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992;*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004;*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986.*

Discrimination law only applies to discrimination done for some reasons, so not everything people may think is unfair is covered. Generally it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of a person's:

- Sex;
- Pregnancy;
- Race including nationality and ethno-religious background;
- Marital status;
- Homosexuality – gay or lesbian;
- Age;
- Disability – broadly defined to include physical, mental and intellectual disabilities and includes current and past disabilities as well as those a person may get in the future or that you presume people have:
- Transgender status;
- Family responsibilities – for example, caring for a child, parent or other family member.

The resource is packed full of case studies and examples to ensure that it is an easy to read resource covering all aspects of discrimination – both direct and indirect.

The writer, Maggie Smyth has extensive knowledge and expertise in equal employment opportunity, anti-discrimination, harassment, bullying and dispute resolution. She was a founding partner of Resolve Management Consulting Group. Her former roles include Manager of Legal and Policy Services, Principal Solicitor and Manager of the Investigation and Conciliation Services at the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.

As an employer you are liable for discrimination by your employees and agents unless you can show that you have taken reasonable steps to prevent that discrimination occurring. The guide gives practical advice based on the five steps for taking "due diligence" to ensure that discrimination does not occur and in acting quickly to remedy the situation if you discover that anything has occurred. There are several steps you can take to reduce the likelihood that discrimination will happen in your service;

- Step 1:** Review your principles and values
- Step 2:** Review your current practices and policies
- Step 3:** Create a policy on non-discrimination or equal opportunity.
- Step 4:** Review your grievance handling or complaints policy to make sure it works for discrimination and harassment matters. See above.
- Step 5:** Implementation
- Step 6:** Make the policy live

To learn more about the practical application of these steps and obtain a copy of this valuable new resource for services go to www.cscentral.org.au/resources in the new year.

Congratulations!

Children's Services Central Professional Support Service Provider, ECTARC, was nominated as one of three finalists in the Small Training Provider of the Year category for the National Training Awards which were recently held in Hobart.

To add to this great achievement, ECTARC won the 'Innovative Business Award'. This is only the second time in the history of the Australian Training Awards that this particular award has been presented. Congratulations ECTARC!