Lismore Communities for Children Site

Final Evaluation Report — Executive Summary

June 2009

Prepared by:
Dr Sallie Newell
Professor Anne Graham

Southern Cross UNIVERSITY
A new way to think
SUGGESTED CITATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
The authors would like to gratefully acknowledge:

- The children, families and early childhood and family support workers of Lismore and Goonellabah - who have participated in the various program strategies and evaluation activities of this Communities for Children site.
- Carrie Maddison, Brooke Maddison, Anna Huddy, Janet Pettit, Jane Gilmour, Adam Biggs and Wendy Britt (project staff and volunteer) for their expertise, enthusiasm and endurance during the collection, coding and data entry of the community-level data presented in this report.
- The support of the Australian Government’s Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, who provided the funding for this project - through its Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.
- YWCA NSW for engaging and supporting us as the Local Evaluator for this project and the subsequent development of a broader working partnership.
- James Webb (Consultant) for his thorough review and critical feedback on earlier drafts of this report.
- The Widjabul people, from the Bundjalung Nation, who are the traditional custodians of Lismore.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Dr Sallie Newell - Senior Research Officer
Centre for Children and Young People
Mail: Southern Cross University, PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480
Phone: 02 6620 3802 Fax: 02 6620 3423 Email: sallie.newell@scu.edu.au
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THIS REPORT

CfC Initiative: The national Communities for Children initiative.
CfC Site: The Lismore Communities for Children program.
CfC Strategy: One of the 11 primary strategies of the Lismore CfC site.
CfC Activities: Components within one of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
Community Consultative: An interagency advisory group which oversaw all aspects of the Lismore CfC site’s activities.
Facilitating Partner: YWCA NSW - contracted by the Australian Government as the lead agency responsible for all aspects of the Lismore CfC.
Community Partner: An organisation contracted to deliver one of the Lismore CfC site’s strategies.
Worker: Refers primarily to those working within early childhood services but can also include others working with young children in whole-family focussed services, particularly when discussed at a strategy-level.
Widjabul: The traditional custodians of Lismore, within the Bundjalung Nation.

Family Survey: Community-level survey of families with children aged 0-5 years conducted in May-July 2006 (initial) and May-June 2008 (followup).
Worker Survey: Community-level survey of workers in the 27 local early childhood and family support services conducted in May-July 2006 (initial) and May-June 2008 (followup).

BFS: Breastfeeding Support - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
BWB: Bonding With Baby - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
CCYP: Southern Cross University’s Centre for Children & Young People - The Local Evaluator for the Lismore CfC site.
EC: Early Childhood - Relating to children aged 0-5 years.
ECFT: Early Childhood & Family Sector Training - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
ECFS: Early Childhood or Family Support Service - One of the 27 early childhood and family support services based within the Lismore CfC site.
FaHCSIA: Australian Government’s Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs - The funding body for the national Communities for Children initiative.
GP: General Practitioner - family doctor.
GWYC: Goori Women’s Yarnin’ Circle - An activity of the Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy.
LCFC: Lismore Child-Friendly City - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
LLR: Lismore Let’s Read - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
PALS: Playing And Learning to Socialise program - A CfC activity within the Ready Set School strategy.
PEA: Parent Education Activities - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
PIGF: Parenting Innovation/ Grassroots Fund - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
PLW: Parenting Lismore’s Way - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
RSS: Ready Set School - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
SDQ: Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - An assessment tool used within the Ready Set School strategy.
WECS: Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy - One of the Lismore site’s 11 CfC strategies.
Lismore, a regional city in far north-eastern New South Wales, was one of the 45 communities across Australia selected to receive funding through the CfC initiative: almost $4 million over five years (2004-09). The boundaries of the Lismore CfC site roughly equate to those of the Lismore Urban local government area.

The 2004 community planning phase indicated that the Lismore CfC site was home to just over 27,000 people living in about 10,500 households, and including just over 2,200 children aged 0-5 years, of whom:

- about 10% identified as Aboriginal;
- about 25% lived in one-parent families;
- of those living in two-parent families - about 15% had no parent in paid work, 44% had one parent in paid work and 41% had both parents in paid work;
- of those living in one-parent families - about 76% had a parent with no paid work, 16% had a parent working part-time and 8% had a parent working full-time;
- about 19% lived in families with annual incomes under $20,000 (defined as relative poverty);
- about 7% had a disability; and
- about 12-18% of preschoolers needed additional support with their behaviour and/or language development - although NSW Department of Education and Training estimates suggested that 39% of children entering Public School Kindergartens in 2004 had some form of additional need (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005a; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005b; Oliver, 2004; YWCA, 2004).
Lismore was selected as the Facilitating Partner for the Lismore CfC site. This involved them facilitating a collaborative six-month community planning and literature review process, which resulted in the following comprehensive Community Action Plan for achieving the CfC site's vision of supporting its children to have the best possible start in life. As summarised below, this site Plan involved five priority areas, 16 goals and 11 strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CFC Site</th>
<th>Lismore will support its children to have the best possible start in life so that they arrive at school happy, healthy and ready to learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strengthening parental attachment to their young babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strengthening family relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Improving children's readiness to fully participate &amp; thrive on starting school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improving Lismore's child-friendliness as a city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improving community understanding of Bundjalung culture &amp; opportunities for Aboriginal children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CFC Site Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CFC Site Goals</th>
<th>CFC Site Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Increasing rates of breastfeeding until babies are 6-12 months old</td>
<td>1.1.1 Breastfeeding Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Improving support for families having difficulties bonding with their babies</td>
<td>1.2.1 Bonding With Baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Increasing rates of parents reading to their very young children</td>
<td>1.3.1 Lismore Let's Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Improving families' access to strong informal support networks</td>
<td>2.1.1 Parenting Innovation/ Grassroots Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Improving families' confidence &amp; ability about raising their young children</td>
<td>2.2.1 Parenting Lismore's Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Increasing the number of fathers actively involved in their children's lives</td>
<td>2.2.2 Parenting Education Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Reducing the number of children exposed to domestic violence</td>
<td>2.4.1 Link to existing Domestic Violence prevention activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 &amp; 3.2 Increasing rates of children with age-appropriate social &amp; communication skills by age 5</td>
<td>3.1.1 Ready Set School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Improving access to support for children &amp; families with additional needs</td>
<td>4.1 Lismore Child-Friendly City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Increasing rates of children accessing 1+ year of early childhood education before starting school</td>
<td>4.2.1 Early Childhood &amp; Family Sector Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Supporting early childhood workers to provide the best possible care</td>
<td>5.1 Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Improving Lismore's ability to demonstrate it is an accepting, diverse &amp; child-friendly city</td>
<td>5.2 Improving understanding of Bundjalung culture among children &amp; their carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Improving the coordination of early childhood &amp; family support services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CFC Site Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CFC Site Strategies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Breastfeeding Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Bonding With Baby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Lismore Let's Read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Parenting Innovation/ Grassroots Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Parenting Lismore's Way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Parenting Education Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Link to existing Domestic Violence prevention activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Ready Set School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Lismore Child-Friendly City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Early Childhood &amp; Family Sector Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community organisations were sub-contracted to develop and implement each CfC strategy:

- Northern Rivers General Practice Network managed the Breastfeeding Support strategy;
- Lismore Family Support Network managed the Bonding with Baby strategy;
- Richmond-Tweed Regional Library managed the Lismore Let’s Read strategy;
- Southern Cross University’s Centre for Children & Young People managed the Parenting Lismore’s Way strategy;
- Northern Rivers (formerly Lismore) Family Day Care managed the Ready Set School strategy;
- Shared Vision Aboriginal Corporation managed the Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy (until September 2007); and
- YWCA NSW managed the Parent Education Activities, Linking with Existing Domestic Violence Activities, Lismore the Child-Friendly City, Early Childhood and Family Sector Training and the Widjabul Early Childhood Strategy (from October 2007).

However, over 65 other local organisations also contributed towards planning and/or implementing the activities of these 11 strategies.

As shown below, all Lismore CfC site-level and strategy-level activities were overseen by YWCA NSW (as the Facilitating Partner) and guided by a Community Consultative Committee, which included senior members from a broad range of government and non-government organisations working with young children and/or families within the Lismore community, the regional FaHCSIA representative and the project, regional and state managers from YWCA NSW.
Southern Cross University’s Centre for Children and Young People was appointed as the Local Evaluator for the Lismore CfC site, with responsibility to develop, implement and report on a comprehensive site-level evaluation plan. This local evaluation plan incorporated data collected at a community-level, as well as data collected from only the children, families or workers having engaged with each strategy.

The community-level evaluation comprised two initial- & followup surveys which gathered data from local families and early childhood and family support workers in relation to the site’s 16 goals outlined above. The followup surveys also included additional questions to explore awareness of and response to the Lismore CfC and its strategies. These surveys were completed by over 90% of eligible families and about a quarter of eligible workers.

The strategy-specific evaluation involved data routinely-collected by those implementing each CfC activity, regarding who participated, how they felt about it and, where relevant, any benefits perceived or demonstrated. Most of the tools used to collect this information were developed collaboratively between the local evaluator and CfC strategy staff. The strategy-specific data ultimately collected and/or available for inclusion in this report vary considerably across CfC strategies and activities, sometimes resulting in less data, and less consistent data, than would have been optimal.

Throughout this report, statistical tests are used to explore the meaningfulness of any response changes between the initial and followup surveys and of any differences between sub-groups of those surveyed. The relatively small sample sizes available for some of these comparisons limit the power of this evaluation to detect what may have been “real” changes or differences. Consequently, what appear to be differences may necessarily be described as “similar”. In order to minimise the likelihood of missing potentially meaningful differences, results in this report are narratively described as higher-lower or more-less when associated statistical testing produced significance (p) values of less than 0.2. Where such descriptive statements are made, relevant statistical test results and their p values (significance) presented in brackets, with grey text indicating currently non-significant but potentially meaningful differences. With all p values (which can range between 0 and 1), smaller numbers indicate larger differences between the groups being compared.

Key Evaluation Findings

CfC Planning & Implementation
The information presented in the Background section demonstrates that the Lismore CfC has succeeded in engaging a broad diversity of local organisations with planning and implementing a comprehensive array of activities to support the development and wellbeing of local children aged 0-5 years. These CfC activities provided local families, early childhood and family support workers with a wide range of information, educational and recreational opportunities, resources and professional support services.
**CfC Awareness & Familiarity**

The community-level data presented in the Evaluation Findings: CfC Awareness & Familiarity section indicate that almost all local families and responding workers had heard of either the Lismore CfC and/or one or more of its strategies. Workers were more likely than families to have heard of the overall CfC, with three-quarters of workers but only one-quarter of families having heard of Lismore Communities for Children.

Families were most aware of Breastfeeding Support, Lismore Let’s Read, Lismore Child-Friendly City and Bonding With Baby, with one-third to one-half of families aware of these strategies. However, most families felt only a little familiar with these strategies and few reported having had any contact with them, except for Lismore Let’s Read, which had reached about one-fifth of families in the Lismore CfC site. Compared against the strategy-specific data about the number of families engaging with each strategy’s activities, it seems likely that many of those engaging with CfC activities may have been unaware the activity was associated with the Lismore CfC or the CfC strategy delivering it. This could have resulted in artificially low community-level awareness figures for the Lismore CfC and its strategies.

Families’ awareness of each Lismore CfC strategy varied considerably in relation to a number of characteristics, including: their suburb, length of time there, family structure, ethnicity, home type and ownership, car ownership, private health insurance status and the respondent’s age, gender, work status and education level. Overall, there was some consistency indicating that fathers and families including younger parents, parents without post-school qualifications, only non-Aboriginal Australian parents and living in Central, South and North Lismore may be generally less aware of the Lismore CfC and many of its strategies.

Responding workers were most likely to have heard of the Ready Set School, Early Childhood & Family Sector Training, Parenting Education Activities, Breastfeeding Support and Lismore Let’s Read strategies, with at least half the workers having heard of each of them. Workers reported being most familiar with the overall CfC and with the Ready Set School, Bonding With Baby and Early Childhood & Family Sector Training strategies. Among those aware of each CfC component, workers reported having had the most contact with the overall CfC and the Ready Set School and Early Childhood & Family Sector Training strategies, with one-half to two-thirds of workers having had some contact and a quarter to a third having had lots of contact with these CfC components.

**CfC Contact, Satisfaction & Perceived Usefulness**

The data presented throughout the Evaluation Findings: Contact, Satisfaction & Perceived Usefulness sections demonstrate that most of these CfC activities have successfully engaged all local early childhood care and education services, many other local child and family support services, many local early childhood and family support workers and hundreds of local families with young children. As a major employment and commercial centre within the Northern Rivers region, the Lismore CfC activities have also reached many families and workers based beyond the CfC site boundaries.

Where feedback data were available, workers and families engaging with the Lismore CfC strategies and activities reported being generally very satisfied with the information, resources, services or other supports they had received. They also reported having found the CfC activities personally helpful and/or useful and perceived that they had been at least a little helpful for other local families, children and/or early childhood workers. However, there is room for improvement in the nature and consistency of participant information collected for some of the CfC activities, in terms of their numbers and relevant socio-demographic characteristics, as well as their feedback about the nature and impact of the CfC activities. This is of particular relevance for many of the one-off information, recreational and educational events aimed at local families and/or workers.
Progress Towards Achieving CfC Goals

As summarised below, the data presented throughout the Evaluation Findings: Progress Towards Achieving CfC Goals section indicate that the Lismore CfC has made progress in relation to most of its 16 main goals.

Goal 1.1 - Increasing rates of breastfeeding until babies are 6-months olds
- The Breastfeeding Support strategy has enhanced the duration of breastfeeding for babies whose mothers attended its appointment clinic, with 76% of these babies being breastfed until at least six-months old, compared to only 55% of babies across the Lismore CfC site;
- There has, however, been no change in the rates or duration of breastfeeding at the community-level; but
- Fewer women may be choosing not to breastfeed their babies, or to discontinue before they reach six-months old.

Goal 1.2 - Improving support for families having difficulties bonding with their babies
- The Bonding With Baby strategy has provided many local families experiencing bonding difficulties with a wide range of useful direct support activities;
- The Bonding With Baby strategy has enhanced the capacity of many other local child and family services to identify and provide appropriate support and/or referrals to their clients who may be experiencing bonding difficulties; and
- The Bonding With Baby strategy has reduced the severity of postnatal depression among the women attending its support group, as well as enhancing their understanding about it and their strategies for managing it.

Goal 1.3 - Increasing rates of parents reading to their very young children
- The Lismore Let’s Read strategy may have increased rates of reading with very young children among the families receiving LLR book bags;
- There may have been a community-level increase in the number of days per week families reading with their very young children;
- There may have been a community-level reduction in the proportion of very young children never or rarely read to; and
- The Lismore Let’s Read strategy may have increased rates of reading with other young children (aged 1-5 years) among the families receiving LLR book bags, although there were no changes in community reading rates with these older children.

Goal 2.1 - Improving families’ access to strong informal support networks
- The Lismore CfC has provided local families with many additional opportunities for informal networking with other families;
- Families participating in Lismore CfC networking opportunities did interact with each other, including with families not previously known to them, thereby enhancing and/or strengthening families’ social networks; but
- There has been no community-level change in families’ need for or ability to access informal support with their parenting, with almost all families expressing a need for informal support and about a third wanting more than they were currently getting.

Goal 2.2 - Improving families’ confidence & ability about raising their young children
- The Lismore CfC has provided local families with many opportunities to enhance their parenting capacity and confidence;
- The Parenting Education Activities strategy may have helped families attending the events to feel more confident and/or capable in their parenting; and
- At the community-level, families reported an increased acknowledgment about the difficulty of being consistent when disciplining children.
**Goal 2.3 - Increasing the number of fathers actively involved in their children’s lives**
- The Lismore CfC has provided some opportunities to enhance fathers’ involvement in their children’s lives, although most have struggled to engage many fathers; and
- There may have been some community-level increase in fathers’ involvement in a variety of child-care activities.

**Goal 2.4 - Reducing the number of children exposed to domestic violence**
- No data were collected or available in relation to this goal.

**Goals 3.1 & 3.2 - Increasing children’s age-appropriate social & communication skills by age 5**
- The Ready Set School strategy improved the language, motor skill, emotional and behavioural development of children receiving support through its specialist activities;
- There were community-level reductions in families’ concern about the frequency of their children’s tantrums; and
- There may have been a community-level reduction in families’ concern about their children’s temperaments and sociability.

**Goal 3.3 - Improving access to support for children & families with additional needs**
- The Lismore CfC has provided a broad range of support services to children and families experiencing a diversity of additional needs;
- There was little community-level change in families’ ability to access needed professional supports, with about a quarter reporting unmet needs overall but half or more having difficulty accessing sufficient occasional day care, speech therapy and supported playgroups;
- There was an increase in overall community-level need for professional support, with over three-quarters of families expressing some level of need;
- There were increases in community-level family needs for GPs and early childhood centres but fewer needs for long & occasional day care, speech therapy & early intervention services;
- There was little change in the main barriers preventing families from accessing required professional support services, with practical factors (e.g., availability, cost, distance, eligibility and parking) contributing to the vast majority of unmet needs in both surveys.

**Goal 3.4 - Increasing rates of children accessing 1+ year of EC education before starting school**
- There was no community-level change in the proportion of children attending EC education services in the year before school, with almost all children doing so in both surveys; but
- The Ready Set School strategy has provided fee relief and/or transport assistance to ensure some children’s ability to attend a preschool program before school.

**Goal 3.5 - Supporting early childhood workers to provide the best possible care**
- The Lismore CfC has provided local early childhood services, and their workers, with a wide range of resources, professional development and direct support activities aimed at strengthening their capacity and confidence in supporting the children in their care;
- Workers attending professional development events offered through the Lismore CfC and its strategies reported considerable improvements in their capacity and/or confidence in relation to a variety of issues relevant to their work with young children;
- There was little change in community-level worker knowledge, skills and confidence in their ability to support young children and their families, with most workers generally quiet confident across a variety of areas; but
- There may, however, have been some improvement in community-level family satisfaction with some of the day care services supported by the Lismore CfC, despite declines in families’ satisfaction with dental and early childhood health services.
GOAL 4.1 - IMPROVING LISMORE’S ABILITY TO DEMONSTRATE IT IS ACCEPTING, DIVERSE & CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY

- there has been little community-level change in families’ satisfaction with their suburb or the overall Lismore CfC site as a place to raise young children, with moderate levels of satisfaction across a variety of aspects;
- families did, however, perceive some improvements in basic community infrastructure and child play areas and less concern about their children playing outside unsupervised;
- workers perceived improvements in community safety and child entertainment; and
- families living in Lismore East and Heights were happier with the availability of public toilets and play areas for their young children and felt safer than families living in other suburbs within the Lismore CfC site.

GOAL 4.2 - IMPROVING THE COORDINATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

- professional development events delivered through various CfC strategies have provided useful networking opportunities across a variety of local child and family support services;
- the Lismore CfC and its strategies have facilitated awareness, communication and referrals between services, both into and out of CfC activities; but
- there has been little community-level change in family or worker perceptions regarding service coordination, with mixed feelings expressed by both groups in both survey rounds.

GOAL 5.1 - IMPROVING THE EQUITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN’S HEALTH & WELLBEING OUTCOMES

- the Lismore CfC has delivered a number of activities with a focus on enhancing Aboriginal children’s outcomes and attempted to include Aboriginal children and families in all CfC strategies and activities;
- there has been an improvement in how well the overall professional support needs of Aboriginal families are being met, with only 13% of Aboriginal families reporting unmet needs in the followup survey compared to 42% reporting them in the initial survey;
- at the community-level, Aboriginal families expressed mostly similar levels as non-Aboriginal families in relation to the need for professional support services, although Aboriginal families did report higher levels of need for early intervention, speech therapy and occupational therapy services, in both surveys;
- there were community-level improvements in how well Aboriginal families’ professional support needs were met - overall and, specifically, in relation to family day care, occasional day care, early intervention services and speech therapy;
- there were also community-level improvements in Aboriginal families’ satisfaction with the professional support they had received - in relation to family day care, dental services, GPs and early intervention services;
- there has been no community-level change in Aboriginal families’ levels of concern about their children’s development, temperament and physical wellbeing, with similar low level concerns expressed as for non-Aboriginal families in both surveys; and
- there has also been no change in the proportion of preschool-aged Aboriginal children attending an early childhood care or education service, with very high attendance rates similar to those among non-Aboriginal families in both surveys.

GOAL 5.2 - IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING OF BUNDJALUNG CULTURE AMONG CHILDREN & THEIR CARERS

- there may have been some community-level improvement in workers’ understanding about local Aboriginal culture, although there remains considerable, self-identified room for further improvements; but
- there has been no community-level change in workers’ or families’ perceptions about the level understanding about local Aboriginal culture in the broader community, with fairly limited understanding perceived by both groups in both surveys.
Recommendations for the Future

In light of the findings and limitations discussed above, the following recommendations are offered towards further enhancing the reach and impact of the Lismore CfC’s ongoing implementation.

Promotion of the CfC

1) There remains scope for improved community-level promotion of the Lismore CfC and its strategies: progress is being made with regard to basic awareness of most CfC strategies but familiarity levels remain low, especially among families. Many local families and workers engaging with the various CfC strategies and activities appear not to realise that the resources they are accessing and the events they are attending are provided by the CfC.

2) Particular consideration should be given to raising CfC awareness levels among relevant community sub-groups, tailored to the gaps currently identified for each CfC strategy, but also with a general focus on younger parents, fathers, parents without post-school qualifications, families living in Central, South and North Lismore and families recently arrived in the CfC site.

Strategy Planning & Implementation

3) The Lismore CfC should continue: its strategies and activities are generally being well-received and perceived as useful by the families and workers accessing them but there remains scope for further improvements in access and outcomes for local children, families and workers.

4) Another round of general community consultations could enhance how well future CfC activities reach the full diversity of children, families and workers within the Lismore CfC site and how well they contribute towards further progress in relation to the site’s goals. This may require some revising of the Lismore CfC site’s goals, in order to ensure they are best-aligned with current community needs and priorities.

5) Targeted consultations with the sub-groups of families and workers less engaged with current CfC activities could enhance their participation in future CfC activities and enhance the Lismore CfC’s capacity to meet their needs.

6) The Lismore CfC and its strategies should continue their focus on the needs and inclusion of Aboriginal children and families: they can be encouraged by improvements shown to date but there remains room to further improve equity of access and outcomes.

7) There remains scope to engage more families in identifying and proposing solutions for the remaining child and family issues.

Evaluation Practices

8) While the CfC strategies are evidently engaging and satisfying many people, improving the routine collection of consistent, basic participant information, especially in relation to one-off activities, would enable future CfC activities to better target and address the needs of the full diversity of children, families and workers within the CfC site. This could be facilitated by developing some templates, for example: a ‘Participant Feedback’ form to be completed by attendees at CfC events, an ‘Event Overview’ form to be completed by strategy workers after each CfC event and a ‘Resource Log’ form to be completed as workers distribute CfC resources.

9) The overall Lismore CfC site Evaluation Plan will need revisiting and revising to reflect any changes in the site’s goals, strategies and/or activities arising as a result of the proposed consultation processes. Existing goals that remain would also benefit from a review to enhance their alignment with targets realistically achievable by the CfC strategies and activities.

10) Consideration should be given to gathering more evaluation data directly from children participating in Lismore CfC activities. This would enhance understanding about children’s experiences with & perspectives about the CfC’s strategies & activities. More child-inclusive planning and/or evaluation approaches could also contribute to enhancing children’s outcomes, especially in relation to their self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem.