

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Aboriginal Unit



About SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Our name

Ngara Nanga Mai (pronounced **ingara nanga my**) is an Eora (Sydney) name which means listen and dream. It reflects our vision and direction for our past, present and future work with Aboriginal children, families and communities.

Our logo

The logo for SDN Ngara Nanga Mai was inspired by the artwork of Gangari artist Kathryn Dodd Farrawell entitled *The Creation Snake*, which was developed as a result of many interactions with SDN Aboriginal staff, Aboriginal children, students and families in our programs.

The large white circles in the logo represent the gathering of people and communities to transfer knowledge, communicate and encourage two-way learning.

The white lines between the circles display this two-way learning process, with knowledge passed between people and communities. Aboriginal people in the community are depicted through the small white inner circles.

The orange lines in the logo represent the tracks to learning, and the transferring and passing of knowledge between generations.

Our mission

The continuing mission of SDN Ngara Nanga Mai is to:

- provide high-quality early childhood education and care for Aboriginal children and their families
- manage services and programs, and develop resources with Aboriginal children and families
- listen to Aboriginal peoples about the inequalities they face and the ways to address these.

Our work

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai provides:

- community development
- training and employment support
- mentoring and leadership for SDN's Aboriginal staff
- encouragement and resources to enable SDN as a whole to reflect Aboriginal perspectives in all aspects of its work
- assistance for long day care centres and preschools to be more inclusive of Aboriginal children and families
- subsidised fees to enrol Aboriginal children in long day care and preschool, including through Aboriginal Early Childhood Scholarships.

Our message

“ The establishment of Ngara Nanga Mai Aboriginal unit within SDN represents a major step towards reconciliation and a significant move towards acknowledging and bringing Aboriginal early childhood learning and teaching from the margins to the centre of our teaching and learning practices within SDN and the communities we serve. In this regard it is also about elevating the different voices and forms of Indigenous being and knowing in early childhood teaching and learning, and working within the organisation, our SDN community and our broader communities to promote our culture, knowledge, value, and ethics. ”

Sonya Pearce, Inaugural Chairperson, SDN Ngara Nanga Mai Reference Group

“ This is a very exciting opportunity to demonstrate how a well established organisation can offer leadership in areas important to making sure all Australian children get a fair go. We are delighted that the Board and senior management have wholeheartedly committed to our new direction. ”

Deb Mann, Director of SDN Ngara Nanga Mai



Left to right: Deb Mann, Sonya Pearce and Ginie Udy

“ I see our Aboriginal unit, Ngara Nanga Mai, as the next logical step for us to take in thinking through our stated mission of addressing inequalities faced by children. The inequality that Aboriginal peoples experience in health, education and employment is on the public record. SDN is committed to listening more closely to what Aboriginal people themselves have to say about this and what together we can do to progress. I welcome Ngara Nanga Mai and am excited about its potential to shape SDN’s policies and practice. ”

Ginie Udy, CEO, SDN Children’s Services

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai's programs

Tracks in Learning

Tracks in Learning is a federally funded program which supports Aboriginal peoples to attain units of competency in TAFE courses, or to participate in more informal learning opportunities. Course content is adapted based on feedback provided by Aboriginal community members.

Child care is provided both onsite and in more formal settings. Transport and tutoring, assistance finding practical work experience and ultimately employment, are other components of the program.



Left to right: Bronwyn Penrith, Koolyn Gordon, Kowana Welsh and Deb Mann

In 2008 SDN won a national Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) award for the Advancement of Indigenous Women for Tracks in Learning. SDN was recognised for developing an innovative educational and employment program for Aboriginal women.

Testimonials from Aboriginal students studying our Tracks in Learning TAFE Certificate III

“ I chose to do my Certificate III as I love working with children and thought it would be a good way to extend my knowledge. I like the idea of the course being at Alexandria Park Community Centre, as it's a more relaxed atmosphere and you can voice your opinions without being embarrassed. Work placement went well, as long as you followed your plans and did a little bit of work each night. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys working with children. ”

Nicole Ella

“ I work in a preschool and have wanted to do [the Certificate III course] for a while, so I can update my qualifications. I really enjoyed my week at SDN Newtown. All the staff, especially Leanne, were very helpful. ”

Jodie Davies

“ I enjoyed all of it! Seeing what it's like to work in a centre, and as my daughter attends, I was able to see what she gets up to during the day and what she likes doing while at SDN Newtown. ”

Angie Cameron



Aboriginal playgroups

Ngara Nanga Mai runs three Aboriginal playgroups for families with children in Glebe, Marrickville and Redfern. Qualified Early Childhood Teachers, Child Care Educators and Aboriginal mentors provide weekly support to families through play based groups three hours a week during school time to promote learning for their children. In 2009–10 the program assisted 47 children. The groups are funded by SDN donors and the NSW Government.



Aboriginal Early Literacy Project

In June 2010 the NSW Government awarded SDN funding to develop and deliver a literacy program for Aboriginal children. The Aboriginal Early Literacy Project involves working with families from the Inner West, Northern and South East Sydney areas. Ngara Nanga Mai is yarning with Aboriginal families, communities and children to find out what literacy means to them and how they have engaged in literacy programs, so that we can develop culturally appropriate literacy resources that families will use with their children.

Mentoring and leadership

Part of the role of Ngara Nanga Mai and the members of the Reference Group is to mentor Aboriginal staff working in SDN centres and programs. The unit also has an important role in communicating contemporary Aboriginal issues and views to the wider SDN Community. They are respected for their leadership and their guidance is appreciated.



Aboriginal Early Childhood Scholarships



SDN has a reputation for welcoming Aboriginal families, through the caring nature and cultural appreciation shown by our staff. In 2007 SDN established Aboriginal Early Childhood Scholarships because it was apparent that many Aboriginal children were not accessing mainstream child care and preschool due to cultural barriers and cost. These scholarships are the only fully funded educational scholarship programs offered to preschool aged Aboriginal children. They cover the cost of attending an SDN Children's Education and Care Centre.

The scholarships were originally funded through a generous donation by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation in 2007. SDN was delighted to extend the program in 2010 thanks to the generosity of many others, including the family and friends of the late Lex McCorquodale and parishioners of the Killara Uniting Church.

The scholarships aim to give Aboriginal children access to high-quality early education to lay the foundation for lifelong learning, and to ensure more Aboriginal children can start school on an equal footing. For information on how to donate, see page 14.

Cultural inclusiveness at SDN

SDN is committed to making our long day care centres, preschools and programs more accessible to Aboriginal children and their families by creating welcoming and inclusive environments and programs. To achieve this we believe staff need to have ongoing cultural awareness opportunities.

We have 63 Aboriginal children from birth to school age enrolled in 15 of our centres. SDN Redfern Children's Education and Care Centre has the largest number of Aboriginal children enrolled. Through Ngara Nanga Mai we are working to involve more Aboriginal children and families at SDN.

SDN is committed to working with Aboriginal elders to allow appropriate consultation, and to ensure community members feel heard when working with our mainstream services. We are encouraging staff to participate in local Aboriginal community events and celebrations.

We aim to employ more Aboriginal staff and we advertise employment vacancies in Aboriginal media sources and agencies.

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai has produced a research paper with recommendations about ways to attract and retain



Aboriginal families in preschools. It provides practical advice to services and can be downloaded from our website at www.sdn.org.au

Our people

Deb Mann MEd *USyd*, BEd (Early Childhood) *Macq*
Director, SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Deb joined SDN in 2002 as the Manager of the Supporting Children with Additional Needs (SCAN) program in South East Sydney. She went on to manage the entire SCAN program and SDN's Aboriginal programs. In 2008 Deb established an award winning early childhood education TAFE course for Aboriginal women. In 2010 she was appointed the Director of SDN Ngara Nanga Mai. Deb has more than 30 years' experience in early childhood. She has been a teacher in preschools, long day care services and schools, and has lectured at TAFE and university in early childhood and education faculties.

In 2007 Deb was honoured with an Early Childhood Australia advocacy award.

Samantha Knight

Aboriginal Projects Coordinator, SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Samantha Knight is a Gubbi Gubbi woman and mother of three. She has been working at SDN Children's Services since 1995, starting as a Child Care Worker at SDN Paddington where she was encouraged to get her Associate Diploma in Children's Services.

Samantha was appointed the Aboriginal Projects Coordinator in 2010. In this role she has gained confidence and skills, enjoying working as part of a team to provide positive early learning opportunities for Aboriginal children and families.

Kowana Welsh

Aboriginal Projects Support Officer,
SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Kowana participated in SDN's Tracks in Learning Playgroup Facilitation course in 2007 and in the same year initiated a young mum's playgroup for Aboriginal women. She undertook a traineeship at SDN Redfern in 2008, which she particularly enjoyed because of the number of Aboriginal families at the centre.

In 2010 she began working for SDN's SCAN program and the Aboriginal programs and was later appointed the Aboriginal Projects Support Officer at Ngara Nanga Mai.

Kowana has won several prestigious NSW TAFE awards following the completion of a Certificate III in Community Services at Petersham College (NSW TAFE). These include the Petersham College Student of the Year 2010 and Petersham College Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the

Year 2010. She also won the Sydney Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Award 2010, and was one of only 10 finalists for the NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Awards.

Ronwyn O'Keefe

Administration Coordinator, SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Ronnie has worked for SDN since 1996, starting as a Child Care Worker. After returning from maternity leave in 2001 she worked part-time as a Special Needs Support Worker. In 2003 she was appointed the Administration Assistant for SDN's SCAN program. After Ngara Nanga Mai was established, Ronnie became the Administration Coordinator.

Tania Lever

Aboriginal Child Care and Community Support Worker

Tania has worked on a casual basis as a Child Care Worker since 2008 and in 2010 joined SDN Ngara Nanga Mai. She has a Diploma in Children's Services and a TAFE Statement of Attainment in Community Work. She has completed a certified TAFE course to become an Aboriginal Education Assistant. She is looking forward to working in a position where her job promotes and strengthens Aboriginal families within their community.



Left to right: Tania Lever, Deb Mann, Samantha Knight and Izelda Sore. Absent: Kowana Welsh and Ronwyn O'Keefe

Izelda Sore

Aboriginal Child Care and Community Support Worker

Izelda is a Yidinjdi woman who has been working at SDN Redfern as an Early Childhood Educator for three years. She is also an artist and has exhibited her work at Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative. She is passionate about the community that she works in and spends much of her time in the community of Redfern working and volunteering through CityCare. Izelda is committed to Ngara Nanga Mai's purpose of working with, respecting and empowering Aboriginal peoples.

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai Reference Group

SDN has established a 12-member Reference Group with representatives from Aboriginal communities in the areas in which we work. The Reference Group provides input, advice and support to SDN Ngara Nanga Mai and is headed by SDN Child and Family Services Board Member, Sonya Pearce.

Members

Sonya Pearce

Chair, SDN Ngara Nanga Mai Reference Group
BEd(Adults) MEd(Adults) AssDipEdu(Aboriginal) UTS

Sonya is an Aboriginal woman from the Goreng Goreng nation of Queensland. She is a Senior Lecturer/Director of Indigenous Programs and teaches Community Management at the University of Technology, Sydney.

In 2007 she was awarded a Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning — sustained and scholarly leadership of courses, teaching and student support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Sonya has also received a UTS Human Rights Award for her work with Aboriginal women tackling violence in Aboriginal communities.

Lyn Stewart Executive Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Sector Advisory Group Inc

Danny Allende Aboriginal Coordinator, Sydney Institute's Yulang Aboriginal Education Training Unit

Delma Davison Field Officer, NSW Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group Inc (NSW AECG Inc)

Kathryn Dodd Farrowell Author/Artist

Steve Cochrane LLB UTS, AdvDiplndLeadership AILC
National Aboriginal Advisor, Mission Australia

Kristy Masella Executive Director, Tranby Aboriginal College

Vivianne Freeman Program Manager, Sydney Metro
Barnardos

Adam Cryer Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family
Community Facilitator, Hornsby Shire Council

Sue Pinkham Aboriginal Project Officer, Northern
Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan

Gary Ella Community Project Officer (Aboriginal),
Randwick City Council

Ann Cribb Aboriginal Coordinator, Sydney Institute's
Yulang Aboriginal Education Training Unit

Supporting the work of SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

SDN Ngara Nanga Mai relies on government support and private donations to fund our work. SDN Aboriginal Early Childhood Scholarships and Aboriginal playgroups are funded by private donors.

We currently have 11 Aboriginal children on scholarships, receiving high-quality early education which would otherwise be out of reach. We would like to be able to offer more scholarships but to do so we need the support of generous patrons.

If you would like to support the early education of Aboriginal children, our playgroups and local Aboriginal communities, please donate to SDN Ngara Nanga Mai by calling Debra Morrison, Donor Relations Officer, on (02) 9213 2400 or fill in the form overleaf.

All donations greater than \$2 are tax deductible.

Government support:

- The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, \$145 250 for Tracks in Learning.
- The NSW Government Department of Human Services, Community Services, \$365 000 for the Aboriginal Early Literacy Project and \$46 000 for the Glebe playgroup.



Other supporters include:

- Ms Pamela Pearce
- Jenour Foundation
- The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
- The late Lex McCorquodale and parishioners of the Killara Uniting Church.

I wish to donate to SDN Ngara Nanga Mai

Name

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Address

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Postcode

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Email

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Phone ()

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I wish to make a donation of:

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$200

Other(please insert amount)

cash cheque money order

OR debit my credit card

Visa Mastercard

Diners Amex

Card number

Expiry date

Cardholder's name

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Signature

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For purposes of tax deductibility please make payment to:

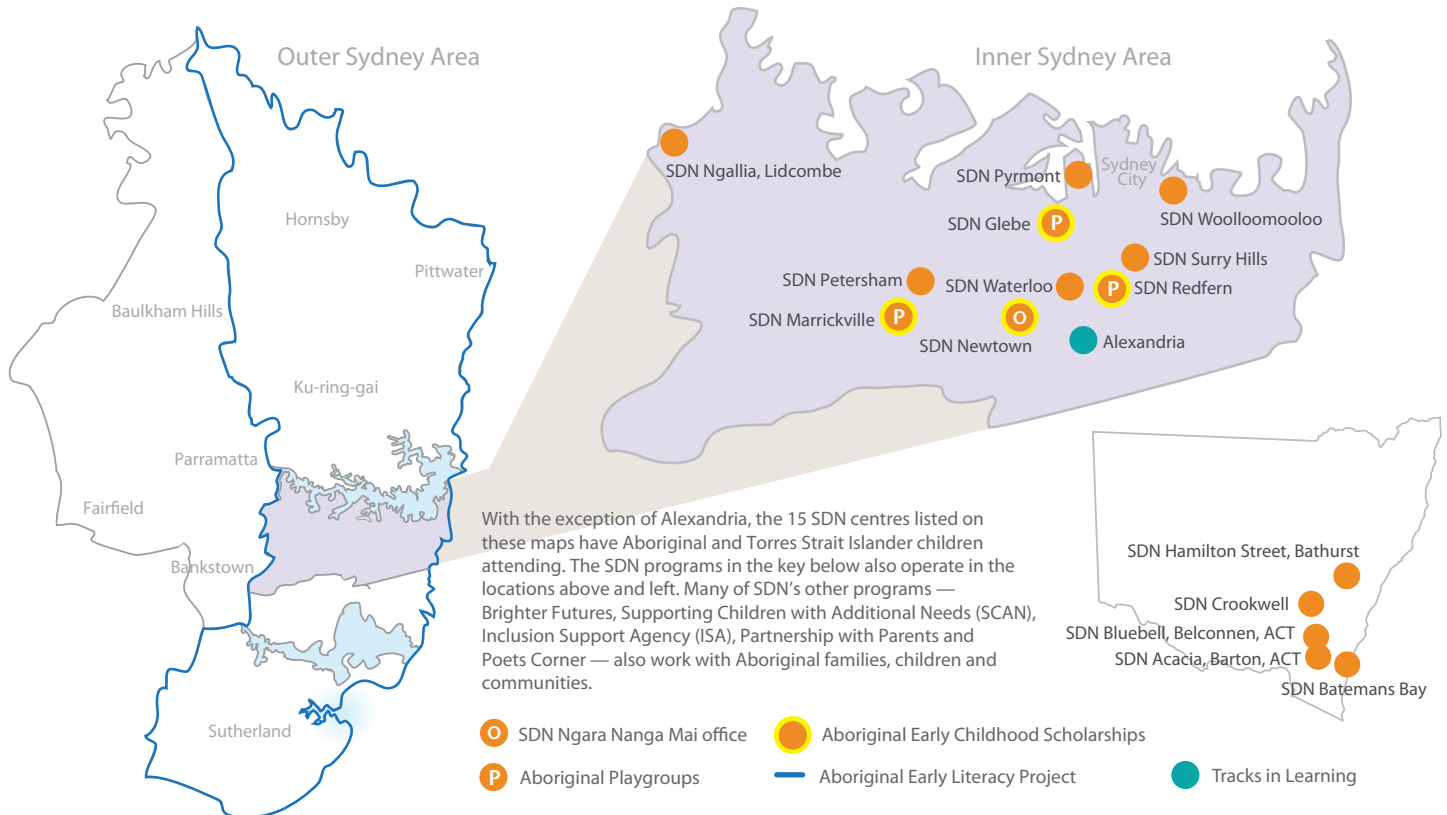
SDN Child and Family Services

PO Box 654, Broadway, NSW 2007

(02) 9213 2400

Where SDN Ngarra Nanga Mai works

SDN Ngarra Nanga Mai acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, who are the traditional owners of the land where the office is located. We acknowledge and respect our elders and leaders who fought to ensure that we have rights previously denied. We will work as tirelessly as they did to continue and expand education, employment and life opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.





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Children's Services

educating and caring for our children

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