

Contact Children's Mobile

A time to come together on Community

There is always a lot of talk around the end of year that Christmas is coming. When you work within Indigenous communities, Contact's experiences suggest that Christmas can be a time for many things. When we ask families and children at the Contact Children's Mobile venues about Christmas, they tell us Christmas is a time for family and a time for rest (as it's so hot!).

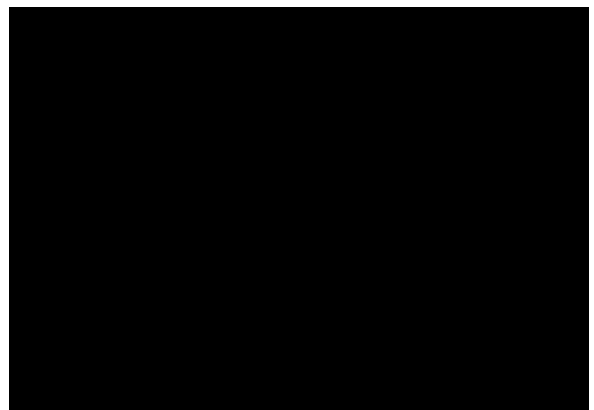
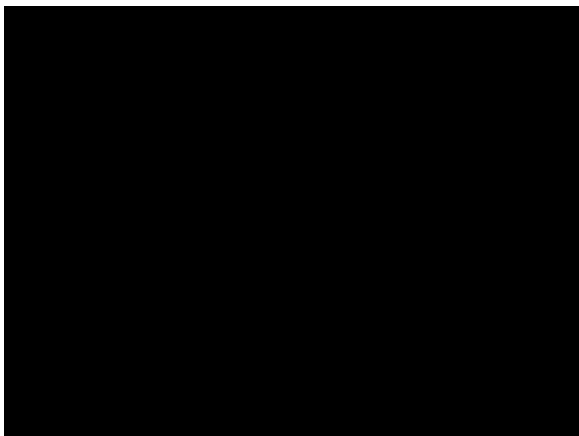
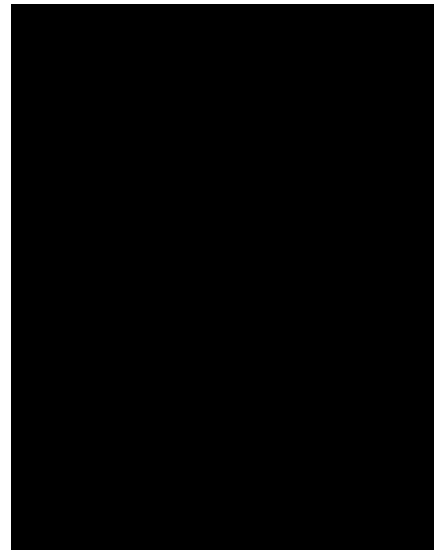
Taking strength that family is the key to any success for the communities that we work in, the Contact Children's Mobile (CCM) does not focus on gift giving as a Christmas gesture, but the gift of time to share with the families and children we work with in sharing and exchanging our ways.

The CCM team talked about their Christmas experiences as a time for coming together for a special meal with family; and Soapy Bore families' indicated similar expectations. Collaboratively, we discussed with the adult family and community participants that we could partake in a meal of a traditional cook-up to mark the end of year celebrations and to enjoy the coming together as one culture with each other.

The ladies at our Soapy Bore sessions soon decided what they could contribute to the cook-up and plans were underway for time to enjoy each other's company and express the deeply felt connections that Soapy Bore community and the CCM team have built together over time.

Together the whole community wandered down to the banks of the Sandover River with some people catching goanna on the way and showing us how they know goanna is about.

Together we were all soon at work gathering wood and kindling for a fire.



With the fire started and kangaroo tails on, we soon had some building blocks out and the children played in small groups with the familiar early childhood focussed resources and exhibited how they can transform learning from one environment to another.

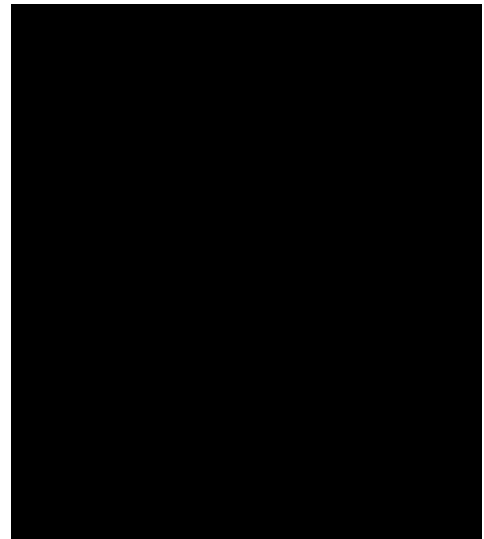
Soon the kangaroo tails were charred and the fur removed and wrapped in foil and placed underground with many hot coals, the goanna was placed on top.

Together with the adults we dug holes in the river bed and explored different sand, some moist and some dry, we used leaves to determine little to big and used beanbags to refine aiming and throwing. Playdough, puzzles and books were also added to the day as the children moved through all the activities.

After two hours of spontaneous activities, the goanna was ready. Enjoyed by all and the play began again with some building from twigs, sticks and small stones. Then the kangaroo was ready.

A delicious serving of kangaroo tail and vegies was enjoyed by all.

Soapy Bore community members expressed that “Contact is welcome anytime to our community and to work with our children as you have helped them to become confident kids to go to school, we can see that you respect us and want good things for us. We want you to come back again and again.”



From a personal perspective, the CCM was deeply moved by the acceptance and inclusion of the team from the community. There was an enormous sense of ease and unity to just enjoy each other’s company.

Contact Children’s Mobile is honoured to have been welcomed and accepted by the community of Soapy Bore. The Contact team approach has proved to be so positive and we firmly believe that the competencies we see the children take on and be ready for school, will stand them strong if reciprocal and respectful positive relationships continue into the child’s schooling life.

To reflect on what Contact Children’s Mobile have worked hard to achieve throughout the year, one thing stands out, that we have given the adults of the community the knowledge back that they indeed facilitate the success of their children. School is every child’s right and when programs such as Contact’s engage families with naturally found resources, they are empowered to know that learning occurs at all times, learning occurs at home (camp) and that their child is confident and capable of navigating school expectations when they have a strong sense of self and believe “They Can Become”.

Gail McMurdo on behalf of Contact Children’s Mobile [7/12/2017]