

K.I.C.S News

May — July 2017

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Playgroup Leader

Carmel Coutts

Playgroup Support Assistant

Colin Coutts

Administration

Royelene Hill

Hours: Tues. Wed. Thurs. 8 - 2pm

Field Team 2

Playgroup Leader

Liz O'Brien

Playgroup Support Assistant

Jamie O'Brien

[Find us on Facebook](#)

KICS is turning 30!

During this year and into 2018 we will showcase this event through the pages of our newsletters.



In the beginning the charter of KICS went far beyond setting up 'education through play' playgroups: it also encompassed reporting back to the Remote Area Service Committee RASC on matters relating to education and health as well as the NT Department of Roads on road conditions. Remote area services in the NT met with RASC about every three months. The above photo is of our very first KICS team John and Kate King with children Amaranth and Nathan, and Simon and Wendy Strutt of the Remote Area Frontier Service RAFS based in Mt Isa (who covered an area of outback Qld and the Barkly Tableland). A playgroup service from Alice Springs also visited the Barkly region during this time.



KICS and the Smile-A-Mile playgroup service based in Darwin set up together for a playgroup at Adelaide River in 1988.



Minyerri 1988 - 1989



KICS out and about - Jasper Gorge



KICS playgroup Dunmarra 1988-1989

K.I.C.S.

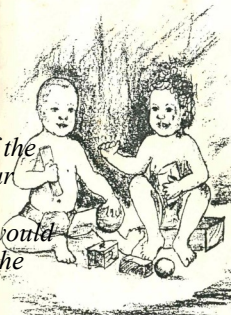
is a new mobile service based at Katherine School of the Air.

Kate and John King are the co-ordinators who are responsible to a Board of Management which is sponsored by I.C.P.A. (Isolated Children's Parent's Association.) and federally funded by the Department of Community Services and Health.

KATHERINE
ISOLATED CHILDREN'S SERVICE
(sponsored by the Katherine I.C.P.A.)

JOHN AND KATE KING
Contact us via School of the Air
P.O. Box 531, Ph. (089) 721833
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Katherine Isolated Children's Services.



We have lived in the Top End for many years, living at Howard Springs. Our two children, Amaranth (4) and Nathan (1) will be travelling with us in our Toyota Troop Carrier and caravan throughout the Katherine region.

John has worked throughout the Territory for 20 years in the surveying field.

Kate has worked in the area of Territory Education for 5 years and Home Duties for 4 years.

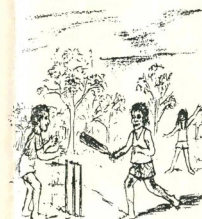
'What can we do for you?'

Our vehicle will transport

- **toys
- **books
- **information
- **equipment
- **us

from place to place, setting up a program where it is needed or wanted.

Our first job is to find out what needs and ideas the people in the bush have about how their kids can benefit from the service.



The first information brochure gives details of the KICS service with lovely art work depicting our first coordinators John & Kate King and their children Amaranth & Nathan. This brochure would have been circulated via Katherine School of the Air and posted to pastoral properties and indigenous communities.

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The Advent of KICS by Patricia Elliott

It all started with a member of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Katherine Branch Mrs Pauline Rayner of Ballongilly Station. Pauline became aware of funding as a result of a review of existing services to similar services in other states e.g. Mount Isa Queensland and from memory, Broken Hill in NSW. The source of the funding was a one off grant from the Federal Government to set up a similar service in the NT. Pauline followed this opportunity up and involved Katherine School of the Air and the Principal at the time Chris James and the NT ICPA.

The KSA Associates (parents' and teacher's group) held their meetings via two way radio from the KSA studio out to geographically isolated families enrolled with the school. Following some discussions at 'On Air' meetings a face to face meeting was held at MacFarlane Primary School for those involved /or interested where the pros and cons were discussed in detail. There was some opposition to the proposal, not the concept but the possibility that the grant and establishment of a separate service would detract from any funding to the early childhood funding to KSA. Some KSA parents felt that the service provided by the school was adequate.

Katherine Branch of the ICPA was then involved in the discussion and research into the success and benefits this service could provide to all remote area children, including those on communities where education departmental schools operated. At the outcome, it was elected that the grant be applied for. There was urgency attached to the need to apply within a specific time frame so decisions became definitive and final. A committee was formed with a number of those interested, committed people from the most remote regions.

What followed was advertising for people who were qualified and interested in implementing a program and prepared to live a nomadic lifestyle in some of the remote areas of the NT. It was also required that they be dedicated in providing quality educational opportunity to children of pre-school age.

This has expanded over the years to a service predominately for the littlies (0-12 years) but inclusive of families in remote areas. Kate and John King were the first couple chosen through a very thorough interview process.



Remote support

A Katherine based support service for isolated families held its inaugural board meeting at the School of the Air last Thursday morning.

Under the new Commonwealth funded Katherine Isolated Childrens Services program, co-ordinators John and Kate King will travel the remote areas of the Territory to provide parent and child support.

The service will be for everyone in remote areas, not just the School of the Air, and will be aimed at children up to the age of four.

"It will mainly be a parent support service that will flow onto the children," the president of the Isolated Childrens' Parents Association, Mrs Pat Elliot, said.

"Initially the role of the co-ordinators will be to find out who is out there and to identify their needs."

It is expected that John and Kate King will travel for two weeks at a time in the fully equipped four wheel drive vehicle and caravan.

The initial cost to establish the service was about \$77,000 and ongoing costs will be about \$65,500 each year.

• The KICS Board. From left:- Kate King, School of the Air principal Chris James, Board chairman Dean Curtis, Pat Elliot, Margaret Vigants, Marjorie Jones and John King.



Thank You Pauline Rayner, Katherine Branch ICPA and the first KICS Board Members: Kate and John King, Patricia Elliott, Chris James & Marj Jones KSA, Dean Curtis Salvation Army and Margaret Vigants for your initiative and contribution to the fledgling KICS!

Once established, the service was named the Katherine Isolated Children's Service (KICS). KSA and ICPA launched a competition through the school for a child to design the logo. As it happened, it was Patricia Elliott's grand-daughter, 4 year old Caroline Elliott from Birrimba Station who was at that time living at Victoria River Downs Station (VRD) who won the competition. This very lovely picture depicting Caroline's family is now in its 30th year of showcasing KICS.

Hello Everyone

As I write this, cool breezes, dry weather and the promise of more to come is truly refreshing after a bountiful wet season. With the school holidays now underway, the NT is gearing up for Agricultural Shows up and down the track as keen exhibitors are turning out their produce, homemade goodies and grooming stock for the big trip to town. No doubt the kids are anticipating dodgem cars and Show bags! I hope you all manage some family time together during this time.

Our KICS Field Teams Carmel & Col and Liz & Jamie have had a busy Term 2 out and about doing what they do so very well... having super fun with the kids (education disguised as fun!). Mandy and I have been just as busy with office bound productivity! Please see Mandy's and the Team reports in this issue.

With the KICS 30th Anniversary looming and our newsletter being an appropriate medium to pass on the KICS story/ history I am pleased to report we have had a good response so far from some of our old Teams and Board Members with their stories and photo memories. Thank you to these people! We are hopeful for more to come. Recently, we received a visit from Elaine and John Edwards who have the honoured distinction of being our second KICS Team (1989—1991). They made a special trip down from Darwin to present KICS with archival treasure. John and Elaine have been keepers of memorabilia during their working life which was fortunate for KICS. You would be aware of the 1998 Australia Day flood that devastated Katherine. KICS was not spared! Kate and John King, our very first and honoured KICS Team (1987—1989) also joined us at the office to catch up with John and Elaine. Mandy and I were privileged in sharing this time with them over a coffee as old times reverberated and bounced off the walls. Thank you Elaine, John, Kate and John for the giving of your time and your enthusiasm in helping to celebrate and document this auspicious occasion. Please see below, Elaine & John's article for this newsletter.

We have been contemplating putting a book together to celebrate our 30th and now as our archival resources swell I think we have a fair chance of achieving this. Elaine & John's lengthy overview/report of their time with KICS will be published in this book. So, for anyone out there who would like to contribute with their KICS story, feedback, comments and photos we would love to hear from you.

Cheers from us all... Royelene

Friends in the Bush

Memories!

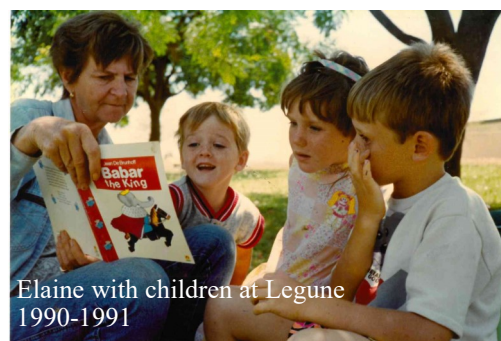
Thank You Elaine & John for the great legacy you helped to establish as the 2nd KICS Team/coordinators!

There might be a few still out there who would remember John and Elaine as the second co-ordinators of KICS in 1989-1991. You may be in some of our pictures either as a little person or a Mom, Dad, station-hand or even a governess, cook or teacher. When the KICS team arrived in those old days everybody who could come, came out to play. Visitors were few and far between. Your delightful Newsletter shows play groups much the same as ours were and in much the same places. The Teams are now able to deliver a different type of service more suited to the times of better communication and travel. We would bet it is still the **BEST** job anyone could ever have but we suspect the teams are not as tired as we were at the end of the day. Hope to see some of you over the next year or so when we come to Katherine to 'bother' our family there and play with the grandkids.

John and Elaine Edwards—Darwin



KICS on the road 1989—1990



Elaine with children at Legune
1990-1991

Read Oct 22/90
"Copy"

Dear John and Elaine,
Thank you
very much for coming to
the
Barkly Bush Sports with
all
your good things to do.
we enjoyed going
around to all the different
stations and hope to
see you again some time.

Yours sincerely
The Barkly Bush
kids
per Reggie
Brunette Downs



•John and Elaine Edwards hand over running of the Katherine Isolated Children's Service to new Coordinators Yve Weinberg and John Naylor.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to KATHERINE ISOLATED CHILDRENS SERVICE 16th October 1990

I hereby present my final Chairman's Report.

This report will be read in my absence due to my family's relocation to Melbourne where I have taken up a new position as Schools Community Development Officer with the Monterey Network of Schools in Frankston.

As Chairman of the K.I.C.S. Board of Management, I have witnessed the Service's growth from birth through infancy under the interim sponsorship of The Salvation Army; through its childhood under the sponsorship of I.C.P.A. Kath. Branch; to young adulthood, with the Service now standing in its own right under its own full incorporation.

The growth process has been painful at times (as can be expected when real growth takes place), but it has also been rewarding to watch the attendant development. My involvement in the process has been personally rewarding and fulfilling.

In this last period under report, the Service has obtained its new transport rig, written the Services constitution, passed through a transition stage of administration (including development of a new Board of Management), gained its own Incorporation, and all the while increased the numbers of people it serves.

I place on record my appreciation for the ICPA and its work, (including its sponsorship of KICS), and for our Co-ordinators with their ability and commitment.

Until now, the Service has been in the hands of good sponsors.

And now the Service moves on in its own name.

The future looks great for a Service much needed in an area underserved.

I personally have appreciated the opportunity of involvement with the Service & the people it serves, and my feelings at present are quite mixed.

Until we meet again, Cheers!

Dean Curtis, Chairman.

New job is no child's play

New Coordinators of the Katherine Isolated Children's Service, Yve Weinberg and John Naylor, farwelled their predecessors in a special gathering at the Salvation Army Community Centre this week.

Elaine and John Edwards have operated the service for the past two years but are moving on to allow ex-teachers Yve and John to take over.

The aim of the KICS service is to support isolated families by providing support to parents as well as playgroups and information on education, health and development.

The KICS service caters to 400 children from 75 stations and communities over an area of about 400,000 square kilometres.

Yve and John spent 1988 and 1989 working in Katherine and the following year down south, but have come back this year to run the service.

Plans for KICS first field trip of the year are under way which will see the service's mobile unit head for the Hodgson River region.

**The KICS
service caters to
400 children
from 75 stations
and
communities**

Another field trip will be held in May bringing playgroups to children across the Katherine region.

Wayne's
FASHION IMPORTERS

**KIDS
DENIM
SALE**

IRRESISTIBLE
stylish denim
with lace or embroidery
for a touch of class

IRRESISTIBLE PRICES

Dresses \$9
Sjirts \$10
Jeans \$12

Katherine Terrace
opp. Commonwealth Bank

Working for 'kicks', was one of Kate and John King's favourite sayings when they worked for KICS.

Kate an early childhood teacher and John a surveyor were the first KICS co-ordinators and with their children Amaranth 4 and Nathan 1 they headed bush in April 1988 on a reconnaissance / playgroup run finding and chatting with families for their input into what the new Service should look like. Many hours of conversation took place sitting in kitchens talking to lonely mums about kids and just about anything: due to the isolation the social component was welcomed by the families. Kate and John promoted KICS and liaised with similar new services out of Alice Springs and Darwin (Smile-A-Mile), the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Katherine Branch, Katherine School of the Air (KSA) and early childhood agencies. At the onset of Kate and John taking on the KICS job, Simon and Wendy Strutt from the Remote Area Frontier Services (RAFS) based in Mount Isa acted as their 'mentors'. During the first 7 months Kate and John surveyed and mapped the geographical isolated areas from Tennant Creek to Adelaide River and from the Queensland border to the WA border to establish a service area for KICS. They visited stations, communities, road houses, small towns, road and mining camps: anywhere there were people! On approaching a possible new venue, a good indicator was to check out the clothes line for nappies! Attending annual bush events, shows, races and campdrafts was a good opportunity to gauge interest and promote the service.

The first KICS office was in the staff room at KSA which was a busy spot with teachers coming and going. The next move was to the old Memorial Hall on the Victoria Highway (now gone). During this time the Salvation Army became the managing body along with an elected Board from the ranks of ICPA. From there they moved into the Daisy Angus Centre (now gone) and then eventually their base and office was set up at the new Salvation Army building in Katherine East. The mobile office was wherever Kate and John camped for the night! There were no laptops or mobile phones just pen and paper, a map, and VJY the flying doctor and two way radio communication base in Darwin. The KSA early morning two way radio sked was their communication tool to let 'everyone listening' know where they were going to be that day. Bush telegraph played its part as well.

Bush mechanics and bush skills came into play from time to time for Kate and John. Following fence lines with a rough map and a station manager's directions, they were always hopeful that the road wouldn't be too rough on the caravan they towed behind their 4WD. With many roads to navigate and travel and flat out on the bitumen highways at 80kmph due to the weight of the truck and van it always took forever to get anywhere. After driving the Murrarji track from Top Springs to the Stuart Highway it took Kate a week to clean all of the dust out of the van. After that experience, windows, doors and anywhere else dust was likely to get in was taped up. On another trip, somewhere down the Duncan and supposedly on a short cut to Riveren and other stations in the region John recalls the remoteness and being held up by camels on the road. It was a Sunday and John tried to radio in via VJY to *Macca's Australia All Over* on ABC radio. Unfortunately the radio reception dropped out and John regretted that he didn't get the opportunity to tell the rest of Australia (and the world) who most likely would have been amazed at what they as KICS were trying to do. It was definitely a lifestyle job, a family affair!

Due to the vast distances throughout the KICS regions the service could only visit each venue three times a year, pending weather and road conditions. Some families saw this as an opportunity to travel great distances themselves to join in on KICS playgroups. When out in the field, Sunday was Kate and John's day of rest: they would find a quiet camping spot and spend the day with domestics, washing, vehicle checks and depending on the camp site they would swim, walk and bring out the toy box and books and have their own personal playgroup. Amaranth loved being the teacher and Nathan's favourite word was 'cow'! It was also the only day Kate didn't make play dough!

Continued next page:

As quoted by Kate and John:

'It was an adventure as each day brought something different, there were routines however, whilst out bush, or in town. There was never a dull moment, always someone wanting something, telling you something or you trying to access information. Emails were only beginning to take traction. The phone and snail mail were still the main means of contact. Interacting with the very strong and experienced women of the ICPA was always daunting, at the time!'

After 18 months of taking KICS to geographically isolated families in the top end of the NT Kate and John decided that it was time to hand over the keys to the office and vehicle to the newly appointed team / coordinators Elaine and John Edwards.

Kate and John stayed on in Katherine, another daughter Tamarah arrived in 1990. John moved into managing public housing and then onto Parks and Wildlife. Kate went back to teaching and later went back to KICS in a two year funded position Remote Aboriginal Mobile Jobs Education and Training (RAMJET). Other positions in education followed with Sunrise Health, Katherine West Health board and the Northern Territory Library.

Working for *kicks*, was what they told people when asked what they did. And it probably looked that way to onlookers back then as Kate and John sat under a shady tree on the Keep River having lunch or attending a cocktail evening as guests of the NT Administrator at Government House in Darwin!

Thank You Kate & John for sharing these wonderful memories and for setting up KICS and getting it on the road. A great achievement, you are a part of the legacy!

Kate and John will be producing a book KICS will produce as an archival record to celebrate the 30th Anniversary.

John's full report published in a

On the road with KICS : photos from the King family collection .



A word from Mandy...

The year is already half way gone and the teams have had access to most places now except Numbulwar and Ngukurr but there are planned visits for next term's Itinerary. We are very pleased to welcome new families to the KICS mobile playgroup experience at Delamere, Nicolson, Calvert Hills and Bullo River!

The KICS teams have been travelling well with no major incidents to the vehicles except new tyres a couple of times already! Col had an unfortunate fall and injured his foot but only a weeks' worth of playgroups needed to be cancelled; I'm so pleased that they're back on the road and wish Col a speedy recovery.

We received \$25K from the Prime Minister & Cabinet through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy specifically for toys and resources. It has been lovely to see big boxes of new toys coming into the service to keep our resources relevant, interesting and safe for the children participating in KICS playgroups.

I am in the process of planning our itinerary for term 3, we have a few invitational events such as Campdrafts and Ladies Days on the agenda but please let me know if there are more! The earlier I know about your planned events the easier it is to fit into the KICS Itinerary as we visited 73 venues last year for a total of 235 playgroups!

On Tuesday 6th June Elaine and John Edwards visited the office to personally hand over their archives of KICS memorabilia, photos and papers from the beginning of KICS; they were the second KICS team on the road after Kate and John King, who also dropped in for a brief visit. The memories of both teams are invaluable as we lead up to the 30th anniversary of KICS next year. I was very interested to see Elaine and John's itineraries and numbers of children attending as they were often on the road for more than a month at a time and facilitated playgroups six times a week!

Please send us your memories of KICS visits so we can include them in our newsletters and our exciting still-in-the-planning-stage event next year!

Amanda Tootell
KICS Coordinator



Jilkminggan



L to R Royelene Hill, John & Kate King, Elaine & John Edwards



Mata-



Dagaragu - R



L-Bulman

2017

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G
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r
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Pigeon Hole



Broadmere



Moolooloo



Larrizona



Field Teams reporting...

Team 1 Carmel & Col

A lot of Firsts for our Second Time Round

Well Term 2 is nearly over and what a lot of firsts we have done so far this year, first time down to Calvert Hill Station for Archie's first playgroup, first time down the Duncan Road, first time to Bullo River for Cooper's first experience with KICS and first- and hopefully last- time I have fallen off the Troopie setting the tent up. One thing that hasn't changed is the smiling faces when KICS roll in to a station or community.

We have only seen one Station family we know from 2014 so far this year but have met many more who have come on board since our last time doing KICS and experienced the same amount of hospitality we did last time. It has been good going back into Communities and seeing the little people from 2014 who have grown up a bit but are still enjoying the KICS experience.

The new toys we found in the toy room that have been purchased this year have been well received by everyone and are going down a treat with all the kids and parents that come to playgroup. We are already well into programming for Term 3 and can't wait to roll it out after the school holidays.

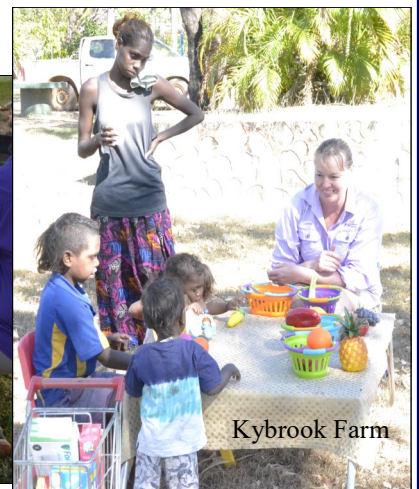
Enjoy the holidays and we will see you all in Term 3! *Carmel & Col*



Amanbidgi



Calvert Hills



Kybrook Farm

Team 2 Liz & Jamie

We have thoroughly enjoyed Term 2 visits to stations and communities and seeing little faces light up with the arrival of our KICS van which we have loaded with new outdoor toys for your enjoyment. We have been fortunate to have visited El Questro this term and attended the Daly Waters Camp Draft which was lots of fun.

The importance of connecting with likeminded people in the right positions to guarantee having a good attendance for our playgroups, especially on our far destinations, is always appreciated. The enjoyment in revisiting stations (again thank you for the hospitality provided of a room/campsite, meal and a cold beer), and local communities for the knowledge of their community and its history is appreciated.

We would also like to thank the Community Elders for giving us permission to camp on the more inaccessible water holes. The bush ambiance, night sky and abundance of barra, cherrabin and redclaw is always a welcoming addition to the end of the day! See you soon! *Liz & Jamie*



Bulman



Campbell Springs resident 'Jingles' 95 + joined in!



El Questro



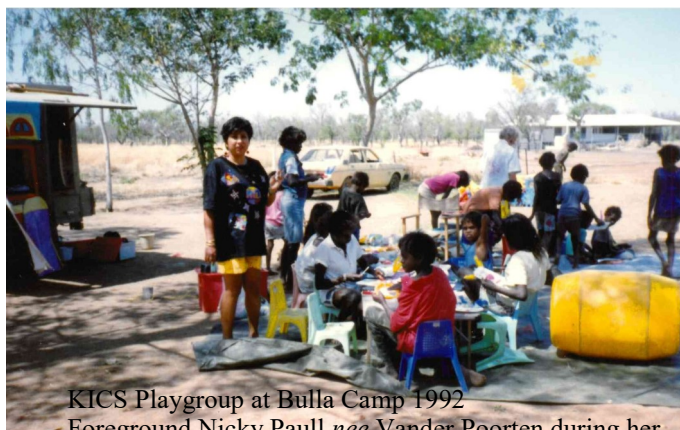
Way back in 1991, I was the teacher at Bulla Camp School. During my two years there, without a doubt, the highlight of our year was the visits by KICS. It was during these visits that I met John Naylor and Yve Weinberg, the loveliest people and it was a welcome respite to being solo and alone in a remote area.

I was privileged and fortunate to take over from them as the KICS Team with my then partner Peter Stark. Camping under the canopy of millions of stars, driving down remote highways and corners of the outback, witnessing spectacular and often rarely seen natural beauty and experiencing the most generous hospitality from station folk – how lucky we were!

Best of all however, was feeling like Santa Claus by bringing a few hours of joy to the lives of isolated children. Congratulations KICS on your 30th Anniversary. Both as a recipient and service provider of this wonderful program, I can guarantee it is indeed worth continuing for at least 30 more years. Well done!



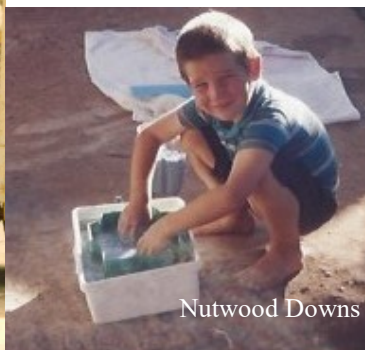
L- R Peter Stark / Nicky Paull nee Vander Poorten / Bubbles Segal KICS Board / Yve Weinberg / John Naylor



KICS Playgroup at Bulla Camp 1992
Foreground Nicky Paull nee Vander Poorten during her time as the Bulla Camp teacher. Yve Weinberg KICS in background.



Bulla Camp



Nutwood Downs about 1996



Thank You Nicky & Peter, Yve & John, Bubbles, Monique & Kelly for your commitment to KICS!

On our facebook site from Monique Gorham accompanied by photo centre below: Kelly Pollock Mt Go Go and Monique Gorham (aka Neek & Kel) the first female KICS Team) made some fantastic memories at KICS. *'It wasn't a job, it was an adventure'*. (Kelly Pollock nee Lemon & Monique Gorham were with KICS in 2011).



Jilkmिंगgan 2011



Monique & Kelly



Limbunya 2011

Memories!

Katherine Flood January 1998

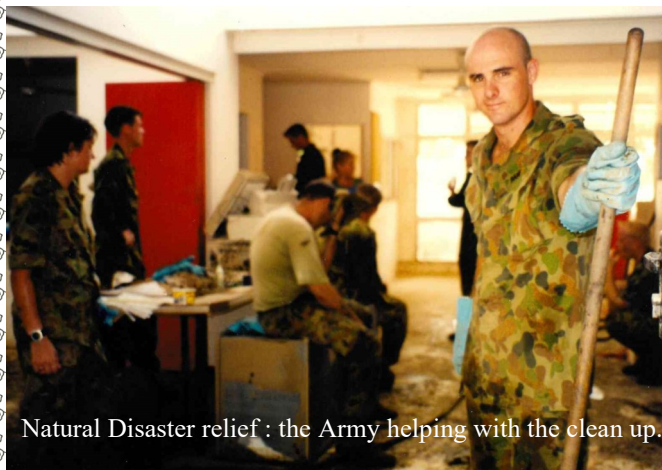


The aftermath of the 1998 flood: KICS office at the Daisy Angus Centre.

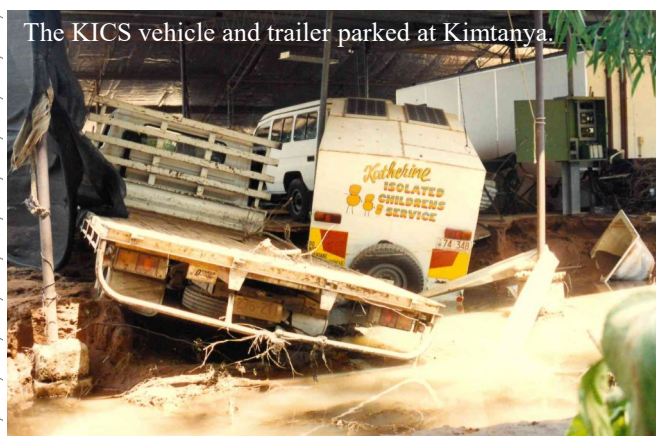
Thank You Donelle and Team for your commitment to KICS and for going way beyond the call of duty with the flood clean up!



Donelle Steele KICS Team / Coordinator 1996 - 1998 in background.



Natural Disaster relief : the Army helping with the clean up.



The KICS vehicle and trailer parked at Kimtanya.

Katherine Isolated Childrens Service

KEEPING UP WITH K.I.C.S.

Well K.I.C.S. (Katherine Isolated Children's Service) has a new team, Peta and Danny Romeyn, so here's a brief bit about us and an update on K.I.C.S.

Danny is a builder by trade and originates from Gosford, NSW, but since then has spent 12 years travelling and working his way around Australia. The travelling finally seemed to finish when he moved to Maleny, QLD, where he stayed put for a few years. However when Katherine flooded last year he decided to move up here to help rebuild the town, and more importantly, meet his wife, ME!

I'm originally from the Gold Coast, Queensland although thankfully it's been a long time since I've lived there, it's no longer my cup of tea. I completed a Business degree in '93, and then in '94 I moved to WA where I drove a mobile food van around Perth. Thankfully I came to my senses and remembered I wanted to be a teacher so I went back to school (Edith Cowan University) and gained my early childhood teaching qualification. There were not many jobs in WA so when I was offered a pre-school position in Katherine I was here quick as a flash.

A little too quick in fact, if I had been a bit slower I would have missed the flood, as it was I arrived, two days before the Australia Day floods. I was fortunate however, as even though my unit was flooded I only had my dog and two bags of gear to my name as everything else was still in transit.

When Danny and I met he was doing building work out in remote Aboriginal communities and I was teaching in town, neither of us was pleased with this arrangement. So when I heard about the K.I.C.S. job I thought 'that's made for us', and now, eight months later here we are.

We have a big, beautiful office, lots of sunlight and our friendly answering machine, which acts as our secretary when we're out bush, which is often.

In one round we see a total of 35 stations and Aboriginal communities, about two thirds of our venues are Aboriginal, we only see 6 places where there is mix of both Aboriginal and white Australian children. In the past K.I.C.S. has only managed 3 rounds per year, Danny and I have set ourselves the goal of completing 4 rounds with the possibility of a smaller 5th round, depending on weather and time. We have just finished our second round for the year, and are grateful to sleep in our own bed for a change. For the month of June Danny and I spent a total of 24 days and nights out, of our 6 days off we spent only 3 of those in town.

K.I.C.S. is well set up with a Toyota Troopy Landcruiser towing a large trailer that carries all of the kids' equipment, camping gear and a fridge. The car is set up like a camper van in the back with cupboards, draws and a freezer, it even has a shower connected to the motor so we get to have hot showers; the top of the car pops up providing us with our bed. It's a great set up, but I wouldn't like to do this job with anybody but Danny, as it's very close living quarters.

The weather up here is glorious as usual; the dry has been superb so fair, with beautiful cool (and sometimes cold) nights and mornings. It makes it really easy to pick the tourists in town as they're walking around in singlets and shorts saying how lovely and warm it is, while the locals are dressed in jeans and jumpers to fend off the cold!

Danny and I feel privileged to be doing a job that gives so much to so many children and parents and also allows us so much freedom, privacy and new experiences.

Cheers.....Peta Romeyn



1999 Dan, Peta and Mac ready to hit the KICS trail.

Peta's story continues overleaf:

Memories!

Starting out with K.I.C.S in 1999 was an eye opening experience. We met with one of the Board Members, signed our contracts and then were handed two sets of keys - one for the office and one for the car. With that we had our introduction to K.I.C.S!!

I recall sitting at one of the two desks in the old Daisy Angus Centre office, opening draws and flicking through almost bare filing cabinets (thanks to the 1998 flood), thinking to myself: 'I have no idea what we are doing! I had told Dan I would do K.I.C.S for 3 years and then I planned to go back to classroom teaching ... however, it took 3 years to even feel like we knew what we were doing.

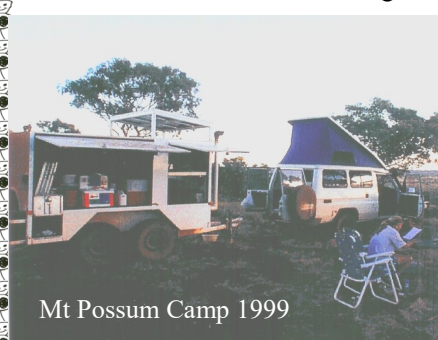
Each round of playgroups involved going to places I could barely even pronounce, meeting wonderful bush folk and finding camping spots. We truly had no idea what we were doing, but somehow we blundered our way through with the support and unending hospitality of innumerable bush families.

By the time 3 years had passed I was totally in love with my job (I actually found it hard to believe we were paid to bring so much joy to so many kids and families), so there was no way I wanted to go back to boring old classroom teaching! That was the beginning of a wonderful life experience with K.I.C.S that continued for 15 years in total, with my 3 kid's early days filled with playgroups, the office and Mrs Hill as a surrogate Granma.

I, for one, loved every minute of my life with K.I.C.S and I would return in a heartbeat if circumstances ever allowed it.

Much love to you all,
Peta Romeyn

Thank You Peta and Dan you are very much a part of the KICS story with 15 years of service, achievements and memories!



Mt Possum Camp 1999



Newry 2003



KICS Fun Day Katherine 2011



Kiana 2003



Timber Creek 2009



The Governor General Her Excellency
Ms Quentin Bryce visited KICS in 2010



Lajamanu 2003



Pigeon Hole



In 2013 I was a governess at Carlton Hill station, halfway though the year I met and befriended the wild and wonderful woman that is Kate Corney. We often joked/dreamed about doing KICS when 'we grew up', so when the job came up for 2015 we applied and couldn't contain our excitement. The phone interview wasn't a highlight of my life, I was chasing a toddler with a fragrant nappy and I was speaking nervous words that were a similar quality to the nappy's contents. We lucked out and somehow they gave us the job.

Working for KICS was so much more than I expected it to be, it was by far the most rewarding job I have ever had, it was also probably the most challenging. The hours upon hours spent in the car on rubbish roads, the nights spent under attack of mosquitoes in sweaty swags, the long afternoons in the middle of nowhere being harassed by flies and the constant washing of toys. Luckily this was all counteracted by the contagious excitement of the kids, the warm welcomes from the families, the incredible landscapes and the entertaining/obscure car conversations that kept us sane. Special mention goes to the 'desert island game' that I tortured Kate with over hundred of kilometres, sorry Kate! # survival of the fittest.

Some of the most memorable moments include the time a buffalo turned up to playgroup, the time Kate left her entire bag at home, having my sister and my best friend join us for a week each and getting to share the KICS world with them, watching Kate lose slime fights, having mad bull yarns with miniature cowboys, both nodding and listening to directions only to discover that neither of us were actually listening, being bombarded by kids while we were a little worse for wear at camp drafts and being called Mr much more often than Kate but her reassuring me it was just because I looked a lot like Miss Trunchbull.

I can make play dough in my sleep, I still do sometimes. I can (basically) reverse a trailer. I know that the universal language of the Northern Territory is fishing. I can have a shower in half a cup of water. I can dye your kid green in less than a minute. I have tried every kind of pie from every kind of establishment from Tennant Creek to Borroloola. I've taken a selfie with a buffalo, camel and donkey. I can clean up glittery play dough dog vomit without gagging. I'm surprisingly capable in a crisis. I can pack up a camp in under five minutes. I can sniff out air conditioning or an ice machine from 500 meters away. I still hate craft and I have a crocodile complex. I have my year with KICS to thank for all of this.

I still think, daily, of all the communities that embraced us and all the station families who fed and housed us (even after we dyed their children). The beautiful people in the isolated corners of the Northern Territory made my year with KICS: the enthusiasm of their kids is unmatched anywhere else I have been.

Happy birthday KICS, I can't imagine how big the cake would have to be to be shared with everyone involved - maybe pies from a servo would be a more sensible option?

Georgia Leatham

Thank You Georgia & Kate for your dedication to KICS!



Georgia / Urapunga 2015



2015 / Welcoming new KICS Teams — induction session .
L-R David Bussenschutt / Leith Russell / Carmel & Colin Coutts (Team 1 2014) / Georgia Leatham / Kate Corney

Hello Georgia

Thank you for this wonderful and hilarious report. Now I know just how much fun you and Kate clocked up during that eventful year. I loved your expression and humour! You write so well. Safe to say you probably haven't missed the mossies, flies, toy washing and bathing in a ½ cup of water! My guess is you are missing the servo pies as you mentioned them twice! Your little story will be well received as it graces the pages of a newsletter coming up. It certainly will put smiles on faces and bring back some happy memories for our families past and present. Thank you for fitting this in with your busy uni schedule. Take care and keep in touch!

Kind regards

Royelene (Mrs Hill...whatever!)



The Very Special Birthday List...

May

02/05/2009 Mikala Craig
 05/05/2005 Jessica Schilling
 05/05/2009 Sam Brown
 06/05/2010 Lachlan Rippon
 07/05/2008 Caleb Lanzarin
 07/05/2014 Nixon Craig
 08/05/2013 Matilda Cook
 13/05/2012 Adam Bracey
 16/05/2012 Riley Gatty
 20/05/2015 Jack O'Connor
 24/05/2014 Cambel Elliott
 31/05/2008 Marih Tapp

June

01/06/2012 Darcy Brown
 05/06/2014 Darcy Payne
 09/06/2009 Felicity Brown
 09/06/2008 Rhianna Andrews
 16/06/2016 Roper Millership
 17/06/2013 Flynn Tootell
 17/06/2009 Waynesha Timms
 21/06/2011 Amber Watts
 21/06/2011 William Cook
 21/06/2010 Colt Scott
 23/06/2011 Georgie Murphy
 23/06/2012 Matthias Armstrong
 26/06/2013 Benji Bethel
 28/06/2013 Angus McDonald
 30/06/2007 Clayton Bogucki

July

01/07/2008 Christina Underwood
 02/07/2003 Hayes Cook
 03/07/2014 Clancy Gatty
 03/07/2013 Violet Hill
 09/07/2008 Harrison Skerrett
 09/07/2014 Jed Inglis
 15/07/2008 Maggie Murphy
 18/07/2011 Beau Angel
 19/07/2013 McKenna Blackwood
 19/07/2012 Tia Craig
 21/07/2009 Anton Lanzarin
 26/07/2011 Harry Burke
 26/07/2008 Wyatt McDonald
 30/07/2012 Bo Brock
 30/07/2012 Mac Harries
 31/07/2007 William Brown

Memories!



feedback from you...

I was visiting my daughter and granddaughter at Camfield Station in May when the KICS Team came to spend the day. I just wanted to say what a great visit it was and how special both of the people were. The children were engaged and it was lovely to see. Great program and thank you! *Suzy Dormer*

KICS is an organisation that is very unique in what they provide. Early education is vital and in isolated Australia early childhood learning is often left with the parents. *Christa Schilling*

KICS is heavily relied upon by our remote families to provide a social, intellectual and physical learning environment. Not only does KICS provide a fun, safe, engaging experience for our children, it also encourages our families to come together: in turn having a positive mental health effect on children and parents. *Kerrie Scott Katherine Branch ICPA (Isolated Children's Parents' Association.)*

K.I.C.S is funded through Budget Based Funding (BBF) from the Commonwealth Department of Education and through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) by the Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C).



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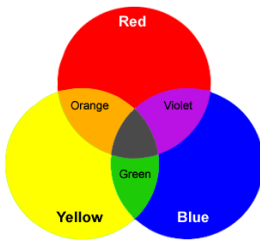
Contact K.I.C.S - 08 8971 0196

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