



Aboriginal elder Major Sumner performs a traditional smoking ceremony to welcome ancestors and purify the new office.



Catching up over a cuppa are Sharon Bruhn (left), who recruits, assesses and trains foster carers, director of accommodation, youth and community services Julia Cranney and program manager for homeless services Joel Hearsch.



Ac.care board member David Glover pours a drink for past board member Jan Malpas at the opening.

# New centre for relationship help

AC.CARE has had a presence in Naracoorte for 10-15 years, but in a prominent new location it's poised to have a greater impact than ever before.

The family services provider is now based in the extensive Smith St premises next to Naracoorte's main roundabout, formerly occupied by First National Real Estate.

The new site was officially opened in front of a large crowd of ac.care staff, health professionals, interest groups and community members last Thursday.

Formerly known as Anglican Community Care, ac.care has been based at several different sites around Naracoorte since first coming to the town more than a decade ago.

Accessed via an entrance off Smith St (not the main door facing the roundabout), the building is much bigger than previous sites and has enough office space to cater for the growing number of services being provided to locals.

They include family support, children's contact services for when parents are separated, helping those with concerns about caring for a new baby, child or teenager, parenting after separation support, men and family relationship counselling, family dispute resolution and dealing with specialised family violence.



Yvonne Hogarth (left) is thanked for making a speech at the opening by ac.care's program manager for administration Pam McPhee.

At the opening, ac.care CEO Rob Foggo said shifting to the prominent 79 Smith St site was a significant step forward.

He said the building was ideally located to be a recognisable part of the community, and was large enough to accommodate all the ac.care services as well as having room for industry partners to provide complementary services.

The office will be open on Tuesdays, with staff also available for appointments on any day, and Mr Foggo said as demand grew the office would be open more often. Ac.care's director of ac-

commodation, youth and community services Julia Cranney described the opening of the building as "a celebration of ac.care's growing connection with the Naracoorte community."

"(It) represents a new beginning for ac.care and the building (which had been vacant for several years after First National moved)."

The new beginning was marked by a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony to welcome ancestors and purify the building.

Ac.care's Julia Cranney said working with other service providers and the community was a key.



"Four Pats and a Shirley" from Naracoorte Red Cross branch serve up morning tea (from left): Pat Gericke, Pat Keatley, Pat Williams, Shirley Roberts (whose middle name is Patricia) and Pat Bourne.

Well-known community volunteer Yvonne Hogarth was asked to address the crowd as one of the town's "poly fillers" who played such an important role in supporting bodies like ac.care.

Mrs Hogarth said people like herself only had to give a little bit to support service providers to make a big difference.

"It seems every week I learn about good samaritan acts by 'poly fillers'," she said.

They helped to "fill the cracks of loneliness, desperation and isolation".

## relationship problems?

ac.care helps local people with relationship problems

- parenting after separation
- children's contact services
- coping when your baby is born
- connecting with your teenager
- families affected by family violence
- family support with home visits
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Aboriginal elder Major Sumner and his sister Elaine Kropinyeri with ac.care CEO Rob Foggo.

## Panel reviews council CEO

FRED SMITH

THE annual performance review of Wattle Range Council chief executive officer Frank Brennan is underway.

Crs Peter Muller and

Michael McCourt asked about the review process at the July meeting.

The mayor Mark Braes said the review had started and six people would be undertaking the task.

The review panel comprised himself, deputy mayor

Cr Rob Dycer, three staff and another elected member chosen by Mr Brennan in consultation with him.

Mr Brennan is one of the most experienced council administration leaders in SA.

After completing tertiary studies in planning in

Adelaide at the SA Institute of Technology, he joined the workforce of the then Millicent District Council in 1980. He was promoted to deputy district manager in 1985 and was appointed district manager three years later.

