Talking Powerfully from the Heart

INTERVIEWS BY
KEN LECHLEITNER
for the Kurruna Mwarre Ingkintja—
Good Spirit Men’s Place
Research Project

“Wurra apa artwuka pmara.
Boy’s and male’s place”
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In partnership with CASSE and Congress looking at ways to develop a best practice Aboriginal good spirit male’s place.
Thank you for the opportunity. I think I’d just like to say this research has been a fantastic direction for all men’s services to go in.

A lot of the men’s services have not been able to work in one direction over many years. Perhaps this might be a way for these services to move on, once we look at the recommendations and hopefully there will be actions by people who are required to action.

There are lots and lots of issues that still need to be resolved, but I think we can all still work together and hopefully come up with a useful outcome for all men, to even encourage all ages to work together, where men can come together and look for common goals.

Hopefully we can encourage specially our young people; to see there are good things out there happening in regards to men’s services.

We have to try and get the organisations and governments not to forget men, we are part of society also, we have to really make sure men aren’t forgotten, but be included in all consultations that take place.

Johnny Liddle
2017
Thank you goes to all the participants in this research and to the Congress and CASSE staff members, along with contracted consultants that guided the development of this research to fruition. I would like to use this opportunity to thank three groups of males from Central Australia. One is all the Aboriginal males that responded to the invitation to participate in a Male Leadership Group. This group of males shaped the direction of where the research should go, not to the bookshelves to gather dust, but create an entity to ensure findings are implemented into becoming outcomes. In thanking this second group of males were the ones in institutional custody participating in Breakthrough Violence Treatment program. These males gave another insight as to the changing of minds and saving lives program that when applying the contents in a culturally appropriate way, resulted with participants developing ownership of their problems, and setting plans to trend away from being violent towards loved ones. Whereas the final group of males, I thank them for their time and willingness to participate in an interview. Their interviews brought to light and to life new found voices for males from Central Australia. These voices from Aboriginal and other Australian males are now coming out of the darkness into the light to share their stories and dreams of shaping what our world would look like and how it could function in providing a service in going forward towards developing males as sound citizens.

Ken Lechleitner 2018
Editor’s Note

The following fourteen interviews have been arranged in line with the approach of the principle researcher Ken Lechleitner where the interviews of the Aboriginal males and non-Aboriginal males have been separated into two chapters. The term ‘other Australians’ has been used throughout the report to describe men in the project who are not Aboriginal. This may be interchangeable with the term ‘non-Aboriginal’, which is used in many contexts. This decision was made in the spirit of the project, promoting inclusivity.

This presentation allows readers to easily distinguish between those voices of Aboriginal experience and those of other Australian males who have worked with Aboriginal males in the region. This collection is therefore presented in a consistent manner to the research findings. As well, this differentiation has been seen as helpful for many of the interview participants agreed to have their interview transcripts published, on the proviso, that they were not identified and readers may lose contextual understanding if this distinction wasn’t evident.

Chapter interviews are ordered by date of interview. The interviews are transcribed in the conversational manner, with interruptions, repetitions and hesitations retained. Where it was deemed necessary to maintain anonymity of participants, editing of names, places or events has occurred.

Interviews were conducted by Ken Lechleitner between 15 September 2016 and 9 February 2017.

Background

In 2014, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) and Creating A Safe, Supportive Environment (CASSE) have undertaken and completed research on a Men’s Shed project known as Kurrun Mwaarre-Ingkintja (Good Spirit Male’s Place). The project aimed to develop a unique Aboriginal Men’s Shed Model, along cultural lines, to empower men to find their voices and live authentically. Men’s Sheds variously refer to organisations which can improve the psycho-social health and emotional well-being of men and offer places of safety, healing, training, cultural revival and more. The project was determined at the community level and with participatory action from the community. The primary Researcher is an Anmatjere and Western Aranda man Ken Lechleitner Pangarte.

Qualitative research interviews with twenty three male participants living in Alice Springs have illuminated critical aspects of men’s experiences. The Aboriginal males talked powerfully from the heart and strongly for the need for a place where they can talk, heal together, and live in two worlds – the traditional/Aboriginal and the post-colonial. They say they have all been victims, witnesses and become perpetrators. Their recognition of the degree to which they have unmet emotional and psychological was striking – an aspect of their experience that seemed unrecognised by the wider public. The men revealed that they hide their feelings that ‘they hurt, they bleed, they have pain’, ‘all suffering’, ‘feel degraded and scorned’, ‘disempowered’, ‘lost’, ‘devalued’ and ‘unrecognised’, seen as ‘violent losers’ and more. With regards to the Men’s Shed, the participants valued having a safe place and space to talk together, where they can ‘straighten up’, ‘explore, grow, get their minds back on recovery’, ‘give them a voice’, ‘share stories’, ‘support each other’ and heal together. One man spoke of ‘dashed hopes’ and how important it is to talk about this dynamic in their lives! The men recognise the importance of an Aboriginal identity first and foremost to secure confidence, ‘strengthen the spirit’, ‘walk tall’ and achieve psychological change. Many spoke of the barriers of racism, of two laws in the courts, of generational trauma, of no education, of not being able to read or write or even speak good English, let alone have skills to cope with life or trade skills enabling employment. They want to learn negotiating skills and skills of self-expression and assertion which will help them in explosive situations defuse domestic violence.

The men have initiated the development of Blokes on Track Aboriginal Corporation (BOTAC) and plan to develop a cultural and safe place for males. They are looking at sites which are out of town. They think this place can provide a cultural place for men who are perpetrators and/or victims of domestic violence, where the men can take refuge and rehabilitate. This Association both represents, and is the result of, the active participation of men in the Kurunna Mwarre project, their ownership of the research process, their increasing capacity empowerment. This is an important and unexpected outcome of the research.

Fourteen men have agreed to have their interviews on public record, most wishing to be de-identified but some wanting to be named.

This publication consists of the voices of these men. The voices are powerful. They need to be heard.

Pamela Nathan

December 2017
...and we’ve got to progress, you know. We’re all Aboriginal men and you know we all come with different powers and ability and experience and you know culture and education now can walk side by side...

Interviewee KMI_03

Date: 4/10/2016

KL: and yep here we go. Well thank you very much, the first question’s about, well have you heard about a men’s shed?

KMI_03: Yeah I’ve heard about men’s shed in general but not in you know, not specifically targeting indigenous

KL: KMI_03: but there, there’s many, many facets of men’s sheds that have been broached and ah produced over the 10 years around Alice Springs

KL: so what would you think about an Aboriginal men’s shed?

KMI_03: Like I said, I said in our previous discussion, I think it’s critical we have a indigenous men’s shed as a way, you know networking and bringing people, our mob together and sit down and discuss things without and it’s [inaudible] but also it gives an opportunity for our mob to talk and network in language and culture and kinship

KL: men. Are you aware that we have a men’s shed in the community of Alice Springs?

KMI_03: Like I said I’ve just heard of one being broadcast last year

KL: yeah

KMI_03: but no I haven’t. I even don’t, I don’t even know where it’s located

KL: yeah okay no worries. Do you know that, okay sorry. So you don’t know where it’s located?

KMI_03: no

KL: so if there was a men’s shed

KMI_03: yep

KL: what kind of programs would you envisage that the men’s shed should run?

KMI_03: Ah it’s, it’s critical I think is health and education, would be the main two and you know looking at confidence and team building like thing, you know like, you know a lot of them probably will have many issues you know and problems, so it’s about getting them to work in a team but also getting them to, to open up and talk about their experiences and, and ah it’s about support and direction

KL: yeah and so a. a men’s shed would work in regards to people coming together and talking?

KMI_03: yeah, that’s what I’m saying yeah that ah, it’s a connection point [inaudible] um, yeah you know, when you look at our men’s mob and our men will go for a drink, they meet up in the pub and talk

KL: and the conversation you could have about is a common illness or a, likes of diabetes yeah?

KMI_03: yeah, yeah like I said, my thing is when you look at the diabetes like being, being an ex-drinker but also ah not knowing about health and education and now in my journey I started to realise that, got to look after oneself to be a role model in the community and this is where we need to be, is ensuring that we know about our health, know about our social background, know about how we can deal with that, but to do it in a team environment and doing it in a neutral place, as you’re talking about – a men’s shed - it would have benefits you know

KL: Yeah

KMI_03: totally appropriate, talkin’ to elders, talkin’ to your mates, talkin’ to your father, brother you know all that sort of connection

KL: yeah.

So that nicely goes into the next question in regards to the empowerment of Aboriginal men.

What do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

KMI_03: well like I was saying you know, it’s self belief within yourself, so it’s about getting yourself right first as an indigenous man

KL: mm

KMI_03: and that’s how and education and, and getting and we gotta get our place back in the community as a leader and as mentor for our younger ones coming through, because we have been disempowered through the government’s policies over the years

KL: yeah

KMI_03: and it’s, it’s how we need to re-address one’s self and get belief back in our self

KL: mm

KMI_03: and be confident to deal with our own issues before we actually move on and start being supportive in the community
men, to continue that empowering them, giving them back in the space of you know, literacy and numeracy you know just bringing that back and it’s education gives them the key. But it gives them a lot of knowledge is power so, all start there and, and, and it’s empowering. That’s the respect that I have that’s the first question is this, ah a Aboriginal Men’s Shed what do you think an Aboriginal Men’s Shed should be? Or what do you think about it? I think it’s the best idea that came to Alice Springs at this stage, being of course that we don’t have any facilities. We have a men’s health centre, but it’s still not good enough to catch up to the women’s program. Even in a court of law for one thing we’re delivering, so it’s got to be culturally appropriate. But my added interest if you look at men’s shed, our men you know and I’m passionate about education and been, been in it for over 30 years now, across health and education and social issues for Aboriginal people, but when you’re in that, education is pretty important and it’s now the education of oneself. You know getting your beliefs back in, in yourself, an educating the right from wrong that I keep talking, but also ensuring that you know we understand the changes in policies that we go through every day. So when you look at education it’s empowerment, it empowers. If you get a bit a education it empowers you. Knowledge is power so, all start there and, and, and it’s understanding the current environment we live in, so you know, you got, understanding policies, understanding changes in direction. This is what we need as men to understand. We have been disempowered but we’ve got to get that back you know? Yeah, Wow, now um, it’s been fantastically informative KMI_03. It’s um, ah, ok, is there anything that you like to sorta kinda say or add to this interview that, that I haven’t covered in these questions? Well like I was saying if you look at a men’s shed, just to say, you know my added interest if you look at a men’s shed, just to you, you know my added interest if you look at a men’s shed, our men you know, due to limited access of an education in the past, might, some might find it hard to, you know understand the information we’re delivering, so it’s got to be culturally appropriate. But also we need to have programs in there that’s manual type you know like, hands on stuff. You know the basic woodwork or leatherworking, leatherworking you know and just in general, man love some good skills. Yeah so it’s think on [inaudible], you know education gives them the key. But it gives them a lot of opportunities, so when you look at manual art and even the basic literacy and numeracy you know just bringing that back and it’s empowering them, giving them back in the space of you know, they don’t, they don’t have to be outside of the [inaudible], they can be involved and progressing forward you know? Yeah, Yeah. KMI_03: and we’ve got to progress, you know we’re all Aboriginal men and you know we all come with different powers and ability and experience and you know culture and education now can walk side by side, but it’s empowering both of them, so you know> Yeah. KMI_03: we need our, we need our Indigenous culture today, for our men, to continue that. Yeah. KMI_03: because there’s powers in our stories, kinship. That’s education there but it’s the mainstream education, walking that fine line mm. KMI_03: but men, [inaudible], tend to help our mob get their confidence back in that field and then it’s about addressing health yeah yeah. KMI_03: and that’s about getting in a good space. KMI_03: and hopefully through, you know, you would talk about those kinds of things - health and education and, and opportunities KMI_04: look that pretty much wraps up our kind of like structured questions KMI_03: yeah. KMI_03: some of the questions you’ve you went into, it overlapped it and KMI_03: mm, mm. KMI_03: so from that perspective you’ve covered all the points that I need to, sort of, that I can ask you one and also thank you for your additional information. So well, we’ll sorta kinda wrap this up now. KMI_03: Yep. So thank you very much for your time and fantastic thank you. KMI_03: thanks for that ay. KMI_03: no worries. Interviewee KMI_04 Date 16/9/2016 KMI_04: we have to negotiate KMI_04: Yes. So yeah that’s negotiation’s really important. So _______ that, I just want to tease out the negotiation. What do we mean by negotiate? KMI_04: negotiation is something, when you want to get something out, information for one thing, ideas in your head, you have to find someone that you can talk to, to negotiate. KMI_04: and if you haven’t got anybody that you can trust, like the program that we’re trying to form now - Men’s Shed - we got nowhere else to turn to. We all gonna be jail birds KMI_04: and just with jealous minds and one things locked up in a cell, pick ain’quit all the time. KMI_04: absolutely. But when you, when you plead guilty you commit yourself so as far as white man’s law is concerned KMI_04: you commit yourself and you’re not innocent any more, once you pleaded guilty KMI_04: even for something you haven’t done KMI_04: or you’re half and half KMI_04: with the other person KMI_04: that’s where the, the whole program in understanding law KMI_04: understanding law, especially we have to leave in a white man’s world now and it’s the white man’s law that locks us up KMI_04: and punishes us KMI_04: very seldom we break our own laws, our own tribal laws KMI_04: because we understand the meaning of it, it’s just one thing with Aboriginal law, you do the wrong thing you get killed for it KMI_04: so there a real understanding of our own Aboriginal law can we just elaborate a bit more on KMI_04: that, how that sorta kinda gudies people? KMI_04: well it’s, we, it’s, it’s a conflict with white man’s law KMI_04: and that’s where we have the big problem KMI_04: We can’t elaborate on our own tribal laws openly KMI_04: and white man don’t understand it KMI_04: is their law that comes foremost for them in the courthouse KMI_04: for one thing and ah, even when you talk to a medical officer somewhere, they can’t elaborate on KMI_04: the Aboriginal sort of concept KMI_04: the problem, to elaborate, get your hands across properly, or your sickness across KMI_04: with empowerment, what do you see as being the empowerment for Aboriginal men? KMI_04: well empowerment maybe the wrong word and what we need is equality
Interview with ______ on the 11th of 10, 2016 and just for your sorta kinda voice reading and just introduce yourself

KL: Hi there, it's okay, no worries. Alright thank you very much for your time this interview

KL: um so the first question is, what do you think about a Men's Shed for Aboriginal men?

KL: I think it's a good idea. I think in all the politics and all the issues in Aboriginal land, the Aboriginal's are the people that are really being edged out and neglected and left behind.

KL: the man is the head of the family, the man is proud of his family in his creation of the family and he provides for the family and I think in, in European society they're the same things but for an Aboriginal person to just have the power and respect and maybe not empower them too much, but bring them up to the equality

KL: of the family, ah the man is proud of his family in his creation of the family and he provides for the family and I think in, in European society they're the same things but for an Aboriginal person to just have the power and respect and

KL: and our younger generation, they grow up in a different world to what we grew up in

KL: and the simplicity of that, it's a time of change, and now with the introduction of the alcohol for one thing, we had alcohol problems

KL: and all and now it's gone up to contraceptives, drugs and things like that

KL: something that we can't elaborate on or debate on

KL: you know it's too far

KL: even for me to

KL: that's really good like that.

KL: and create friendships with other men and understanding and the

KL: never had the chance and even though in the eyes of most people

KL: they're all gone now

KL: to talk about how

KL: that's really good like that.

KL: and our younger tribe, I'd love to see young men come up

KL: and they mightn't be our family tree, you know they stay on

KL: with our elder men, how do our elder men in community feel like

KL: with scorn straight away

KL: we suffer right across the board with everything. You can go

KL: and come away with a satisfied frame of mind. That's my view

KL: contest anything that maybe we don't agree with

KL: and our elder men in community feel like

KL: and we're degraded right from day one

KL: and my dream is I'd like to see us all on that one level I was

KL: and they're not they're just like any, anyone else, they hurt, they

KL: and for one thing, we had alcohol problems

KL: but he's got a good following that man I've always believed in

KL: that you'd like to sorta kinda see how a Men's Shed should operate?

KL: What do you, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

KL: and create friendships with other men and understanding and the

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KL: we suffer right across the board with everything. You can go
KL: yeah, thank you very much. The um, now talk about some of the barriers for empowerment you know what are some of the reasons why Aboriginal men are disempowered?

KL: mm

KMI_05: if you talk at a lower level on the normal everyday standard, id say employment, big employment i guess in this society creates the barrier where if you're not working, you're not making money, if you don't have money you can't provide

KL: yeah

KMI_05: so that's a very hard issue and if you come from an Aboriginal society where you've come from the bush, um that makes it a hell of a bar to you because you, you don't know how to create employment, you don't understand the rules and the regulations, european society, so it's another thing you have to overcome. Not saying that Aboriginal men can't do that, a lot have had to learn, that they have to do to be in this, in the two worlds so, it, it's quite special when you do see men rise to the occasion and, and become part of the two societies

KL: mm

KMI_05: so if you had a place where Aboriginal men could go and it's like their place and there, the respect and even knowledge that can be taught to other men that they may not know and they might be things that they need now but they can learn

KL: yeah, mm alright um um, um thank you very much for your time

KL: you're welcome and thank you very much

KL: thank you

Interviewee KMI_07

KL: thank you for your time and participating in this interview or research for lookin' at a Aboriginal Men's Shed

KMI_07: no worries, Ken

KL: thank you. Now the first question is, what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

KMI_07: ah, an Aboriginal Men's Shed would be a great idea. It'd be a good place for fellas to go and hopefully talk about issues that affect them and as we know around here, right across Australia, there's so many issues that are affecting Aboriginal men

KMI_07: um do you know that, do you know of any Men's Shed in the community?

KL: I know there is a one, a one for white fellas

KMI_07: but I, but I'm not, I've never been there so, I don't know too much about it

KMI_07: yeah, okay, alright, that's what allows us to move onto the next question, which looks at sorts like, Aboriginal men's empowerment. Um, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

KMI_07: um, their culture, where they stand in, or their standing in the community. Um, I suppose how they feel, just look

KL: yeah

KMI_07: what empowers you, it's, it's how we feel about ourselves

KL: mm

KMI_07: it's how we feel, we think everything is against us

KL: yeah

KMI_07: so we're so disempowered

KL: when you look around the community, um who are the empowered men that you see?

KMI_07: ah

KL: or what does an empowered Aboriginal man look like, in, in the, in this community?

KMI_07: ah, well that's, that's, a someone who's proud of their role, proud of their family. I can name a few that I've seen around and, but they're few and far between Ken

KL: yeah

KMI_07: hey. You and I both ah, we got pretty solid families

KL: yeah

KMI_07: and we know it's but not everyone has got that

KL: yeah. Okay we move on to, what are some of the actual barriers that, that you know disempowers Aboriginal men?

KMI_07: I would say probably education

KL: yeah

KMI_07: the mere fact, the colour

KL: yeah

KMI_07: colour plays a very important part

KL: yeah

KMI_07: in, because we're ah, a minority. Oh look I'm a very light skin

KL: yeah

KMI_07: I'm probably classed as a white fella

KL: yeah

KMI_07: and I'm not gonna feel the same

KL: yeah

KMI_07: when I walk into place

KL: yeah

KL: as someone a darker colour

KL: yeah, mm, yeah

KMI_07: ah, in a lot of cases people will, they tend to focus on the white fella, more so

KL: yeah

KMI_07: because it comes down. I think it comes down to, you know that the white fella's a lot better educated

KL: yeah, yeah

KMI_07: um

KL: yeah

KMI_07: just go back to that question again Ken

KL: yeah, so what are the main reasons why Aboriginal men are disempowered?

KMI_07: well it's, the media plays an important part

KL: yeah

KMI_07: because it's always, it's always the black fella that's always in trouble

KL: yeah

KMI_07: and always the perpetrator, well not always but the majority of times he's the perpetrator

KL: yeah

KMI_07: you just go back to history, the riots in America and all those best of sorts of things it's

KL: yeah

KMI_07: if people are suppressed

KL: yeah

KMI_07: they will get their backs against the wall and they will fight and if they can't fight, drugs, alcohol and all those other things are there to assist and they can forget who they are

KL: yeah

KMI_07: and then at the same time that just leads to their ah, their own self esteem and how they feel you know amongst the majority of people, they feel low

KL: thank you very much. We're now moving into the next sorts kinda question is about improving

KL: Aboriginal men's access to programmes that could empower men

KL: um what type of programmes would you think could be one to empower men or help empower men?

KMI_07: I'm not gonna, I was with you, then all of a sudden I sort of flipped over to, 'cause my background

KL: yeah

KMI_07: mm, mm

KL: yeah I just think of what we want to, well let's say Institution. What they want to deliver out to communities, it's all white fellas driven

KL: yeah

KMI_07: so we'll talk about our Cert I, Cert II, Cert III, something I'm very passionate about is the, you're teaching people out there in communities second, english is their second, third, fourth language and ah, you're teaching them white fellas way and all of a sudden these guys are just bombarded by this, and they turn away from it

KL: yeah

KMI_07: all of a sudden you've lost potential people, officers

KL: yeah

KMI_07: out in communities. But all we, all they really need is something to get their confidence going. You don't bring in them with a Cert III, or a Cert II. You give 'em something so they get confident in their role, whether you're talking football or basketball and then, then other little things. So at any time they're caught out, they reach into their bag of tricks and say 'okay that's not working', it's too hot outside or whatever, 'we're going to do this'

* Certificate of Education, from the Vocational Education and Training sector

KMI_07: mm
KL: yeah
KMI_07: that, so they’ve got something, something they can just draw on and through that sort of stuff, it’s in getting them confidence to go on to the next step. You know if you all these or four different languages
KL: yeah
KMI_07: but and the white fellow knows one, so he’s try’n to drum it into you. You try and teach a white fellow the language
KL: yeah
KMI_07: nah, they’ll shy away from that, they’ll just think, oh hang on KL: yeah. So, I s’pose the disempowerment is, is the compliance? So compliance to programmes that you want to engage people in but then you bring out the compliance to it
KL: mm hm
KMI_07: and then, that could you elaborate on that in regards to how that dates
KMI_07: yep, yeah, yeah. You have to adhere to that sort, that programmes. But at the same time it’s really not what is needed, I s’pose. If people, you’ve got to go round
KL: yeah
KMI_07: to get through
KL: so to increase that participation, we need to empower men by allowing them to, you know do it their way
KMI_07: to do it their way. Yeah exactly Ken, do it your way, you know? Then at the same time you walk alongside
KL: yeah
KMI_07: it’s like teaching someone basketball
KL: yeah
KMI_07: don’t just throw me up there with a say ‘right you’ve got to use that game’ Walk alongside them while they’re um
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and give um tips. If they make mistakes, you were too work with them. Not to put um down and say ‘listen, you’re no good’ and I found that it’s, it’s intimidating
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and if you’re intimidated or embarrassed, it’s like the thing where, get someone up in front
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and that can, that can go right across white fellow, black fellow. If you get someone up in front and they, they’re struggling, they’ll never go back to that
KL: yeah, yeah
KMI_07: and make, it’s no one likes to feel
KL: yeah
KMI_07: put down or ashamed
KL: yeah, yep, mm hm. Could a Aboriginal Men’s Shed programme manage it like, you know what kind of like look like if ah, it was in town or outside of town, what do you think, you know what it would look like?
KMI_07: it, that probably I would say it’s like a meeting place where guys you can sit around, talk, under a tree, maybe have a board there
KL: mm
KMI_07: um, where they’re comfortable
KL: yeah
KMI_07: as we know of our mob smoke
KL: yeah
KMI_07: don’t show ‘em in the environment where they’re, they’re thinkin’ about where their next, gonna have their next smoke. I’m right against smoking, but
KL: yeah
KMI_07: if someone is comfortable, hey they can still be involved, have ‘em, direct away, move ‘em in a direction, in a place where the wind’s blowing the other way and not affecting
KMI_07: you know but, um you know, comfortable environment where they can share, have their cups of tea and sit down and maybe something to eat
KL: yeah
KMI_07: people are, it’s just like. I’m comfortable talking to you because I’ve known you for a long time
KL: yeah, yeah
KMI_07: if you’re comfortable
KL: yeah
KMI_07: you will talk and you’ve gotta have that relationship. So it’s the sender and the receiver have got a relationship
KL: mm hm
KMI_07: if I came in here and you asked me to talk
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and, and I thought urgh. We know where, we know where
KL: yeah
KMI_07: we can get over a lot of hurdles
KL: yep
KMI_07: even if there’s issues, we’re not going to talk. If you don’t know someone you’re not going to talk to
KL: yeah, yeah
KMI_07: that these sorts of issues are resolved
KL: yes, yes
KMI_07: or you’re man enough to get over it
KL: yeah
KMI_07: but you’re sitting in your environment where you’re comfortable and you’re made to feel comfortable
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and it’s, you don’t feel like you’re under pressure
KL: yeah
KMI_07: you can have guests speakers come in, talk to the guys, sit down with the fellows and talk to it. It’s not, it’s not a simple language. It’s a language but without all that bullshit
KL: yeah
KMI_07: yeah all that, as we say the high falutin words
KL: yeah
KMI_07: it’s ah, was in a, a bit of a presentation, a person did a presentation. It was about simple language that everyone can understand. A doctor, he could, If you mentioned it to him he’d understand it and vice versa, you should be able to communicate that back to them, you know simple terms. Not talking to kids or anything like that, um it’s easy to understand, we’ve got to be comfortable there
KL: yeah. So the next sorts like um question is more or less of a free-flowing one, where um, we’ve done away with our pretty much semi structured type questioning. Now I just wanna look, is there anything that you’d like to share, what is a men’s, what an Aboriginal Men’s Shed would look like?
KMI_07: look, I think it’s got to be decided by the people who are gonna be part of it. When I was down in ________ I, I working with the Men’s Shed down there and they have, they would be simple. I thought, you know we’ll know fellow and black fellow. Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal involved in it and it’s through, through that, just like they made people welcomed
KL: yeah
KMI_07: they weren’t, it was just men and that’s what I enjoyed about the one down there it was just men coming and they’d have, woodwork benches over there. Just out the back they had a wedding bay, where the guys could just do the welding, um okay they never, they are adhered to safety, safety was a priority and gear had to be put back and you know there was, everyone, guys were trained in, it’s, how to use a chainsaw. Someone could come in, show them how to use a chainsaw and then and out, then over here you might have someone on a lathe
KL: oh wow
KMI_07: and then you’d have, um you know they could be just carving boomerangs
KL: yeah wow
KMI_07: so there’s lots of different things and that’s going back a number of years now. I’m not sure if it still exists
KL: yeah yeah
KMI_07: or if we’ve got people working together on that and things do change and that was, I thought that was a good model. I only went there 2 or 3 times
KL: wow
KMI_07: but it was predominantly set up for white fellow
KL: yeah
KMI_07: but everyone could come and they were coming
KL: mm, wow
KMI_07: there was probably two thirds white fellow and one third
KL: yeah
KMI_07: Aboriginal, but
KL: wow
KMI_07: at the time (inaudible)
KL: that’s fantastic
KMI_07: and that’s what we would like to see
KL: yeah
KMI_07: that people can feel
KL: mm
KMI_07: comfortable and sometimes I feel if you’ve got a mixture, it’s like knowing a mate
KL: yeah
KMI_07: the old buddy system
KL: mm
KMI_07: ‘here Ken, there’s a job going out here”
KL: yeah
KMI_07: “it’s pouring petrol, at the servo”
KL: yeah
KMI_07: “it’s just that word getting around. So sometimes it’s um, it’s always one to have it (inaudible), but ah
KL: yeah
KMI_07: there’s people who can learn from one another
KL: yep
KMI_07: cause there’s a lot of lonely men out there
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and they did go to, and
KL: mm
KMI_07: it’s, it’s back to Clontarf. You know, Clontarf originally started
KL: yeah
KMI_07: off for Aboriginal boys to
KL: yeah
KMI_07: go along. But what was happening, there was a lot of guys not coming to training because they were out with their mates
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and because their mates weren’t allowed to come along.
‘cause they were white kids
KL: yeah
KMI_07: hence, there was not all the numbers that they wanted
KL: yeah
KMI_07: “John, why didn’t you come to training?” “Oh I was out skating or riding with my mate,” “well bring him along.” “He’s not Aboriginal”
KMI_07: “Bring him along”
KL: yes
KMI_07: and I’ve got some great stories on that too really
KL: wow
KMI_07: one was so powerful that, um, we had one young kid who started coming and he was, he was a young fellow who was overweight
KL: yeah
KMI_07: um, who was as white as white
KL: yep
CD: and all these black kids were there
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and yet stop and he put up with a lots of crap from these guys, but he rode the storm and he rode it for many years, till he was one of the leaders
KL: wow
KMI_07: and it was just, his mother, this guy was very withdrawn
KL: yeah
KMI_07: but he developed, He was confident and then over a period of about five or six years
KL: yeah
KMI_07: he drew into a really, he was, he was up working in a butcher shop
KL: yeah
KMI_07: and I couldn’t believe when I first saw that young fellow. So he was. He walked in
KL: both worlds
KMI_07: both (inaudible), both worlds
KL: wow
KMI_07: yeah and that was a ah, a brilliant story and that was, it showed what can happen
KL: that’s the ultimate, it’s like kinda ah, I s’pose that goal that we need to look at is that we’ve got to work towards a framework where we can work together
KMI_07: mm
KL: you know and, and it’s not about colour
KMI_07: no
KL: it’s about the character of the man
KMI_07: mm
KL: and, and then sorta like, designing, developing our community, how we want to live
KMI_07: yeah
KL: wow
KMI_07: yeah
KL: alright look um that’s pretty much concludes our um, structured, semi structured sort of interview and I, I’ll use this opportunity to say thank you very much
KMI_07: mm
KL: for your time and ah, we’ll turn her off
KMI_07: good, no worries
KL: thank you very much and thank you for participating in this interview.

KL: Yep that's fine.

KMI_08: you’re welcome.

KL: now the first question is what do you think about an Aboriginal man?

KMI_08: I reckon it’s a great idea. Like I think it has a lot of good, promising, you know well, it catches my imagination, so I think it’s a great idea.

KL: yep you are aware that there’s a here a, um a Man’s Shied in the community?

KMI_08: not at the moment no not really. I know there’s some little media related matters, there was a Congress there, at the back of the men’s, but I don’t know what, you know there’s not much of a, it’s more of a medical thing you know, which is I don’t know what, it’s not, should it, does it doesn’t sound like a social – addressing social issues.

KL: yes, yep. So we’re going to talk about, a bit about empowerment

KMI_08: empowerment yeah.

KL: what are the um, some of the things that empower Aboriginal men?

KMI_08: identity, a sense of strong identity with bonds firmly extended community relationships but meaningful productive outcomes you know and doing something towards their own sense of control or you know like, free choice and being able to feel in control of your own self really, so by you know, personal empowerment that’s directly related to self reliance, self-sufficiency and you know, today with the way the money system works it can be a bit complex and problematic because. You’re only allowed to develop so much in that way in terms of personal empowerment you know, because if you do to, get away from the controlling model sort of society, through corporate government it can be a bit awkward because, but there’s got to be a balance struck. I just believe in a balance between the two. Between more of a happy-go-lucky compromise or a happy medium between the, the corporate government and the individual, would be the ideal scenario to aim for.

KL: alright so this leaves us on the next question is that, what are some of the barriers to you know, to personal empowerment?

KMI_08: Barriers? Basically the present habits and thinking habits of, you know of behaviour, well addictions, there’s different forms of addiction that, that psycho process psychologically, there’s different you know like, insecurity financial, there’s a whole lot, you know education, lack of understanding, knowledge, communication, there’s a, there are, drugs is a, is an issue, there’s various forms of drugs, alcoholism and so on and so on and so forth. You know it’s all to do with managing fear-based issues in life, because you know we basically the problem of love and fear and we just gotta try to manage the balance between it, you know a healthy balance of voice of sound mind, good heat between love and fear but help that those are really suffering mental health issues, with managing their fear, insecurity and to personally empower the conquer those, than your inner demons know like, your inner fears

KL: now what would say some of the programs would look like in, that could empower Aboriginal men?

KMI_08: I wouldn’t be able to answer that question.

KL: Yep that’s fine.

KMI_08: because that’s more of a professional thing to address, but yeah it’s ah, that would have to come from...
their protection around their own people and I think that, that’s a shame that we’ve gotten to this point, but I totally understand why we’re at this point in time.

KL: yeah, mm

KMI_09: and I think that Aboriginal men taking control of this, of this whole process and this vision of Ken’s, of yours, I think it is a major step forward because

KL: yeah

KMI_09: once we start believing as Aboriginal men that we can influence our own lives and our family’s lives, well we can start moving forward in a positive way. But that victim mentality in us creates the biggest barriers for Aboriginal men, which then creates barriers for all our families and our family members and our children and everybody that’s around us. As soon as we can start believing that we have power and that we can access love and respect, well then we can move forward in ways that people have never ever seen before

KL: yeah, well thank you very much

KMI_09: the other thing too, just quickly

KL: yeah

KMI_09: I think that government systems and western systems, don’t allow us to be able to move forward in the ways that we do, so what I think that, although I’ve talked about Aboriginal men and how we sort of sit within ourselves, I think that western systems have a really, really big responsibility to start respecting Aboriginal people and start to be a bit more flexible and bit more sort of acknowledging of our ideas and our solutions on how to move forward, because too many places I go to, it’s always this top down approach where white men ways are always sitting on top of Aboriginal ways sitting and I think that’s wrong and I think it’s disrespectful and, it’s sort of like we both have roles in this. Aboriginal men have a role in this in free ourselves, but the system also has to be flexible enough and going enough to give us space and room to come up with solutions from our own selves

KL: yeah, mm, yeo was that the next question, look is there anything that you that you want to add because that sort of completes our structured questions

KMI_09: mm hm

KL: so is there anything that you know, that you see from a, you know an Aboriginal man’s perspective that you want to add to that sorta kinda or any comments that you want to make a final comment?

KMI_09: yes sort of what I guess my comment sort of feed into the last point that I made about western systems

KL: yeah

KMI_09: always controlling Aboriginal ways of being and I’ll just, I’ll just say something about all of us Aboriginal men have experienced and we’ve witnessed and this is to do with Aboriginal culture. Now when we go into a cultural context for a cultural setting, everything flows beautifully because there’s, there’s strong governance around it and the simple fact is the reason why it flows so naturally and beautifully and it’s really caring environment because there’s no white man input. It is totally controlled by our Aboriginal senior men and women

KL: yeo

KMI_09: and I’ve observed this many times

KL: yeo

KMI_09: where we can be a setting or a context or an environment, where it’s sort of created by western thinking and western sort of top-down approaches. But when we go into environments where Aboriginal people are in full control, it’s just a total situ, it’s, it’s a total different situation

KL: yeah

KMI_09: and you know it’s, it’s, it’s really, really close to me that the, the common denominator in all of that is, people taking control of their own well-being

KL: yeah

KMI_09: and it’s not controlled by outsiders

KL: yeah, mm

KMI_09: yeo, so I think this vision of yours is a really, really powerful one and I hope that people can get behind it and support it

KL: yeah

KMI_09: and because I think that it’s been a long time coming and something that’s controlled by Aboriginal men for Aboriginal man is a really, really special vision and we all sort of need to get behind it

KL: mm. On that note look thank you very much young fella for your time. Thank you appreciate it

KL: all right

KMI_09: Date

Interviewee Tyson Carmody

Date

21/9/2016

KL: it’s 21 September 2016. I’m here with the interview with Tyson Carmody from ___________ school. Ah thank you very much for participating in this interview Joseph

TC: you’re right, you’re welcome

KL: sorry Tyson

TC: Tyson thanks

KL: sorry Tyson

TC: you’re right

KL: now the first question is, is this, in regards to what do you think about a Men’s Shed for Aboriginal men

TC: I think it’s a good thing to have, yeah it’s, it’s something that’s to provide a space for the Aboriginal men to go to and to feel safe so

KL: are you aware of any men’s share in the community at all?

TC: yeah so I’ve utilised the one at Congress

KL: yes

TC: um, personally and also through work with taking young people there

KL: yep, mm hm

TC: um, on a regular basis so

KL: what so can you tell us about that?

TC: um we just try to engage our young people in, into the service there so they can learn about what services are there, what’s available for them. So that if they need to, they feel comfortable to go there, um and they’ve met and know the people working there

KL: mm

TC: so they’ve got a relationship and it, so that you know, they don’t have to rely on us as a staff member, or other people. They know, I can go there, get this help for this issue, this health issue or

KL: yeah

TC: I can just go there and use the weights, use the gym to do some fitness stuff so

KL: wow, so um, you’ve used the ah Men’s Shed

TC: mm hm

KL: how many times have you used it?

TC: Ah recently not a lot, that previously we would go once a week

KL: wow

TC: Um with our young people so

KL: mm

TC: on a set day we’d aim to meet

KL: wow

TC: and to do different activities, so

TC: um, just asking on the programme. Do you think that programme’s running the night way? For um, advocate of men, or for the community?

TC: um, I guess, you know there’s always room for improvement

KL: mm

TC: and that’s why I look at, the thing, anything I do, or anything that I see around me, you know like there’s um, yeah so there’s definitely room for improvement in terms of maybe, I’m not too sure like there’s, when I talk too, especially the younger guys

KL: mm

TC: they don’t really know about it too much

KL: yeah well they know about it but they don’t feel like it’s a place for them, it’s for older men

KL: yeah

TC: so um, that’s part, part of the reason why we try and take them there too

KL: can just take out to that aspects of old, you know it’s only a place for, it’s been seen as a, only a place for an older man

TC: mm

KL: how could we, how could that place be made to be used for younger men?

TC: um, I’m not too sure like I guess, um, you know with, with our school we try and go there to try and break that down a bit

KL: yeah

TC: but then like um, it’s, it’s hard because they just have that section

KL: yeah okay

TC: utilising the services there

KL: mm hm

TC: which is, you know. So um, I don’t know whether we have, if there’s capacity to have a separate place for younger fella’s to do things as they often do, when we do walk in sometimes they do feel shame that there’s older men there

KL: mm hm

TC: all that kind of stuff and, and maybe the older men feel the same if there’s young blokes walking through I’m not too sure

KL: yeah

TC: um, but maybe, yeah possibly a separate place then, um something that can bridge the two as well

KL: yeah

TC: so that it’s not just always young, old and we need to be able to bridge that gap

KL: mm

TC: particularly in this day and age

KL: it’s also the unknown aspects of, you know

TC: mm hm

KL: thanpanitya” you know, like there’s thanpanitya over there so we can’t really go there or

TC: yeah, yep

KL: you know, Um, so I guess um, that’s why um, looking at you know how we can sorta like improve the programme would be listening to these kind of information that you’re just sharing

TC: mm hm yep

KL: now what are the best parts of the Men’s Shed? Is it the place or the programme?

TC: um, I think it’s, for me personally it’s a mixture of both like

KL: yeah

TC: I know I go there and get what I need support with, um for my health or what, however I’m feeling you know

KL: mm

TC: um, and I’m, I’m comfortable with that and I understand all of that work of stuff um

TC: in terms of, yeah like, “guess, tryin” in terms of the space, it’s always for me like, I think if we can try and, and I know it’s only a small space there, but try and open it up a bit

KL: mm hm

TC: and so that’s really a good outdoor area, so that you know, there are places for a fine pit, all that kinda stuff that

KL: yeah, mm hm

TC: just simple things like that. The actual layout of the place

KL: yep

TC: help the feel of it and

KL: yep yes

TC: I think at the moment it feels very clinical

KL: yes, mm hm

TC: for me anyway so

KL: yeah, No, that’s, that’s the whole idea

TC: Kl of getting you know

TC: yeah

KL: your side of the story as you, as the informant. What are some of the things that you didn’t like about it?

TC: um, I guess there’s, not so much that I didn’t like but, mainly what I like what I was just saying yeah just the layout

KL: yeah

TC: the clinical feel, like yes alright you’re going to see a doctor and it needs to be that, sort of standard of um hygiene and all that kind of stuff there

KL: yeah

TC: to be um …

KL: so you highlighted you know, the improvement should be more space

TC: mm hm

KL: Um, more open

TC: mm hm

KL: and um, you know, less clinical

TC: yeh, yeh

KL: or the feel of you know being clinical

TC: yeah, yep

KL: mm. Um, is there um, anything else you want, sorta might want to comment on that area with regards to …?

TC: Um maybe, another thing I just thought of was too about accessing sort of, if I’m not sure if

KL: building yeah

TC: the access but also, like bush medicine and traditional healers through that avenue like

KL: yep

TC: I’m not sure if you’re able to do that through there or … I think if that’s not happening it would be a good thing to happen. That’ll, that’ll go a long way to helping people feel comfortable

KL: that’s right, yep

TC: and feel belonging there to

KL: oh fantastic

TC: yeh

KL: now with the term Aboriginal empowerment

TC: mm

KL: you know, what’s um, what comes to your mind when you think about empowerment, what Aboriginal, what empowers Aboriginal men?

KL: what do you think?

TC: I think when the feeling valued
KL: yeah
TC: um, and you know think there's a, there's a saying you know, 'a person who feels valued will go above and beyond'
KL: yeah
TC: what is expected of them and so um, yeah, if that, that four empowerment of Aboriginal men or for any person really, if you're feeling valued about who you are and what you have, what you know, your skills, regardless of where you've come from
KL: yeah
TC: that's really, along, goes a long way to empowering that person, that group or whatever you know, so and really like truly valuing, despite um, there might be some challenging or difficult behaviour of that particular individual. But if we focus on what, a few good things about that person, really highlight that stuff, they can focus on those good things about themselves too. Rather than “alright I'm no good because I'm a drunk”
KL: mm
TC: “I'm no good because I bash my wife” or whatever
KL: yeah yeah
TC: um, well actually you can teach, you're really good at teaching young fellas about language and stuff
KL: mm
TC: that's really good and we'll work on that and
KL: yeah
TC: when they're feeling good about that, they're in a better space to actually address these other issues
KL: um, well that's what I think about it
TC: so, that's fantastic so um, just an elaboration on that is um, what would an empowered person look like? You know in the community, what do you see as empowered men in the community?
KL: um, someone who is empowered I guess, is you know really proud about who they are, what, where they come from. The knowledge that they hold and um, I guess having a clear sight of where they're going
KL: yeah
TC: or even if they don't have a clear sight they're sort of, they're strong enough in themselves, oh no regardless of what happens ahead
KL: mm hm
TC: um, I can handle that situation
KL: yeah
TC: so they're feeling, and almost that sort of chest out sort of thing so
KL: yeah
TC: um, yeah and confident in themselves and knowing what they do, but also um understanding, you know alright I made a mistake there, but I can learn from that
KL: yeah
TC: that sort of thing so yeah
KL: okay. What are the um, some of the things that disempowers
Aboriginal men?
TC: I guess that's the opposite of being valued is being devalued and having, and being perceived, you know having that own perception of themselves and say "oh I'm not valued because I'm not accepted, this, I can't get that, or I'm told I'm no good, or I'm told I'm a drunk" or whatever it may be. And for our young people they're told they're no good either because they've been kicked out of school or they've been kicked out of the house so they're not feeling valued from those sorts of things
KL: yeah
TC: um, and yeah so when it, you know someone is not feeling valued, it's, they don't value themselves really
KL: yeah, mm hm
TC: and it's hard for them to look at themselves in any good light, because everyone around them they feel is not looking at them in that same light
KL: mm
TC: so, yeah
KL: oh thank you very much
TC: mm hm
KL: new with um, Aboriginal mens access to programs that could empower men
TC: mm hm
KL: what would you sorta kinda see as some of the programs or um, or a suggestion that you would have to, that would empower Aboriginal men?
KL: i think for me, less is more
KL: yeah
TC: and sometimes I know in the school setting we try and offer lots of things, you know fun activities and different things and the young people don't know what to choose, you know?
KL: um and then there's too much to choose from and it's overwhelming and then it, "I don't want to do any of that"
KL: mm
TC: but if there's small easy steps that are reachable goals and then they tick something off and they're feeling good, oh alright I've just done something
KL: mm
KL: you know the next step. So for me, the programs um, I guess it's not really, it depends on what you know, I guess, for me it's not about what the programme is about, it's about how the programme is delivered and
KL: mm
KL: in a way that the person that were meant to be delivering it can understand it in their own mind, in their own language, in their own words
KL: yeah
TC: um perception. So it's not about, "oh I understand it this way so it should be easy for you"
KL: mm
TC: no no, it's about, well let that person contemplate what the information is, what the programme is about and when they understand it, then they 'get something out of it
KL: yeah
TC: "cause they can nod their head and go yeah, you, no worries and then, they walk out the gate it's all gone
KL: yeah
TC: left then inside, you know like they would have been, we want programmes that men, young fellas, anyone. Take information away with them and hold it and use it to you know
KL: mm
KL: um and that's why I think the smaller, less is more sort of stuff and adds reachable goals
KL: so with then Aboriginal Men's Shed, what would sorta kinda programmes and what would that look like in, in your, your mind?
TC: um, for me in my mind I guess there'd be, there'd be a balance between having a set structure, but also having sort of flexibility. So it's being able to bend and work with the people who are coming
KL: mm
TC: and you know, all, all Aboriginal men are different in every, in a lot of different ways and there are some similarities but we all have different life experiences so we look at, we could be looking at the same thing differently you know so
KL: yeah
TC: we need to be able to work with that
KL: yes
TC: um and be flexible and be understanding and patient with that
KL: yeah
TC: um and I guess patience for me is really important to because, you know if you get a bloke who's 25 years old, he's lived his whole life a certain way and then we get a programme here to try and change his thinking
KL: yeah
TC: it's not gonna happen over two weeks, one year. It's gonna take a long time you know
KL: yeah
TC: for him to, one, comprehend what you're tryin' to do, but also to actually change his way of thinking
KL: i think
TC: yeah
KL: because yeah it, you know if you've lived your whole life one, a certain way, so I guess yeah being, having a set structure there, but also being flexible
KL: yeah
TC: maybe I, for the next half an hour, we're doing this sort of work
KL: mm hm
TC: and then after that we'll have a bit of a break and then we'll have you know, half, for me half an hour is like
KL: yeah
TC: good timing for for, for young fellas particularly so yeah, I guess for me it's not so much about what the content is, it's about how it is
KL: yeah
KL: what, where would be the best place for an Aboriginal Men's Shed to be developed?
TC: um, that's a tricky one because, you know the location where it is now is pretty good because it's easily accessible
KL: yeah
TC: for a lot of blokes in town. But I sort of like the feel of being out of town but too so you can have that sense of, oh this is, we're secure here
KL: mm
KL: away from other people who maybe
TC: you know people walking past the gates can't hear what you talking about
KL: mm
KL: and all, all that kind of stuff. There's that balance of, do you have it where it's easily accessible in town or do you have it just out of town and... or maybe a bit of both so that
KL: yeah
TC: but for me, in terms of, like my experiences working in the school here, whenever we try and do activities or programmes around our, the well-being of young people at the school, it just doesn't work
KL: yeah
TC: as soon as we go somewhere else, it's too much easier. Out bush or out of town or another place
KL: yeah
TC: um it just, it's a better, the young people are more settled and they're like a captured audience
KL: mm hm
TC: so they can listen and they'll, they'll talk and they'll all that kind stuff. But when they're here at the school, it's a lot more distracting for them
KL: yeah
TC: and they don't feel comfortable about talking whatever they're feeling
KL: yeah
TC: with other kids around or whatever
KL: yep, yep
TC: and maybe that could be happening at the current location
KL: that's right. Look we're pretty much gonna come to the end in here
TC: mm hm
KL: but um, um, is there sorta kinda anything that, that um, you'd like to say that we may have sort of left out in this, you know in this sort of structured question? Is there anything that you know, you want to share, that we might need to think about in the future if we're going down the path of developing an Aboriginal Men's Shed?
TC: i think there needs to be a strong connection with the schools in town
KL: yeah
TC: um, i just so think that's really important for like, for both the young people but also for the Men's Shed, but also, the old, you know like, we often hear about older mob saying ‘oh we need young people to stand up and take the baton on and take
KL: mm
TC: take that next step. And then young people sorta saying at the other end, old people don't trust us with that stuff and
KL: mm
TC: and so how do we bridge that so that there is that sort of
KL: yeah
TC: two-way stuff because if you know there is thing that with modern technology and everything, it's a different world now
KL: yes
TC: compared to when that older mob were younger
KL: yeah
TC: and um i think there's that sort of misunderstanding of, you know, perception oh you young people don't respect anything because all you want to worry about ..and then young people thought of saying ‘well you mob don't ..’
KL: yeah
TC: and so there's this back and forth sort of stuff
KL: yeah, so there's a lot of miscommunication between
TC: yeah, yeah, yeah. We all want the same thing but where sort of, yeah
KL: yeah
TC: and young people, well they are young people who want to step up
KL: mm
TC: but not quite sure how to and feeling maybe if they're try to step up they'll get shut down
KL: mm
TC: and older people saying "you mob need to step up but you mob need to do it this way" and then young people say ‘hah nah that doesn't work for us”
KL: yeah
TC: yeah um, so I think with the Men's Shed, if there was a good strong connection with the schools
KL: yep
TC: and programs for positive engagement with young people and elders and
KL: yep
TC: ah we try and do that with our school our self with family and stuff, but I think if we can do it in, in more of the community sense
KL: yeah
TC: that go a long way to bridging that sort of generational gap
KL: yeah
TC: because
KL: i think that's, that's it, we've got to identify that generational gap
KL: mm hm
KL: and then actually really work it at from both sides
KL: yeah exactly, yeah and respectfully and safely too
KL: exactly, yuh
KL: yeah ta

KL: look um, ah Tyson, thank you very much for your time

KL: yep

KL: everyone's gaining something

KL: no one is losing anything

KL: going to get up properly

KL: hopefully we’ll see some good things come out of this

KL: mm, mm

KL: um and that culture will lose that next step

KL: and then we’ll lose the generation after that

KL: mm

KL: look um, ah Tyson, thank you very much for your time

KL: yep

KL: mm

KL: hesitant

KL: yeah, yeah

KL: so with this other facility have you been there all or …?

KL: mm

KL: yeah

KL: I, I think you’re, you’re right there

KL: yeah, yep

KL: maybe they’re scared of them, maybe they don’t like white people, I don’t know

KL: I think you’re, you’re right there

KL: yeah

KL: because it’s, it’s, it’s a communication issue

KL: yeah

KL: different languages, different culture, different attitudes, different standards

KL: yeah

KL: and our mob are, well I know even my mother nowadays, she still thinks of white people like the old police

KL: yeah

KL: she’s a little bit scared a white fellas

KL: mm

KL: and I’m sure some of these fellas have still got that sort of attitude you know? That white people are the

KL: yeah

KL: the bad people, ha, I shouldn’t say that but …

KL: yeah, no but um …

KL: they scared of I’m

KL: well seeing this is where the relationship hasn’t really blossomed

KL: mm

KL: as much as we’d like to think it has

KL: mm, mm

KL: so with this other facility have you been there all or …?

KL: no I haven’t but I’ve been on my list of things to do but quite honestly I was a bit scared about going there myself

KL: yeah, yeah

KL: um, I don’t know if there is the word but

KL: hesitant

KL: yeah, I don’t wanna be the only black fella there

KL: yeah. True yeah

KL: so I’ve been trying to get other blokes to come with me, but

KL: they say ‘oh yeah next time we’ll go, next time’,

KL: yeah

KL: and I think I know some of them blokes that go to that, the non-Aboriginal fella you know?

KL: yeah, yes

KL: I can’t say they’re my friends but I know them and you know it might be good if we did just to remind them

KL: yeah, mm

KL: that there’s another mob in this town

KL: mm. now was that, do you, are you aware that this, what kind of programs they run there or …?

KL: I think they’ve been set up and I’m only just guessing and from what people have told me that they do the normal Men’s Shed type activities which is you know maybe fix a car, do some woodworking, maybe stand around, maybe have a few beers and have a talk and a laugh. Which is how most Men’s Sheds that I know of are

KL: yeah, mm, hm

KL: the rest of Australia are set up. It’s to try and get blokes to go and you know tell people about their troubles, or to show other blokes that they’ve got skills that they want to pass on

KL: yeah

KL: whether that might be a mechanic, or carpenter or something like that

KL: yeah.

KL: So that would be sorta kinda one of the best parts of actually sharing

KL: mm

KL: skills

KL: mm

KL: in that kind of

KL: mm

KL: environment

KL: yeah

KL: to us, our fellas, they get different skills of course

KL: yeah

KL: and you know that could be like language and culture, um lot of the old blokes have got skills in, you know making leather belts and that sort of stuff, but because of the way our mob are going they’re, it’s a dying art now. So we need to harness the knowledge that these elder fellas of ours have got. Whether it’s making boomerangs or even fitting cars, you know there’s not many cars that a home mechanic can fix now

KL: mm

KL: it’s all computerised

KL: yeah

KL: but you know we’ve all seen our mob fix them computerised cars, I’ve seen them out bush

KL: yeah, yes

KL: I can’t do it but I’ve seen them mob do it

KL: so something along that line would be a good program?

KL: yeah.

KL: But there’s not a, you know we can do things with, say like the school groups, with some of our

KL: yeah

KL: our elders, if you wanna call them that. Blokes of stature

KL: mm

KL: because a lot of these school kids are lost in regards to their

KL: yeah

KL: they don’t really know who their families are. They know their immediate family but they don’t really know who they are related to in this town

KL: yeah
Land Rights Act and introducing income management over the Aboriginal services including dismantling aspects of the Aboriginal reflected more a conservative government agenda of mainstreaming argued that it was a rushed and ill thought set of proposals that Emergency Response (known as the Intervention) as a response to KL: mm
KL: yeah
KL: yeah, that's right
KMI_21:
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KL: yes
KMI_21:
KL: it's so... KL: Um, just starting to sort of wrap up these questions, um what, where would be the best place to have an Aboriginal Men's Shed?
KMI_21: I think there's a number of places um, we've gotta be careful about stepping into areas where people don't want to go. Whether that's seen by the general community that it's own, didn't quite
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: families or certain tribal groups
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: or it could be too close to sacred areas. All that sort of stuff, we've gotta be careful about that
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: Um, one of the things about Alice Springs is that it's there, it's not much spare land anywhere
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: a lot of it is taken up by development over the years but, you know I'm sure there's places around that can be, be found but um, you know I'll take a bit of a negotiation but I'm sure there's a place out there somewhere
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: that would be acceptable by everyone and is um, what's the word? Imperial
KL: Yes, yeah
KMI_21: to everyone, so that everyone will feel free to visit it and ah, no one will say "hey that's my place, or you mob are too close to a sacred site" IKL: Yeah
KMI_21: or something like that
KL: mm
KMI_21: you know there's, there's things like that
KL: that's the reality of actually knowing, living in a society that's sort of living next to an ancient society
KMI_21: yeah, yep. Like you know the town was developed before Aboriginal people got those sort of rights
KL: Yes
KMI_21: then white, white man's way
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: they always had it Aboriginal way but when you try and do a place like that, there gets come along and says "you in the wrong place", you know it'd just shatter people who put it altogether. So lot of negotiations I reckon
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: I'm sure it can be done but
KL: mm, now is, just in coming to the sort of closing, is there anything that you might feel you'd like to share, that I may not have covered in this list of questions? Is there anything that you know
KMI_21: yeah
KL: you think that I may have overlooked?
KMI_21: I think Ingerkinga is a very important place for all men and that includes male men, initiated, young blokes old blokes, in between. It's a very important place for men, all men
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: it's a safe place for men, there's, it's a male only place. There's no females, even allowed as cleaners
KL: Yeah
KMI_21: to come in on this place
KL: so that allows for male cleaners?

KL: yeah
KL: yes and look what some of your regular visitors are to Ingkintja, KL: yeah
KMI_21: KL: yeah
KMI_21: KL: a safe place yeah
KL: yeah
KL: yes
KL: So they talk about so many different things and they can have a laugh without lookin' over their shoulder and someone tellin' 'im "hey, you can't do that here" KL: yeah true
KL: yeah so KL: so
KL: we try and get 'em to feel at home here
KL: it's an empowerment of men's capacity to think
KL: yeah and I even get told by Aboriginal women, "that is a good thing you do there for those men" KL: yeah
KL: they've got somewhere safe to go. A lot of men come here just to have a sleep, because they can't sleep at home KL: yeah
KL: there's too much noise KL: yeah
KL: there's too much confusion, there's hubbub, there's emotions, there's cars driving round KL: mm
KL: so they either got to participate in what's happening at home KL: yeah
KL: in all of that confusion and hubbub and drinking and all, or they try and find somewhere, "guez, I just need to get away from 'em" KL: yeah
KL: a chill out place KL: yeah
KL: and then none of them won't get hubbubbed KL: so you touched on a really important point there in regards to some men come here just to have a lay down KL: yeah
KL: so um KL: when I first saw it I thought what's wrong with these fellas, they, is something wrong? Are they sick? And I've talked to a few of them and I said "are you alright?" And they said "nah, couldn't sleep last night, too many. Family come from bush, they're all drinkin' ..." KL: oh wow
KL: " ... make troubles, noise, doors bangin', dogs, cars roarin', round, dogs barkin'" So, we've had blokes KL: geez, do we gotta get an ambulance for this bloke? He's ... KL: yeah, yeah
KL: nah, he's just havin' a sleep KL: yeah
KL: so um KL: when I first saw it I thought what's wrong with these fellas, they, is something wrong? Are they sick? And I've talked to a few of them and I said "are you alright?" And they said "nah, couldn't sleep last night, too many. Family come from bush, they're all drinkin' ..." KL: oh wow
KL: " ... make troubles, noise, doors bangin', dogs, cars roarin', round, dogs barkin'" So, we've had blokes KL: geez, do we gotta get an ambulance for this bloke? He's ... KL: yeah, yeah
KL: nah, he's just havin' a sleep KL: yeah
KL: it's important to have, and a sleep KL: yeah
KL: so when I actually see, oh you know countrymen say sleepin' in the laws, it's like hang on they're just KL: yeah
KL: enjoying KL: enjoying that space KL: yeah
KL: no. No, I the first couple of times I thought, Jesus I'm worried that something is wrong with this bloke, we gotta get him in the hospital KL: but he was just worn out from the night before KL: yeah
KL: too many family, too many drunk, too many cars roarin' round, dogs barkin', doors slamming" KL: mm
KL: all this sort of stuff KL: could that be something that um, as part of a like a set up to allow for men to have a little KL: I reckon once or twice a week I get asked, "you mob got a men's shelter?" KL: yeah
KL: that's what they say to me, a lot of these blokes KL: yeah
KL: we need somewhere KL: for men to have a safe place to put their head down KL: yeah
KL: where you know they can chill out, they can have a shower, wash their clothes, play music KL: yeah
KL: without being at risk KL: yes, yes
KL: or participating in risky KL: yeah
KL: behaviour KL: and I noticed that um, you know when you do sort of come here you have men, you know washing their clothes and they just got those, it's like, around in a towel KL: yeah
KL: which is really, you know that, that is showin' that they're comfortable, you know amongst men KL: when, when they first started that service we used to provide sorta like, spare clothes. But a lot of the fellas didn't like that KL: mm
KL: they just wanna have the KL: yeah
KL: have the towel KL: yes
KL: they're, they're proud to sit around and talk to one another KL: yeah
KL: like talk and laugh and tease one another KL: yeah
KL: all this sort of, which is great. It's a, like a family atmosphere, well a family that KL: while the clothes are being washed KL: yeah
KL: while they're washing their clothes. Yeah KL: and you can see that you know there might be conflicts between different communities and tribal groups. But when, when they're here we never have any trouble here KL: yeah
KL: it's a safe place for men
KL: mm, so even with that, with their like avoidance relationships KL: yeah
KL: you know KL: yeah
KL: they, they've managed themselves in this space KL: yes, they do and it's, the space is not designed for what we use it for. It's just a jumble of buildings KL: yes KL: but they, they work all that out, yeah KL: wow, that is fantastic
KL: without any, they know these fellas. They know how to do it KL: mm
KL: we don't intervene with that, they, they just do it themselves KL: laughs yeah wow, so KL: and no one ever says to me, you know this is rubbish place. It's only a ramshackle building KL: yeah
KL: and stuff we got but, no one ever says, you know "it's no good!' They all say, just about every day someone says "that's a good place for me" KL: wow
KL: we love coming here KL: that's fantastic
KL: yeah
KL: wow
KL: so with things like that it makes you feel good, you know that we're doing somethin' good for these blokes KL: yeah
KL: but we're also tryin' to get young teenage blokes to come here also KL: yeah
KL: so they know when they get to a certain age they can continue to come here KL: yes, yes
KL: and use the facilities KL: fantastic
KL: mm
KL: alright boss I'll thank you very much for your time, so we'll wrap it up and um KL: my pleasure KL: I, I thank you for your time KL: yeah good on ya and I appreciate you talkin' to me KL: no worries thank you KL: good on ya Ken KL: ta
Chapter Two: Other Australian males share their views

Interviewee KMI_01

Date 6/10/2016

KL: ah take two. Ok the first question and, and thank you very much , is that okay if I call you that?

KMI_01: that’s fine

KL: ______ fine okay thank you. First question, what do you think about a Men’s Shed for Aboriginal men?

KMI_01: yeah well the, the whole concept of having a Men’s Shed empowers I suppose individuals within that framework so they’ve got a support system in place. So, you know I think Men’s Shed’s a proven successful program, certainly having a specific Indigenous Men’s Shed, I think would break down some of the barriers that the Indigenous men may find themselves going to a broad Men’s Shed. Alice Springs has established a Men’s Shed here in Alice Springs

KL: Mm hm

KMI_01: I’m not familiar of you know how many Indigenous people have taken up the opportunity to engage in the, in that Men’s Shed there and certainly that would be something for you to look at, but ah I think it’s a proven concept, it’s a great opportunity, certainly for Indigenous males to, I suppose seek some support, comfort, direction and certainly assist them in any sort of endeavour that seems to trouble them

KL: Yeah and I suppose um, well you mentioned the one that we already have and, and the difficulties of probably accessing that

KMI_01: Yep

KL: and I suppose the programs would have to be different, so what, what, what, what would be your suggestion in regards to kind of programs that we could run in the, the Indigenous Men’s Shed?

KMI_01: Yep, well certainly from my understanding of the Men’s Shed is geared up in you regards to mental health

KL: Yeah

KMI_01: for, for ah, obviously it’s the self being, self-worth type entity there so, I think particularly if you’re looking at the Indigenous Men’s Shed, you’d be looking at a place where men can seek some supports, some seek some direction if they’re feeling troubled, you know if there’s any sort of area of concern, I think certainly if you, if you look at issues affecting Indigenous men, in and around Central Australia

KL: Mm hm

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‘I think one of the main things that empowers Aboriginal men is obviously our cultural practice...when we practice culture it seems to appear that all men have a role and a responsibility in that space...’

(KMI_09)

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KMI_01: domestic violence features quite prominently, you know certainly in the criminal space that I sort of operate in, I know it’s an area where we look at in regards to developing programs

KL: yeah

KMI_01: for men in regards to, you know change behavioural programs, that sort of stuff. I think there’s also any sort of programs you need there, need to you know, pick people up, you know provide them with a sense of direction, a sense of worth, a sense of belonging

KL: mm hm

KMI_01: you know they, they need to be aligned to skills

KL: Yes

KMI_01: But you know skills that they can take back to the, you know to the family environment, so coping mechanism skills

KL: Yeah

KMI_01: But also skills which lead to you know, full time employment or part-time employment

KL: yeah

KMI_01: so you’re looking at all these skills that they can develop internally

KL: Mm, yeah

KMI_01: to make them feel stronger

KL: Mm hm

KMI_01: in areas where they perhaps ah don’t feel as strong, but also programs in regards to, you know a set of skills, or skill areas where they can, as I said

KL: mm

KMI_01: lead to long term employment, part-time employment or areas of interest and the like

KL: so I suppose there’s no kind of like real cultural orientation for Aboriginal men to come into mainstream culture so would, would a program somewhat, you know along that line maybe useful to actually culturally orientate Aboriginal people into the mainstream? Because there’s nothing like that happening

KMI_01: okay To my knowledge I’m not sure

KL: Oh

KMI_01: so it certainly enlightens me in that regards but, certainly I think there’s, there’s an, an area of you know cultural orientation for all manners of

KL: Yeah

KMI_01: you know, different cultures so certainly cultural awareness

KL: Yeah. Just that, there’s cultural awareness being conducted for people that go out and work in remote communities

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*Name/term removed to respect anonymity*
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: I suppose the only comment I have is what would that look like?
KL: yeah, yeah, mm
KMI_01: so there, cause I means it's a, it's very broad brush
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: in regards to you know cultural awareness in that regard
KL: Yeah, mm
KMI_01: certainly you know the other side of the house about particularly non-Indigenous people working in remote
KL: Communities and that but
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: yeah Indigenous men working in a Australian society
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: I'm not sure what that would look like to be honest with you
Ken
KL: yeah yeah
KMI_01: or but, I think you know certainly programs which, you know, self-worth?
KL: Yep
KMI_01: I think are very key
KL: yeah
KMI_01: you know programs in which identify areas that individuals and men feel that they're, they're not coping with so, you know coping strategies
KL: Yeah, mm
KMI_01: areas they feel that they would like to, you know develop skills in, so you know be that in you know, a particular job skill or
KL: Men
KMI_01: a coping mechanisms skill or a family life skill, you know, those sorts of things I think is quite
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: quite crucial
KL: I suppose with these structured type questions so that comes up to empowerment so like
KMI_01: yeah
KMI_01: the question is that well how, how would you see empowerment in, the individuals?
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: not a, not a textbook that's experiences, um, so it's, it's evidence based in that regard so it's, it's
KL: with those individuals together, it's, it's sharing stories, sharing
KMI_01: in this aspect?
KL: empowerment so like those sorts of things I think is quite
KMI_01: quite crucial
KL: self-worth
KL: or something that you may think, hey look maybe a Men's Shed
KMI_01: or some thing you'd wanna sorta kinda share
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: so you wanna have a pathway, you know you wanna have a pathway you know, you wanna have a pathway for the Cancer Council
KMI_01: Oh
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: it's all rolling in too and I don't want to sorta kinda stop it and change it, but look with this semi-formal structure questioning
KMI_01: you're not actually building people up.
KMI_01: so it's, you're not actually building people up. But you say, these are some significant issues affecting Central Australia
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: you're not labelling your individuals attending the Men's Shed, you're providing them an opportunity to, for information, for coping so they can create that amongst
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: their fellow men
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: so and it's, it's, you, you put it in the context of an awareness of community safety issues
KL: mm hm
KMI_01: an awareness of issues affecting not just men, but women
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: and Central Australia so
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: so it's, you're not actually saying, you know you are responsible for this and all that sort of stuff, 'cause that, I think that, that's self-defeating and then it's not accurate and you know, you're not actually building people up. But you say, these are some significant issues affecting Central Australia
KL: mm
KMI_01: you're, me, everybody around us, it affects in some means, you know you're either a witness to, you're a victim to, you're, you know in the past you may have been an offender
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: but all this collectively is hurting our people as a whole community. And so here's some things to think about. So you need to also make sure you tap into
KL: Yeah
KMI_01: those major issues, so people get a self, well an idea of self-awareness
Before, I think your Cope for Life thing is a fantastic program that sort of questions and you're input has been fantastic. It with the Men's Shed might actually say, I really like that aspect of groups. You can just go and work or do a project with the Lions Club, for a for.

You know what you can also do, you know those men involved with the Men's Shed might actually say, I really like that aspect of that work.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

Oh fantastic. Look. Look, you know very much for your time, because that's sort of like pretty much concludes the structure sort of questions and you're input has been fantastic. It certainly will give us a scope to look at all these other things to hopefully.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.

I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves.
KMI 02: it's gotta be a controlled work environment from a, from a, from a, purdy, you know my, my history, my run history workshops in the bush over the years, you've got three things that I have in the forefront of my mind. You gotta have the tools, they gotta be sharp or you know available - there's no point havin' a saw if it's blunt, no point, you know havin' a, havin' equipment if it can't be operated
KL: mm
KMI 02: it's there gonna be there in advance. There's no point, there's no point you know run a project, even if there's scrap materials
KL: mm
KMI 02: there's no point running it and then you know 10 people turn up and go, and then we say we just gotta juggle and get some tools and pieces you know, 'cause we got, we got all this cabnetry to put together but we got no glue and nails
KL: yeah
KMI 02: the whole thing starts to, so you get up startin' to chase your tail. So tools, materials and a very clearly and effectively designed, I'm gonna say designed product or project. So, no tools and heaps of numbers, not heaps and heaps of words, which is gonna potentially (inaudible) people who are gonna struggle with reading and writing
KL: mm
KMI 02: and, and, and numbers
KL: yeah
KMI 02: this is where the design comes in. The design, you know even flat packing for example and how do you design the flat pack? Anyhow, there's, there's as you know, that's what I do, so, so I've spent a lot of time getting the design right because if we get the design right it means that people are going to be able to access opportunities, even if it comes to simply assembling a product. Not necessarily fabricating the whole thing, maybe fabricating parts of it, all, and one of the things that I've noticed Kenny which is pretty interesting is, is what people really love and what the fella in the bush really love is the finishing. So once it's put together and we got no glue and nails, you know, which, which, which from a health point of view is designed to be functional, fast, affordable, etc.
KL: mm
KMI 02: and they haven't often got anything to do, but if there's some introduction going forward for the young person with really the last 6 to 12 months of their time, for example in res care, so now you've got housing, which is intentionally working with the health sector
KL: mm
KMI 02: to, for these young people to transition and then intentionally on the other side of that, transitioning out the other side of the Men's Shed or maybe you know if you know if there's, if it's right for somebody to move on
KL: yeah
KMI 02: if that, you know like, like, but supported into a new career path or whatever it might be
KL: yeah
KMI 02: like it's gonna be part of the system. Education, employment, health and ultimately you know from my, you know from what I've been rabbitting on about is container houses and that sort of stuff! All that stuff, you know, you know Kenny considered could be punchin' out you know, housing
KL: mm
KMI 02: you know, which, which, which from a health point of view is designed to be functional, fast, affordable, etc.
KL: mm
KMI 02: transportable, just what people in the bush are just gonna light up about
KL: mm
KMI 02: but ah, it's gotta be, like I would suggest that it needs to be, be a part of, a larger vision. I mean I've been runnin' workshops in the bush as you know for 10 years mate and at the end of the day, it doesn't like. It's a workshop's a workshop's a workshop
KL: mm
KMI 02: but it falls over
KL: yeah
KMI 02: and it remains in isolation to all
KL: yeah
KMI 02: everything else that's got on. That's where, you know that so that's, that was if there was one thing that I put put out there
KL: yeah
KMI 02: from the outset, get, so it's not just the design of projects that people might be doing in the workshops, but, but it's also the design of the service model
KL: mm
KMI 02: that's, that's really key in, in my opinion
KL: yeah
KMI 02: you know and, and so like having, having you know people who are trained in, in
KL: mm
KMI 02: in um, in the health services for example like a social worker, or are a couple of men's
KL: mm
KMI 02: social workers who's going to be able to talk with people or invite the opportunity, create the opportunity, invite people to go, look you know let's just, let's talk about why we ah, why we spend our time beating our chests and we, and we failed at kids care for people
KL: yeah
KMI 02: and then subsequently we fail to care about our partners and wives and kids. What's going on there? That's, that's a big conversation and, and it needs to be sort of done in a, it needs to be managed or facilitated by people who know they're doing
KL: yeah
KMI 02: you can't just, I mean I can't just go and crack that conversation open around
KL: mm
KMI 02: you know
KL: wow. Look um, thank you very much for your insight and your time
KMI 02: I think that kind of really pretty wraps up the interview and I'd like to use this opportunity to thank you very much for your time
KL: no worries Kenny
KL: thanks for that
KMI 02: cheers mate
KL: yeah thanks man
KMI 06: that you know, you know, And, and now, you know it, it really is a need in the community for men
KL: yeah, yeah. Have you been to any one of them?
KMI 06: yeah I've, I used to, well, in Ingkintja in the way of going there
KL: yes
KMI 06: when they had their shed there, um I don't know if that's still active
KL: Yeah
KMI 06: but yes I've been along there and of course I've been to quite a few men's gatherings out into, out, out bush and out community where I've been honoured to be part and asked to be part of it
KL: Yeah what was it that you got to have a look at some of the programs?
KMI 06: I looked at some of those, some of those programs but you know they, it seemed like the Men's Sheds that have always been fighting for resources or acceptance or and, that and that a delivery of services was always the last thing because they were trying to survive and keep the doors open you know and I find some of those services have picked them up and picking up men and allowing a space for them to have conversation
KL: mm
KMI 06: that they feel that they could be it's, it's a trust one, respectful place, um and also I think that the men's sheds themselves, allowing just men to go there is important and draws to a whole area of the community whether they're black or white
KL: thank you. Just talking about like empowerment now of Aboriginal men, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?
KMI 06: I think to be valued
KL: Yep
KMI 06: respected
KL: mm
KMI 06: those things are core. To have, um, ah to know who they are
KL: mm
KMI 06: and you might think that that's, that's that's a common thing

1 Name/term removed to respect anonymity
when it comes to Indigenous men, well no because you have a
look in the past, it's very much been a dictator and a downtrodden
sort of process by non-Indigenous people whereas they ah, they
didn't take the time to understand what culture was about, the,
the um connection to land, ah history, ah to be that person, that,
that man in that family environment. They always associated with a
non-Indigenous

KL: mm

KMI: 06: Family structure
KL: yeah

KMI_06: there's a big difference in all of this
KL: yeah

KMI_06: Indigenous men, when, when they know, ah, this brother
knows what I mean
KL: mm

KMI_06: he says something I understand it straight away, I don't have
to explain it all
KL: yeah

KMI_06: because I can't explain it all, it's a knowing
KL: yes, mm oh wow, thank you. Um and then I suppose the opposite
is that, you know what are the barriers of - empowerment? What are
the, so many of the reasons that Aboriginal people are
disempowered?
KMI_06: I think ah, well disempowerment comes in many forms, the
most obvious can be the law
KL: yeah

KMI_06: as well, ah, ah this, where you, ah you ah are, again going back
to not being valued, respected, it can be ah, the community tribal
structure where you would have a lot of elders that have passed on
and, and so
KL: yeah, mm hm

KMI_06: and that's the same as when, if your grandparents die or your
father died
KL: yeah

KMI_06: it's the same sort of process, you don't have that one you seek
out someone else and sometimes you seek out someone else that
has totally different agenda
KL: yeah

KMI_06: And when it comes to, and when it comes to understanding
that way with non-Indigenous or government entities, those
dots are not connected they cause there's, there's not enough
understanding
KL: yeah

KMI_06: of how deeply entrenched
KL: mm

KMI_06: men, ah men's place in society is
KL: Yeah, mm could that be sorta kinda just teasing that out a bit more
in regards to the empowerment, could that be a program in regards
to the empowerment? What are some of the programs that, you
know, that come to your mind?
G: Oh I think the, the program first of all is, is what the Men's Shed,
Men's Sheds and gatherings do, is they listen
KL: yeah

KMI_06: they allow someone to tell a story
KL: yeah

KMI_06: without being judged
KL: mm

KMI_06: that's a powerful thing in itself, then you feel as though, you
feel confident
KL: yeah

KMI_06: you no longer just looking at the earth, you looking at
people's faces that tell you that story
KL: yeah

KMI_06: suddenly you've gone from being downtrodden to have pride
KL: yes

KMI_06: And in that pride is recognition and in that pride is
empowerment so that whole process and it that does not happen
just over one meeting
KL: No

KMI_06: Because what you're doing is that you're sensing and feeling
ah the kinship that you're building with those around you to be
able to speak
KL: yeah, fantastic. Look sorta kinda is coming to pretty much the
end of the questions now, like from the semi structured sorta kinda
questions. Is there anything that you'd like to share or would like to,
you know say that we could take into consideration in regards to
possibility setting up a Men's Shed? Is there something that, that
you know that you might think we should a need to focus on?
KL: yeah you can go back a long way you know to colonisation and that, you don't need to go back. You go back to
what's been triggered and just the recent history. Recent history tells you
that the Intervention had a major influence and was disastrous
for men, men spiritually, economically, they were devalued they
weren't respected, they were labelled.
KL: mm

KMI_06: All those things happened all in twelve months and in a very
short time
KL: yeah yeah

KMI_06: and spread throughout the Territory and the country. Other
men became afraid
KL: mm

KMI_06: When we have a fear of doing something which is natural to
mankind, whether it's like a hug or a cuddle, ah to be that person
who is ah who is that ah, that protector
KL: mm

KMI_06: not just of your family, of that community
KL: mm

KMI_06: and suddenly you're afraid
KL: yeah

KMI_06: and what happens outta that? You become shame. Shame
for no reason, except the fact that you're Indigenous, you're
labelled and people are judging you in a totally different way, in a
destructive
KL: yeah

KMI_06: negative way, than what you were 6 months earlier
KL: yeah yeah

KMI_06: so when you look at that whole process you say ok, we need
to, to what we need to do is look at what's taken place and undo that
KL: mm

KMI_06: and undo that by first all again by listening, respecting
having that, that place which is, which is safe
KL: mm mm

KMI_06: you know is safe and um and that they, they feel that they're
able to, are comfortable enough to say, I was a victim, I was hurt, I
was punished for something that wasn't even in my makeup I was,
I was just because I was an Aboriginal man
KL: mm

KMI_06: that these things happened to me
KL: yeah

KMI_06: and I was labelled unfairly. Out of that you listen, you say 'we understand'
KL: mm mm

KMI_06: So what would you like us to do? You ask, what does that
person want?
KL: yeah mm hm

KL: When you empower them by saying 'well I don't have the, all the
answers but what, what would you like to get?'
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: What, what can we do to make you complete and strong?
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: And proud man
KL: Yes, yes

KMI_06: And it's not about clean clothes, it's not about anything like
that
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: It's about sometimes the simple things, going back to that
environment that they come from
KL: Yes

KMI_06: Or, or that they've been removed from
KL: Yes yes mm

KMI_06: and allowing them to tell the story of their country
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: To sit there and sometimes sitting there is silence, which is the
most powerful thing and not always words
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: Indigenous men feel and sense with the spirit
KL: Yes

KMI_06: and out of that comes the voice and the song
KL: yes

KMI_06: and when you connect to a country and your land everything
there is what gives you that strength to stand up and be heard
KL: yeah yeah well on that note I'd like to thank you very much for the
opportunity to interview you in regards to part of this research,
thank you very much
KL: Yeah

KMI_06: It's a pleasure, it's a pleasure
KL: yeah

KMI_06: I feel really honoured to be asked
KL: thank you

Interviewee Russell Goldflam

Date 15/11/2016

KL: okay interview with Russell on 8th of the 11th 2016. Looks thank
you very much for volunteering to be one of my subjects
RG: sure

KL: so there's only like a semi structured sorta question and then there's
a free, free flow sorta questions after that. What do you think about, well
this is the first question, what do you think about an Aboriginal
Men's Shed?
RG: I don't really know much about it. I'm generally familiar with the
Men's Shed concept in mainstream Australia, but I've never heard of
an Aboriginal Men's Shed
KL: yeah

RG: and I don't know what it would entail so I haven't really got an
opinion yet
KL: yeah, yep, mm hm. Right that's good thank you, so you know there's
a Men's Shed in the community and so that's a mainstream Men's Shed
community. Have you been to one?
RG: no

KL: no, ok. So that then automatically leads us onto the next question.
Some of the things in regards to the Aboriginal Men's Shed is
looking at, what do you see that empowers Aboriginal men?
RG: What do I see that empowers Aboriginal men?
KL: yeah, mm

RG: well the term Aboriginal men is a very broad term
KL: yeah

RG: because if you're talking about men who come from a background
of participating in traditional business and ceremonies and having
been through business, been initiated, although I don't know
anything about that which involves
KL: yeah

RG: my understanding, very shallow though it is, is that participating
in the ceremony and in particular going through business and
becoming inducted into non-public forms of knowledge and
so on is an empowering experience and that having the status
of a being a man in a traditional sense is very empowering. Being
acknowledged as having that status within a family and kinship
setting gives power to men and playing the role of that's assigned
under the kinship system through social life within the family and
community. I would think that's empowering. So that's one
KL: mm hm

RG: domain of empowerment that
KL: yeah

RG: I can see. Another domain of empowerment is becoming
successful in the mainstream world by making good money by
getting a high status job
KL: yeah

RG: by getting qualifications through a recognised educational
institution, through being given recognition through the bestowal
of you know, awards for sport
KL: yeah

RG: or for public service or
KL: yep, mm hm

RG: for heroism or whatever
KL: yeah

RG: serving in the military
KL: yeah

RG: those sorts of, those sorts of things I think are empowering. I think
one more personal level that it's empowering to Aboriginal men
to become parents and take on the responsibility of fatherhood. I
think it's also empowering but in a negative sense, for men to wield violence against other people.

KL: mm
RG: that they are able to victimise
KL: yes, mm hm
RG: I think that the use of violence within families is an empowering experience to
KL: yeah, mm hm
RG: and that they often express their dominance over other people, particularly women
KL: mm hm
RG: by using violence and that that is an empowering experience for them
KL: yes, mm hm
RG: I think that my answer to those questions
KL: yeah you thank you very much. This then leads on to the other question, which is what the barriers of empowerment?
RG: well just to use the same categorisation that I did
KL: yeah, mm
RG: with the previous question, that is dividing up the categories of traditional power structures and mainstream power structures
KL: yeah
RG: and I should've, I guess I should say in brackets that, it's not as though you're either a member of the traditional power structure or a member of a mainstream power structure. I doubt that there's any Aboriginal men in Australia who have a foot in only the camp of traditional power structure
KL: yeah
RG: because any Aboriginal man in Australia is also part of mainstream society
KL: yeah that's right
RG: to a greater or lesser extent. There may be some Aboriginal men in Australia, know them, many Aboriginal men in Australia who don't connect to the traditional world
KL: mm
RG: and so they are living in, only in the mainstream world. That doesn't mean they haven't got a rich Aboriginal cultural life
KL: yeah
RG: but not in the sense that I was talking about it before perhaps. I think everybody has to some extent got a foot in the white camp to put it crudely. But anyway in answer to your question about barriers
KL: yeah
RG: looking at the first category that I delineated previously, that is the traditional cultural context
KL: yeah
RG: I mean one obvious barrier is that only a relatively small part of the Aboriginal male population in Australia have the opportunity to be, to participate in traditional lawmaking and traditional business. Because most, in most parts of Australia that structure has been lost, to participate in traditional lawmaking and traditional business.
KL: later in life
RG: you know in his 60s or something
KL: yeah, mm hm
RG: as a as a mature man
KL: yep
RG: with a whole life
KL: yeah
RG: in another world
KL: yes
RG: so presumably he could have made a choice to participate earlier but he chose not to
KL: yeah, mm
RG: so that's a barrier. Another barrier is that there is a stigma, hostility and to some extent legal prohibition against participating in ceremony. It's frowned on as being primitive
KL: yeah
RG: and savage and a secret so it's feared by the mainstream
KL: yeah
RG: and it's regarded as being a system which supports violence, particularly violence against women and children indirectly, so for that reason it's regarded in many parts of Australia as being something that needs to be stamped out. That's a very significant issue and it's a significant barrier I would think for a young Aboriginal man growing up in Alice Springs, but exposed to these messages all the time
KL: mm
RG: that they need to turn their back on, the old ways because they're uncivilised and they need to direct themselves towards modern, more civilised life. I think it's really a serious issue and I think that it's a barrier which is, I'm sure that for you know young people say, in their early 20s or late teens, that have grown up in Central Australia and have been, had a foot planted firmly in mainstream society by going to school and so on. I think for them at times, that must be an exceptionally difficult problem to have to face. As far as barriers to success in the mainstream world, in a way it's just the other side of the same coin, in that Aboriginal men, perhaps more than just about any other identifiable group, possibly with the exception of young visibly Islamic men, who are stigmatised now very strongly are subject to fear and hatred in the strongest form but in a less strong form suspicion and
KL: mm
RG: low expectations by the mainstream, because it's notorious that Aboriginal men are far more likely to commit offences and be incarcerated than anybody else. Notorious that Aboriginal women are far more likely to be bashed up than anybody else and they generally get bashed up by Aboriginal men
KL: yeah
RG: so being Aboriginal man in Central Australia in particular about Australia in general, ah means that you are stereotyped by people you don't know, but who see you when you walk down the street as being a loser and quite possibly as being a violent loser.
KL: yeah
RG: and that must have a profoundly demoralising effect
KL: yeah
RG: on a lot of men
KL: mm
RG: and there are, that's a sort of a cultural and psychological barrier, but there are very significant structural barriers as well. Because
KL: yeah
RG: maybe Aboriginal men as boys grew up in households which were chaotic, violent, poor, overcrowded and unhealthy and as a result, their experiences were stunted and plagued by ill-health and dysfunction and learning difficulties and a host of other factors which contributed to them not being able to perform well at school when they went to school or perhaps not even going to school very much
KL: mm
RG: that in turn means that their opportunities to become powerful in the mainstream world
KL: yeah
RG: are grossly impaired. This is a really serious problem too because it means that the barriers that young man's face a result of things that happen to them when they were babies and infants and toddlers
KL: mm hm
RG: and that the die has sort of been cast by the time they even get to kindergarten
KL: yeah, yep
RG: and they're stuck with that and not to mention, I will mention it as well as is what I should have said the barriers that come from the history of coming from generations of family who have got stories of dispossession and disempowerment and victimisation and incarceration and poverty, which are handed down so you grow up as a child who is taught
KL: mm
RG: that the family you come from are people who have been unable to do a fair go
KL: yeah
RG: so you're grown up to believe that that's going to be your lot as well
KL: mm
RG: I'm, I'm, obviously I'm generalising. I'm not saying that that's
KL: yeah
RG: a complete picture of what life is for young Aboriginal men, but I'm answering a question about
KL: yeah
RG: barriers, well these are the barriers
KL: yeah, that's exactly, truly there
RG: um, I think to that there's an additional sort of structural barrier and that is when young Aboriginal men get to education, or higher education and training and employment
KL: mm
RG: they're usually working in, or studying or training in institutions which are not particularly geared to the specific needs of people from the Aboriginal community
KL: mm
RG: so for example if people have got responsibilities to leave their place of study or work to attend some sort of family commitment, you know general or something like that, the workplace or training institution may not be able to accommodate that
KL: yess, mm
RG: they're a mainstream institution and they just don't have that sort of flexibility. Yeah, so that's another barrier which adds to the other ones that I've been talking about. And finally, this is sort of ironic, there's the barrier that young Aboriginal men often face, not just men but Aboriginal people in general, often face when they do find themselves in a position of power, because they've, despite the odds, got themselves the, the good position or the high status position or a professional qualification, so much fuss is made of them as being the heroes who triumphed over all the barriers
KL: mm
RG: that it's not uncommon for those people to then be immediately saddled with the burden of unrealistically high expectations
KL: mm
RG: and on many occasions being parachuted into positions of responsibility, which they just haven't got the experience and skills to be able to successfully discharge
KL: mm hm
RG: which in turn leads to them failing and that only reinforces the stereotype that they were losers all along, in the first place
KL: yeah, yeah
RG: this happens in offices like the ones you and I have worked in, but it also happened on the sporting field, it happens everywhere. Because everybody really loves to see a successful Aboriginal person triumph against the odds and when they do so, look what happened to Adam Goodes, Australian of the year
KL: mm
RG: you know, a classic if rather extreme example of how the pressures and Buddy Franklin another great footballer
KL: mm
RG: and like, star. The pressures to succeed can be absolutely overwhelming
KL: yes, yes
RG: and the abuse that comes with it
KL: yes
RG: and part of the abuse that comes with it sadly is often within the very community that that person came. They seem to beflash
KL: yeah
RG: that they seem to have to, turned their backs on their people
KL: yeah
RG: because they got successful
KL: mm hm
RG: you know, being successful in a demoralised community means staying down in that community, mixed in the problems and poverty and violence of that community and if you get out of it, you're a traitor. So I've seen many people who have been stifled by their own families and communities simply because they have managed to claw their way to a more successful
KL: yeah
RG: that position and that perhaps hurts more than any of the other sorts of vilification
KL: mm
RG: that they're exposed to. So there's some pretty significant barriers to empowerment
KL: mm hm. Oh look fluss thank you very much for that. Now this looks at sorta, kinda, you know, some of those things are tied to this next question, which is like programmes, what kind of programmes, you know where this Men's Shed could hopefully develop or design, that could help these Aboriginal men? In regards to transitioning into this modern world or, or you know this whole new process really. Is there any, any little program that come to mind that you might want to share? Where um, I have sorta sessions with men and that and then what sorta kinda comes to sorta kinda, ah evidence is that men will say hey I want to learn how to read
RG: mm
KL: I want to learn how to speak English. There's no real place or process where they can actually in their comfort, learn how to actually speak English or learn how to even read English
RG: I'm very good at analysing problems and identifying challenges and barriers and Lehen fitz came to Alice Springs, which was 15 years ago I used to think that I was pretty good at identifying solutions
KL: yeah
RG: I'm not so good at that any more. Because I've seen so many well- intentioned, carefully designed programs fail and fall

But I’ve kind of lost the confidence to be able to say, this works, this is what we should do.

For example, you’re saying people want to learn english and read and write. Well! Worked in an organisation for 10 years where that’s what we were doing. We were doing english such as, you’ve in a community and you decide you want to drink, you say to your next sister brother or cousin, “Hey we should go into town for drinking” or for a drink.

And then, he’s going, yeah you should, okay well let’s get some money but we don’t have a car! Okay well we go and ask so and so and we borrow his car and we’ll do a run into town. And then so on the way into town, they can sorta like, ring up when they get into mobile reception, they’ll get up and so if we, and so on and so on, then you then know you then try and for you, ‘cause you get your residential address ‘okay yeah, oh not that person, we go this way.’ Then “you know you what you’ve actually done?” You’ve actually planned this whole process with an objective to actually have a drink, that’s the main goal. But you had a conversation you expanded on an idea, then you expanded on resources and pooling your money together, and then you sorta like said okay well it’s gonna cost us either way. It costs us to hve this car, fuel, and then actually when we get to town, who’s gonna’ buy it for us? We’ve then gonna’ take a percentage of money for that as well.” So I said “what you’ve actually done is planned business. 101 Group consultation, meeting sorta kinda setting goals and meeting that goal and putting resources attached to it, so you did mainstream business.” So just put a label on it and they go “oh” and I said “this is what you have, you already have the skill set, it’s just seemed different. But what you gotta realise, that’s a good skill set if you ever want to get into business and do a real life business. Like being a butcher, baker, candlestick maker in your remote community.” And they go “oh!” I said “you’ve already got it, it’s just you were gonna’ put a different, different label on it” and that’s when they realise “oh that’s what we should be doing” or “that’s how we could actually get engaged in the western world” I said “yes”!

Work with that first example you were giving of the picture of the way a shed would work with mechanic’s boys and people use their natural aptitudes and skills to fix up whatever it is, and then assuming that could lead to employment. Ah, that last little bit “and that could lead to employment,” I think is a huge part of what I imagine a successful Aboriginal Men’s Shed model might be.

It remind me off, it’s, it’s problematic though. It reminds me of something that Mr Bray who used to work with me and he died a couple of weeks ago.

Yeah. He always used to say, and he always used to refer to himself ironically as ah, this little black kid he’d call himself Mr Bray.

So this little black kid has been a trainee all his life.

And he was sick and tired of always being a trainee.

And there was a lot of truth in what he had to say, that there is this tendency to set up programmes where people are given pretend jobs to do, but they know, everybody knows, it’s not a real job and they don’t of course get real money.

And I think a real trap for an Aboriginal Men’s Shed would be it’s yet another variation on the ‘little black kid’ trainee.

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But this is not really the case here where you can really apply kind of like a job. So actually lining people up with their skill sets that they actually have, or if they, like, like an example that I use with one of the senior’s is this, say, “you’re in a community and you decide you want to drink.”

You say to your next sister brother or cousin, “hey we should go into town for drinking” or for a drink.

And then, he’s going, yeah you should, okay well let’s get some money but we don’t have a car! Okay well we go and ask so and so and we borrow his car and we’ll do a run into town. And then so on the way into town, they can sorta like, ring up when they get into mobile reception, they’ll get up and so if we, and so on and so on, then you then know you then try and for you, ‘cause you get your residential address ‘okay yeah, oh not that person, we go this way.’ Then “you know you what you’ve actually done?” You’ve actually planned this whole process with an objective to actually have a drink, that’s the main goal. But you had a conversation you expanded on an idea, then you expanded on resources and pooling your money together, and then you sorta like said okay well it’s gonna cost us either way. It costs us to hve this car, fuel, and then actually when we get to town, who’s gonna’ buy it for us? We’ve then gonna’ take a percentage of money for that as well.” So I said “what you’ve actually done is planned business. 101 Group consultation, meeting sorta kinda setting goals and meeting that goal and putting resources attached to it, so you did mainstream business.” So just put a label on it and they go “oh” and I said “this is what you have, you already have the skill set, it’s just seemed different. But what you gotta realise, that’s a good skill set if you ever want to get into business and do a real life business. Like being a butcher, baker, candlestick maker in your remote community.” And they go “oh!” I said “you’ve already got it, it’s just you were gonna’ put a different, different label on it” and that’s when they realise “oh that’s what we should be doing” or “that’s how we could actually get engaged in the western world” I said “yes.”

Work with that first example you were giving of the picture of the way a shed would work with mechanic’s boys and people use their natural aptitudes and skills to fix up whatever it is, and then assuming that could lead to employment. Ah, that last little bit “and that could lead to employment,” I think is a huge part of what I imagine a successful Aboriginal Men’s Shed model might be.

It remind me off, it’s, it’s problematic though. It reminds me of something that Mr Bray who used to work with me and he died a couple of weeks ago.

Yeah. He always used to say, and he always used to refer to himself ironically as ah, this little black kid he’d call himself Mr Bray.

So this little black kid has been a trainee all his life.

And he was sick and tired of always being a trainee.

And there was a lot of truth in what he had to say, that there is this tendency to set up programmes where people are given pretend jobs to do, but they know, everybody knows, it’s not a real job and they don’t of course get real money.

And I think a real trap for an Aboriginal Men’s Shed would be it’s yet another variation on the ‘little black kid’ trainee.

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But this is not really the case here where you can really apply kind of like a job. So actually lining people up with their skill sets that they
Interviewee Brian Haynes

Date 27/09/2016

KL: so you've got a bit of an idea of what you're going to do but then I think it's important to have the mechanism in place that once you've got your participants in, it'll be the men deciding forward. Okay, what are we going to do? What are the options we want to run? I won't say that sounds fantastic. I can just tease out the mechanism of fixing cars? Or the …

BH: yeah, KL: that aspect, could you just …

BH: the reason I was mentioning that is, I don't know if you're aware but in the past has involved in a programme called Deadly Tradies, which was for young men, kids.

KL: fantastic.

BH: and it was fixing bikes. So what you find is as they get a bit older, they're all interested in cars. I don't know if you've, did you ever watch that series 'Busch Mechanics'.

KL: yes, yes

BH: fantastic.

KL: yes laughs.

BH: just brilliant show. So old too.

KL: yeah, yeah

BH: that was made 30 years ago.

KL: yeah

BH: I could not believe that was made like 30 years ago and from our experience with young men, they're all interested in cars.

KL: yeah

BH: absolutely all interested in cars. Men fix motor, I don't - I'm talking other men, not me!

KL: yeah, yeah, yeah, mm

BH: I get it, I get you know men that are interested in cars to fix mine. It's just an example, I just kind of think that you have a shed, so if you have your Men's Shed, dedicated on the facility there, it may be you've got garage space where you can get some tools donated and you get, you know men workin' on cars and stuff. Now not all men are going to be into working on cars.

KL: mm

BH: but that's a, you know that's one idea. But I think you'll find that a lot, almost all men at some stage will be tinkering with cars.

KL: yeah, that's right.

BH: so you're looking at a bit of both and that also becomes such a great social gathering because you're still doing, you still doing all the other stuff. Some of the blokes' will sit and have a cuppa tea, watchin' the people working on the cars.

KL: yes, that's right, yes.

BH: others'll get into it.

KL: yeah

BH: you know and then you can have a, as we all know, servicing vehicles, repairing the vehicles is all very expensive.

KL: wow, wow.

BH: we also have the issue of course with, you know people not being able to drive their cars because they become unroadworthy or whatever. So why not train people on how to fix that sort of thing?

KL: and have that where you know, you eventually have it where they could bring their own cars in and everyone's workin' on their own car to fix up. Again, just, you know it'll depend on the interest of the people you end up attracting.

KL: yes

BH: whether they're into that, but yeah I mean I think that's one idea that could operate from there.

KL: so yep, fantastic. Look, you've certainly answered a lot of sorts questions in regards to just what you're sharing as your story. It's fantastic. So what are some of the actual programmes that you, you know what kind of, like a men's shed to do?

BH: I think it's, as I was saying I do think, I think there's a couple of key programmes it could run, from a Men's Shed and then as I say, and I think it's important to have the mechanism where, when you get a certain group of participants will then decide, well hey they'll come up with the idea, 'hey why don't we do this?' or whatever.

KL: yeah

BH: I think one of the ones we do, I suppose it depends on age. I mean we do mostly with young men.

KL: yeah

BH: up to about 25, I'm not sure

KL: yeah right.

BH: I'm not sure whether there's gonna be an age target or.

KL: all men.

BH: I assume it's open to all men.

KL: all men.

BH: yeah so you'll get a mixture. The other issue we had with young men for example is licenses and learners permits, the books. You know, you get the books in there.

KL: yeah

BH: build up a resource library.

KL: yeah, mm hm

BH: so young men can come in and think, 'oh look I've gotta get my learner permit, is there somebody who can give me a hand with that?' I know that they do some of the stuff online now, so you can do a bit of you, can do a lot of your research online. So you know, it'll be good to have access to the Internet there.

KL: mm

BH: I'm assuming these are the things that probably be looked at.

KL: yeah

BH: I think that the benefit of the Men's Shed could also be a men's resource.

KL: yeah

BH: centre so to speak.

KL: mm

BH: so, away from the concept of socialising, other men to talk to I think the world is your oyster as far as what you could offer from there.

KL: yeah, mm

BH: and I think we've been talked recently about setting up a learner permit programme for young kids. So we're talkin'.

KL: yeah

BH: 15, 16-year-old kids, for learner permit. The older ones you might find, it could be someone that doesn't have their license any more, but wants to get it. Maybe they're getting it.

KL: yeah

BH: in trouble with the cops because they're driving.

KL: yeah

BH: with no license.

KL: mm hm

BH: so, you know a resource centre so you just have a little kit, that if anyone come in and said 'oh, you know I'd love to get my license back', or whatever. All the info there. Alright well this is what you've gotta do. I don't know you link in with other organisations that do that.

KL: yeah

BH: the experts in that.

KL: mm hm

BH: you know they may come and say 'oh okay well we'll come run a Thursday afternoon group for you'.

KL: yeah

BH: for anyone interested in learner permit license stuff.

KL: yeah

BH: come to this one-hour group or whatever.

KL: wow

BH: you know so I think, I think that sort of thing would be handy. It's a bit like what I was saying to you as well, I think one of the things that I'll be exploring further.

KL: yeah

BH: next year.

KL: yeah

BH: too much happening at the moment, is the lack of resources within Alice Springs that many other communities have got.

KL: yeah

BH: like the neighbourhood, every suburb in other towns have got neighbourhood houses.

KL: mm hm

BH: now in those neighbourhood houses you offer things like, you know you might have, it'll go from young people to old people. So you might run the odd literacy course, they'll come in and do a literacy programme, Tuesday afternoon.

KL: mm hm

BH: or whatever. As mentioned the, you might say well 'yeah we're running Thursday afternoon basic motor mechanics'.

KL: mm hm

BH: people interested in that. Wednesday afternoon we're gonna do a 'Deadly Tradies' thing.

KL: mm

BH: so you bring your kids in with their bikes and we'll get some people in that know how to repair bikes. So a community centre, the concept of a community centre is very similar to.

KL: mm hm

BH: a Men's Shed except that a community centre is aimed at all.

KL: yes

BH: members, whereas the Men's Shed's you know specifically for men to have their space.

KL: yeah, yeah

BH: so it doesn't mean though that you can't run some of the same concepts that you would run from a community centre.

KL: yeah

BH: that would, you know that men would be interested in doing so …

KL: I just think the, it's so exciting.

KL: yeah

BH: I just think the opportunities that you could do.

KL: mm hh, fantastic. Look will move onto this couple more questions.

BH: yep.

KL: in regards to Aboriginal men's empowerment, I just like to know sorta idea, what you do sorta kinda see as um, or linked um empowerment of Aboriginal men? What do you, what do you see as the

BH: well look, I can only talk a white fellas perspective.

KL: yeah, yeah, mm hm

BH: a lot of the Aboriginal young people that we deal with.

KL: yeah

BH: a lot of the young people, they wanted tell their stories.

KL: yeah

BH: our young people get so excited when I sit there and they're tellin' me and their whole face lights up.

KL: wow

BH: and they're telling me about where they're from.
KL: Yeah
BH: Their homeland and they talk about you know, All the stuff that I just do not understand
KL: Yeah
BH: I think the stronger depth of that
KL: Yeah
BH: Where they’re in a space where they can openly talk about that
KL: Mm hm
BH: I think that within our organisation, kids are reluctant to just come out with it
KL: Yeah
BH: That got to be asked the question
KL: Yeah
BH: You know and from my point of view too, I’ve got to be try to be knowledgeable as to not ask the wrong questions or say...
KL: Yes, yes, yes
BH: or say “hey if you wanna tell me a story I’d love to hear it”
KL: Yeah
BH: So I think also a lot of that’s got to come from them
KL: Yeah, yeah
BH: One of the things that we try to do with the resource centre that we just set up for example. We’re not an Indigenous specific organisation
KL: Yeah, mm hm
BH: But you know, 80-90% of our clients are Indigenous
KL: Yeah, mm
BH: So um, I think they can tell their story, they can share their story. Other people within there are gonna understand
KL: Yeah
BH: Now me as a white fella does, don’t automatically understand
KL: Yes, yes
BH: Whereas if you’ve got other Indigenous people there do they, they get it
KL: Yes
BH: You know it doesn’t have to be explained to them
KL: Yeah
BH: Whereas with me it’s gotta be explained deeper
KL: Yeah, mm hm
BH: For me, but you know the opportunity, and again most of my experience has been with young
KL: Yeah
BH: Young men, young Indigenous men and they just wanna tell the story and they wanna know more about
KL: Oh wow
BH: You know the history of that sort of thing
KL: Yes
BH: So you know again, you know it may be a resource centre based around their stories you know
KL: Yes
BH: Do they wanna be the ones that build that story for their community? Rather than it being there already
KL: Yeah
BH: You know parts could be, “oh okay where you from”
KL: Yeah
BH: You know yeah so I always find that really fascinating because, a lot of our kids you just see the whole, how their face lights up
KL: Wow, yep
BH: That’ll be a kid you’ve got almost nothing from, and you’ll just say “do you want something to eat?” yeah
KL: Yeah
BH: But then you say you know “tell me your story” what, they’ve got to trust you though
KL: Laughs yeah
BH: They don’t just blurt it out
KL: Yes, yes
BH: But once you’ve built that rapport, KL: Yeah
BH: And I know, you know recently I’ve learnt a lot, from young, young kids, tellin’ me you know, things about where they’re from, where their mum’s from
KL: Yeah
BH: How that connects, the language
KL: Yeah
BH: And how you know things about skin and all that
KL: Yes
BH: And I had no concept of any of that stuff
KL: Ah yeah
BH: Yeah so you know, to a white fella they’ve gotta explain it a lot more in-depth
KL: Yeah
BH: Before we start understanding, whereas you know, I think they do like to tell their story
KL: But I suppose we started to actually unpack that within, within your sort of storytelling, is um, the barriers as well so it’s all within that
BH: Yeah
KL: It’s just opening up the opportunity
BH: Mm
KL: To …
BH: Yeah, I think a big part of its gonna be Kenny as I say
KL: Yeah
BH: You know of course to set it up, you’ve gotta make some preconceptions, like
KL: Yeah
BH: You gotta think, well okay, this is what we think
KL: Mm hm
BH: I think there gotta be a mechanism within their so, once you, and we did the same similar to the resource centre and we do it with our youth refuge, you know we open it up. Well what do you want to see here? What, what do you, what would you benefit from?
KL: Yeah
BH: And I think that’s really important in ownership as well you know, that they own it
KL: Yeah, so um, just teasing out the ownership, what would you kind of like see as some of the things that they bring to the table
BH: I think you would, and again you know, I mean I’ve never directly opened a Men’s Shed
KL: Yeah
BH: I’ve had, I’ve had no real experience of Men’s Shed other than what I’ve read and
KL: Yeah
BH: That I’ve spoken to people about, participated in Men’s Sheds
KL: Yeah
BH: In other areas and I think what you find is different ones have got different themes
KL: Yes
BH: Because it’s based on what that community wants
KL: Mm hm
BH: So for example if you got a Men’s Shed out in a rural area
KL: Mm hm
BH: A lot of it is around rural, farming
KL: Yeah
BH: Stuff, if you’re in, you know if you’ve got a Men’s Shed maybe in the inner city
KL: Yeah
BH: The stuff they talk about is quite different
KL: Yeah
BH: From what the rural men might be talkin’ about
KL: Yeah
BH: And then there’s a little stuff that go right across all men, you know there’s certain issues that all men talk about
KL: Yeah, yeah, mm hm
BH: Whether you’re Aboriginal man or white fella
KL: Yeah, yeah
BH: From rural, from city. There’s core groups around health and that sort of thing
KL: Yeah
BH: That you know, you’ll all talk about. But I think what comes out is based on the group of men that are using it at the time and it may roll, so in other words, if you’ve got a group of 20, 30 men that are regularly using it
KL: Yeah
BH: What they want, maybe different in a year, if you get a rotate where you get a new group of men
KL: Yeah
BH: Those are like “oh no I want it …”
KL: Well that’s the empowerment
BH: Yep
KL: Aspect isn’t it
BH: Yeah
KL: As well
BH: Yeah
KL: Wow, okay look, we’ve don’t really, really fine here. Now in sorta like comin’ to the conclusion, is that um, is there sorta like anything that you can, will you know, would like to share that or, or think, that’ll be valuable for ah, lookin’ at Men’s Sheds aspects?
BH: That can be dangerous sometimes Kenny aking’ me
KL: Yeah okay
BH: My thoughts
KL: Yeah
BH: Because we could be here in three hours, I have thoughts on everything laughs
KL: Laughs
BH: You know, look the only thing I would add is that I just think it’s a wonderful idea
KL: Yeah
BH: And as I mentioned, I mentioned years ago
KL: Yeah
BH: That we need multiple Men’s Sheds
KL: Yeah
BH: Necessarily just one and I do think one specifically for Indigenous men, a really, really good idea. The thing I think the key aspects is that you think that I might want to look at from my perspective are gonna be location
KL: Yeah
BH: What sort of facility do you want, because you’ve gotta think of summers and things. People won’t come if it’s a hot
KL: Yeah
BH: Literally a shed, you know stuck in the middle of somewhere
KL: Yeah, true, true
BH: That can be a comfortable place, so I think there should be, you know I think a bit, a lot of thought put into where is going to be fairly central for men to get
KL: Yeah
BH: In and out of
KL: Yeah
BH: Comfortable to have outside spaces. As you know with the Indigenous men
KL: Yeah, yeah, yeah
BH: Very important. I think that’s quite different to white fellas. The white fellas would look at a building
KL: Yep
BH: We wouldn’t necessarily look at the sitting areas outside
KL: Yeah, true, true
BH: We look at where you have the barbecue
KL: Yeah
BH: And that’s it
KL: Mm hm
BH: As far as outside of the building goes
KL: Yeah
BH: I think with the Indigenous men that we’ve dealt with, the outside
KL: Yeah
BH: Is just as important
KL: Yes
BH: As the inside facility
KL: Oh yeah laughs
BH: And again, again from a white fella’s perspective, I hate heat
KL: Yeah
BH: You know
KL: Yeah
BH: So in summer wouldn’t go
KL: Yes
BH: I’d be like “oh God no, that’s too hot. I’m not going there”
KL: Yes, me too
BH: So I think making sure that, that there is a place that this is a bit of a sanctuary for men too. That they can come in and during the summer there’s a nice cool area inside
KL: Yeah, mm hm
BH: They can sit and have a drink of water or a cuppa tea
KL: Yes
BH: And that’s there’s also a bit of an outdoor area they can go out, so. Cause the other thing I think you’ll find to Kenny is that as it develops, you’re not gonna get, like one great big Group of men
KL: Mm
BH: That are just talkin’ that whole time
KL: Yeah
BH: You’re gonna get, you might get a great group of men, some of’em will be sittin’ outside in their little group
KL: Yes
BH: Talkin’, don’t somethin’
KL: Mm
BH: While the others sitting inside in the cool, having a cuppa tea with
KL: That group
BH: And that’s just talkin’ that whole time
KL: Yeah
BH: You’ve gonna get, you might get a great group of men, some of’em will be sittin’ outside in their little group
KL: Yes
BH: Talkin’, don’t somethin’
KL: Mm
BH: While the other sitting inside in the cool, having a cuppa tea with
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BH: While the others sitting inside in the cool, having a cuppa tea with
KL: That group
BH: And that’s just talkin’ that whole time
KL: Yeah
BH: You’ve gotta get, you might get a great group of men, some of’em will be sittin’ outside in their little group
KL: Yes
BH: Talkin’, don’t somethin’
KL: Mm
KL: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, it's not gonna happen.

KL: What they're gonna want from that, I think, I think we can't take away the importance of their space.

KL: Yeah.

BH: That we set that up as their space.

KL: Mm.

BH: I think the other thing that's really important is to not put any mandatory stuff on, like "oh if you're coming here you have to participate in this group we have every Thursday".

KL: Yeah.

BH: It's "no"; it's "hey, mate if you want to, this is on. If you don't ..."

KL: Yeah.

BH: You go grab yourself a cuppa tea?".

KL: Yeah.

BH: "And say, that's no drama" and I think that that be really important.

KL: Yeah.

BH: Because people do try to enforce what they want people to do once they're there.

KL: Yeah.

BH: So I think it's gonna be really important to have the flexibility, the participants choose when they come. Do I wanna go in and help with that motor mechanic thing; that's happening there?

KL: Yeah.

BH: Or do I just wanna sit here on the computer with a cuppa tea?

KL: Yeah.

BH: And you can choose, so I think that's the other really important aspect.

KL: Mm.

BH: And again we try to do that at our youth centre.

KL: Yeah.

BH: So we have structured stuff.

KL: Mm.

BH: But if a client comes in, they don't have to participate in that and we don't say well you have to leave.

KL: Mm.

BH: You know we say "oh well that's all right, it's your space go and do whatever".

KL: Yeah.

BH: So I think that's quite important. People can come in and be involved as little or as much.

KL: Yeah.

BH: As they feel they wanna be. Um, the other issue I think too and again I'm not sure how you're gonna do that is how, how you set up that so that they do have control in a lot of that stuff.

KL: Yeah.

BH: I hear, you gotta maybe think about the ideas as to whether you're gonna have a reference group, a local board.

KL: Mm hm.

BH: As in participant group, you know I think that that's important as well.

KL: So I'm not sure.

KL: Yeah.

BH: What your thoughts are, and I know that you're in the early stages and you're discussing so, yeah so ways that they can participate and feel that they're actually involved in, in helping run the place, sort of thing.

KL: Yeah.

BH: And once they get ownership of that, I think you'll find a lot more of a connection to it.

KL: Yeah, yes that's right. Oh look Brian I'd like to use this opportunity to thank you very much for your time and it's been fantastic.

BH: My pleasure.

KL: And thank you. No worries mate. Good luck with it.

KL: Yeah, ta.

Interviewee Clive Rosewarne

Date

27/10/2016

KL: Ah, testing, um interview with Clive Rosewarne now Clive ...".

CR: Um.

KL: Ah, look ah Clive thank you very much for the opportunity to you know sit down and have a talk.

CR: Mm hm.

KL: About this Indigenous Aboriginal Men's Shed. So the first question is what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

CR: I think it's a good idea, um, for somewhere for men to be able to drop in, for blokes to come and, and be together. But the design of it, it's not, I don't think you can take it sort of an off-the-shelf sort of one.

CR: From the sort of same Men's Shed broad movement.

KL: No.

CR: Um, because there's elements I think, of that ethos of what a Men's Shed is — that can be done in a variety of different ways and I mentioned before that Ingkintja, with the drop in approach and the ah, the ah washing machines and they used to have, they come in and to do talks on Mondays in the backyard there. To me that's sort of the ethos of the Men's Shed.

KL: Yeah.

CR: It doesn't necessarily have to have any lathes sitting in a corner or you know that sort of thing or workout equipment or [inaudible]?

KL: Yeah.

CR: I think it's, it can have all that.

KL: Now on, on that note, is there another Men's Shed that you may be aware of in the community?

CR: I know that there is a maris, there is a Men's Shed.

KL: Mm.

CR: Ah, I haven't actually gone onto it myself.

KL: Yep.

CR: But I do know that there's one and I think it probably more the sort of classic, come do some work.

KL: Yes.

CR: Tinker on a car or something.

KL: Yeah.

CR: And then's been sort of, you know this, this sort of process as a way of engaging with guys has been done a few times in Alice Springs and certainly for Aboriginal blokes as well.

KL: Yeah.

CR: It was down at um, the old Little Sisters. Yeah it was when IAD was down there at some stage.

KL: Yeah.

CR: There was a Men's Shed down there, which was basically pulling cars apart.

KL: Wow.

CR: And young guys could drop in you know and unfortunately it got, I think they got a bit annoyed eventually because there were too many car wrecks and so, not that many cars.

KL: Yeah, right.

CR: But it gave guys something to do.

KL: So that programme itself was quite, quite attractive.

CR: What can I get immediately? I can get this I can contact the other blokes, um show off my skills, 'cause a lot of those guys, you know, we know they're very clever.

KL: Yes we do.

CR: Um, but sometimes if you are putting everything into a training programme they're not getting to look clever.

KL: Yeah.

CR: So it's sort of, that sort of, strength based stuff, I think.

KL: Yeah.

CR: Could work well.

KL: Yeah, mm hm.

CR: For an Aboriginal designed Men's Shed, is having people come in from a strengths base.

KL: Yeah, yeah, mm hm.

CR: Rather than just a drop in base.

KL: Oh, look thank you very much. So just move on to the next question, um we're looking at sorts of an Aboriginal men's empowerment. Now what do you think empowers an Aboriginal man?

CR: I'd say from from, from an outside perspective, it is men who feel strong in their culture. Who, that cultural strength though is a reciprocal one where they, where they know that they're going to, they're getting other men, who, who are around them as well and that they are, you know it's part of that ongoing process of being a cultural man. Rather than maybe what some young men, when they first come into culture.

KL: Yeah, yeah.

CR: Feel, I know it now. Yeah.

KL: Yeah.

CR: And certainly the men I know, the old men, it's, they know they're part of a learning, a bigger learning process. So I'd say cultural strength.

KL: Yeah.

CR: Um, and family.

KL: Yeah.

CR: Which is part of that, they're not, they're hard to separate but that connection to land, connection to family, that sense of reciprocal responsibility.

KL: Yeah, mm hm.

CR: And being able to enact that.

KL: Yeah.

CR: Gives purpose gives I think people a strong position.

KL: I think that's an example of the sort of barriers.

CR: And that's we're often dealing with, that aren't that historical.

KL: Yeah.

CR: So out of what was obviously a, a fraught and potentially upsetting process, this, the report, getting Little Children Are Sacred report, I think that's a modern day implementation of that same policy.

KL: Wow.

CR: What did the Intervention do? Came along and immediately took away a lot of the jobs that men had, through CDEP.

KL: Mm.

CR: Then opened up communities for any Tom, Dick and Harry to come into.

KL: Yeah.

CR: And then the NT Government came along and destroyed the rest of the jobs.

KL: Wow, yeah.

CR: So, out of what was obviously a, a fraught and potentially upsetting process, this, the report, getting Little Children Are Sacred report.

KL: Mm hm.

CR: Done. It could have actually, developed a positive programme for men.

KL: Mm.

CR: A positive role for men, in.

KL: Yeah.

CR: In implementing its outcomes, instead you have a government so, I think that's an example of the sort of barriers.

KL: Mm.

CR: That's we're often dealing with, that aren't that historical.

KL: Mm.

CR: Um, we know that historical barriers of colonialism.

KL: Mm hm.

CR: And the stolen generation and so on, but what we're seeing now is a modern day implementation of that same policy.

KL: Yeah.

CR: To come along and, almost look and ask "who we gotta hit over the head?"

KL: Yeah.

CR: To look good, 'oh there's some black blokes, we can hit them over the head and'

KL: Yeah.

CR: We'll position women as the victims.

KL: Yeah.

CR: So we'll look good. So we disempower the women as well.

KL: Yeah, yeah.

CR: 'Cause they're just characterised as victims.

KL: Yeah.
CR: and they’re perpetrators
KL: yeah
CR: and I’m not part of this. I’m white, I’m back over here
KL: yeah, yeah
CR: in Canberra or even in Alice Springs*
KL: wow, yeah
CR: you know, they’re the sort of barriers I think
KL: mm
CR: which are really hard because it also attempts to, it doesn’t understand Aboriginal family values
KL: yeah
CR: It actually tries to separate the men and women
KL: yeah
CR: which is not my understanding of what anybody wants here
KL: yeah
CR: um, so those sorts of barriers need to be called out and then
protective programmes need to be put in
KL: yeah
CR: to help break some of the other barriers so
KL: yeah
CR: when you’ve got family breakdowns happened because of these
pressures
KL: yeah
CR: and men feel they’re gonna blow up
KL: yes, yes
CR: where do they go?
KL: true
CR: one of the things we found when we did the Inkingorta study, and it had been a long-standing demand of men right back to the 1980s
KL: yeah
CR: right back? I think it might even be in that, those early works
KL: yeah, yeah
CR: with your dad and Pam, I think we managed to reference it in there. People said they wanted a men’s shelter, for want of a better word
KL: yeah, in them
CR: and it wouldn’t, “oh you know they’re taking the Mickey and the men are getting beaten up oh poor things”,
KL: yeah
CR: some men are, getting beaten up. But it was like that, where to go
when you’re about to explode
KL: yeah
CR: somewhere that’s open 24 hours
KL: yeah
CR: that a bloke can go, instead of going out on the street and doing something wrong, whatever it is, going with a woman, smashing something
KL: yeah
CR: drug, whatever
KL: yeah
CR: slipping back into getting drunk because possibly they’ve stopped. You need somewhere they can go where there’s Aboriginal blokes who can help. Cool um down, have some time out. Tell the family they’re safe
KL: yeah
CR: “he’s not with someone else”, laughs “he’s here with us.”
KL: yeah
CR: you know
KL: “he’s not at the pub”
CR: “he’s not at the pub”
KL: yeah
CR: “there’s no further stuff gonna happen” you know, “he’s here”
KL: mm
CR: “and he’ll stay with us until he’s …? Now I don’t know if you’d call
that a Men’s Shed
KL: yeah
CR: but it’s certainly an extension of the idea of somewhere for men
to go
KL: well that’s sorta kinda teasing the idea out in regards to some of the programmes that we’d
CR: mm
KL: you know like um, probably think about, you know that we need to
look at. Like what are the programmes that we need? Well exactly
some of the things that you highlighted
CR: yeah and that’s why I think in terms of an Aboriginal Men’s Shed
KL: yeah
CR: we may be looking at something different than the white fella
KL: yeah
CR: old retiree
KL: he wants to go and, he’s at home in his nice quiet house and
KL: yeah
CR: probably his wife’s died and he’s lonely
KL: yeah
CR: or he’s kicked out of work, been sitting at home
KL: yeah
CR: I think we’ve got maybe some different models
KL: mm
CR: we shouldn’t, that’s why I don’t think the, the
KL: mm
CR: mainstream one necessarily would fit
KL: oh fantastic laughs. Um look that sorta kinda pretty much yeah
concludes the structured type questions, but is there anything that
you’d like to share that we have, I may not have covered in this little semi structured questions? That ah, you’d like to share?
CR: um, no look I think yeah just sort of think it’s really important that we
don’t get caught in a structure
KL: that is um, may work fine elsewhere
CR: um, and I’m sure even in the mainstream there’s different versions of Men’s Sheds
KL: mm
CR: between old blokes and young blokes and unemployed and
everybody doing something different. But here, I think you know
people joke about that, you know there’s, that, that term ‘social capital’
KL: yeah
CR: you know? And they talk about how sort of a lot of people you
know, don’t have much social capital and that is like the poor old
fella
KL: yeah yeah
CR: who’s home by himself and yeah I’ve had Aboriginal people say to
me, “I’m fairly rich with social capital” laughs. No shortage of people
KL: yeah yeah
CR: contacts. I’m not lonely
KL: yeah yeah
CR: but where do I go to get away from them maybe
KL: yeah, true
CR: is what I want and maybe we look at what are, what are the
assumptions behind why someone would want to use a Men’s Shed
KL: yeah
CR: need to be addressed. Because if we just think it’s ‘cause these guys are lonely
KL: mm
CR: or they’ve got nowhere to go
KL: yeah
CR: I think we might be missing
KL: yeah
CR: that actually they’re not lonely. They are lonely internally
KL: yeah, yeah
CR: they’re not lonely in terms of lack of contact
KL: yeah yeah
CR: all they do is have plenty of places to go
KL: yeah
CR: and some of those places aren’t good places for them to go to
KL: yeah
CR: um, so maybe we’re looking at, they need, this is more a place they
can get away
KL: yeah
CR: and how do we create that and protect that, in a way where it’s safe
for them to get away?
KL: yeah
CR: and they’re, they’re not gonna have someone
KL: yeah that’s true
CR: coming after them. So if it’s a male only place, that’ll be respected
KL: yeah
CR: with whatever format we’ve got
KL: yeah
CR: um, but yeah the thinking behind why, who’s the audience?
KL: yeah
CR: and, and what do they want?
KL: mm
CR: why would they want to come to somewhere?
KL: yes, yeah
CR: I’m not only what they might tell you, you want, but what you can
interpret from what you want and you know, certainly the guys
who are using Inkingorta on a Monday and Tuesday sessions when
they used to come in there, was there a certain sort of self-serving part
of it
KL: mm mm
CR: um, they got to deal with their clothes
KL: yeah
CR: they got a feed. But while they were there they also got engaged
in talks
KL: yeah
CR: and the talks ranged from everything. Like there was a huge range
the police came in some weeks to talk to them about how the court
system works. The court people came in, Someone came in and
teach them how to cook on a wok
KL: mm
CR: someone else, I went and did some talks about the um, Angela
Pamela Uranum deposit
KL: oh yeah
CR: that was hot at the time. Um, you know you can get anybody to
come and talk to a group of people who want and, and that I think
is the other thing that I, I think a Men’s Shed should then to try and
do is a way of being a referral centre on. ‘Cause when the Men’s
Shed was being setup at the back of Congress, one of the things I,
I mentioned was, “we’ll don’t try and have everything in it”
KL: yeah
CR: if some guy comes in and says he wants to do welding
KL: yeah
CR: get someone else to bring a welding set over, show him how to do it
and then try and enrol him in a welding course
KL: yeah
CR: over at CDU
KL: yeah
CR: don’t set up everywhere here
KL: yeah
CR: be a referral. Have your contacts where you can go “yeah, you want
you to do that” You bring someone in, or you take them there and
you stay with them for the day
KL: yeah
CR: while they’re getting they’re feet and feeling comfortable
KL: woe
CR: help them to clean themselves up if that’s necessary before they go
KL: yeah
CR: to help them feel confident. That sort of, you know it’s very labour
intensive
KL: yes
CR: but um, I think you, we’re at the stage with a lot of men that that’s,
you know we need that intensive support
KL: yeah
CR: not just for men, for families. We know it, you know that intensive
programs work
KL: yes, yeah
CR: and we can’t just go “oh we’re just gonna worry about the little
kids”
KL: yeah
CR: you know because that’s like saying, “well you’re all, writing off all
you old blokes”
KL: yeah
CR: “you’re a failure, your life’s shit”
KL: mm
CR: “and we’ll take the children”, again
KL: yeah
CR: it has a bit of that
KL: yeah yeah
CR: even though we’re not taking them from the house, we’re taking
them away from your world. If we bring them up thinking
KL: yeah
CR: well being able to read and write and have all these skills and you
don’t
KL: yeah
CR: that’s a bit, that’s pretty disempowering
KL: yeah
CR: and I think that’s one of the things, we go back to that issue about
what makes strong men
KL: yeah
CR: is, it is family connection and you don’t want to disconnect that
by
KL: yeah
CR: bringing up smart arsed teenagers laughs
KL: yeah
CR: who’ve got no respect, for the circumstances of their dads and
mums
KL: wow, oh look Clive thank you very much for your time and um, we’ll
sorta kinda conclude on that
CR: alright
KL: and ah, that gives us a lot of things to think about. Thank you very
much
CR: thank you for thinking of coming and talking to me
KL: yeah
…I think one of the main things that empowers Aboriginal men is obviously our cultural practice…when we practice culture it seems to appear that all men have a role and a responsibility in that space…'

(KMI_09)