PART 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A report, statement, recommendations and a five step action plan from the 400+ Aboriginal males who gathered at Inteyerrkwe (Ross River NT)

Features the historic -Inteyerrkwe Statement

The Summit and this report presented by:

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress-Alice Springs NT

www.caac.org.au/malehealthinfo
"We the Aboriginal males from central Australia and our visitor brothers from around Australia gathered at Inteyerrkwe in July 2008 to develop strategies to ensure our future roles as husbands, grandfathers, fathers, uncles, nephews, brothers, grandsons, and sons in caring for our children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.

We acknowledge and say sorry for the hurt, pain and suffering caused by Aboriginal males to our wives, to our children, to our mothers, to our grandmothers, to our granddaughters, to our aunties, to our nieces and to our sisters.

We also acknowledge that we need the love and support of our Aboriginal women to help us move forward.”
ABOUT THIS REPORT

This summit report has been prepared by the Congress Aboriginal Male Health team with the support of the summit facilitators and project managers Arrernte Workforce Solutions.

It is essentially a recording of the information exchanged, the issues raised and the recommendations generated from the summit workshops.

But most importantly it is all about developing a 5 step action plan to monitor in the long term the government’s and communities responses and commitments to our recommendations to address the underlying social and environmental factors contributing to child abuse.

Part 1-Executive Summary-An ongoing action plan that “will not gather dust”

We have summarized all the summit recommendations in an ongoing 5 step action plan

1. Workshop the issues and find solutions.
2. Develop and submit recommendations.
3. Get government to action our recommendations.
4. Measure the progress of governments and community actions.
5. Set up review mechanisms to monitor implementation

Part 2-What were the issues –What were solutions male delegates came up with!

In a separate report delegates and facilitators have listed all the issues and outcomes that came out of the workshops.

How often have you gone to a meeting or conference and when you later get the reports or minutes you cannot see your contribution. Well here are our delegates inputs “unedited”

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Explanation use words Male–Men--Man

At the summit and in its subsequent reports it was agreed that the preferred descriptor was “male” rather than “men” or “man” so as to avoid confusion about “men” as initiated males.

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SUMMIT MISSION AND GOALS

**Mission**

The 2008 Aboriginal Male Health Summit will focus on males understanding their roles as fathers, uncles, brothers and sons in caring for children in a safe family environment that leads to a happier, healthier, longer life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.

**Goals**

1. Acknowledge the hurt caused by a proportion of the male community against family and community members through violent acts, which are not historical cultural practices, which is shaming many Aboriginal males who are not violent;

2. Acknowledge Aboriginal males who already contribute to provide a safe healthy environment for their family, while reinforcing that; pornography, child abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and violence are not acceptable;

3. Provide knowledge to enhance the individual’s capacity to make behavioural changes in their community or family environment, to provide adequately for their children;

4. Reinforce the goals of the NT Intervention and the changes that are being implemented to assist them in making their family or community environment safe for their children; and

5. Provide recommendations to government and organisations on changes and support Aboriginal males believe are required to allow them to reach their true potential and take their place along side the wider community.
OUTCOMES

Outcomes for Aboriginal Male delegates:
There will be positive workshop engagement that can provide a clearer understanding of issues, help support behavioural changes and to address long term issues raised by the NT intervention and the 

Ampe Akelyerneman Meke Mekarle Little Children are Sacred Report

Outcomes for the community:
Develop recommendations for locally based action, local resourcing and tools to strengthen local control to make real changes.

Outcomes for the national agenda:
Develop new ideas and contributions to the current 2020 national policy agenda.

Projected outcomes

1. Approx 200-300 Indigenous males attend a summit that increases their knowledge of the responsibilities required of a parent or community member in providing for their children;

2. Delegates have increased knowledge of services and resources available to make responsible behavioural changes to better provide a supportive environment for children;

3. Delegates have an enhanced understanding of changes required under the NT Intervention to support children and their families;

4. Recommendations that provide a better understanding of the support males believe would assist them in their taking on the responsibilities
I would like to commence by paying my respects to the Eastern Arrernte people and their ancestors on whose lands the summit was held.

On behalf of the Aboriginal men from around Australia, I welcome all our visitors to the 2008 Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Male Health Summit.

I give recognition to the Aboriginal males who have come together over the three days working together to demonstrate their commitment to making their communities better places.

I also thank all those Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal facilitators, who have given their time to ensure that this Summit has been so successful. My thanks also to Arrernte Workforce Solutions for all aspects of event management.

Aboriginal males from across central Australia have come to Ross River to express their support for their brothers in the Northern Territory, following the roll out of the Federal Intervention a year ago.

This includes Aboriginal males from Cape York in Queensland, Mt.Isa, the central coast of New South Wales, Albany in Western Australia, and Adelaide in South Australia.

In total over 400 Aboriginal males have travelled to this place to discuss the health of themselves, their families and their communities.

There are many reasons why we held this Summit.

There has been over a decade of work by Aboriginal males to establish male health in the policy debates, but as I will outline later I feel we now need to move beyond the policy struggle to implementing the vision.

Nor can we, nor do we want to, ignore the “Little Children are Sacred” report’s findings and recommendations. Many of us contributed our feelings and ideas to the Inquiry co-chairs Pat Anderson and Rex Wild.

### Recommendation 1

**Unfinished business—we need action!**

This Summit calls on the Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government to respond to this final report within three months and establish long term action and review mechanisms.

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: OPEN DAY JULY 3 2008**

*John Liddle - Summit Chairperson-Central Australian Aboriginal Congress - Alice Springs*

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Nor can we, nor do we want to, ignore the “Little Children are Sacred” report’s findings and recommendations. Many of us contributed our feelings and ideas to the Inquiry co-chairs Pat Anderson and Rex Wild.
Here I remind you what Rex and Pat said: “Aboriginal males have been targeted as if they were the only perpetrators of child sexual abuse in communities.”

They confirmed that: “This is inaccurate and has resulted in unfair shaming, and consequent further disempowerment, of Aboriginal males as a whole”.

The Commonwealth Government’s Northern Territory Emergency Response or the Intervention as it is known, has also loomed large in our lives.

While some provisions, most notably additional, long sought after financing in our communities, are welcome, other aspects of the package have had mixed impacts, sometimes creating more disempowerment, sometimes creating opportunities for social and emotional breathing space.

But I would like to say that this Summit is really an outcome of the discussions that have occurred with Aboriginal males who have attended our Congress Male Health Service in Alice Springs over the last couple of years, particularly those who have attended and participated in our discussion and information sessions to move beyond the frustrations of being scapegoated and blamed for all the ills in our communities.

As one participant said to me, “Not all males are bastards!”

Congress agrees, and has seen many males come into our service, a unique service for Aboriginal males in central Australia, and confront their own problems and those of their community.

We have seen what a difference a responsive community-controlled service can make in people taking control of their lives.

That is what this Summit has been about, Aboriginal males taking control, not being given it, not having it forced upon them, but willingly taking up the difficult challenges that confront us all.

Our struggles have aspects that are at times unique to us as Aboriginal people in this country but also sometimes have things in common with other males in the Australian society. Patrick Dodson has been quoted that:

“There has been a process of undermining the role and status of Aboriginal males within our society since the early days of Australia’s colonisation and continuing in recent commentary around the Northern Territory Intervention”.

When you add to this the rapid changes in the role of males within that colonising society and the consequent dislocation of non-Aboriginal males and their struggle to define new self-images, it is no wonder that Aboriginal males may struggle to make sense of the contemporary world.

And if those critical views of us as Aboriginal males are expressed with no effort to understand our cultural values, or the pressures caused by the colonial relationships and contemporary social transformations, then we become alienated from this society.
This alienation is at the core of the struggle for male health and wellbeing, as it acts to debase males, stripping away their dignity and the meaning in their lives. We therefore need to confront these social relationships that shape our health.

This does not excuse inappropriate behaviour, but I believe may help explain our silences about the behaviour of those we know to be doing wrong.

This Summit is about reversing these imposed images of the dis-empowered Aboriginal male.

In doing so it draws upon the strengths of male culture as it still exists in our community and it draws upon the heritage of the many Aboriginal males and women who took control and established our community-controlled organisations over thirty years ago.

This change commences with the recognition that we are seeking our path as males, in two worlds, our Aboriginal culture and the broader Australian culture.

We know those males that we need to emulate and learn from in our culture; and we will work with our young males and male children to strengthen these cultural connections.

Our culture is a dynamic one that will meet challenges. As Summit participants we have pledged this to our communities.

We can’t ask others to do our work and we can’t expect that our demands will be easily met. Many vital reforms flounder in their execution.

Lets remember that it was nine years ago that the Learning Lessons report was written, seventeen years since the publication of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody final report and we are close to the 20th anniversary of the National Aboriginal Health Strategy.

Our task is to ensure that what we seek is within our power to pursue and achieve.

That doesn’t mean we don’t seek additional commitments from governments, but that we can, as they say in government ‘apply the blow torch’ to get the outcomes we want.

Our first task is to ensure that Aboriginal male health is understood as our wellbeing. In addition to notions of personal confidence and resilience, our wellbeing is intimately and inextricably placed in our cultural relationships with each other, our communities and our social interactions and status.

Therefore it is about the social relationships of our health.

The stories that we have shared in the last few days illustrate our state of health, and they can’t be broken down into body parts.

Do this and you keep undoing us, and you break us down as well.
For Aboriginal males to work on their health issues they need safe places to explore their health. We need more Aboriginal male health services like Congress, that deal with all aspects of our health, that have a community development role, that deal with the social relationships of our health.

These centres must be staffed with males; both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal who wish to work in this community development, or holistic primary health care framework. We need to initiate actions and work with our women, to re-invigorate the health and wellbeing of our communities.

There have been many proposals for concrete action on this at this Summit.

We have defined roles and talked about the necessary support needed that will allow more males to participate as fathers, uncles, brothers and sons in providing a safe and supportive environment for our children (and other members of our communities) to live happier, healthier and longer lives.

For us to achieve this we want all levels of government to empower our communities and to work in partnership with our traditional and cultural decision-making structures and processes.
The next steps

HOW WILL OUR FIVE STEP ACTION PLAN WORK

We have summarized all the summit recommendations in an ongoing 5 step action plan:

1. Workshop the issues and find solutions.
2. Develop and submit recommendations.
3. Get recommendations implemented.
4. Measure the results of government actions.
5. Set up review mechanisms to monitor implementation.

But most importantly it is all about developing a 5 step action plan to monitor in the long term the government’s and community responses and commitments to our recommendation to address the underlying social and environmental factors contributing to child abuse.
What will happen with these recommendations

“There is not a single action that the Commonwealth has taken so far that corresponds with a single recommendation. There is no relationship between their emergency powers and what’s in our report.”

Pat Anderson Author
Little Children Are Sacred Report
Media Interview June 2008

STEP 1. Workshops

By engaging in 8 specific workshops over 2 days delegates will individually and collectively have a better understanding of the support males believe will assist them in taking on the responsibilities to become good husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.

A comprehensive report on all workshop issues and outcomes is attached in part 2 of this report

The Workshop topics included

1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.
3. PORNOGRAPHY/SEXUALITY.
4. HEALTH: MALE WELLBEING.
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSE
6. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.
7. EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT.
8. ABORIGINAL CULTURE
1. All delegate/participants were allocated to one of 8 groups/teams and stayed in that team for all workshops over two days.

2. Over the next 2 days each group/team completed 8 workshop sessions.

3. Each workshop/session:
   - lasted for up to 1.5 hours
   - Had a qualified facilitator and a person who is specialised in that topic to work with the group for that workshop/session

4. Each group/team discussed a different topic to the others during each workshop/session and had a person to write up their ideas (a scribe) and a translator as required.

5. In the workshop/session there was a basic presentation by the facilitators (no longer than 10 minutes) to help start discussion. There was then discussion time for delegates to work out their ideas and share their feelings and come up with positive future recommendations from the group/team group.

6. At the end of that workshop/session the facilitators moved to the next group- taking that topic with them.

7. At the end of the second day each group presented a summary of their ideas to the summit delegates.

8. These ideas were linked together and presented back to the summit and visitors on the open day.
Workshop facilitators
Spiros Woods-Senior Aboriginal Health Worker-Great Southern AHS (WA)
Andrew Rush-Team Leader Father support-Children's Protection Society (VIC)
Michael Keane-Counsellor-Children's Protection Society (VIC)
Tony Evers-Community Mental Health Educator (WA)

WORKSHOP REPORT

Our workshop theme was “Children Are Our Future” with a particular focus on What Can Males Do to Keep Children Safe?

All the workshop topics at this summit touch and affect what happens for males, women, and children, so there was a high level of cross-influence and agreement across many discussions. Children were kept at the centre of discussions in our workshops.

As facilitators – 3 white males and one Noongar man – we came to this place from far away - Melbourne in Victoria and Albany in Western Australia. We came to listen to Central Australian Aboriginal Males talk about themselves, their children and their families, and this is what we heard.

The big theme was inclusiveness – bring families back together, work with the whole family, work with the whole community. Males want to be in families, are seeking acknowledgement and inclusion, and are prepared to put a lot of effort into that.

Many males feel that they have done well as fathers and family members – not perfectly, but well – and whilst acknowledging the dangerous, fearful, and distressing actions of some men, most males feel grossly misrepresented by ALL males being labelled with violence and abuse.

Males do want to take a role in caring for children and families but don’t always know how, and recognise that they need help with this that is positive and inclusive. Community empowerment, men’s centres and safe houses, for families as well as males, located within and run by communities were common themes.

We heard of many positive activities, initiatives, and strategies already in action within communities to restore and maintain safety for children and families – some recent, but many of long standing.

Males need to be feeling safe and empowered if they are going to take a positive role in keeping children and families safe – elements that are considered essential in supporting this include greater emphasis on culture, education, employment, and health, within and belonging to Aboriginal people.

Males are struggling with how to deliver discipline that is not violent inside families and communities where some elements are out of control. Many times we heard that males need to ensure that their characters, words, and actions are aligned and consistent – a need to “walk the talk”.

We heard of needs and aspirations that mirror those in the wider Australian community – Aboriginal males want the same things for their families that all fathers do, and a clear need was identified for sustainable long-term investment rather than erratic short-term funding to support this. This is seen as intergenerational business with a long-term time frame.

Finally, as facilitators we feel honoured and privileged to have been a part of this powerful and positive event – a big step in an important journey.”
The next steps

1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE/Keeping Children Safe

WORKSHOP REPORT

- Fathers have fights then ‘run away’ because they feel sad and confused and don’t know where to go for help. Removal from the situation is protective behaviour that is often interpreted as uncaring or irresponsible. Males need safe places to run TO – safe houses, centres, accessible support services.

- Establishment of places of healing for Aboriginal males, including men’s shelters/sheds’, short term ‘drying out’ places for males, and more resources for long-term rehabilitation of Aboriginal males with alcohol and other drug problems, preferably within their own community. Also ‘half-way’ houses to either give ‘time out’ or time to move slowly back into work/family/training, to be run by Aboriginal men. Also for Males AND Kids – address family disruption and distress, not just alcohol and drugs.

- Fathers are not able to discipline their kids like they used to; not able to give a ‘whack’ – kids tell the welfare – not able to show ‘tough love’; this is how they were brought up and there are not other ways of disciplining. Need to develop other ways of delivering discipline based on relationship and self-discipline. Develop discipline that is not violent – don’t just do what was done to us – but what to do about people who are out of control, not respectful, not listening?

- The operation of family services to be inclusive of males and for the establishment of more male-specific health programs. Programs for Aboriginal families need to incorporate men more as part of the family, and also develop programs for young fathers.

- Males find it hard to give cuddles because if kids say they get cuddles from father or grandfather, then these males get accused of abuse. More complete investigation of accusations and situations can lead to better outcomes (safety and protection for kids and families) and fairer consequences (perpetrators are identified and dealt with, innocent males are not labelled).

- Education and support for family budgeting and family/community financial management that will promote viability and sustainability.

- Consistent awareness, acknowledgement, and concern about violence.

- Promote everyday, local people as role models – “walking the talk”.

- Long term INVESTMENT rather than short-term/erratic/inconsistent funding in programmes and strategies to support sustainable change. This is intergenerational business.

- Promoting positive media portrayals of the ‘good work’ that IS happening.

- We need to make sexual abuse of kids a national issue, not just an aboriginal issue.

- We need to make pornography a national issue, not just an aboriginal issue – be consistent, not hypocritical.

- Mainstream need to accept that there is not one solution for all communities.

- Seeing each child as having their own issues, don’t treat them all the same.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Workshop facilitators
- Paddy Murray-General Counsellor-Men’s Programme-Centacare (NSW)
- Malcolm Frost-General Counsellor-Congress Alice Springs (NT)
- George Peckham-Community Liaison Officer-NT Legal Service Commission

WORKSHOP REPORT

Many of the solutions discussed in the groups around domestic violence, apply to a whole range of community wellbeing issues and were raised in other workshop discussions.

We would summarize the major solutions as follows in two parts:

1. Enabling Framework and

2. Practical Solutions. The enabling framework most probably applies to all workshop topics.

Enabling Framework

1. The starting point for all solutions is that they are arrived at through genuine consultation at the community level. Each solution should be carefully discussed and negotiated so that genuine community acceptance and backing for the solution is achieved.

2. Programmes should be resourced and committed to for a long term, to avoid the current mistrust of ‘stop go’ programme resourcing. This of course would be subject to review and adjustment of programmes around achievements of effective outcomes.

3. Properly trained male workers will need to be available to help negotiate, develop and assist in the running of programmes. This training is not currently available. The knowledge required to develop and run this training is available from a few key people in the NT and around Australia.

A suitable training programme needs to be established and located with an appropriate body such as Congress (CAAC). Without adequate training programmes are not likely to succeed.

Recognition of appropriate local cultural leadership skills and paying for them when used.

Invocation:

On ABC life matters 23 July 2008, two Kimberley elders and Jesuit Brian McCoy talked about Holding Men, the title of Brian’s new book.

When Brian was asked to suggest the way forward in relation to the intervention he spoke of:

Sitting down and listening with respect with each indigenous community. Respect their values and recognize strengths. When we always tell them what is wrong we hurt marginalize and shame.

We need to build on strengths that have been evident over thousands of years.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WORKSHOP REPORT

1. Community Courts: Use community based courts where possible. Explore concepts such as circle sentencing and restorative justice. Research and refine the effectiveness of community courts.

Develop a range of alternative sentencing programmes. Have a look and question the value of possible over use of shaming techniques, versus strength based and healing solutions.

2. Men's Centres – shelters: Their needs to be places in each community where men can go to dry out or quieten down to avoid violence and conflict. These centres' would need to be manned by males trained to assist males in this situation.

A range of other resources could also be available in these centres, around counselling, violence prevention groups, drugs and alcohol, education training and employment.

These centres could vary in size depending on the size of the community.

3. Men's Groups: (Building Strong Men) Men’s groups are a powerful technique to look at building strengths and avoiding problem behaviour, violence drugs and alcohol, sexual abuse poor parenting. Strong older males can then truly move into the eldering and mentoring role for younger men and boys. These groups already run successfully in other parts of Australia (Lismore Rekindling the Spirit Programme) and can be adapted for use in the NT.

They will need to be resourced by appropriate training mentioned in the enabling framework above.

4. Prison Rehabilitation and Transition: Large numbers of males are in prison for violence related offences. It was thought that these males were just dumped back into the community and often re-offended.

The provision of prison based violence prevention programmes should be maximized and some thought given to transition programmes.

Transition programmes could be at specialized camps or at the men’s centre/shelters and monitored by the community courts.

5. Positive Media - Men’s Storey’s: All workshops mentioned the lack of positive publicity about good males stories. The continual negative and problem based focus by the media on males created intense shaming and blaming which tends to lock males into negative low self esteem positions. This can lead to reinforcing negative behaviour. Particular mention was made of Imparja role in this.

Consideration should be given to resourcing a range of material especially audio visual material around good male story’s which can be used at all levels of community life, male groups, schools and media. This is a general social problem as media is basically about bad news not good news – So a male good news programmes should be a priority.
The next steps

3. PORNOGRAPHY

Workshop facilitators
Ken Vowles-Program Manager-Pornography Classification Education (NT)
Brad Wallace-Australian Federal Police
Brenton Peterson-Australian Federal Police

The outcomes from the Pornography workshop came about after much discussion including some education on the issue of pornography and effects on the community and social systems.

Some of the outcomes were practical outcomes targeting the availability of Pornography in the community. By limiting the availability of Pornography through sales and or marketing this will have an almost immediate impact on the availability or Porn in the community. Although it has been shown through previous attempts at prohibition that, attempts to limit and or control the availability of prohibited items does not control and or reduce the impact on the community it just pushes the market underground and creates a Black (white) market.

Some examples of limitations include but are not limited to.
- Restriction of sales at service stations
- Implementation of the same process to purchase porn as grog, ID required and I information collected.

Another major outcome was the emphasis on legislative changes to reduce impact of Porn in the community. This is more focused on a national level not local and includes all dynamics of Australian society therefore taking the spotlight away from Porn being a solely indigenous issue as portrayed in the media and in the current NT intervention.

Some examples of changes identified include but are not limited to.
- Porn is an issue for society, not only indigenous communities.
- Canberra is the porn capital of Australia, it should lead by example. It is hypocritical to ban pornography in aboriginal communities and it being easily accessible in the rest of Australia.
- Where is research by government. on results and harm to society by increased level of access to sex shops.
- Stronger classification of films/videos/publications.
- If legislation is banning pornography, don’t just target aboriginal people, ban it nationally.

It has also been identified that there is a need to provide Sex education to our children and community members.

This is the highest priority in my mind from the outcomes and discussions that took place during the workshops and was strongly identified particularly by remote community members in attendance.

This education is not limited to schools but can include wide reaching media campaigns on both mainstream and indigenous media networks and through advertisement on vehicles, billboards etc.

Education of our children to ensure they are not being groomed by members of society fulfilling their own desires, understanding that what they are seeing is make believe and not real and limiting their access as children to images and or audio that may create problems is a priority.
Some examples of sex education proposals include but are not limited to.

- We need to encourage our kids about sex education
- As fathers we need to be strong as role models, and take responsibility for our children’s actions.
- Kids showing/teaching younger kids.
- Kids unaware of love/relationships and just seeing sex as an act.
- Sex education in communities at all age and gender groups.
- Create community meetings to discuss with parents the age of consent, and develop community policies with community agreement.
- Create youth summits – based on community beliefs and expectations.
- Provide sex education in high schools and provide a Certificate of Achievement acknowledging a base understanding of sex education.
- Schools should incorporate relationship and psych sessions.
- Develop literature for public information pornography laws – in language as needed.
- There must be a big emphasis on gender based education.
- Put promotional material on police cars.
- Any education strategies should be tailored to each community based on consultation and age groups.
- Increase penalties for people who are trafficking porn.

Identification that the community as a whole needs to take responsibility for our actions as leaders and role models in order to be responsible for the actions and correct teaching of our children.

This is particularly important as children replicate the behaviours they see in their mentors and role models.

This includes the need for communities to take responsibility to take the lead in preventative measures to counteract and control the problems porn creates and encourages.

Some examples of community proposals include but are not limited to.

- If porn is found on the community, the person should be named and shamed and banned from the community.
- Raising the profile of elders networks in each community.
- Father and son camps.
- It should be up to the home and family to discipline and educate.
- As fathers we need to be strong as role models, and take responsibility for our children’s actions.
- We need to keep our houses safe.
- More community action through enforcement.

On a whole all males present agreed that Pornography has a definite negative impact on young minds and leads to unrealistic views of sex and society. The main focus was placed on educating our children as we know that Porn will not be stopped due to the introduction of technology to wider society.

But we can address the issues of educating and limiting our children’s access to this genre as an immediate action.
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

Workshop facilitators
Jason Bonson- Aboriginal Male Health Co-coordinator-NT Dept. of Health (NT)
Dr Ben Bartlett- Principal Plan health Pty. Ltd.
Dr Mick Adams- Chairperson National Peak Body (NACCHO)
Roy Price- Nutritionist Dept. Of Health Founder of Flower Drum Stove

WORKSHOP REPORT

Each of the eight workshop groups where held in a respectful and harmonious manner, where participants engaged in emotional topics, they decided that rather than debate about issues and various circumstances there was the agreement by all to “lets work together to resolve these issues”.

Some Key issues that were mentioned at a community level are:

- Aboriginal male health must be understood in a holistic framework, reductionist biomedical models do not address Aboriginal male health issues and will not substantially reduce the health gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal males. Male health is about the whole person. It is about how that person fits socially and culturally.

- Aboriginal male health centres provide a vital setting for supporting males and dealing with the complex issues that affect their health. Such as supporting Aboriginal males to address their social health issues, including matters relating to family relations, self-esteem, alcohol and other drug issues, strong men, strong culture issues and encouraging each other to take responsibility for our health and our actions.

- These services to work in conjunction with or to also provide the following types of services: Men's groups - us males need to talk more about issues that affect our everyday lives. We can help each other but we don’t talk enough.

- Mens Places and shelters/ Also more Male places can a be a starting point for support services and assist with culturally appropriate Health service delivery in communities. Places where males can go after being incarcerated/leaving rehab to slowly ease back into community life.

- Male only places to be properly resourced. - Run by males for males.

A separate Male only place for cooling off/time out place for males.

- ATSI Male Health is more than Just a STI/ Adult health screening. - Questions that where asked include Do all ATSI males know what the screening is all about? What happens to their results? Where do the blood and urine sample goes/ who sees them?. Our health is more about feeling happy, strong, stress free, its about being a part of family and community.

- Males and women need to work together more: Our women don’t think we can do good things, but everything (programs& help) in community is for women and kids. There nothing for us males
The next steps

4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP REPORT

- Cultural Security - is a big problem. Firstly if clients do not feel secure they do not access health (and other) services, reinforcing the false stereotype that Aboriginal males are uninterested in their health and community issues. Secondly if non ATSI people don’t understand how sorry business works or other community cultural matters they often can behave in disrespectful ways or not understand Aboriginal peoples behaviour, eg issues relating to cultural business and there are no specific leave entitlements that cover this type of leave or other ceremonial business in most workplaces.

- More ATSI Male Health staff/Access to Real Jobs – AHWs being acknowledged for their skills and allowed/encouraged to perform them. Consider balancing Health worker positions with RN/EN nursing positions, where experience equal qualifications are the criteria. Increase Remote Area Nursing Orientation focusing cultural awareness and the important role of a AHW when entering a community setting. Provide mentoring for Aboriginal males entering the health workforce, possibly in conjunction with other professional bodies such as the Indigenous doctors association.

- Raise the Profile of Aboriginal Males- There are a lot of good strong Aboriginal males who are here at the summit that can and should be used as role models for our fellow countrymen in rural/urban/communities – Aboriginal Health workers, health educators, promotion officers workers, Dr’s, Politicians, Aboriginal Community Police officers, CDEP workers, Teachers Aids, CEO of organisations, home owners etc. Most Aboriginal Males will be a quote for someone.

- Some Key issues that were mentioned on a National and State Level are:
  - Should be Territory Policy on Male Health - the women have a women’s health policy.
  - More consultation with Aboriginal males regarding community policy and program development. ATSI men need to be involved more in the decision making process about issues that effect us and our families and community at all levels of consultation and implementation. Aboriginal males from this Summit should be linked into these processes as we become aware of opportunities.
  - Establish of a National Aboriginal Male Health committee that’s acknowledged by the Federal Government and work with Government as an advisory and advocacy body on all holistic lifestyle issues that are our health.
  - NT Aboriginal Male Health reference committee will be a delegate to the National Body. NT Aboriginal male health reference group can - Advise Government and current services on how to be more responsive to Aboriginal males needs, a more coordinated approach, also to link up the NT on regular basis. Create a workable NT ATSI male health network who will provide feedback to local communities in addition to supporting the work of the reference group.
  - Provide national training programs for Aboriginal Facilitators and mentors.
  - Access to Real Jobs.
  - A follow up NT ATSI Male health summit/convention and to be held every two years.
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

Workshop facilitators
Keith Buzzacott - Alcohol and drug worker - ADSCA - Alice Springs (NT)
Jeff Browncombe - Clinical Director - NT Alcohol and other drugs
Gerard Waterford - Counsellor - Congress Alice Springs
David Beveridge - Counsellor - Congress Alice Springs
Chris Hawke - Counsellor - Congress Alice Springs

WORKSHOP REPORT

Our discussions ranged from thought provoking to inspirational.

Many men were deeply self-reflective and honest about their own lives. They were passionate about fixing up the problems that Aboriginal male have to face as the result of alcohol and other substance abuse. They addressed community, family, and particularly wives and children in their discussions. There were many words of encouragement and lots of motivational discussions. Many of the males stirred each other up: “C’mon let’s do something, let’s stand up and take our rightful roles in the family and the community. Let’s make a difference, we are the ones who have to be leaders”

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services were a frequent topic of discussion. Males were generally supportive of expanding currently available services, such as residential rehabilitation, though awareness about these could be raised. However, they consistently cited the need for services delivered in a community context, including counselling and support services that assist not just the affected individual but also those around them. Services should incorporate outstation facilities, the teaching of recovered addicts, develop skills and employment opportunities, and be delivered increasingly by Aboriginal workers. Specific approaches to different substances, including alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, stimulants and inhalants, were also discussed.

Participants expressed their concern at the extent of alcohol and drug use amongst young people, as well as across the community generally. They discussed strategies for protecting young people in vulnerable situations.

Other key areas addressed included: the need for education regarding safe drinking patterns, AOD education in schools, addressing injustice and boredom, and reducing alcohol harm through law enforcement and limits on advertising.

For many the chance to express themselves in an open discussion helped to relieve frustration and stress. They were able to share concerns, discuss solutions and develop relationships and networks, both locally and interstate. A great camaraderie continues to evolve amongst Aboriginal men, strengthened by greater awareness and resolve around these and other issues.

Issues and workshop recommendations

Individual

Issue: Males need to acknowledge their responsibility to family and as role models
Recommendation: All males to be honest with themselves about the impact of their drinking on those around them. Develop support networks and men’s spaces.

Issue: Poor self esteem/depression and loss of male pride
Recommendation: Males to understand their own strengths and “find strength within”
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP REPORT

Issues and recommendations continued

Individual continued
Issue: Need for males to learn to drink responsibly
Recommendation: Education programs in schools, utilize cultural knowledge and experiences of ex-addicts, develop visual and interactive resources, address drinking in pregnancy

Issue: Underlying causes of drinking, such as grief and loss, living conditions, unemployment
Recommendation: Address these underlying causes

Community
Issue: Lack of appropriate AOD treatment services in communities
Recommendation: Develop local services that include community consultation/tailoring, counselling and support, outstation facilities, utilize the experiences of ex-addicts, use innovative treatment approaches including visual aids, develop skills and employment, employ and train Aboriginal people.

Issue: Underage drinking and need to protect children when adults drinking
Recommendation: Find a safe place for children, adults to remain sober, address housing and overcrowding

Issue: Need to live according to Aboriginal and mainstream law
Recommendation: Strengthen understanding of Aboriginal law and law enforcement by police, community responsibility for enforcing standards and assisting police

Issue: Boredom, lack of opportunity
Recommendation: diversionary programs, education and training

Issue: Injustices within employment, such as subcontracting to private enterprise and over-emphasis on tertiary education
Recommendation: value local knowledge and skills in selection criteria, require references from elders, community consultation

Issue: Males disadvantaged by legal system and attempting to deal with women’s hurtful practices
Recommendation: legal reform, acknowledgement of women’s unseen power

National
Issue: Aboriginal males unfairly labelled according to the behaviour of a few
Recommendation: media standards around fair and accurate reporting

Issue: The Australian ‘drinking culture’ and glorification of drinking
Recommendation: Re-define positive male images around self-respect and responsibility for family, alcohol advertising to be regulated/banned

Issue: Shortfall in funding for programs and employment schemes
Recommendation: pro-active approach from government, long-term commitments, patience
WORKSHOP REPORT

Environmental health encompasses a wide range of challenges and the development of expertise and experiences in a multitude of programs/initiatives relative to the practical on the ground recommendations of the Male Health summit; is sorely needed.

It is about a change of mindset in promoting, educating and sustaining a healthy diet, safe, clean, comfortable and affordable shelter, better water; and healthy relationships within family’s and/or communities. It is also about sustaining and maintaining the land on which we live. Governments and other leaders (i.e.; Cardinal George Pell’s recent comments) still have divided opinions on climate change and the effect it is having on the environment and the land. Traditional land management practices that have been in use for centuries is still seen by most experts as a temporary employment program or short news story article; rather than a lifetime skill and commitment.

The late Dr Charles Perkins stated back in 1986 that we would need at least $6 billion dollars in Government funding, if we were even going to come close in addressing adequate and appropriate housing needs for the rapidly growing NT Aboriginal population. Surely we missed a great investment opportunity then. Considering the now spiralling financial cost for housing on Communities and the advancing manifestation of anti-social behaviour fuelled by the increase in drug and alcohol use, we really did miss the boat then.

The necessary skilled workforce to undertake such a monumental development is here in our own back yard; yet the formulation of policy and programs within the education system, training and the apprenticeship arenas, are still piece meal and farcically short in real people numbers and funding.

Despite years on negotiation, consultation and advice, Governments of all persuasions continue to fund short term, quick fix programs for Aboriginal Australians. This country has been riding the crest of a mining boom for over a decade filling the Nations coffers with unprecedented wealth, yet Aboriginal people still languish at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

As an example The Whitegate Community, the home of Senior Aboriginal traditional owners of Alice Springs live in abject poverty within “spitting distance” from the town’s centre. White gate is truly one glaring example of the inequitable sharing of this accumulated wealth and the inability of Aboriginal leaders and Politician’s to act. This is both morally and culturally wrong.

There is no real opportunity for Aboriginal people to have input in to the budgetary processes of Forward Estimates Committee’s; whether it is State or National, how will fairer money distribution ever occur if we have no real input into making the “money cake” before its given to Treasury?

When will the practice of bureaucrats and outside contractors, who consume/waste considerable amounts of funding designated for Aboriginal people, change? There needs to be a fundamental change in the mindset of Public Servants as well a better system of screening and rating the people they engage to undertake programs/contracts, within the Aboriginal community.
7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The education, training and employment workshops were facilitated by three Aboriginal males who were from various states and territories around Australia these being NSW, Queensland and the NT. The facilitator’s between them had many years experience in Aboriginal education, training and employment.

The aim of the workshop was to develop a broader understanding of the Aboriginal males knowledge and value of white education and to ascertain where black education (traditional culture) fits in today’s contemporary society. The first challenge to understanding both black and white education was to identify the existing barriers in Aboriginal education, training and employment in the Northern Territory and to develop clearly defined achievable solutions.

In doing this we first needed to identify that the men at the summit saw value in white education and that the communities where able to recognise the achievements of their children in gaining white education. Although it was clearly supported by the majority of males at the summit that white education is important it was difficult for Aboriginal males to see the value as many of the children that have undergone white education were not gaining meaningful employment within their communities.

This was a common statement across all workshops and lead to the first critical solution of “linking education to employment” within communities. This solution challenges the education system to rethink how it engages Aboriginal communities and develops a long-term strategy to improving communities. Some of the jobs that exist within communities are health workers, teachers, administrators, community workers, trades people etc.

The second most common barrier to Aboriginal education, training and employment in the Northern Territory is the lack of recognition of black education (traditional culture) and local cultural practices and knowledge; this was identified across all workshops.

One of the greatest challenges the NT faces to date is mastering the cultural divide between white Australia and black Australia, to do this both cultures must recognise and move forward as “equal partners in learning“. It was clearly identified in the workshops that the co-educational structure in which white education is delivered is in direct conflict with traditional Aboriginal customs and practices of males business and women’s business, it was identified that co-education was a major barrier in relation to ceremony where young boys became young males and young girls become young women.

The solution to this barrier was to recognise traditional customs and practices and to establish a school system that was able to cater for “two ways learning”.

“Two ways learning” is developing a system that recognises both forms of education (black and white) and implementing a school structure and curriculum that is negotiated by community and government to maximise the greatest educational outcome.
A simple solution identified at the summit was establishing a three tier schooling system of Junior school (kindergarten to yrs3), middle school (yrs4 to yrs7) and high school (yrs8 to yrs12) separating both boys and girls. Schooling would consist of both white and black education and ceremony would be negotiated at the end of middle school and prior to high school, the reasoning for this is that young girls and boys become young males and women and must be treated as such in an adult education environment.

One of the key advantages of this structure is that you are able to introduce Vocational education and training (Voc Ed) to students in high school and develop leadership programs that recognise “students as teachers”, senior students teaching younger students how to read and write creating real role models and developing true community capacity.

The third most common barrier is the lack of local cultural knowledge teachers and other workers have of communities, protocol and process and developing a community “cultural education program” that all workers entering a community must undertake.

The “cultural education program” will provide all workers with an in depth understanding of issues relating to:
- Cultural protocol and knowledge within communities i.e. sorry business, ceremony etc
- Alcohol use and other bans within communities
- Key organisations and community members
- Other impacting issues relating to community

In introducing a localised “cultural education program” you create a greater awareness for new workers entering community and you provide new workers with a better understanding of the people, country and customs whilst continuing to “link education to employment” by creating local jobs for local people.

1. Linking education to employment
2. Equal partners in learning
3. Two ways learning
4. Students as teachers
5. Cultural education program
Defining Aboriginal culture from the 8 workshops is as varied and complex as the many Nations and people that make up what remains of the original habitants of this land itself. Whether you are from the remote bush areas, still living on country or mixing it with mainstream in the cities and towns, we all have our own concept of Aboriginal culture and sense of community. Our Workshops resolved there is no right or wrong in personal belief systems.

Culture is life, without it we have nothing. Our sense of ownership, guardianship, sovereignty, sense of belonging to land, is every bit as strong now as it was in the beginning. Despite the tyranny of distance, loss of land, the removal from culture, the influence of mainstream societies, the ever changing pace of technology; and Government’s, State and Federal who simply just don’t “get it, we are intrinsically linked.

Sex with children is not cultural (Ingkintja). This was the strongest underlining theme by the gathering of males at the Male Health Summit. The almost “witch-hunt” of Aboriginal males and the demonising of our males by the mainstream media and politician’s State and Federal; caused much angst not only at the summit but at all community levels as well.

Although many of the Elders present conceded that a lot of the old ways have been broken down, there was still a strong sense of a need to immerse our young ones in culture as a means of addressing many of the challenges and changing ways that Aboriginal people find themselves in mainstream society today.

The establishment of a Council of Elders at both the local and State levels was strongly endorsed by participants at the summit. This would give Aboriginal males a voice in not only working with our young people but also developing better relationships with the police, Government Agencies such as Centrelink etc. It will also enable Aboriginal males to re-build the lost respect and much needed cultural authority that has been eroded recently by the hysteria generated around the consequences of the “Little Children Are Sacred Report” and the continuing racist Government policy of the NT Intervention.

The need for men’s shelters ranging from sobering up centre’s, half-way-houses and/or safe places for males (as pointed out women are violent too) was also one of the recommendations adopted at the summit.

Aboriginal males are seemingly in perpetual mourning. Sorry business, a new culture of alcohol and drug induced payback (which causes more grief) and the breakdown of sharing sorry business between Nations also adds to the weight of helplessness many Aboriginal males now feel.

The need for cultural appropriate parent training programs and establishing strong ground/house rules within family groups was also seen as critical in reshaping the lives of our future generations.
The responsibility of making sure that our children attend school is not the responsibility of the teachers, the police, our grandmothers, or the Government of the day. It's the responsibility of the parents and particularly the males.

For any program to succeed, it will be necessary for Aboriginal males to be engaged as active and supportive participants. For this to occur, programs must be built on at least two basic assumptions: that most Aboriginal males desire to work for the establishment of peaceful communities in which all Aboriginal people flourish; and that Aboriginal males will not abide wholesale rejection of their customs and law.

This is not to say, that programs for early intervention must accept, uncritically, the status quo. Success is most likely to come if Aboriginal males are engaged on the topic of their lore and how it can be interpreted so as to meet contemporary challenges. That is, early intervention should be directed towards bringing about social change – but with an acknowledgement that there is much of value to be built upon. Likewise, there is little prospect of improvement until Aboriginal people become actively engaged in the process of economic development. If this is to occur, then Aboriginal communities will need to develop the ‘human capital’ needed to succeed in a competitive economy.

If children are to be educated to the levels required, then this will require the support of older males and women in the community – and that support will only come if new, positive attitudes are nurtured and reinforced as part of a wider program of social change.

The experience of Aboriginal people has included much injustice, especially since colonisation. However, those who respond to this experience by focusing on claims for ‘social justice’ risk failing the legitimate aspirations of Aboriginal people. This is because claims for ‘social justice’ place Aboriginal people in a passive role.

No matter how just the claim, its satisfaction depends on the decisions of others. Furthermore, some people tend to use the experience of injustice as a shield to screen out the basic realities and challenges of modern life. Waiting for “social justice” becomes an excuse for dependency and inaction. An alternative approach would still preserve the claim for justice. However, it would see Aboriginal people take an active role – defining and driving the conditions for social change. In doing so, Aboriginal people would be preparing themselves to take on the modern world – both in its own terms and on theirs.

Rather than lore, ceremony and culture being preserved as remnants of a lost world, they would undergo a renaissance – literally a rebirth – maintaining their authenticity and utility in a new world. An agenda for “social change” will breathe new life into old ways – judging their merit according to their capacity not merely to sustain Aboriginal people – but to allow them to flourish.

The key to this renaissance will be found in educating the wider public to understand that for every story of Aboriginal dysfunction there is another of quiet success (all the more remarkable given the barriers to be overcome).

Genuine engagement by government and the wider community is the key to true empowerment for Aboriginal people - so that they/we can master the lore of modern society – unlocking the goods that can complement older ways.

The decision to opt for social change is a decision to apply the same adaptive genius that has allowed Aboriginal people to live in this land for millennia.
**STEP 2 Recommendations**

Summit delegates believe that the following recommendations will provide a better understanding of the support they believe will assist them in their taking on the responsibilities to become good husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.

The summit delegates considered a wide range of issues and current reports/strategies and came up with 24 recommendations:

1-20. Specific summit recommendations from delegate discussions.


22. Response to Little Children are Sacred report.


All the workshop topics at this Summit touched and affected what happens for men, women and children. Children were kept at the centre of the discussions in our workshops. Therefore there were no specific recommendations relating to the workshop on children, rather the following statement reflects to overall feel of the children workshop- “The big theme was inclusiveness- bring families back together, work with the whole family, work with the whole community. Aboriginal males want to be, and see themselves, as being a vital part of their families, they seek inclusive and are prepared to put a lot of effort into that”.

The following recommendations aimed to get practical outcomes to further the protection of children and to enhance the roles of Aboriginal males in their communities by identifying immediate work for Summit participants at all levels of society- personal, community, local organisational regional forums and by influencing national policy and agendas.

**Recommendation 1: Unfinished business-we need action!**

This Summit calls on the Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government to respond to this final report within three months and establish long term action and review mechanisms.

**Recommendation 2: Male Health programs**

Recognising that in order to address the social relations of male health there need to be Aboriginal community controlled male health services that operate in a community development and comprehensive primary health care framework; to nurture, coordinate and delivery programs such as but not limited to:

- male support groups,
- places of healing for Aboriginal males, including men’s shelters/sheds,
- short term ‘drying out’ places for men, and more resources for long-term rehabilitation of Aboriginal males with alcohol and other drug problems, preferably within their own community.
- ‘half-way’ houses to either give ‘time out’ or time to move slowly back into work/family/training, to be run by Aboriginal males.

These services need to be established across the NT under increased funding as core primary health care services.

**Recommendation 3: Community based prevention programs including family centres**

Establishment of community-based violence prevention programs, including programs specific to Aboriginal males such as:

- Males AND Kids programs– address family disruption and distress, not just alcohol and drugs.
- Young fathers programs,
- Family Centres to provide an environment for males, and women and children to meet and undertake joint recreational, educational and other activities.
- Anger management programs, Male support groups.

And that the operation of family services to be inclusive of males and to work in conjunction with male health services and that programs for Aboriginal families need to incorporate males as part of the family, and also develop programs for young fathers.
Recommendation 4: A National Male Health Day
Establishment of a National Aboriginal Male Health Day on an annual basis on the 1st of July to coincide with NAIDOC Week.

Recommendation 5: Male Network
That an Aboriginal male network be established from this Summit to support the ongoing contact established between us and the implementation of the actions identified, the views and ideas expressed here.

Recommendation 6: Tax free status for community based professionals
Three Year tax-free status for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals, such as doctors, health workers, teachers, and police working in for identified communities. Also incentives to employ Aboriginal people in similar positions.

Recommendation 7: An Aboriginal education revolution
7.1 Redesigning education curriculum to include and value traditional and cultural ways of learning includes the establishment of community, regional and state/territory Aboriginal education consultative groups for schools with large populations of Aboriginal students. Increase the participation rates for Aboriginal men in teaching professions, including building the capacity of Aboriginal teacher’s aides to become fully qualified teachers.

7.2 The recommendations of the Little Children Are Sacred report relating to education and the Learning Lessons report’s findings must be implemented within the next term of the NT Government. That a community driven NT Education system reform group be established to pursue this recommendation basing its actions on the delegate’s views recorded at this Summit.

Recommendation 8: Man power planning.
Utilise a manpower planning approach to ensure the matching of Aboriginal males to employment development. Such an approach can be incorporated into a broad scale policy such as the NT Intervention, but must incorporate senior community members in its implementation and would involve the following principles:

- Identify employment opportunities in communities, utilising the range of new positions such as identified or implied in the recommendations of the Little Children Are Sacred report (see Summit participants and facilitators handbooks for details) as well as other positions identified through community consultations,
- Identify appropriate Aboriginal males (in conjunction with community elders) to be appointed to roles (i.e. cultural brokers or other senior knowledge positions) or to be recruited as workers,
- All trainees or early position workers to be mentored in both the content of the position and separately into working processes and the particular needs of the position,
- All workers to have training pathways developed, and for these pathways to be funded- including locum funding for when a workers is away training, training to include workplace literacy and numeracy support in addition to any specific professional or skills development,
- All cultural knowledge to be renumerated at pre-established and adequate levels.

Recommendation 9: Economic empowerment of Aboriginal Males
Economic empowerment – building the capacity of Aboriginal males in literacy and numeracy to access locally-based jobs, better support for establishing local Aboriginal-run businesses to tap into the minerals boom, agriculture, aquaculture or whatever is relevant to their traditional country.

Recommendation 10: Recognise the need for cultural knowledge in all positions.
Job descriptions for community employment should include more detailed criteria around cultural knowledge and acceptance, community consultations and references from elders.
Recommendation 11: Community Courts
Community courts – diversionary strategies such as special court processes which can put the responsibility back on the community and help to keep young Aboriginal males out of the gaol system, includes the establishment of young men’s groups as an outlet to express their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

Recommendation 12: Cultural training for children
Fund programs to develop specific cultural training for young males by elders where they are taught and retaught cultural ways. These programs should be coordinated by Community organisations.

Recommendation 13: Long term Investment
Long term investment rather than short-term/erratic/inconsistent funding in programmes and strategies to support sustainable change. This is intergenerational business.

Recommendation 14: Superannuation
Change superannuation access to reflect that if Aboriginal males have a life expectancy 20 years less (59+) than non-Aboriginal males (79+) that these funds can be accessed at an earlier age.

Recommendation 15: Alcohol and Other drugs
Recognise that we need to live according to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal law. That we need to strengthen our understanding of both laws and that these must be enforced by police in criminal matters and by the community in our law and in enforcing community standards and assisting police. That while there are no one sized solutions, that in dealing with these problems, we need to have educative, regulatory and treatment approaches, that recognise there are underlying social disadvantages that cause and inflame the problems of alcohol and other drugs.

Recommendation 16: Coordination of national anti-violence awareness campaigns
Better develop a nation-wide ‘whole of government’ health promotion campaign to promote anti-violence messages specific to Aboriginal males, that address underlying social causes as well as seeking to affect behavioural changes and that are backed up with legal consequences appropriate to the offence.

Recommendation 17: Sexual health education
That there is the provision of culturally appropriate and gender-based sexual health and relationships education in schools. That education on these issues also is available to community members in a manner and forum (i.e. family centres or male health centres and women’s centres) that is considered appropriate by that community.

Recommendation 18: Bans on pornography
Support for strengthened, but uniform laws relating to access to pornography, across Australia and between different racial groups. If there exists legislation banning pornography, it shouldn’t just target Aboriginal people.
**SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS 22**

**Recommendation 19: The Little children are Sacred report (Reference in brackets)**

That this summit whilst supporting most of the “The Little children are Sacred report” findings highly recommends the following specific 15 recommendations as discussed in our workshops.

**19.1 Recommendation (59):**
That the government actively support Aboriginal men to engage in discussions about, and address, child sexual abuse and other violence in communities. (p. 160)

**19.2 Recommendation (87):**
That an education campaign be conducted to inform communities of:
- a. the meaning of and rationale for film and television show classifications
- b. the prohibition contained in the *Criminal Code* making it an offence to intentionally expose a child under the age of 16 years to an indecent object or film, video or audio tape or photograph or book and the implications generally for a child’s wellbeing of permitting them to watch or see such sexually explicit material. (p. 200)

**19.3 Recommendation 45:**
That, as soon as possible, the government, in consultation with Aboriginal communities and organisations, develop, implement and support programs and services that address the underlying effects of both recent and “intergenerational” trauma suffered in Aboriginal communities and enhance the general emotional and mental wellbeing of all members of those communities. (p. 140)

**19.4 Recommendation (43):**
That, in order to provide access to comprehensive quality primary health care, DHCS advocate for increased Australian Government funding and continue as a matter of priority the roll out of the Primary Health Care Access Program. (p. 140)

**19.5 Recommendation (61):**
That the government continue to implement the Alcohol Framework as a matter of urgency and focus on reducing overall alcohol consumption and intoxication and not just on “visible” or “risky” drinking.

**19.6 Recommendation 63:**
That, as a matter of urgency, the government makes greater efforts to reduce access to takeaway liquor in the Northern Territory, enhance the responsible use of takeaway liquor, restrict the flow of alcohol into Aboriginal communities and support Aboriginal community efforts to deal with issues relating to alcohol.

**19.7 Recommendation 70:**
That government develop and implement a multi-faceted approach to address the abuse of illicit substances in Aboriginal communities in particular cannabis abuse, including prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies which recognise:
- a. the geographic context of substance abuse, that is, urban and remote locations and the implications this has for effective prevention, intervention and enforcement
- b. population-based, youth-focused prevention and intervention strategies that integrate substance abuse, mental health, and other health and welfare concerns into
### Recommendation 19 “The Little children are Sacred report” continued

**19.8 Recommendation (88):**
That an education campaign be conducted to target gambling in Aboriginal communities, showing the impacts of gambling and especially the risk posed to children who are unsupervised while parents are gambling.

**19.9 Recommendation (90):**
That further research be carried out on the effects of gambling on child safety and wellbeing, and that consideration be given to the enactment of local laws to regulate gambling as part of the community safety plans to be developed pursuant to recommendation 79.

**19.10 Recommendation (84):**
Given the extent of overcrowding in houses in Aboriginal communities and the fact this has a direct impact on family and sexual violence, the Inquiry strongly endorses the government’s reform strategy of critical mass construction in targeted communities, and recommends the government take steps to expand the number of communities on the target list for both new housing and essential repairs and maintenance in light of the fact that every community needs better housing urgently.

**19.11 Recommendation (80):**
That further work be undertaken by DEET in regard to the development of innovative employment training options for Aboriginal communities in such areas as the creation and support of local industries, use of cultural skills and knowledge, community leader roles, and brokerage/liaison with external agencies, and that this be supported through adequately resourced adult education and training.

**19.12 Recommendation (81):**
That efforts be made to develop a local workforce to address health and welfare issues within communities to provide a base of continuity for more transient professional responses, and linking professionals to mentor and support these workers.

**19.13 Recommendation (82):**
That Government provide support for the development of Aboriginal people as local community development workers (with either defined or generic roles) to improve capacity, problem-solving and administrative self-sufficiency within communities.

**19.14 Recommendation (83):**
That the NT Public Sector, led by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment and DEET, make renewed efforts to increase the level of Indigenous employment in the Northern Territory Public Sector and in the non-government and private sector respectively.

**19.15 Recommendation 85:**
That, in recognition of the importance of community employment in addressing the existing dysfunction, and the need for more community housing, an intensive effort be made in the area of training and employment of local Aboriginal people in the construction and repair and maintenance of houses in Aboriginal communities, with input from DEET as appropriate.
SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 20

This Summit calls on the Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government to address the challenges as outlined by this summit and findings of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2001-2006

20.1 Turn government commitments into action:

Governments have been making commitments to address family violence for some time already. What we need is concerted, long term action which meets these commitments.

20.2 Indigenous participation:

This action must be based on genuine partnership with Indigenous peoples and with our full participation.

20.3 Support Indigenous community initiatives and networks:

There are significant processes and networks already in place in Indigenous communities to progress these issues. We need to support them to lead efforts to stamp out violence, including by developing the educational tools to assist them to identify and respond to family violence.

20.4 Human rights education in Indigenous communities:

There is a need for broad based education and awareness-raising among Indigenous communities. Working with communities to send strong messages that violence won’t be tolerated, that there are legal obligations and protections, and that individuals have rights, are critical if we are to stamp out family violence.

20.5 Don’t forget our men and don’t stereotype them as abusers:

Family violence is fundamentally an issue of gender equality. We need strong leadership from women, but we also need the support of Indigenous males if we are to make progress in stamping out violence. Indigenous males need to model appropriate behaviour, challenge violence and stand up against it, and support our women and nurture our children.
20.6 Look for the positives and celebrate the victories.

There are good things happening in Indigenous communities, even if the national media is not interested in reporting them. We need to confront family violence, but also do so by reinforcing the inherent worth and dignity of Indigenous peoples, not by vilifying and demonising all Indigenous peoples.

20.7 Re-assert our cultural norms and regain respect in our communities.

Family violence and abuse is about lack of respect for Indigenous culture. We need to fight it as Indigenous peoples, and rebuild our proud traditions and community structures so that there is no place for fear and intimidation.

20.8 Ensure robust accountability and monitoring mechanisms:

There must be accountability measurements put into place to hold governments to their commitments. This requires the development of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These will also allow us to identify and celebrate successes.

20.9 Changing the mindset:

We require a change in mindset of government from an approach which manages dysfunction to one that supports functional communities. Current approaches pay for the consequences of disadvantage and discrimination. It is a passive reactive system of feeding dysfunction, rather than taking positive steps to overcome it. We need a proactive system of service delivery to Indigenous communities focused on building functional, healthy communities.

20.10 Targeting of need:

Let us be bold in ensuring that program interventions are targeted to address need and overcome disadvantage. As it stands, government programs and services are not targeted to a level that will overcome Indigenous disadvantage. Hence, they are not targeted in a way that will meet the solemn commitments that have been made. They are targeted to maintain the status quo.
SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 21:**
That this summit endorses Congress’s recent position paper on the Australian and Northern Territory Government’s Emergency Response to Child Sexual Abuse in the Northern Territory.

That the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress believes that there is an urgent need to reform the racially discriminatory aspects of the emergency response while continuing to implement the large investment in new services and programs across a broad range of social determinants of health.

See Page 47 for complete details of this recommendation

**Recommendation 22:**
This Summit whilst supporting the CLOSE THE GAP statement of intent requests both the Federal Government and the Territory government to clearly communicate the benchmarks and targets, to ensure that we are progressively realising our shared ambitions.

See Page 49 for complete details of this recommendation
The next steps

Who is going to listen and respond?

Unfinished business—we need action!

This Summit calls on the Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government to respond to this final report within three months and establish long term action and review mechanisms.

STEP 3: Action plan

The bookshelves of state, territory and federal ministers are lined with hundreds of Aboriginal health reports, strategies and promises going back 10, 20, 30 years.

Typically they involve much thought, expertise, expense, consultation and agonising, in an environment where key players, including the Aboriginal Males who created this report, have been very cynical about the governments will for action and ongoing accountability.

How do governments usually bury reports!

1. Typically, publication produces formal adoption of the report and general political grandstanding and backslapping

2. Ministers effect shock, make vague promises of action. announce something minor to indicate good intentions.

3. There are a few days of media publicity, thankyou’s and editorials.

4. Then little to nothing is heard from government of the report again.

After all this hard work we cannot let that happen.
## ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>BY WHEN</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Issue formal apology/sorry to Women</td>
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<td>July 3</td>
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<td>2. Issue Interim recommendations</td>
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<td>July 3</td>
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<td>3. Issue Final Report Part 1</td>
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<td>August 7</td>
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<td>1-20 Recommendations</td>
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<td>21. Response to NT Intervention</td>
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<td>22. Response to Little Children are Sacred</td>
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<td>23. Response To Human Rights</td>
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<td>24. Response To Closing Gap</td>
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<td>4. Issue Final Report Part 2</td>
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<td>August 7</td>
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<td>5. Forward report to Federal Government</td>
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<td>6. Forward Report to NT Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Establish Central Australian working group</td>
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<td>August 15</td>
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<td>8. Establish network website-forum</td>
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<td>10. Response from NT Government</td>
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<td>11. Report back to delegates</td>
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</table>
STEP 4: Measuring the progress

Summit delegates believe that being able to measure the response to recommendations will provide a better understanding of the support they believe will assist them in their taking on the responsibilities to become good husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.

‘If policies and strategies and frameworks made people healthy, then Aboriginal people would possibly be the healthiest people in the world. It’s implementation we need, not more policies.’

‘The Commonwealth policies [such as the primary health care access program] are broadly in the right direction – the trouble is they are unfunded, or under funded. ‘And it’s not the money. The question is commitment.’

‘But there really isn’t any argument about the feasibility of it – it’s not easy, but we know what to do and how to do it – it’s really a question of implementation.’

How can we measure the progress?

Commonwealth “Closing the GAP” Indigenous Health Equality Summit-Statement of Intent

“To measure, monitor and report on our joint efforts, in accordance with benchmarks and targets, to ensure that we are progressively realising our shared ambition.”
The next steps

Closing the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a core priority of the Government I lead.

That is why on the first working day of every parliamentary year that I am Prime Minister, I will report to the Parliament on the progress my Government has made closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

This annual Prime Ministerial statement on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will report on;

- Progress in closing the life expectancy gap;
- Progress in closing the gap on infant mortality and mortality of children up to five years of age;
- and
- Progress on closing the literacy and numeracy gap.

There is no reason that the Australia of today, a successful developed nation with a modern and prosperous economy, should accept a 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

There is no reason that Indigenous children in Australia should have less opportunity for education or health care than the opportunities provided to non-Indigenous kids.

This gap has no place in a modern Australia.

Each year we must know as a Government, as a people, and as a country if we had made progress closing this gap.
### MEASURE

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<th>Community Action</th>
<th>Government Action</th>
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<td>2. Male Health Programs</td>
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<td>3. Community based prevention programs</td>
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<td>4. A National Male Health Day</td>
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<td>5. Establish male networks</td>
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<td>6. Tax Free Status for community based professionals</td>
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<td>7. Aboriginal education revolution</td>
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<td>8. Man power planning</td>
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<td>9. Economic empowerment of aboriginal males</td>
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<td>10. Recognise the need for cultural Knowledge in all positions</td>
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<td>11. Community courts</td>
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<td>12. Cultural Training for children</td>
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<td>13. Long term Investment</td>
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<td>14. Superannuation</td>
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<td>15. Alcohol and other drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Coordinate national anti-violence awareness campaigns</td>
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<td>17. Sexual Health Education</td>
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<td>18. Bans on Pornography</td>
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<td>19. The little Children are sacred report</td>
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<td>20. Human Rights and Equal opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Closing the gap</td>
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It is proposed to establish a Male Health Summit Scoreboard on www.aboriginalmalehealth.com.au To measure the progress of our recommendations
STEP 5 Review

Summit delegates believe that there should be mechanisms in place to review the summit recommendations that will in the long term provide a better understanding of the support males believe will assist them in taking on the responsibilities to become good husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.

1. Central Australia Aboriginal Male Health Action Group (CAAMHAG)

After the summit the following delegates volunteered to create an interim action group to drive this report:

John Liddle, Des Rogers, Bruce Loomes, Colin Cowell, Don Mallard, Baeden Williams

2. Establishment of a National Aboriginal Male Health Action Group (NAMHAG)

After the summit the following delegates volunteered to look at ways of establishing and resourcing a national network:

John Liddle, Colin Cowell, Dr. Mick Adams (NACCHO), John Patterson (AMSANT)

3. Establish a dedicated website forum and information sharing for delegates to the male health and

After the summit the action group registered www.aboriginalmalehealth.com and plan to go live in August 2008 with this networking mechanism.
The next steps

How can we review government responses?

The following network mechanisms should be established and resourced to oversee the implementation of this report's recommendation:

1. Central Australia Aboriginal Male Health Action Group (CAAMHAG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listing of delegate organisations (over 100 private visitors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apunipima Cape York Health Council-Queensland</td>
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<td>APY Lands</td>
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<td>Arrernte Council</td>
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<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
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<td>Bushmob</td>
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<td>Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit</td>
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<td>Central Australian Aboriginal Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape York Health Service</td>
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<td>Central Australia Supported Accommodation</td>
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<td>Centre For Disease Control</td>
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<td>Central Australia Aboriginal Family Legal Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Land Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol Services Associsation Alice Springs Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Correctional Services New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Education Employment and Training Alice Springs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT Dept. Health &amp; Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT Dept. Of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desert Knowledge Australia Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol Services SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Family, community services and Indigenous affairs (Wadeye)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute of Aboriginal Development Alice Springs</td>
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<td>ITEC Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Group</td>
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<td>Looma Health Clinic</td>
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<td>Mental Health Association of Central Australia</td>
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<td>Mental Health Association / Waltja</td>
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<td>Mental Health Association Central Australia</td>
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<td>Miwatj Health Raypirri Ron Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt Isa Murri Mens Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mutitjulu Community inc. Health Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mc Donnell Shire Night Patrol Alice Springs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW Land Council</td>
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<td>NT Legal Aid Commission</td>
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<td>Oenpelli Health Centre</td>
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<td>Red Cross</td>
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<td>NT Department of Health and Community Services-Remote Health</td>
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<td>Safe Houses</td>
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<td>Tafe NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamworth Yaamanhaa Mens Group</td>
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<td>The Shed, Mens Health Ctr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tullawon Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Arrernte Utopia Health Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarrenyty Altere Learning Centre</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. Acknowledgements/official visitors/media coverage

1. Major Sponsor
   Department of Health and Aging-
   Office of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health-Brenton Phillis

2. Official visitors included
   Hon. Warren Snowdon MP Member for Lingiari
      (representing the Commonwealth Government)
   Hon. Rob Knight MLA Minister for Central Australia
      (representing the NT Government)
   Congress Alukura Women's Group
   Hon. Karl Hampton -MLA Member for Stuart
   Hon. Allison Anderson -MLA Member for McDonnell
   Major General Dave Chalmers-NT Emergency Response-Operational Commander
   Sue Gordon NT Emergency Response-Chair as at June 2008
   Ms. Marcia Ella Duncan Board Member-NT Emergency Response Review
   Peter Yu Chair NT Emergency Response Review
   Rex Wild QC. Author The Little Children are Sacred Report
   Jason Everingham NT Police
   Damien Ryan Mayor Alice Springs Town Council
   John Rawnesley Councillor Alice Springs Town Council
   Mark Coffey Regional Coordinator ICC Alice Springs

3. Guest keynote speaker Summit Opening:
   Tom Calma Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commissioner

4. Special thanks:
   Ross River Resort
   Central Land Council
   Pieter Naessens Photography

4. Media Coverage included; A full report is available on our website
   ABC Television news-NT
   ABC Television Lateline-National
   Imparja Television-Footprints Current Affair program
   ABC Radio-National/World Today/News
   Melbourne Age
   Melbourne Sun Herald
   AAP Newswire
   Koori Mail
   Ninemsn Website
   ALP National Website
   National Indigenous Times

Special Thanks to Event Managers
Marketing, labour hire, event management, catering.
Workshop and facilitation coordination.
Tel: 08 89 500 100
Here is our challenge to:
Hon. Warren Snowdon MHR (left)
(representing the Federal Government)
Hon. Ray Knight (right)
(representing the NT Government)

The summit delegates considered and adopted this

Statement from “The Little children are Sacred report”

Ampe Akelyerneman Meke Mekarle

Some of our readers to might say,
We know all that; what’s the use of yet another report?

We would say: Yes, but what has been done? We know the problems, we know
how to fix many of them and the likely monetary cost.

And we pause here to interpose the question:
What is the likely future cost of NOT now attempting to deal with the issues?.

We have an enormous amount of knowledge in this country
(at various times we have been described as the clever country and the
lucky country -by our own people, of course) and in the Territory.

The money is available. The Australian Government budget surplus last year
was billions and billions of dollars. What has been lacking is the political will.
We have to stop marching on the spot and work with some real commitment
to success to save Australia from an impending disaster.

Strong words? Certainly, but they are justified.

Just a lot of rhetoric? We don’t think so.
Position paper on the Australian and Northern Territory Government’s Emergency Response to Child Sexual Abuse in the Northern Territory.

There is a need to reform and not roll back the intervention and we believe this latter term creates the impression that all aspects of the intervention should be reversed and this is not what is needed.

For many years Aboriginal people have identified the need for essential services and programs and we have been advocating for governments to act.

In this context, Congress welcomes the large increased investment in services and programs that has now emerged from the emergency response.

The Australian Government has now made a total commitment $1327.9 million over 4 years.

The funding is provided on the basis that the NT Government agreed to certain conditions including a radical overhaul of the way it delivers Commonwealth funded housing programs.

The Northern Territory Government will ensure that sufficient classrooms, equipment and teachers will be provided to cope with an anticipated increase in school enrolments and attendance as welfare reform measures are introduced.

The Australian government funding will provide much needed police in remote Aboriginal communities, a large injection of funding into housing, a large boost to primary health care services and the conversion of more than 2000 CDEP positions to real permanent jobs.

The new government has announced that CDEP will no longer be abolished but will be reformed so that it provides more meaningful employment.

They have also announced that the permit system will now be retained with modification to exempt journalists and contractors.

This is also a reform that Congress supports.

More recently the announcement of the funding of 200 additional teachers will substantially add to the increased investment in education.
The Northern Territory Government has also committed $286 million over 5 years.

This funding will greatly enhance child protection services, alcohol and other drug services, legislation and management plans, enhanced remote area police, community corrections and courts and family violence programs, enhanced primary health care, additional housing.

They have also made an additional contribution to Aboriginal education but this will need to be substantially increased if the unmet need is to be properly addressed.

They have given a commitment to the Australian government to provide the necessary education resources to meet the need.

They have also funded enhanced employment programs and have committed to establishing new consultative structures to ensure that Aboriginal people have a greater input into policies and programs in future.

The major problem with the intervention is the racially discriminatory aspects which are causing much anger and hardship and include:

- The quarantining of welfare payments to all people of one racial group living in certain areas irrespective of their behaviour or record in caring for their own children.
- The forced prohibition of alcohol to all people of one racial group living in certain areas.
- This is coupled with the introduction of extraordinary police powers that allow the police to enter any house in a prescribed community without a warrant if they suspect alcohol is being consumed.
- The forced removal of land title without compensation.

All of these problematic measures have been made possible by the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act and Congress calls for its immediate reinstatement.

There are more appropriate alternatives to these measures which are not racially discriminatory including:

- The quarantining and income management of welfare payments for all Australian families who are not appropriately caring for their children as determined by FACS or some agreed measure of school attendance.
- A comprehensive approach to alcohol including supply reduction, demand reduction and harm minimisation measures especially a minimum price benchmark and reduced take away trading hours. Prohibition should only be implemented at the request of Aboriginal communities.
- Ensuring land title is with either traditional owners or native title holders in all cases in accordance with the Land Rights Act.
- Exploration of further alternatives for reform of infrastructure ownership on the land drawing on models of best practice for housing cooperatives and ensuring the infrastructure on the land remains in Aboriginal control.
Our challenge for the future is to embrace a new partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The core of this partnership for the future is closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on life expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities. This new partnership on closing the gap will set concrete targets for the future: within a decade to halve the widening gap in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous children, within a decade to halve the appalling gap in infant mortality rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and, within a generation, to close the equally appalling 17-year life gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous when it comes to overall life expectancy.

- Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Apology to Australia’s Indigenous Peoples, 13 February 2008

This is a statement of intent – between the Government of Australia and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia, supported by non-Indigenous Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous health organizations – to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by the year 2030.

- We share a determination to close the fundamental divide between the health outcomes and life expectancy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia and non-Indigenous Australians.

- We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equal life chances to all other Australians.

- We are committed to working towards ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to health services that are equal in standard to those enjoyed by other Australians, and enjoy living conditions that support their social, emotional and cultural well-being.

- We recognise that specific measures are needed to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ access to health services. Crucial to ensuring equal access to health services is ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively involved in the design, delivery, and control of these services.
Accordingly we commit:

- To developing a comprehensive, long-term plan of action, that is targeted to need, evidence-based and capable of addressing the existing inequities in health services, in order to achieve equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.

- To ensuring primary health care services and health infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which are capable of bridging the gap in health standards by 2018.

- To ensuring the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs.

- To working collectively to systematically address the social determinants that impact on achieving health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- To building on the evidence base and supporting what works in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and relevant international experience.

- To supporting and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services in urban, rural and remote areas in order to achieve lasting improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

- To achieving improved access to, and outcomes from, mainstream services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- To respect and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by ensuring that health services are available, appropriate, accessible, affordable, and of good quality.

- To measure, monitor, and report on our joint efforts, in accordance with benchmarks and targets, to ensure that we are progressively realising our shared ambitions.
A detailed report on the issues and outcomes from the 8 workshops attended by 400+ Aboriginal males who gathered at Inteyerrkwe (Ross River NT)

The 8 workshop issues and outcomes:

1. Children are our future
2. Domestic Violence
3. Pornography
4. Male health
5. Grog and other substance abuses/petrol sniffing
6. Environmental Health
7. Education and employment
8. Aboriginal culture
These 8 workshop topics were drawn from issues raised during discussions with many hundreds of Aboriginal males attending the regular Monday morning drop in sessions at the Congress Male Health Clinic at 21 Gap Road in Alice Springs.

They echo the Little Children are Sacred report’s statement that:

“Put simply the cumulative effects of poor health, alcohol, drug abuse, gambling, pornography, unemployment, poor education and housing and general disempowerment lead inexorably to family and other violence and then on to sexual abuse of men and women and finally, of children”.

Our workshops were about empowering Aboriginal males to take positive individual and community action to change the situation they currently face.

1. All delegates/participants completed 8 specialist workshops, covering the topics listed.
2. Participants were asked firstly to identify the issues
3. Outcomes from all these workshops have consolidated and presented in this report.

FACILITATORS

We would sincerely thank the 30 + Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal specialist facilitators who volunteered their time, energy and expertise to facilitate these workshops and compile this report. Background on all Facilitators can be found on our website.
This summit report has been prepared by the Congress Aboriginal Male Health team with the support of the summit facilitators and project managers Arrernte Workforce Solutions.

It is essentially a recording of the information exchanged, the issues raised and the recommendations generated from the summit workshops.

But most importantly it is all about developing a 5 step action plan to monitor in the long term the government’s and communities responses and commitments to our recommendations to address the underlying social and environmental factors contributing to child abuse.

**Part 1-Executive Summary-An ongoing action plan that “will not gather dust”**

We have summarized all the summit recommendations in an ongoing 5 step action plan

1. Workshop the issues and find solutions.
2. Develop and submit recommendations.
3. Get government to action our recommendations.
4. Measure the progress of governments and community actions.
5. Set up review mechanisms to monitor implementation

**Part 2-What were the issues –What were solutions male delegates came up with!**

In a separate report delegates and facilitators have listed all the issues and outcomes that came out of the workshops.

How often have you gone to a meeting or conference and when you later get the reports or minutes you cannot see your contribution. Well here are our delegates inputs “unedited”

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**Copyright:** John Liddle, Colin Cowell

**Explanation use words Male–Men--Man**

At the summit and in its subsequent reports it was agreed that the preferred descriptor was “male” rather than “men” or “man” so as to avoid confusion about “men” as initiated males.

**PUBLISHER CONTACT**

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
Tel:08 89514 436 Fax: 08 89 514 350
19 Gap Rd Alice Springs
or email: malehealthinfo@caac.org.au
www.caac.org.au/malehealthinfo
PART 2-WHAT WERE THE ISSUES –WHAT WERE THE SOLUTIONS (in detail)

CONTENTS OF PART 2 REPORT

1. Workshop issues and outcomes

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FACILITATION TEAM

1. Facilitation/Report manager
   Colin Cowell

2. Facilitators research
   Clive Rosewarne
   Phil Walcott
   Ken Laughton

3. Facilitators scribes
   Peter Bourke
   Todd Condie
   Daniel Forrester Jnr.

4. Facilitators
   See each workshop for issue facilitators and website for each CVs.

5. Steering Group
   John Liddle
   Bruce Loomes
   Des Rodgers
   Baeden Williams
OUR FIVE STEP ACTION PLAN

STEP 1-THE WORKSHOPS

What were the issues
What were solutions male delegates came up with!

In this part of the report our delegates and facilitators have listed all the issues and recommendations that came out of the workshops.

How often have you gone to a meeting or conference and when you later get the reports or minutes you cannot see your contribution.

Well here is our delegate input “unedited”
1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE/Keeping Children Safe

Workshop facilitators
Spiros Woods-Senior Aboriginal Health Worker-Great Southern AHS (WA)
Andrew Rush-Team Leader Father support-Children's Protection Society (VIC)
Michael Keane-Counsellor-Children's Protection Society (VIC)
Tony Evers-Community Mental Health Educator (WA)

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Our workshop theme was “Children Are Our Future” with a particular focus on What Can Males Do to Keep Children Safe?

All the workshop topics at this summit touch and affect what happens for males, women, and children, so there was a high level of cross-influence and agreement across many discussions. Children were kept at the centre of discussions in our workshops.

As facilitators – 3 white males and one Noongar male – we came to this place from far away - Melbourne in Victoria and Albany in Western Australia. We came to listen to central Australian Aboriginal Males talk about themselves, their children and their families, and this is what we heard.

The big theme was inclusiveness – bring families back together, work with the whole family, work with the whole community. Males want to be in families, are seeking acknowledgement and inclusion, and are prepared to put a lot of effort into that.

Many males feel that they have done well as fathers and family members – not perfectly, but well – and whilst acknowledging the dangerous, fearful, and distressing actions of some males, most males feel grossly misrepresented by ALL males being labelled with violence and abuse.

Males do want to take a role in caring for children and families but don’t always know how, and recognise that they need help with this that is positive and inclusive. Community empowerment, male centres and safe houses, for families as well as males, located within and run by communities were common themes.

We heard of many positive activities, initiatives, and strategies already in action within communities to restore and maintain safety for children and families – some recent, but many of long standing.

Males need to be feeling safe and empowered if they are going to take a positive role in keeping children and families safe – elements that are considered essential in supporting this include greater emphasis on culture, education, employment, and health, under Aboriginal community control.

Males are struggling with how to deliver discipline that is not violent inside families and communities where some elements are out of control. Many times we heard that males need to ensure that their characters, words, and actions are aligned and consistent – a need to “walk the talk”.

We heard of needs and aspirations that mirror those in the wider Australian community – Aboriginal males want the same things for their families that all fathers do, and a clear need was identified for sustainable long-term investment rather than erratic short-term funding to support this. This is seen as intergenerational business with a long-term time frame.

Finally, as facilitators we feel honoured and privileged to have been a part of this powerful and positive event – a big step in an important journey.”
1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE/Keeping Children Safe

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Don’t spend all family money on drinking, gambling, smoking.
- Be strong and spend money on fuel, clothes, food, rent etc.
- Not knowing what to do as parents.
- Kids are growing up too fast – some are forced to look after themselves.
- Setting boundaries and curfews for our kids.
- Males don’t know how to be dads.
- Males who have been falsely accused of abuse need support from ongoing impact.
- Males need to feel happy and safe but need to be able to talk to their wives about issues.
- Dad’s need to play a stronger role in kids education.
- Fathers have fights then ‘run away’ because they feel sad and confused and don’t know where to go for help. This is protective behaviour that is often interpreted as uncaring or irresponsible. Males need safe places to run to.
- Fathers are not able to discipline their kids like they used to; not able to give a ‘whack’ – kids tell the welfare – not able to show ‘tough love’; this is how they were brought up and there are not other ways of disciplining. Need to develop other ways of delivering discipline based on relationship and self-discipline. Develop discipline that is not violent – don’t just do what was done to us – but what to do about people who are out of control, not respectful, not listening?
- Males find it hard to give cuddles because if kids say they get cuddles from father or grandfather, then these males get accused of abuse. More complete investigation of situations can lead to better outcomes (safety and protection for kids and families) and fairer consequences (perpetrators are identified and dealt with, innocent males are not labelled).
- Child protection not simply a family welfare issue – protection of children shouldn’t be linked to family economic status; it should be a philosophical/ideological issue, not about poverty.
- Ongoing impact of initial impact of arrival of missions and stolen generations – different ideas about “protection”.
- Education and support for family budgeting and family/community financial management.
- We need to spend more time with our kids i.e. getting involved in their sport, going to their schools.
- Different generations of men learning off each other as fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles
- Cultural engagement of children – tapping them into traditional knowledge.
- Get more involved in parenting and help the women – go camping or something.
- More father/son camps/initiatives.
- We need to teach kids to be responsible for themselves.
- More education about child protection laws in regards to discipline.
- Acknowledge the cultural knowledge and understanding that males have, and not to have to be ‘volunteers’ with their knowledge but be paid.
- Males take on the role as protector.
- We need good food in stores from intervention.
- How does good discipline operate when males are left out in custody disputes?
The next steps

1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE/Keeping Children Safe

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Getting balance between traditional life and contemporary life.
- We need to challenge TV influence from America and popular culture.
- There is an ongoing impact from stolen generations.
- Violence is promoted by boredom and depression. – this is happening through erosion of culture e.g. young kids being influenced by African/American culture – hip hop, gangster
- No-one listens to aboriginal peoples ideas.
- Mainstream TV promotes violence, drug use, abusive relationships with women.
- There were efforts to control alcohol in communities before the intervention.
- Low self-esteem occurs when males aren’t working.
- Long-term fixes need to focus on all of the family and extended family.
- National Child Protection Framework (indigenous specific component?)
- Consistent awareness, acknowledgement, and concern about violence.
- We need to make sexual abuse of kids a national issue, not just an Aboriginal issue.
- We need to make pornography a national issue, not just an aboriginal issue – be consistent, not hypocritical.
- Mainstream need to accept that there is not one solution for all communities.
- Seeing each child as having their own issues, don’t treat them all the same.
The next steps

1. CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE/Keeping Children Safe

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Fathers have fights then ‘run away’ because they feel sad and confused and don’t know where to go for help. Removal from the situation is protective behaviour that is often interpreted as uncaring or irresponsible. Males need safe places to run to — safe houses, centres, accessible support services.

- Establishment of places of healing for Aboriginal males, including men’s shelters/sheds, short term ‘drying out’ places for males, and more resources for long-term rehabilitation of Aboriginal males with alcohol and other drug problems, preferably within their own community. Also ‘half-way’ houses to either give ‘time out’ or time to move slowly back into work/family/training, to be run by Aboriginal males. Also for Males AND Kids — address family disruption and distress, not just alcohol and drugs.

- Fathers are not able to discipline their kids like they used to; not able to give a ‘whack’ — kids tell the welfare — not able to show ‘tough love’; this is how they were brought up and there are not other ways of disciplining. Need to develop other ways of delivering discipline based on relationship and self-discipline. Develop discipline that is not violent — don’t just do what was done to us — but what to do about people who are out of control, not respectful, not listening?

- The control of family services to be inclusive of males. For the establishment of more male-specific health programs, programs for Aboriginal families need to incorporate males more as part of the family, and also develop programs for young fathers.

- Males find it hard to give cuddles because if kids say they get cuddles from father or grandfather, then these males get accused of abuse. More complete investigation of accusations and situations can lead to better outcomes (safety and protection for kids and families) and fairer consequences (perpetrators are identified and dealt with, innocent males are not labelled).

- Education and support for family budgeting and family/community financial management that will promote viability and sustainability.

- Consistent awareness, acknowledgement, and concern about violence.

- Promote everyday, local people as role models — “walking the talk”.

- Long term INVESTMENT rather than short-term/erratic/inconsistent funding in programmes and strategies to support sustainable change. This is intergenerational business.

- Promoting positive media portrayals of the ‘good work’ that IS happening.

- We need to make sexual abuse of kids a national issue, not just an aboriginal issue.

- We need to make pornography a national issue, not just an aboriginal issue — be consistent, not hypocritical.

- Mainstream need to accept that there is not one solution for all communities.

- Seeing each child as having their own issues, don’t treat them all the same.
The next steps

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Creating and implementing compulsory indigenous histories, knowledge and languages into educational curriculum K-yr 12.
- Night Patrol for both kids and parents.
- More complete investigation from the authorities about what happens to kids – will lead to better outcomes and fairer consequences.
- Create male groups from the age of 12 up to discuss issues and then work together with women’s groups.
- Establish men’s centres as safe houses e.g. respite house, half-way house to either give time-out, or time to move slowly back in to work/family/training – to be run by males in the community.
- Incorporating signs of safety for kids into the schools.
- Creating appropriate youth forums for children to have their say.
- Many initiatives should look to be being visual and being fun.
- Promote everyday, local people as role models – “walking the talk”.
- Indigenous TV to offer more education programming; no alcohol or sex advertising.
- Look into the role of night patrol and better linking in with other services.
- Promoting positive media portrayals of the ‘good work’ that IS happening.
- Creating a ‘safe-haven’ in communities for children while community works with parents – e.g. kids might stay for 10 days – haven is in community so kids stay in community.
- Programs for families need to incorporate males more as part of the family, and also develop programs for young dads. Family services should consult with males and children all the way in making this work.
- Support of placement of kids within the community when the family is absent or in distress or disarray.
- Child agencies need to consult and work in partnership with the community.
- National march for males and their children
- Promote everyday, local people as role models – “walking the talk”.
- Promoting positive media portrayals of the ‘good work’ that IS happening.
- Long term Investment rather than short-term/erratic/inconsistent funding in programmes and strategies to support sustainable change. This is intergenerational business.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Workshop facilitators
- Paddy Murray-General Counsellor-Mens Programme-Centacare (NSW)
- Malcolm Frost-General Counsellor-Congress Alice Springs (NT)
- George Peckham-Community Liaison Officer-NT Legal Service Commission
- Gary McFarlane-Congress Alice Springs (NT)-Workshop Scribe

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Many of the solutions discussed in the groups around domestic violence, apply to a whole range of community wellbeing issues and were raised in other workshop discussions.

We would summarize the major solutions as follows in two parts:

1. Enabling Framework and
2. Practical Solutions. The enabling framework most probably applies to all workshop topics.

Enabling Framework

1. The starting point for all solutions is that they are arrived at through genuine consultation at the community level. Each solution should be carefully discussed and negotiated so that genuine community acceptance and backing for the solution is achieved.

2. Programmes should be resourced and committed to for a long term, to avoid the current mistrust of 'stop go' programme resourcing. This of course would be subject to review and adjustment of programmes around achievements of effective outcomes.

3. Properly trained male workers will need to be available to help negotiate, develop and assist in the running of programmes. This training is not currently available. The knowledge required to develop and run this training is available from a few key people in the NT and around Australia.

A suitable training programme needs to be established and located with an appropriate body such as Congress (CAAC). Without adequate training programmes are not likely to succeed.

Recognition of appropriate local cultural leadership skills and paying for them when used.

Invocation:

On ABC life matters 23 July 2008, two Kimberley elders and Jesuit Brian McCoy talked about Holding Men, the title of Brian’s new book.

When Brian was asked to suggest the way forward in relation to the intervention he spoke of:

Sitting down and listening with respect with each Indigenous community. Respect their values and recognize strengths. When we always tell them what is wrong we hurt marginalize and shame. We need to build on strengths that have been evident over thousands of years.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WORKSHOP SUMMARY-PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

1. Community Courts: Use community based courts where possible. Explore concepts such as circle sentencing and restorative justice. Research and refine the effectiveness of community courts.

Develop a range of alternative sentencing programmes. Have a look and question the value of possible over use of shaming techniques, versus strength based and healing solutions.

2. Men’s Centres – shelters: Their needs to be places in each community where men can go to dry out or quieten down to avoid violence and conflict. These centres’ would need to be manned by males trained to assist males in this situation.

A range of other resources could also be available in these centres, around counselling, violence prevention groups, drugs and alcohol, education training and employment.

These centres could vary in size depending on the size of the community.

3. Male Groups: (Building Strong Men) Male groups are a powerful technique to look at building strengths and avoiding problem behaviour, violence drugs and alcohol, sexual abuse poor parenting. Strong older males can then truly move into the eldering and mentoring role for younger males and boys. These groups already run successfully in other parts of Australia (Lismore Rekindling the Spirit Programme) and can be adapted for use in the NT.

They will need to be resourced by appropriate training mentioned in the enabling framework above.

4. Prison Rehabilitation and Transition: Large numbers of males are in prison for violence related offences. It was thought that these men were just dumped back into the community and often re-offended.

The provision of prison based violence prevention programmes should be maximized and some thought given to transition programmes.

Transition programmes could be at specialized camps or at the men’s centre/shelters and monitored by the community courts.

5. Positive Media - Male Storey’s: All workshops mentioned the lack of positive publicity about good male stories. The continual negative and problem based focus by the media on males created intense shaming and blaming which tends to lock males into negative low self esteem positions. This can lead to reinforcing negative behaviour. Particular mention was made of Imparja role in this.

Consideration should be given to resourcing a range of material especially audio visual material around good male story’s which can be used at all levels of community life, male groups, schools and media. This is a general social problem as media is basically about bad news not good news – So a males good news programmes should be a priority.
2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Selection of a national body of elders (confederation).
- Form male groups around violence which will include counselling.
- Development of mediation services by elders.
- Establish a rehabilitation program post-prison release.
- More shelters for males i.e. dry out shelters, men's sheds.
- More long-term funding for attracting aboriginal males to the areas of education, and physical and mental health (particularly violence education/prevention) workers.
- Appropriate funding for community driven programs for male violence.
- Establishing a more dramatic marketing strategy around empowering males through messages of non-violence.
- Funding and recognising existing skill bases in the community.
- More funding for indigenous male interpreters.
- Create paid pathways of input for elders to inform violence prevention programs.
- Develop community structures to deal with alternatives to violence and non-violent ways to discipline our children.
- Special court processes – aboriginal courts which can put responsibility back on the community and keep young people out of gaol e.g. Murri Men's Court – elders involved – young fellas get directed to attend appropriate groups to talk about their feelings. The good work in these groups, facilitated by the right people leads to reduced sentences.
- Men's group’s can also be a body that applies for funding for things like men’s sheds.
- No ‘bandaid’ funding – long term commitment.
- More marketing and interest in recruitment of aboriginal males into the defence forces.
- CDEP positions to go onto stations.
- For juvenile diversionary programs to send kids back into their community to do community service.
- Correctional services need to talk to elders to develop programs e.g. Berrimah Gaol Darwin.
3. PORNOGRAPHY

Workshop facilitators
Ken Vowles - Program Manager - Pornography Classification Education (NT)
Brad Wallace - Australian Federal Police
Brenton Peterson - Australian Federal Police

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The outcomes from the Pornography workshop came about after much discussion including some education on the issue of pornography and effects on the community and social systems.

Some of the outcomes were practical outcomes targeting the availability of Pornography in the community. By limiting the availability of Pornography through sales and or marketing this will have an almost immediate impact on the availability or Porn in the community. Although it has been shown through previous attempts at prohibition that, attempts to limit and or control the availability of prohibited items does not control and or reduce the impact on the community it just pushes the market underground and creates a Black (white) market.

Some examples of limitations include but are not limited to.
- Restriction of sales at service stations
- Implementation of the same process to purchase porn as grog, ID required and I information collected.

Another major outcome was the emphasis on legislative changes to reduce impact of Porn in the community. This is more focused on a national level not local and includes all dynamics of Australian society therefore taking the spotlight away from Porn being a solely indigenous issue as portrayed in the media and in the current NT intervention.

Some examples of changes identified include but are not limited to.
- Porn is an issue for society, not only Indigenous communities.
- Canberra is the porn capital of Australia, it should lead by example. It is hypocritical to ban pornography in aboriginal communities and it being easily accessible in the rest of Australia.
- Where is research by government. on results and harm to society by increased level of access to sex shops.
- Stronger classification of films/videos/publications.
- If legislation is banning pornography, don’t just target aboriginal people, ban it nationally.

It has also been identified that there is a need to provide sex education to our children and community members.

This is the highest priority in my mind from the outcomes and discussions that took place during the workshops and was strongly identified particularly by remote community members in attendance.

This education is not limited to schools but can include wide reaching media campaigns on both mainstream and indigenous media networks and through advertisement on vehicles, billboards etc.
3. PORNOGRAPHY

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

Some examples of sex education proposals include but are not limited to.

- We need to encourage our kids about sex ed.
- As fathers we need to be strong as role models, and take responsibility for our children’s actions.
- Kids showing/teaching younger kids.
- Kids unaware of love/relationships and just seeing sex as an act.
- Sex education in communities at all age and gender groups.
- Create community meetings to discuss with parents the age of consent, and develop community policies with community agreement.
- Create youth summits – based on community beliefs and expectations.
- Provide sex education in high schools and provide a Certificate of Achievement acknowledging a base understanding of sex education.
- Schools should incorporate relationship and psych sessions.
- Develop literature for public information pornography laws – in language as needed.
- There must be a big emphasis on gender based education.
- Put promotional material on police cars.
- Any education strategies should be tailored to each community based on consultation and age groups.
- Increase penalties for people who are trafficking porn.

Identification that the community as a whole needs to take responsibility for our actions as leaders and role models in order to be responsible for the actions and correct teaching of our children.

This is particularly important as children replicate the behaviours they see in their mentors and role models.

This includes the need for communities to take responsibility to take the lead in preventative measures to counteract and control the problems porn creates and encourages.

Some examples of community proposals include but are not limited to.

- If porn is found on the community, the person should be named and shamed and banned from the community.
- Raising the profile of elders networks in each community.
- Father and son camps.
- It should be up to the home and family to discipline and educate.
- As fathers we need to be strong as role models, and take responsibility for our children’s actions.
- We need to keep our houses safe.
- More community action through enforcement.
On a whole all males present agreed that Pornography has a definite negative impact on young minds and leads to unrealistic views of sex and society.

The main focus was placed on educating our children as we know that Porn will not be stopped due to the introduction of technology to wider society.

But we can address the issues of educating and limiting our children’s access to this genre as an immediate action.

Overall there are issues with pornography in society not just in our communities and these issues are now raising their heads in the bush and in town which leads us to the point we are at now.

It is every Australians right over the age of 18 to purchase pornography in all legal forms with the exception of prescribed communities.

It is an adults own choice to participate in the viewing or utilisation of Pornography for many legal and normal reasons.

Education of our children to ensure they are not being groomed by members of society fulfilling their own desires, understanding that what they are seeing is make believe and not real and limiting their access as children to images and or audio that may create problems is a priority.
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

Workshop facilitators
- Jason Bonson- Aboriginal Male Health Coordinator-NT Dept. of Health (NT)
- Dr Ben Bartlett- Principal Planhealth Pty. Ltd.
- Dr Mick Adams- Chairperson National Peak Body (NACCHO)
- Roy Price- Nutritionist Dept. Of Health Founder of Flower Drum Stove

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Each of the eight workshop groups where held in a respectful and harmonious manner, where participants engaged in emotional topics, they decided that rather than debate about issues and various circumstances there was the agreement by all to “let’s work together to resolve these issues”.

Some Key issues that were mentioned at a community level are:

- Aboriginal male health must be understood in a holistic framework, reductionist biomedical models do not address Aboriginal male health issues and will not substantially reduce the health gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal males. Male health is about the whole person. It is about how that person fits socially and culturally.

- Aboriginal male health centres provide a vital setting for supporting males and dealing with the complex issues that affect their health. Such as supporting Aboriginal males to address their social health issues, including matters relating to family relations, self-esteem, alcohol and other drug issues, strong men, strong culture issues and encouraging each other to take responsibility for our health and our actions.

- These services to work in conjunction with or to also provide the following types of services: Men’s groups- us males need to talk more about issues that affect our everyday lives. We can help each other but we don’t talk enough.

- Mens Places and shelters/ Also more Male places can a be a starting point for support services and assist with culturally appropriate Health service delivery in communities. Places where males can go after being incarcerated/leaving rehab to slowly ease back into community life.

- Male only places to be properly resourced. - Run by males for males.

- A separate Male only place for cooling off/time out place for males.

- ATSI Male Health is more than Just a STI/ Adult health screening. - Questions that where asked include Do all ATSI males know what the screening is all about? What happens to their results? Where do the blood and urine sample goes/ who sees them?. Our health is more about feeling happy, strong, stress free, its about being a part of family and community.

- Males and women need to work together more: Our women don’t think we can do good things, but everything (programs& help) in community is for women and kids. There nothing for us males
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Cultural Security - is a big problem. Firstly if clients do not feel secure they do not access health (and other) services, reinforcing the false stereotype that Aboriginal males are uninterested in their health and community issues. Secondly if non ATSI people don’t understand how sorry business works or other community cultural matters they often can behave in disrespectful ways or not understand Aboriginal peoples behaviour, eg issues relating to cultural business and there are no specific leave entitlement’s that cover this type of leave or other ceremonial business in most workplaces.

- More ATSI Male Health staff/Access to Real Jobs – AHWs being acknowledged for their skills and allowed/encouraged to perform them. Consider balancing Health worker positions with RN/EN nursing positions, where experience equal qualifications are the criteria. Increase Remote Area Nursing Orientation focusing cultural awareness and the important role of an AHW when entering a community setting. Provide mentoring for Aboriginal males entering the health workforce, possibly in conjunction with other professional bodies such as the Indigenous doctors association.

- Raise the Profile of Aboriginal Males- There are a lot of good strong Aboriginal males who are here at the summit that can and should be used as role models for our fellow countrymen in rural/urban/communities – Aboriginal Health workers, health educators, promotion officers workers, Dr’s, Politicians, Aboriginal Community Police officers, CDEP workers, Teachers Aids, CEO of organisations, home owners etc. Most Aboriginal Males will be a quote for someone.

- Some Key issues that were mentioned on a National and State Level are:
  - Should be Territory Policy on Male Health - the women have a women’s health policy.
  - More consultation with Aboriginal males regarding community policy and program development. ATSI men need to be involved more in the decision making process about issues that effect us and our families and community at all levels of consultation and implementation. Aboriginal males from this Summit should be linked into these processes as we become aware of opportunities.
  - Establish of a National Aboriginal Male Health committee that’s acknowledged by the Federal Government and work with Government as an advisory and advocacy body on all holistic lifestyle issues that are our health.
  - NT Aboriginal Male Health reference committee will be a delegate to the National Body. NT Aboriginal male health reference group can - Advise Government and current services on how to be more responsive to Aboriginal males needs, a more coordinated approach, also to link up the NT on regular basis. Create a workable NT ATSI male health network who will provide feedback to local communities in addition to supporting the work of the reference group.
  - Provide national training programs for Aboriginal Facilitators and mentors.
  - Access to Real Jobs.
  - A follow up NT ATSI Male health summit/convention and to be held every two years
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

In traditional Australian Aboriginal society there was no word for health as it is understood in Western society.

Traditionally and today, the Aboriginal view of health encompasses a holistic matrix of family connections, land and community. Implicit in this is control over the physical environment, self-dignity, community cohesion, self-esteem and social justice.

Despite a huge investment in Aboriginal health in recent years, the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males has not been given appropriate attention. Most attempts to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male health have failed, perhaps in significant part because they have been based on Western medical approaches to health.

Today the situation among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males is that they are the least healthy group in Australian society. They have consistently poorer outcomes across a range of health indicators and a greater incidence of major illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease than the Australian population as a whole. This is mirrored by the psychosocial status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males who have a low educational level and a correspondingly high rate of unemployment, which leads to a low income and high dependency on social security benefits. All of these factors compound the cycle of poverty that is fed by the low self-esteem and depression associated with the loss of traditional male roles. This and the prevalence of racism in Australian society is the legacy of colonisation.

Associated with poverty and compromised mental health are the risk factors of poor nutrition and the use of harmful substances (smoking and alcohol abuse) both of which worsen the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males. However, the major killers of this group are the so-called preventable diseases that among other population groups are considered manageable with lifestyle changes: diseases of the circulatory system (myocardial infarction and strokes), injury and poisoning, respiratory diseases, cancers and endocrine disorders (predominately diabetes).

These ‘preventable diseases’ become lethal when added to the impact of intergenerational trauma (eg loss of culture and the affect of ‘the stolen generation’); the poverty cycle; a lack of health education, and cultural and language barriers to accessing appropriate health services. The situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males is desperate and these issues must be addressed urgently.

My personal philosophy is that in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community if the males is unwell he cannot provide for his family, therefore, the family suffers. If the family suffers then they draw on resources from the community.

The overuse or dependence of the community causes it to dysfunction. If the male is well he can provide for the family. Therefore, if the family is provided for they will be nourished. If the family is satisfied then they need not draw on resources from the community.

Therefore, if the male is well and the family is satisfied then the community stays healthy and all will function to their fullest potential.

Dr. Mick Adams-Summit Facilitator
Chairperson National Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Males have a ‘natural fear’ of being ill, need to support each other—education and encouraging
- Use alternative to get check ups eg ‘Football fitness’ Tennant creek
- Having a male health centre increases access for men
- Centre leads to conversations that are broader than sexual health issues.
- How can we encourage others to set up men’s centres?
- In Tennant Creek males approached the Board of Directors, and ask males what they wanted through the ‘Stronger families’ program.
- Government after evidence, Congress Male Health and Tennant Creek can provide that evidence.
- Need for regional, coordinated approach
- Need support from other family to access health services
- Workforce issues are a problem, WAHAC male centre 14 months without a male nurse
- Male Health is physical and mental wellbeing
- Start off point for delivery of male health services:
  - Delivered by males for males
  - Time out to do counselling, prevent suicide, get rid of pain
  - Women’s centre has art and craft associated
  - Men’s place could have recycling, arts and craft, multifunction
  - Full time doctor to do health checks
  - Male health is more than just clinical
  - Male centre multifunctional centre—cultural activities
  - “one stop shop for men”
  - Expansion by word of mouth—communication strategy.
- Important for males to see males when coming to a service
- Male health not just STI checks
- Male centres in communities bring in elders
- Doing things for the community
- Take young fellas out and mentor
- Start change attitudes, start doing things together
- Relationship between women health services managers and Aboriginal males can lead to problems if cultural respect is not observed and understood
- View that men are violent not true for most, is there a similar view that women are violent?
- Male health clinics need to be accessible, separate to where women go and with male staff
- General clinic work for some males
- ‘Men’s health—no one listening, no funding for men’s health’
- Existing (male health) groups fell apart
- Male health—doesn’t lack support—lacks funds
- You can have a men’s shed, but it can be empty, need funding to employ men’s coordinators
- Men are sacred too. Need to be able to access services in confidence.
- Need to be able to access traditional healers in hospitals
- Need national bodies to feed into national policy—Need agreement on representation. Representatives from each region
- Need a men’s health advisory council in the NT
- Local government—more pressure on local representative to discuss issues with males in the community
- Need a steering committee from this summit
- Representatives from the health sector need to be involved in Rudd’s proposed new national advisory body.
- International men’s health Week 9-15th June, need a national Aboriginal male Health day
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Males need to take an active role: to sit back and let things happen - feel disempowered /of that, not government fault that we didn’t play our part. Our fault we didn’t take the opportunity to talk.
- Women often talking for the community
- Men reluctant to engage in health
- Women viewed as being proactive because willing to put hand up
- Women portrayed as victims, men don’t argue “women want to run the show, and then let them” (get support)
- Aboriginal males have to change behaviour/mind set (travel together)
- Aboriginal women to change behaviour/mind set (travel together)
- Need to raise to that other level
- Men’s stuff, Going fishing and taking the kids
- Role models engage with sons and nephews
- Need to develop a new male role model description
- Before males had high status, responsibilities, what now?
- Separate male group (Hope Vale) take kids out, show cultural stuff, no funding.
- Use Men’s sheds to get together at night and teach cultural stuff, making spears etc
- Having a male space helps.
- Intervention – stopped every piece of dignity
- CDEP loss of income
- FACSIA – Reports make them look good.
- Many sad stories
- Nepotism in the shires
- Lack of jobs for year 12 graduates
- Sick of hearing ‘no money is available’
- Need to set up in major centres in the NT
- Raising awareness
- Time to connect up to be more collective
- How do we get Aboriginal males to be involved?
- “Health” frightening - “strong men”
- How long is it since campaigning for Men’s health checks?
- In 2008 Aboriginal males know little about health threats- how can they be proactive?
- March in 1999 need to reignite the passion
- Need to get up and demand rights to have problems and issues acknowledged, find solutions
- Raise profile of males, need for social marketing of males- raise media profile, strong men’s T-Shirts and caps etc. Need strong positive male role models to be presented in publicity campaigns, what is our role model to be?
- How to lift the profile of men above being perpetrators? Have a national body- of senior male reps
- Use sport stars to get messages out about men’s programs
- Also community men should be messengers about health programs
- Need to invite non-Aboriginal people to view successful programs.
- Jails, need to have programs in jails
- Why are proposals squashed? What is going on?
- Show governments that you are taking responsibility as individuals- get a well persons check.
- National program to teach people to develop male programs in communities.
- Facilitator training and mentoring programs
- Acknowledgement- Internationally that for women’s health to improve there needs to be an improvement in Male health.
- Taking people out of country
- Need male representation within judicial process in communities for pre-court sentencing.
4. MALE HEALTH-WELLBEING

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Aboriginal Health worker union- bigger unions lobby on behalf of AHWs, coverage for mental Health workers, unions can standardise everything. One Voice
- Why are males walking away from being AHWs?
- Lots trained, but not working
- Need to overcome stigma of gay male AHW’s
- Increase males in workforce
- Some of the best people to deliver programs are those who have been to the brink, not allowed to use them- police checks etc.
- Mentoring- mix of young and old males. Need this support. Mentoring for AHW’s possibly from Indigenous Doctors Association.
- Identify students who want to do medicine and nursing, need support to overcome homesickness, fear of failure
- Males need to understand and learn community development and the social determinants of health.
- Male health policy needs to be strengthened and made a bigger political issue, need a NT Male Advisory Council
- Look at male’s role in families.
- Need to reconnect the relationship between males and women, and to end the view of males as problems that splits up family and community perceptions that women need all the help.
- Concentrate on male roles in families and the role they play to improve families.
The next steps

5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

Workshop facilitators
Keith Buzzacott-Alcohol and drug worker-ADSCA-Alice Springs (NT)
Jeff Browncombe-Clinical Director-NT Alcohol and other drugs
Gerard Waterford-Counsellor-Congress Alice Springs
David Beveridge-Counsellor-Congress Alice Springs
Chris Hawke-Counsellor-Congress Alice Springs

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

There were a lot of good ideas and recommendations in the eight sessions

Most of the discussions were very fruitful and most of the men were passionate about fixing up the problems that Aboriginal Males have to face as the result of alcohol and other substance abuse. Including the family as a whole, in particular the wives and children and the whole Community in the entire process.

There were many words of encouragement and lots of motivational discussions. Many of the males stirred each other up in the sense of "c'mon let's do something, let's stand up and take our rightful roles in the family and the community. Let's make a difference, we are the one's who have to be leaders"

For many the chance to express their selves in an open discussion was a good way to release built up pressure. The pressing matters in the society had caused a lot of frustration and stress. The opportunity to share those feelings and views with many other males in similar situations meant a lot to them.

Strong relationships between the different groups were developed in a very short time of three days. The potential for strong networks to be established intrastate and interstate was displayed. Also I believe that many of the participants are keen to follow up on ideas and strategies to tackle the alcohol and other substance related issues.

It was strongly expressed that each individual community and group will need to tailor alcohol and other substance programmes and services. Different communities have different alcohol and other substance use issues and therefore need different types of programmes. For example the main substance abuse may be inhalants therefore the main focus would be around providing services for that. They will need workers, consultants and advisors from within their own groups.

Willingness to make appropriate changes to support AOD programmes with local input making them more likely to succeed.

There is existing alcohol and other drug programmes and services Australia wide and in Central Australia that proved to be successful. Some of them are not as well known as the others and therefore the public need to be made more aware of such services. Maybe there should be some awareness campaigns.
Our discussions ranged from thought provoking to inspirational.

Many men were deeply self-reflective and honest about their own lives. They were passionate about fixing up the problems that Aboriginal male have to face as the result of alcohol and other substance abuse. They addressed community, family, and particularly wives and children in their discussions. There were many words of encouragement and lots of motivational discussions.

Many of the males stirred each other up: “C’mon lets do something, let’s stand up and take our rightful roles in the family and the community. Let’s make a difference, we are the ones who have to be leaders”

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services were a frequent topic of discussion. Males were generally supportive of expanding currently available services, such as residential rehabilitation, though awareness about these could be raised.

However, they consistently cited the need for services delivered in a community context, including counselling and support services that assist not just the affected individual but also those around them. Services should incorporate outstation facilities, the teaching of recovered addicts, develop skills and employment opportunities, and be delivered increasingly by Aboriginal workers. Specific approaches to different substances, including alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, stimulants and inhalants, were also discussed.

Participants expressed their concern at the extent of alcohol and drug use amongst young people, as well as across the community generally. They discussed strategies for protecting young people in vulnerable situations.

Other key areas addressed included: the need for education regarding safe drinking patterns, AOD education in schools, addressing injustice and boredom, and reducing alcohol harm through law enforcement and limits on advertising.

For many the chance to express themselves in an open discussion helped to relieve frustration and stress. They were able to share concerns, discuss solutions and develop relationships and networks, both locally and interstate.

A great camaraderie continues to evolve amongst Aboriginal men, strengthened by greater awareness and resolve around these and other issues.

Issues and recommendations

Individual

Issue: Males need to acknowledge their responsibility to family and as role models
Recommendation: All males to be honest with themselves about the impact of their drinking on those around them. Develop support networks and men’s spaces.

Issue: Poor self esteem/depression and loss of male pride
Recommendation: Males to understand their own strengths and “find strength within”
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Issues and recommendations continued

Individual continued

Issue: Need for males to learn to drink responsibly
Recommendation: Education programs in schools, utilize cultural knowledge and experiences of ex-addicts, develop visual and interactive resources, address drinking in pregnancy

Issue: Underlying causes of drinking, such as grief and loss, living conditions, unemployment
Recommendation: Address these underlying causes

Community

Issue: Lack of appropriate AOD treatment services in communities
Recommendation: Develop local services that include community consultation/tailoring, counselling and support, outstation facilities, utilize the experiences of ex-addicts, use innovative treatment approaches including visual aids, develop skills and employment, employ and train Aboriginal people.

Issue: Underage drinking and need to protect children when adults drinking
Recommendation: Find a safe place for children, adults to remain sober, address housing and overcrowding

Issue: Need to live according to Aboriginal and mainstream law
Recommendation: Strengthen understanding of Aboriginal law and law enforcement by police, community responsibility for enforcing standards and assisting police

Issue: Boredom, lack of opportunity
Recommendation: diversionary programs, education and training

Issue: Injustices within employment, such as subcontracting to private enterprise and over-emphasis on tertiary education
Recommendation: value local knowledge and skills in selection criteria, require references from elders, community consultation

Issue: Males disadvantaged by legal system and attempting to deal with women’s hurtful practices
Recommendation: legal reform, acknowledgement of women’s unseen power

National

Issue: Aboriginal males unfairly labelled according to the behaviour of a few
Recommendation: media standards around fair and accurate reporting

Issue: The Australian ‘drinking culture’ and glorification of drinking
Recommendation: Re-define positive male images around self-respect and responsibility for family, alcohol advertising to be regulated/banned

Issue: Shortfall in funding for programs and employment schemes
Recommendation: pro-active approach from government, long-term commitments, patience
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Males need to acknowledge their responsibility to family, as role models etc.
- Undesirable for children to drink/use drugs so young (better after 18)
- Individual education for underage AOD use.
- We must ask ourselves “Why do we drink in the first place?”
- We need to learn how to drink responsibly.
- We need to make the choices to change individually and develop strengths as part of the community.
- Males should take responsibility to make children and families safe.
- We need to change the cycle of children watching their parents drink.
- Males have to be willing to change.
- Males need good examples of other men.
- Males need to acknowledge and work from their strengths.
- Poor self-esteem and depression
- Injustices within employment – loss of aboriginal jobs through subcontracting to private enterprise, machination, and overemphasis on tertiary qualifications.
- Lack of appropriate AOD treatment services in community.
- Not everyone should be tarred with the same brush.
- We need to address the underlying issues of grief, pain, housing, social dysfunction etc that lead to AOD misuse.
- Some people need to acknowledge they have a problem with drinking too much
- Males are disadvantaged by the legal system and attempting to deal with women’s hurtful practices.
- Need for males to support each other and to address loss of male pride.
- Looking out for children when people drinking
- Need to enforce “2 Laws”.
- Community education for underage AOD use.
- “Labelling” – fails to acknowledge diversity (tarring everyone with the same brush’).
- Education – it is better if delivered from reformed drinkers and drug users “we’ve been there (alcoholism) and it’s a sad road to go down”.
- There is a significant amount of excess alcohol and gunja in aboriginal Australia.
- Housing crisis.
- It is difficult to control children and young people. We need to provide clear, culturally appropriate messages (in language as relevant) and be role models for our kids.
- Boredom; lack of opportunity; lack of reasons to stop drinking.
- Regular engagement with cultural knowledge.
- Build on more opportunities and initiatives for local people to provide communication and counselling skills.
- Kids need to stay in school longer.
- Media portrays poor examples.
- Can’t push our family away.
- Back to country.
- Royalty money scattered all around the streets.
- Acknowledge the diversity in the patterns of drinking – we’re not all alcoholics.
- More harm minimisation strategies for example drug and alcohol education.
- “If you see someone with an alcohol problem – speak up: challenge, enforce, encourage responsibility.
- Two laws should make us stronger – strengthen both.
- We need community initiatives.
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- We need to prioritise grog and drugs in our health services/clinics.
- When they're drunk they're not thinking about our health and culture.
- Hold the pubs/industry to account for their approach/policies.
- Why can’t we strategise the programs ourselves?
- Do we need individual and/or family services to address problems.
- When a bloke comes out of gaol, we need to get all the family together.
- People from universities telling us on communities what is ‘culturally appropriate’.
- Address trans-generational trauma.
- Grandparents are getting burnt out from caring for the kids.
- Alcohol Management Plans/Takeaway Limits – can be helpful but people who have serious problems will change to another drug or find other ways to drink.
- Inappropriateness of current AOD treatment services.
- Rehab removes males from their environment and family – this is not conducive to the healing process as they lose contact with their family and may get jealous.
- Insufficient knowledge/education around safe drinking patterns and dealing with inappropriate alcohol/drug use.
- Inappropriate selection of people for key positions (of employment).
- Insufficient recognition of cultural knowledge. There is an over-emphasis on degrees.
- Gambling is a problem.
- Women pushing buttons.
- Holistic ‘healing centres’ needed to reconcile family and community issues.
- Isolated communities in particular have nothing – leads to boredom – need after hours services.
- Petrol sniffing is an issue.
- Resources should support family initiatives.
- The “Australian” drinking culture
- National education for underage AOD use.
- Community controlled ownership of the issues and their solutions.
- Diversity of communities needs to be recognised – with regards to the intervention, some communities were already dry and blanket solutions from government are not the solution.
- We haven’t got government organisations listening to us.
- “Branding”
- Employment and funding of programs
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP ISSUES OUTCOMES

- All males to be honest with themselves about the impact of their drinking and those around them, “find strength from within”.
- Need to understand our strengths.
- Find ways to communicate with young people – explore their strengths. See other community recommendations.
- Address grief/pain/environment.
- Education programs in school, utilise cultural knowledge and experiences of ex-addicts; taking responsibility “Blaming will keep you drunk”.

- Services should include the following
  - community consultation/tailoring
  - outstation facilities
  - develop skills/employment
  - include those who have come through addiction
  - pictures/DVD’s as resources
  - counselling
  - need for government consultation and appropriate funding.
- AOD treatment should be on outstations, and concentrate on diversion/skills/employment. Use pictures and DVD’s as resources.
- Job descriptions and roles should value cultural knowledge, references from elders and community consultations.
- Legal reform to acknowledge males more and recognise women’s ‘unseen power’.
- Culture of males encouraging and ‘cooling out’ for each other; men’s groups/sharing circles/healing circles.
- Find safe places for children. Adults to stay sober and look out for kids.
- Address housing and overcrowding.
- Strengthen understanding of aboriginal law and incorporate into law enforcement by police.
- Media/government. should portray the range of aboriginal people more fairly.
- Self-reflection and honesty from males needed – “find strength from within” with support from families and wider community. We need education around responsible drinking and changing community expectations around behaviour/amounts consumed.
- Look at supply reduction as a strategy as it has a role but is not the full picture – it can make things worse.
- Create community controlled and based treatment initiatives for AOD misuse.
- Better links between the younger generation and the elders/senior people of the community.
- Better promotion and funding for arts and crafts centres as healing places.
- More relevant and culturally appropriate diversionary activities for males entering/leaving prison.
- Better support for establishing local aboriginal run businesses to tap into minerals boom, agriculture, aquaculture, etc whatever is relevant to the country.
- More men’s groups – parenting skills.
- Ban alcohol advertising on Imparja and more health and community service announcements.
- More resources to develop better treatment services which includes rehab services that focus on follow up and transitional housing; support groups, counselling from both indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives; ex-drinkers to deliver messages, and go out bush.
- Have education programs that include ceremonies, activities out bush.
- More funding for transitional housing.
5. GROG AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSES

WORKSHOP ISSUES OUTCOMES

- Money to establish rehab centres in remote areas.
- Need more night patrols.
- Provide education at schools about alcohol, as well as show them gaol, hospital, movies to symbolise these messages, and have this explained in language and done by parents who are employed to do this.
- Create more programs like Mt Theo for young people away from town centres.
- Incorporate a bush nutrition program.
- Full-time positions for researches so we know what the real issues actually are, for example – less people on CDEP which means less money on communities, which leads to financial stress, more drinking.
- Create more ‘voluntary beds’?
- More flexible aboriginal positions that make cultural knowledge more valued. References should come from community members instead of mainstream educational requirements.
- Community groups need to be the ones who make ‘decisions’ about who gets jobs, rather than administrators deciding on qualifications.
- Create more rehab beds in general and for people who self-refer as priorities are given to court-ordered people and this creating longer waiting lists.
- Creating more opportunities for local kids who complete yr 12 to gain employment in their local communities.
- More AOD treatment services located within communities which will better incorporate the whole family unit as part of getting better.
- Job descriptions should include more detailed selection criteria around cultural knowledge and acceptance, references from elders.
- There needs to be a commitment to training Aboriginal people in key positions. This needs to recognise and address obstacle to aboriginal employment.
- Community services should not just focus on grog, but include a focus on all substance abuse.
- Health boards should have alcohol and drugs as a high priority on their agendas.
- Re-define positive male images around self-respect and responsibility for family.
- Pro-active response from government with patience and a commitment to long-term visions.
Environmental health encompasses a wide range of challenges and the development of expertise and experiences in a multitude of programs/initiatives relative to the practical on the ground recommendations of the Male Health summit; is sorely needed.

It is about a change of mindset in promoting, educating and sustaining a healthy diet, safe, clean, comfortable and affordable shelter, better water; and healthy relationships within family’s and/or communities. It is also about sustaining and maintaining the land on which we live. Governments and other leaders (i.e.; Cardinal George Pell’s recent comments) still have divided opinions on climate change and the effect it is having on the environment and the land. Traditional land management practices that have been in use for centuries is still seen by most experts as a temporary employment program or short news story article; rather than a lifetime skill and commitment.

The late Dr Charles Perkins stated back in 1986 that we would need at least $6 billion dollars in Government funding, if we were even going to come close in addressing adequate and appropriate housing needs for the rapidly growing NT Aboriginal population. Surely we missed a great investment opportunity then. Considering the now spiralling financial cost for housing on Communities and the advancing manifestation of anti-social behaviour fuelled by the increase in drug and alcohol use, we really did miss the boat then.

The necessary skilled workforce to undertake such a monumental development is here in our own back yard; yet the formulation of policy and programs within the education system, training and the apprenticeship arenas, are still piece meal and farcically short in real people numbers and funding.

Despite years on negotiation, consultation and advice, Governments of all persuasions continue to fund short term, quick fix programs for Aboriginal Australians. This country has been riding the crest of a mining boom for over a decade filling the Nations coffers with unprecedented wealth, yet Aboriginal people still languish at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

As an example The Whitegate Community, the home of Senior Aboriginal traditional owners of Alice Springs live in abject poverty within “spitting distance” from the town’s centre. White gate is truly one glaring example of the inequitable sharing of this accumulated wealth and the inability of Aboriginal leaders and Politician’s to act. This is both morally and culturally wrong.

There is no real opportunity for Aboriginal people to have input in to the budgetary processes of Forward Estimates Committee’s; whether it is State or National, how will fairer money distribution ever occur if we have no real input into making the “money cake” before its given to Treasury?

When will the practice of bureaucrats and outside contractors, who consume/waste considerable amounts of funding designated for Aboriginal people, change? There needs to be a fundamental change in the mindset of Public Servants as well a better system of screening and rating the people they engage to undertake programs/contracts, within the Aboriginal community.
The next steps

6. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- We need to keep our communities/homes clean tidy and safe.
- We need to take pride in our communities.
- We need to build around our families, parents passing on lifestyle skills to their children.
- We need to share knowledge and ideas.
- We need to be more supporting of our families.
- Ensure indigenous engagement and participation in planning, design, and construction and maintenance and management of community housing.
- Lack of quality, targeted education, in regards to lifestyle and basic house maintenance skills.
- Lack of apprenticeship opportunities.
- No support or mentoring of apprentices.
- Lack of community planning.
- Home ownership!
- Government contract being fulfilled by outside contractors.
- Bureaucracy using up to much of the money targeted at communities.
- Need more real jobs.
6. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- We require housing organisations to provide or organise basic house maintenance training courses, as part of providing housing.
- Engage indigenous people in leadership development programs.
- Develop and implement training programs in basic house maintenance and lifestyle skills, plus intergenerational cultural maintenance.
- Schools and housing assoc. to deliver lifestyle/home economics programs, and work experience.
- Engagement of local work teams to carry out basic service work in their communities.
- Better resourced and targeted employment and training.
- Encourage actively participation in the planning design, construction and maintenance of housing. For example houses designed that are designed for Elderly people, large families, and other needs.
- Government policy needs to be aligned with community aspirations.
- Provide adequate resources/money for improved housing, training & leadership development.
- Create initiatives that support enterprise development to ultimately create self-generated income, and self sufficiency.
- Conduct skills audit to establish what skills exist in communities. Then maintain a list of skilled people that exist in the community, allowing them to be easily identified and engaged when opportunity arises.
- Government procurement policy needs to provide opportunities for indigenous people in regards to employment and training.
- That resources are provided to develop community business plans that encompass all community assets, activities and concerns. That shires should develop shire-wide plans that align and support community business plans. Government policies/initiatives are aligned with community business plans and aspirations.
- Opportunities and mentoring for apprenticeships in remote communities.
- Support and mentoring of apprenticeships in remote communities.
The education, training and employment workshops were facilitated by three Aboriginal males who were from various states and territories around Australia these being NSW, Queensland and the NT. The facilitators between them had many years experience in Aboriginal education, training and employment.

The aim of the workshop was to develop a broader understanding of the Aboriginal males knowledge and value of white education and to ascertain where black education (traditional culture) fits in today's contemporary society. The first challenge to understanding both black and white education was to identify the existing barriers in Aboriginal education, training and employment in the Northern Territory and to develop clearly defined achievable solutions.

In doing this we first needed to identify that the males at the summit saw value in white education and that the communities where able to recognise the achievements of their children in gaining white education. Although it was clearly supported by the majority of males at the summit that white education is important it was difficult for Aboriginal males to see the value as many of the children that have undergone white education were not gaining meaningful employment within their communities.

This was a common statement across all workshops and lead to the first critical solution of “linking education to employment” within communities. This solution challenges the education system to rethink how it engages Aboriginal communities and develops along-term strategy to improving communities. Some of the jobs that exist within communities are health workers, teachers, administrators, community workers, trades people etc.

The second most common barrier to Aboriginal education, training and employment in the Northern Territory is the lack of recognition of black education (traditional culture) and local cultural practices and knowledge; this was identified across all workshops.

One of the greatest challenges the NT faces to date is mastering the cultural divide between white Australia and black Australia, to do this both cultures must recognise and move forward as “equal partners in learning”. It was clearly identified in the workshops that the co-educational structure in which white education is delivered is in direct conflict with traditional Aboriginal customs and practices of men business and women’s business, it was identified that co-education was a major barrier in relation to ceremony where young boys became young men and young girls become young women.

The solution to this barrier was to recognise traditional customs and practices and to establish a school system that was able to cater for “two ways learning”.

“Two ways learning” is developing a system that recognises both forms of education (black and white) and implementing a school structure and curriculum that is negotiated by community and government to maximise the greatest educational outcome.
7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

A simple solution identified at the summit was establishing a three tier schooling system of Junior school (kindergarten to yrs3), middle school (yrs4 to yrs7) and high school (yrs 8 to yrs12) separating both boys and girls. Schooling would consist of both white and black education and ceremony would be negotiated at the end of middle school and prior to high school, the reasoning for this is that young girls and boys become young men and women and must be treated as such in an adult education environment.

One of the key advantages of this structure is that you are able to introduce Vocational education and training (Voc Ed) to students in high school and develop leadership programs that recognise “students as teachers”, senior students teaching younger students how to read and write creating real role models and developing true community capacity.

The third most common barrier is the lack of local cultural knowledge teachers and other workers have of communities, protocol and process and developing a community “cultural education program” that all workers entering a community must undertake.

The “cultural education program” will provide all workers with an in depth understanding of issues relating to:

- Cultural protocol and knowledge within communities i.e. sorry business, ceremony etc
- Alcohol use and other bans within communities
- Key organisations and community members
- Other impacting issues relating to community

In introducing a localised “cultural education program” you create a greater awareness for new workers entering community and you provide new workers with a better understanding of the people, country and customs whilst continuing to “link education to employment” by creating local jobs for local people.

1. Linking education to employment
2. Equal partners in learning
3. Two ways learning
4. Students as teachers
5. Cultural education program
7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Cultural knowledge not recognised by mainstream society.
- There needs to be incentives for local people to be paid professionally.
- “Aboriginal experts”
- Two-way learning
- Increase participation rates.
- Breakfast/lunch programs in schools.
- We need to develop a strong work ethic in kids.
- No cultural education being undertaken in communities that values their community’s cultural practices.
- Clarification of the role of males.
- Lack of adult education and training that addresses skills development outside the health workers training programs.
- There’s a lack of cross-cultural programs in education system.
- Improve literacy levels (research evidence).
- Developing aboriginal storytelling as a means to sustain culture and improve literacy.
- Teachers excluding themselves from the community (9.00-5.00) so they are not seen as a social part of the community.
- How to better engage kids in VET learning (trades based).
- There needs to be greater emphasis on excluded and suspended children.
- There’s a lack of cultural brokers/mentors/facilitators from communities.
- Males not supporting women in the education of their children.
- Education doesn’t link to jobs.
- How do we improve the participation rates in schools?
- Bi-Lingual Education
- Recognise cultural knowledge.
- Students as teachers.
- Linking education to employment
- Cultural mentors.
- There’s a lack of recognising aboriginal teacher’s aides in the school system and increasing their capacity to become fully qualified teachers.
- There’s a lack of adult education pathways that support young children to succeed at all levels of education.
- Identifying all areas of learning that support aboriginal teachers to become better teachers in delivering subjects to our own people.
- What involvement have communities had to provide input in the engagement of education information to all key peak bodies e.g. NSW model of community education consultation councils.
- Lack of recognition of life skills and competence at the community level.
The next steps

7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Implement a visionary system whereby all aboriginal children are expected to achieve grade 12 level of education and link that schooling to TAFE, Uni and transition programs to meaningful employment.
- Develop aboriginal education consultative groups at a local, regional and territory level.
- Teacher education for local community members. This would include mentoring programs, cultural brokering, cultural facilitators.
- Develop education to training pathways for communities.
- Development of a cultural curriculum by our people for our people.
- Develop life-skills curriculum.
- Implementing contractual agreements with teachers to achieve outcomes.
- Develop alternative learning online resources for kids.
- Create community transport for kids to get to school.
- Linking education and employment to local jobs.
- Establish a men’s centre on communities and develop community based programs to deal with issues.
- Create better transition programs for welfare to work.
- Engage local communities with the schools to discuss education, programs to develop curriculum’s to meet community needs.
- Create alternate education – aboriginal education which balances cultural responsibilities and cultural knowledge.
- Establish multi skilling adult-education centres.
- Establish “one-stop” ‘male business’ centre in communities that deal with education and employment training, skills development in a holistic framework.
- Increase the number of aboriginal teachers.
- Implement local cultural knowledge training for all people working in communities by appropriate cultural custodians who are paid for their services.
- Develop and market more positive roles for males in the education system.
- Develop induction protocols for teachers that includes a holistic appreciation of being both a professional and a community member and what that actually means.
- Develop a pre-orientation program to teach new staff about aboriginal communities and cultural values – done by the appropriate paid community members.
- Develop after school tutoring programs.
- Develop better partnerships between education and other services, NGO’s and government.
- Implement a reward system to encourage learning.
- Provide more resources to support school-based nurses in communities.
- Implement a school-based community support program to raise level of responsibility of parents.
- Develop skills-based VET training across all areas in communities that lead to real jobs.
- Develop and support individual education plans that relate to skills development on their communities.
- Develop alternative education program on-line and self-paced learning using I.T.
7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Develop a mentor program to work with students in communities.
- Identify males and women who work as cultural brokers and have an agreement between the schools, jobs and communities.
- Set up tutoring programs that work around men’s business and are culturally appropriate for each community.
- Developing adult education for our males to support the learning of our children culturally.
- Change the education system so that curriculum’s value traditional ways of learning and knowledge – a ‘holistic cultural delivery’. This should include the (re) introduction of bi-lingual systems of learning and education.
- Research and develop learning strategies that identify aboriginal children’s style of learning.
- Develop a process of recognition of prior learning for all aboriginal teacher’s aides and introduce new positions for career paths in schooling environments.
- Develop adult education pathways that culturally support aboriginal young people to succeed and achieve.
- Develop a mainstream cultural package that identifies all aspects of cultural learning practices in subject delivery/content.
- Develop partnerships and work collaboratively with established indigenous community education consultative councils.
- Develop community assessment teams by the employment of cultural brokers to assist in the facilitation or recognition of prior learning (RPL) from CDEP and job employment skills development to appropriate certificate/diploma levels.
- Develop adult education programs that assist our young people to achieve at all levels/grades of school participation
- Create a community, local and state aboriginal education community consultative advisory bodies and national levels of engagement in relation to all issues on policies and cultural education delivery.
- Develop ‘bottom-up’ approaches and frameworks to engage in education strategies.
- Develop a whole of government marketing strategy in increasing male participation in education at all levels.
- Establish a national evaluation/assessment criteria at all levels of our children’s learning outcomes – this evaluation should be undertaken by our own cultural evaluators.
- Accountability with national benchmarks that evaluate methods that include cultural ways of learning and engaging cultural brokers.
- Development of better cross cultural awareness programs with the engagement of community cultural brokers at all levels of school participation.
8. ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Workshop facilitators
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WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Defining Aboriginal culture from the 8 workshops is as varied and complex as the many Nations and people that make up what remains of the original habitants of this land itself. Whether you are from the remote bush areas, still living on country or mixing it with mainstream in the cities and towns, we all have our own concept of Aboriginal culture and sense of community. Our Workshops resolved there is no right or wrong in personal belief systems.

Culture is life, without it we have nothing. Our sense of ownership, guardianship, sovereignty, sense of belonging to land, is every bit as strong now as it was in the beginning. Despite the tyranny of distance, loss of land, the removal from culture, the influence of mainstream societies, the ever changing pace of technology; and Government’s, State and National who simply just don’t “get it, we are intrinsically linked.

Sex with children is not cultural (Ingkintja). This was the strongest underlining theme by the gathering of males at the Male Health Summit. The almost “witch-hunt” of Aboriginal males and the demonising of our men by the mainstream media and politician’s State and Federal; caused much angst not only at the summit but at all community levels as well.

Although many of the Elders present conceded that a lot of the old ways have been broken down, there was still a strong sense of a need to immerse our young ones in culture as a means of addressing many of the challenges and changing ways that Aboriginal people find themselves in mainstream society today.

The establishment of a Council of Elders at both the local and State levels was strongly endorsed by participants at the summit. This would give Aboriginal males a voice in not only working with our young people but also developing better relationships with the police, Government Agencies such as Centrelink etc. It will also enable Aboriginal males to re-build the lost respect and much needed cultural authority that has been eroded recently by the hysteria generated around the consequences of the “Little Children Are Sacred Report” and the continuing racist Government policy of the NT Intervention.

The need for men’s shelters ranging from sobering up centre’s, half-way-houses and/or safe places for men (as pointed out women are violent too) was also one of the recommendations adopted at the summit.

Aboriginal males are seemingly in perpetual mourning. Sorry business, a new culture of alcohol and drug induced payback (which causes more grief) and the breakdown of sharing sorry business between Nations also adds to the weight of helplessness many Aboriginal males now feel.

The need for cultural appropriate parent training programs and establishing strong ground/house rules within family groups was also seen as critical in reshaping the lives of our future generations.
The responsibility of making sure that our children attend school is not the responsibility of the teachers, the police, our grandmothers, or the Government of the day. It's the responsibility of the parents and particularly the males.

For any program to succeed, it will be necessary for Aboriginal males to be engaged as active and supportive participants. For this to occur, programs must be built on at least two basic assumptions: that most Aboriginal males desire to work for the establishment of peaceful communities in which all Aboriginal people flourish; and that Aboriginal men will not abide wholesale rejection of their customs and law.

This is not to say that programs for early intervention must accept, uncritically, the status quo. Success is most likely to come if Aboriginal males are engaged on the topic of their lore and how it can be interpreted so as to meet contemporary challenges. That is, early intervention should be directed towards bringing about social change – but with an acknowledgement that there is much of value to be built upon. Likewise, there is little prospect of improvement until Aboriginal people become actively engaged in the process of economic development. If this is to occur, then Aboriginal communities will need to develop the ‘human capital’ needed to succeed in a competitive economy.

If children are to be educated to the levels required, then this will require the support of older males and women in the community – and that support will only come if new, positive attitudes are nurtured and reinforced as part of a wider program of social change.

The experience of Aboriginal people has included much injustice – especially since colonisation. However, those who respond to this experience by focusing on claims for ‘social justice’ risk failing the legitimate aspirations of Aboriginal people. This is because claims for ‘social justice’ place Aboriginal people in a passive role.

No matter how just the claim, its satisfaction depends on the decisions of others. Furthermore, some people tend to use the experience of injustice as a shield to screen out the basic realities and challenges of modern life. Waiting for “social justice” becomes an excuse for dependency and inaction. An alternative approach would still preserve the claim for justice. However, it would see Aboriginal people take an active role – defining and driving the conditions for social change. In doing so, Aboriginal people would be preparing themselves to take on the modern world – both in its own terms and on theirs.

Rather than lore, ceremony and culture being preserved as remnants of a lost world, they would undergo a renaissance – literally a rebirth – maintaining their authenticity and utility in a new world. An agenda for “social change” will breathe new life into old ways – judging their merit according to their capacity not merely to sustain Aboriginal people – but to allow them to flourish.

The key to this renaissance will be found in educating the wider public to understand that for every story of Aboriginal dysfunction there is another of quiet success (all the more remarkable given the barriers to be overcome).

Genuine engagement by government and the wider community is the key to true empowerment for Aboriginal people – so that they/we can master the lore of modern society – unlocking the goods that can complement older ways.

The decision to opt for social change is a decision to apply the same adaptive genius that has allowed Aboriginal people to live in this land for millennia.
8. ABORIGINAL CULTURE

WORKSHOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Sex with children IS NOT cultural (Ingkintja).
- Cultural discipline used in our communities.
- We have strong love for our kids.
- We don’t want to feel shamed about our love.
- “Old ways broken now”.
- Men not recognised – no chance to talk.
- Gaol’s not helping men.
- How can we live strong if we don’t own our land?
- Too many wrong stories by women from down south
- We men need to be recognised to have control of our communities
- Laws are lopsided.
- Women use violence too.
- Caring for kids is shared by the whole family.
- Police take more notice of women.
- Police need to learn more about, and respect culture-ways.
- Need to form council of elders in areas.
- No resources for males and male-related programs.
- We need to listen and learn more from the old people.
- We need culturally supportive programs for work-roles.
- Males who drink too much need to sober up.
- More elders involved in education and cultural teaching.
- Other cultures making our kids weak.
- We need to use our culture to pull our kids in.
- Wrong-way payback causes problems.
- So much sorry business – males sad all the time.
- Breakdown between tribes – sharing sorry business.
- Nothing for young males leaving school
- Be aware of extended family pressures when addressing family problems in a cultural way.
- Promised wife is a cultural way of protecting young women, not an excuse for early sex.
- Having strong house rules that mums and dads talk to their kids about.
- Fathers need to do more than preaching the right way, they have to be doing what they’re telling their kids to do “Practice what you preach”.
- Night patrols are effective when there are available safe houses and other support services for their work.
- Centrelink (and government) needs to be flexible.
- We need men’s shelters.
- Relevant to country – better cultural training for police, and other public servants/staff. This should be done in consultation with relevant cultural reps and delivered by the appropriate people – not non-indigenous people.
- Establish a NT Council of Elders to represent the input from the communities.
- Establish a council of Elders to guide local government decisions.
- Establish parent training programs in the proper culture way.
- Create more dry houses and sobering shelters
8. ABORIGINAL CULTURE

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- More resources for aboriginal children to learn about their culture – e.g. employ elders.
- Create young men’s centres and have young males working more closely with elders.
- Regular forums for aboriginal men to meet and discuss issues and solutions – perhaps an aboriginal NT men’s council.
- Develop youth leadership groups.
- Develop safe houses for kids on communities – care by extended family still strong.
- Develop specific cultural training for young males by elders where they are taught and retaught and put straight in cultural ways.
- All government workers need to observe ‘community protocols’ for work visits. Communities should be consulted about what these are.
- Cultural awareness training to be specific and ongoing and to include any aboriginal workers outside of that community.
- Incorporate cultural training into ongoing professional development/study leave to allow for young males to continue cultural education.
- Continue a network of information exchange through Congress.
- Congress is authorised to act and follow up on summit recommendations.
- Stop the intervention
- Put discrimination act back.
- Laws should be translated into languages.
- Any aboriginal men’s councils should be given statutory authority

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