

**A REPORT OF THE DERBY/WEST KIMBERLEY PROJECT: *WORKING  
WITH ADOLESCENTS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE***

**Anne Poelina and Ian Perdrisat (Madjulla Incorporated)**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999, the Australian Government's National Crime Prevention Program piloted a project, *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* in the Western Australian town of Northam.

The project sought to break the cycle of domestic violence by working with adolescents to show the social unacceptability of violent behaviour. It started by discussing issues of personal power and powerlessness and then related these concerns to violence in general and bullying and family violence in particular. The project concluded at the end of 1999.

Evaluation of the Northam project suggested that the project had a positive impact on adolescents' understanding of the unacceptability of violence and recommended that the project could be implemented in other areas where there is community interest in the prevention of domestic violence.

While the Northam project targeted adolescents in a small town community, recommendations from a National Crime Prevention Program report, *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence – Indigenous Rural Model* (called the Derby project) extended elements of the Northam pilot to the Derby/West Kimberley region in 2000. The aims of the project were:

- to increase awareness and understanding of domestic violence in the Derby community
- to develop and implement culturally appropriate strategies for the intervention and/or reduction of domestic violence in Derby through active participation of adolescents, families and communities
- to provide a practical and sustainable model for the intervention and/or the reduction of domestic violence through working in partnership with relevant agencies/service providers and key Aboriginal organisations.

The project established new programs and enhanced some already established. These included centres established for men, women and young people in the Mowanjum and Derby communities, and a schools' curriculum project.

The project, funded by the National Crime Prevention Program, was managed by the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley which engaged a project coordinator. Madjulla Incorporated was engaged to report on the progress and outcomes of the project.

The Shire of Derby West Kimberley comprises two major towns, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing, and the small township of Camballin. It occupies an area of 102,706 square kilometres and is one of four local governments in the Kimberley region. The town of Derby is set on a peninsula and surrounded by tidal marshland. It is located on the King Sound, near the mouth of the Fitzroy River. The total population of the Shire of Derby West Kimberley in June 2000 was 7,883.

This report of the *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence Project* in the Derby/West Kimberley Shire identifies significant, positive

outcomes for the community.

The project involved considerable interagency collaboration generating quite exceptional partnerships between local government, service providers and community representatives servicing young people and their families in the Derby community. The Shire's council's critical role in investment and support significantly strengthened the capacity of the Derby community to respond to the needs of young people and their families. The Shire's role has been significant in the rate of change within the Derby community and appears a critical element if the project were to be transferred to similar setting elsewhere in Australia. This collaborative working relationship between stakeholders was pivotal to the project's success.

Participation on the project steering committee by a shire councillor and chief executive officer informed the Shire's decision to revise the Shire's corporate structure to focus on community development.

The project has created a locally generated model to target groups within the community who have specific needs, are isolated or otherwise disadvantaged, and might not participate in more mainstream community programs.

The project demonstrates the value of capacity building and health promotion principles in reducing the predisposing factors responsible for generating violent behaviours by developing life promoting and technical skills in culturally safe environments.

The project engaged an holistic approach in directing investment to address causes of family violence. For example, the young women's and men's centres, Mowanjum community men and women's programs and the schools' curriculum are at various stages of providing access to information, networking, advocacy and counselling support. The young women's and men's programs have successfully introduced health awareness programs including mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and gender specific physical health issues.

The project successfully used a range of media and community awareness activities to highlight family violence issues in a constructive way and to encourage discussion of these issues.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

In 1998, the National Crime Prevention Program (NCP), and the Australian and New Zealand Crime Intervention Officers' Forum (formerly known as National Anti-Crime Strategy Forum) identified domestic violence in Australian and New Zealand communities as a priority area for intervention. Plans for intervention involved two stages. Stage 1 was an audit of existing programs and a literature review on adolescence and violence intervention in order to develop recommendations for establishing and evaluating pilot projects for adolescents. Stage 2 advocated the development and evaluation of pilot programs in this arena.

This pilot project is one of a number of projects being supported under the National Crime Prevention Program's report, *Pathway To Prevention: Developmental and Early Intervention Approaches to Crime in Australia*, published by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department in 2000. The report emphasises the need for a developmental approach to crime control.

Derby was chosen as a site for a pilot project implementing a model of intervention in dealing with domestic violence because it has social and economic features common to other rural districts with a high Indigenous population. Its profile includes high rates of inter-personal violence as well as a host of associated concerns such as alcohol abuse. The principal intention of the model is to prevent adolescents from acquiring patterns of violence in their intimate relationships by targeting the general adolescent population, those at risk of developing those behaviours, and those who have begun to exhibit signs of violence within their intimate relationships.

*Derby is in many respects typical of other Indigenous communities in northern and central Australia with similar age and demographic profiles and suffering similar social and economic ills...Family violence is a significant issue in the Derby region and is taken very seriously by Indigenous organisations (Blagg, 1999 p.14).*

### *Violence in Indigenous Communities*

In 2001, the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department published a report, *Violence in Indigenous Communities*. The report encapsulated many of the findings arising from the Northam pilot and identified a number of promising approaches and basic principles for effective intervention. A number of these are reflected in the design and progress of the Derby/West Kimberley project.

For the purpose of this report, family violence in an Indigenous setting is inclusive of wider family and community networks. The National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party (1989) wrote, "Domestic violence, which is frequently associated with alcohol consumption, cannot be attributed to any one cause. Domestic violence has its roots in institutionalisation, incarceration, loss of role, loss of parental and role models, low self esteem and alienation". In brief, many Indigenous Australians view family violence as "family fighting or feuding, rather than domestic violence, to describe the multitude forms of conflict and aggression in and around Indigenous intimate relations" (Blagg, 1999 p.14). In this regard family violence is defined in a holistic sense of dis-ease given that violence has a rippling effect on extended families

as well as other family and community members located within the Indigenous town and community settings.

The ways in which service providers, government agencies and Indigenous systems work, can become an extension of violence.

*An oppressive situation in itself constitutes violence because it interferes with human beings' ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. When an individual's natural right to grow, to create and venture forth is responsibly blocked, that right is violated. Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognise others as persons, not by those who are oppressed, exploited and unrecognised (Freire 1972.p.41).*

Systemic violence is practised within the above systems, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous as institutionalised racism and confronts many Indigenous Australians on a daily basis. Culturally appropriate locally developed strategies are being implemented and evaluated in response to Indigenous individual, family, community and systemic violence.

## 2. AIMS

The aims of the project are threefold:

- to increase awareness and understanding of domestic violence in the Derby community
- to develop and implement culturally appropriate strategies for the intervention and/or reduction of domestic violence in Derby through active participation of adolescents, families and communities
- to provide a practical and sustainable model for the intervention and/or the reduction of domestic violence through working in partnership with relevant agencies/service providers and key Aboriginal organisations.

A contract between the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley and the Crime Prevention Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department was established to deliver the pilot project which operated between March 2001 and June 2003. A further contract engaged the services of locally based Indigenous consultants, Madjulla Incorporated.

## 2. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

These include an assessment of the pilot project commenced in Northam contributed to the decision to place the management of the pilot project with the Shire of Derby / West Kimberley, and

- an emphasis on family-based violence as it represents a significant proportion of all violence within Indigenous communities. It is essential that strategies are culturally relevant and involve families in the process
- an emphasis on interventions which focus on young people as they clearly both witness and experience violence from a young age. Therefore much of the primary intervention should be supported by a whole-school approach
- an emphasis on young Indigenous women to increase protection and allow them to articulate clear messages about the unacceptability of violence.

### *Features of the Project*

These include:

- a significant balance of the project is weighted towards community involvement
- the project is run by, as well as for, Indigenous people. Indigenous people are represented on the steering committee by an Indigenous shire councillor and staff. Indigenous service agency officers are Indigenous. The programs that have emerged from the project are staffed and managed by Indigenous people
- the project is owned and supported by key groups and individuals in the community. Agencies have been working collaboratively towards goals of the project
- the project enables the development of educational and promotional resources ie video, CD-ROM brochures, posters etc which are geographically and culturally appropriate, with input from young people to increase community awareness through public displays and promotional activities which extend beyond the Derby/West Kimberley communities.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

In undertaking their assessment of the project, Madjulla Incorporated were guided by the approach advocated by prominent Indigenous researcher and academic, Linda Smith (1998).

*Indigenous methodologies are often a mix of existing methodological approaches and Indigenous practices. The mix reflects the training of Indigenous researchers, which continues to be within the academy, and the parameters and common sense understandings of research which governs how Indigenous communities and researchers define activities (p.102).*

The importance of combining existing methodological approaches is shown in the evaluation and the video, *Keep 'N It Real* (Appendix), which document and evaluate locally determined interventions developed in response to personal, family, community and systemic violence in Derby.

##### *The Qualitative Approach*

The approach, according to Hakim (1992), is:

*...concerned with individual's own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour. It offers richly descriptive reports of individual's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things, as well as their behaviour (p.26)..*

This approach has been adopted to enable Madjulla Incorporated to gather evidence through “common sense understandings of research” (Smith, 1998, p. 102), thus demonstrating how meaning derives from the actions of Indigenous people as they make or react to social situations, which then determine the quality and continuity of individual and community life.

The approach engaged principles and characteristics of participatory action research. The characteristics of this approach ensure that the research:

- has a local significance and application
- supports issues related to social justice, equity and advocacy
- allows critical reflection
- enhances change
- empowers participants, and
- has a strong active discourse (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood & Axford, 1999).

This combination of approaches drew on the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied for the purpose of taking action or effecting social change (Green et al, 1996). The principles guiding the investigation articulate:

- social reconstruction – taking action to implement change within a prescribed social circumstance

- co-generative learning – researchers learning together to generate new ideas, and
- co-creation of local theory– developing knowledge specific to particular Indigenous community settings (Green et al, 1996, p.4).

The (process) predetermines the roles of the researchers and those being researched as a partnership involving both parties in the construction of knowledge, the active seeking and negotiation of meaning and the search for solutions to problems. In this exploratory method of study, Indigenous people are regarded as co-researchers in the research process (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood & Axford, 1999).

The (approach) also identifies the historical background that influences the current situation and the ideologies that mould social circumstances, generating evidence for better practice and creating opportunities for sustainable change (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood & Axford, 1999).

### *Engaging Indigenous Researchers*

The fact that the report was prepared by Indigenous Australians provides a particular insight as they:

- have extensive kinship and cultural networks within the identified community
- have long standing professional networks along with the identified site and target population
- have extensive experience as insiders consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on complex and sensitive issues in ways that are culturally appropriate, safe and respectful of existing expertise in the community
- have extensive knowledge of emotional and social well-being issues in Indigenous communities, with particular skills and experience in remote Australian settings.

The researchers make the connection between the community and the evidence generated in case studies and the project findings

The researchers also drew on the principles of process, impact and outcome evaluation in reporting on the effectiveness of the project in meeting its goals.

Process evaluation measures the activity of the project in terms of what is going on. It determines the extent to which the project is being implemented and planned. Impact evaluation is concerned with the immediate effects of the project, that is its effect on those factors that contribute to enhancing the project outcomes. It requires ongoing assessment of the project objectives and includes an assessment of both intended and unintended effects. Outcome evaluation seeks to answer the question of whether the project has achieved its goal and, importantly, if the project has reached the stage of long term sustainability

Evidence informing the report was generated throughout the life of the project and the details of the investigation were included in a series of progress reports.

### *Data Collection*

Primary data were collected through the mix of the methodological approaches previously outlined. These included participant observation in community and organisational activities, formal and informal interviews, and regular monthly attendance at project steering committee meetings. The data were also collected by the project coordinator/s, program managers and the researchers in the form of personal and community narratives

### *Filmmaking*

The researchers were instrumental in negotiating and mobilising the resources necessary to engage filmmakers to collect visual evidence of the project's impact and outcomes (Appendix). Film is used as a creative process for community story telling capturing an Indigenous worldview for a range of audiences. Filmmaking is a culturally applicable research technique for both building theory and engaging the study from an Indigenous paradigm (Bostock, 1990). The viewers, particularly the project management group are able to be transported directly into the setting and hear the voices of the participants, key informants, project evaluator, program managers and project steering committee members.

Bissell, Manderson, and Allotey (2000) advocate changing power relationships by demonstrating that film can be used as an empowerment strategy, which has positive implications for Indigenous Australians:

*Film is a powerfully evocative tool and, combined with focus groups, is an excellent qualitative research technique. Film provides a medium to offer voice to those whose muteness is both structurally and situationally determined; film as media is appropriate for study of a population which is not used to written text (p. 181).*

The film was developed to highlight and evaluate community-negotiated strategies in reflecting the locally developed violence interventions.

The collection of secondary data included a literature review of international and national evidence for good practice, a review of government policies and enquiries, media releases, radio interviews, reviewing minutes of the project steering committee meetings and extensive interview footage of key informants on video/film.

### *Case Studies*

The collection of data using case study methodology is one way of maintaining respect for the sensitivities of the key informants, project steering committee members and community members while at the same time describing community and political change. In the main, information was collected when individuals and families were experiencing crisis and seeking support from key informants/natural helpers and or service agencies. The project coordinator/s, program managers and researchers passed the community stories to the project steering committee to seek information, knowledge and advice to support the development of effective strategies to respond to violence.

## 5. EVIDENCE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The principles of justice, empowerment, participation, equity and working in partnership are of paramount importance in this endeavor (Barry, 2002). The steering committee was responsible for project coordination and strategic direction. Each strategy add value to the initial project investment by strengthening the capacity of the community-generated initiatives to become independent, sustainable resources building the capacity of the Derby community. The project's aims and objectives of enhancing community strengths and resilience as a means of reducing community disorder are reflected in the following case studies.

### *Case Study 1- Increase Local Community Awareness and Understanding Of Domestic Violence*

The benefits of employing local people as the project coordinator/s were demonstrated by the ability of these people to mobilise local strategies to increase awareness, understanding of and response to domestic violence. Derby provided the opportunity to incorporate the broader social context of domestic violence to include individual, family, community and systemic traumas. The coordinator/s used their extensive local community and professional networks to coordinate the project.

The project coordinator/s have produced a comprehensive directory of individuals and agencies servicing family and community violence. Community and government agencies have indicated the directory is useful and should be made more accessible to the community. Annual revision is required to reflect staff and program developments.

The project has gained a wide audience through fortnightly articles on family violence and project updates in local and regional newspapers. Newspaper articles and radio interviews have been pitched to communicate information to Indigenous community members. The most effective method for communicating information within Derby Indigenous communities has been through individual interaction and professional and community networks. Sponsorship of a community football team conveyed health-promoting messages *No Blame, No Pain, No Shame* and raised awareness of community violence with community members.

The project has been guided by evidence suggesting violence is very much a function of family systems and early learning (Harnett, 1998). The development and implementation of school curriculum needs to accommodate community, cultural, historical and educational issues build the knowledge base of young people within the context of local family and community life.

### *Family Violence Curriculum*

A consultant was engaged by the project in 2002 to develop a local family violence curriculum. Broad discussions captured the views of the school community regarding the curriculum content, development and delivery. The consultant liaised with the local state and catholic school principals and the Kimberley District Education Office to ensure the curriculum would meet the Western Australian Ministry of Education Curriculum Framework policy. The curriculum has been developed and circulated to the committee and the school-community to validate the content and determine a

timeline, strengthen the community partnerships and consider resource implications for piloting and evaluating the curriculum within local schools.

#### *Case Study 2- Shire of Derby / West Kimberley*

The flow of federal funding from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department to the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, demonstrates the Australian Government's recognition of the community's role in addressing wider social and community development dimensions impacting on family violence in communities which have responsibility for Indigenous populations.

The project focused on community development at a range of levels. The local government has become actively involved in attempting to influence social, cultural and economic outcomes of individuals, families and the wider community of the Shire by being the auspicing agency for the project. Participation on the steering committee by a Shire councillor, chief executive officer and executive manager of community development has informed Council's revised corporate structure to focus on community development.

The steering committee brings Shire representatives together with community and government service agencies. The project has created programs to target particular disenfranchised groups within the community. These programs have been established in partnership with the community with the view to becoming independently incorporated and managed by a governing committee selected by the participants involved. The program engaged a community development approach by developing life promoting and technical skills in culturally safe environments.

#### *Case Study 3 - Young Women's Program*

Many of the young women who attend the young women's program have had a life full of feeling excluded. Young mothers and potential young mothers are an important target group of the project. They are an extremely disenfranchised group who experience high levels of abuse and risk resulting in low levels of trust and self-esteem. Access to marginal groups is generally regarded to be difficult. The young women's program has created an opportunity to bring young women together to raise their awareness of relevant issues and generate pathways to improved life outcomes. The impact of the young women's experiences has the potential to influence future generations' social, cultural and economic outcomes.

The personal vignettes of key informants accessing the program in the communities' young women's centres affirm the impact of one element of the project which is also reflected in the film. Narratives are drawn from a cross section of participants reflecting diversity of age and life experiences. While most women attending the program are Indigenous, the program is not exclusively Indigenous. The non-Indigenous participants have expressed the view that the program brings women together around shared experiences and contributes to community harmony.

#### Informant 1- Young Single Mother with one child (20 years)

*I reckon it's a cool place- the best place in Derby. At the end of last year the Coordinator asked us what we liked and didn't like (Questionnaire reported in the process evaluation report August 2001). I told her that I*

*didn't like Tai-Bo (self defence) as it left me too tired, when I had to watch my baby for the rest of the day. We can get legal advice here. Help with budgeting too. The children get good food here like fruit and we learn new nursery rhymes. I couldn't think of any when my baby was little. They have a CD and I learnt heaps to sing to her.*

*They help you with food ideas and nurses come in from time to time to teach you about health. If someone gets belted they can help. I have a girlfriend, she is too shame to come to the Blue House, who got belted so (the Manager) went around to see her. She already had legal advice, (the Manager) was able to give emotional support. Her family had stopped listening to her.*

*The lady from Skills Share introduced me to (the Coordinator). I thought why not, it's something to do. At first it takes a while to start talking but now, it's great. First time I came I sat somewhere and just started crying. (The Coordinator) sat with me and that helped a lot. Sometimes just talking helps. The Blue House is one of the only places you can go without having to worry about fights, someone going to hit you. There is no racism that's one thing I've noticed. No longer binge drinking from coming to the Blue House.*

The key informant went on to talk about her dysfunctional family and how she is trying to create a new way of life in which she has control.

#### Informant 2-Young Married Mother with two young children (20years)

Lives in a stable relationship with a working husband.

*The time (two and a half hours each day) is good because the children get tired and have a sleep in the afternoon (at home). Also need time to do house work, cooking dinner, washing clothes and cleaning the house. (Other young women supported the need to make time available for housework and supported the program running for morning sessions only).*

*My husband doesn't mind me coming. One time I left him (her husband) with the kids on the weekend and he said how do you do it? He started to realise how hard it is.*

*(The Manager) is like a big cheeky sister. Other girls have come once and that's it, however most come and keep coming. They don't come because they are shy and they don't know who else is here. When I first came I came with my two cousins also good to make friends with other women in town.*

#### Informant 3 - Young Single Mother (23 years) with two children

*I come here just for the fun of it - have nothing else to do at home. I have fun just hanging out with the girls (other women at the Blue*

*House). Its not really stressful at home I just get bored. I'm not really exposed to violence but I see a lot of it in the streets. This program is useful for reducing violence. I grew up in Derby and have a lot of friends in Derby, but do not see them a lot as kids slow you down. Coming here puts me in contact with other women so we can talk to each other. I look forward to coming. I found out about it (Young Women's Program) after my sister came here. I don't have any plans yet.*

#### Informant 4 - Young Single Mother (15 years) one child

*I came here to learn because I want to get work. Here I do painting, computer, cooking. It is very useful and makes me feel better. I learn health and I like doing Tai-Bo because it was good fun and exercise. Some Gardias (non-Aboriginals) come here and help us - learning us to look after kids and stuff. I have to do a lot of work, washing dishes and cleaning things. I like to make the house clean and tidy and make it sweet inside. I'm really good at sewing and can make sheets, towels, tablecloths, anything with sewing machine. I learnt at high school and would like to keep doing sewing. This program helps women in violence. Here I don't worry about things. This is a good place to make friends, sometimes your friends can help you.*

The coordinator and manager have observed considerable development in this young woman's skills and confidence since coming to the Blue House. She is extremely shy and vulnerable and lives in a high risk, dysfunctional and overcrowded house. Her access to education and information has been reduced as she left school at thirteen. With support from the young women's program this young woman is starting the process of establishing a home of her own to provide a safe place for her baby, mother, sisters and cousin-sisters. Furthermore she is seeking opportunities to engage in skills training in preparation for employment and independent living.

Issues of violence are not reflected in Informant 4's narrative as this young woman is dealing with a number of unresolved issues stemming from a life dominated by violence. The focus of the informants' narratives appear to focus on being pro-active rather than reactive to issues concerning violence. It would have been inappropriate to pursue discussions specifically related to violence issues. Violence related discussions are targeted in the support and information awareness programs of the centre.

This project has an added value effect. It is inclusive of other high-risk young women living with family violence as reflected in the following narrative.

#### Informants 5 & 6 - Sister (13 years) and Cousin (12 years) of the Young Mother (15years)

*We do not go to school - school is slack. We like coming here because we learn things and we want to do work (participating in productive activities).*

The manager knows that the young girls do not attend school however, the reality is that if they are not permitted access to education and information at the Blue House, they will not receive essential life skills.

### Informant 7 - Mother (35 years) with 3 children in abusive relationship

*I really like coming here, the project is good and gets me out of the house and that. Before I was just sitting at home arguing- getting in to trouble - fighting and arguing. I come here to relax. Informant 7 is currently in an abusive relationship and is seeking pathways to resolve this situation. The Manager of the Young Woman's Program has been collaborating with the Manager of the Men's Program to reduce violence in this family.*

*I found out about the program through (the manager) sort of recruiting people. I get peace and quiet, relax and do things (at the Blue House). It's boring at home-nothing to do. Here I learn things like arts and craft to decorate my home. You do what you want to do here; there are lots of things to do. Like making things or learn a bit on the computer instead of going to TAFE. Get into the education world.*

Other young women commented on the opportunity to enter a learning environment, which was non-threatening, supportive and flexible.

*When my son is old enough to go to school I want to start getting work. I've just been a parent all my life. I will work in anything, but I would like to work with community people/children. This program is good to stop family violence that's what happens to me. When I stay home I argue too much. This program really helps in reducing family violence. I've been talking to the staff about family violence, if I don't do something about it, we will be breaking up. I was talking to a really nice lady yesterday about legal and other advice about violence.*

These key informant comments confirm the impact of the young mums' program and the larger project is having on young women in Derby. The coordinator of the young mums' program validates the findings in the video *Keep 'N It Real*. Through her consultation and negotiations with women she is able to identify the skills required by the women, "they wanted to know, about poison, they wanted to know how to cut a pattern and sew, they wanted to know about computers and budget cooking". Through talking with the women and "asking them what they wanted" the coordinator is able to directly measure the change in the skills development, "when they first starting coming here, they were not able to cut a pattern, now they can. They can cook and work computers...the investment in these women is building big time" (Program Coordinator, Young Mums Program, May 2003).

#### *Child Care*

A crèche has been established to support the young women's program. The crèche provides an opportunity for the young women to give their baby to someone else for a short period. Some young mothers indicated it was initially difficult to give their baby to someone else, however, the relationship of trust has grown. These mothers now feel they have the opportunity to relax and do something for themselves. The crèche is integral to providing a supportive learning environment for young women to build resilience and resourcefulness to reduce violent outcomes.

The opportunity to provide employment and training for young Indigenous women is a value-added component of the work undertaken in the centres introducing young women to the workforce. The activities in the centres provide alternative pathways for awareness raising of violence issues in the women's social and cultural networks, which go beyond the scope of the young women's program.

#### *Case Study 4- Derby Men's Centre*

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley provided premises to establish the men's centre in Derby. During this phase of the project, two Indigenous men and one non-Indigenous man have been employed to manage the centre. The successive employment and resignation of these men highlight a number of issues for consideration. It is important to recognise Indigenous men are passionate about wanting to make a difference in their lives and in those of other Indigenous men in Derby, however, management and administration of programs require a degree of technical and organisational skill which can conflict with individual and cultural relationships. The long-term sustainability of the men's centre is reliant on the opportunity to identify a local mentor to audit the skills of the incoming manager and recommend training to support the manager in this role. In the short term, the Family Healing Centre has agreed to auspice the Derby men's centre. Funding has been provided from the Western Australian State Crime Prevention Strategy.

The men's centre provides a range of services to Indigenous men who usually do not receive services. The services are specific to the immediate needs of men while at the same time attempting to increase their understanding of the issues around family violence and suggesting ways in which men in the community might respond to those issues.

The men's centre provides an opportunity for various agencies to collaborate on individual and community approaches. The centre has established a governing committee involving cultural mentors and elders. Through the opportunity to participate in community meetings, talking directly with the manager/s and observing the interactions of men accessing the range of onsite services, the researchers were able to report the benefits of this program; one of which brings together the various service agencies mostly represented by Indigenous men in a positive and collaborative spirit.

Guest speakers are invited to present new ideas to the committee. The coordinator of the Broome men's centre is providing networking and mentoring support in the establishment of the Derby men's centre. The centre provides some basic physical needs (ie showers, light meals and clothes washing facilities), recreational and cultural activities, and access and advocacy to government and community services.

The general lack of servicing, employment, education and activity opportunities, high levels of stress, trauma, homelessness and exposure to extreme weather conditions affect life outcomes and appear to contribute to increased incidents of violence principally involving men in Derby. The activities of the Derby men's centre are providing an opportunity for disenfranchised men to access an appropriate pathway to building their capacity for change.

The centre is open to Indigenous men of all ages. Young men are able to interact with older men to develop constructive and meaningful relationships in a supportive environment. Local mentors and local partnerships are needed to support the men's centre. Mentors can support the development of social and cultural links within the local community.

Mentoring includes organising opportunities for men who are usually restricted by transport to visit 'kuntri' (country) and other cultural affirmation activities. Men working within Indigenous service agencies provide a mentoring and support role by delivering services at the men's centre as well as providing committee support. The men's centre requires mentoring support for the formation of their own committee as a strategy for long-term sustainability.

#### *Case Study 5 Mowanjum Community*

Mowanjum Aboriginal Community is located nine kilometres east of Derby, and has a population of approximately 300 people, which can rise and fall depending on cultural/recreational events and seasonal variations. The community is connected to a range of homeland outstations with family and community associations in neighbouring communities linked with Derby.

#### *Mowanjum Men's Centre*

The centre functions as a clubroom for the Mowanjum Hawks Australian Rules Football Club. The facilities have been developed for this purpose, and include exercise equipment. Wider community planning processes are underway to find out the views of Mowanjum men and youth on how they perceive the centre will best suit their needs. Employment, training and management are an essential part of community development processes for empowering local men. The rate for engaging these processes is being determined by the community.

Project sponsorship of the Mowanjum Hawks centred on raising awareness and active participation in the reduction of violence by young men. The anti-violence slogan *No Pain, No Shame, No Blame* was clearly displayed on the Mowanjum Hawks football uniforms. The team adopted codes of behaviour to reduce drinking, and violent actions. The men went on bush trips to further promote positive life experiences. These activities were reported to strengthen cultural affirmation and social cohesion.

The Mowanjum Hawks success was extremely visible throughout the region coming from the bottom of the football competition in 2001 to finish third in 2002/03. The project coordinator/s ensure frequent media exposure of the team's success and maintain the links to the anti-violence message in local and regional press.

The Mowanjum and Derby community has invested a great deal of community spirit into the Hawks throughout the 2002 football season. The presentation night sponsored by the Mowanjum community and the project was a critical event in galvanising community spirit. The presentation night involved trophies, awards and speeches by community leaders and football club representatives, the project coordinator and the deputy chairman of the steering committee who is also a local shire councillor was also present.

The Mowanjum Hawks sponsorship has raised the level of awareness and discussion about violence in the community. The success of the football club as a means of reducing drunken behaviour which may lead to violence may be seen in the reduction in police call outs from an estimated six per week to two, particularly during the football competition.

The Mowanjum Hawks sponsorship is a cost effective investment to increasing awareness, community discussion, and a positive response to reducing violence in the community. The steering committee has sponsored the Mowanjum Hawks for the 2003 football season. Future sponsorship will be sought from alternative sources.

The seasonal nature of football and the wider environmental and seasonal variations impose risk variables. The football season finishes with the rising temperatures and high humidity signifying the build up of the tropical wet season. This period is often referred to as the *tropo season* as the high levels of temperature and humidity cause increased levels of distress, which increases the risk of violent behaviour. The wet season, coupled with the layoff between football seasons, increases risky alcohol consumption, which is strongly associated with violence. Community infrastructure is further stressed as people in smaller remote communities affected by flooding move closer to town. New investments need to explore wet season options for young men, their families and the community.

#### *Mowanjum Women's' Centre*

The Mowanjum women's' centre is a gathering point for the collection and exchange of information, where women and families meet and support each other. It has an educational role where programs target health, domestic and other general areas of personal development. There is a washing machine for communal use. Information sharing programs have generated community action on health education issues and youth programs.

The women's centre has been a catalyst for bringing the community together. The community has invested a considerable amount of their own resources including a building, auspicing grants, community employment positions, reticulation and landscaping, paint and screen printing equipment as well as supplying a computer.

Staff performance and community ownership is critical to program success. The initial manager was an Indigenous woman external to the community and was replaced following a three months review. An Indigenous woman from Mowanjum was appointed and has started generating more positive outcomes. The review and recruitment process was a positive experience building the capacity and sustainability of local community women's governance. Positive outcomes for the women included the opportunity to make decisions through consultation and negotiation.

Local women have taken control of the centre and are generating community action for those women who have a interest in the program. The future development of interventions must incorporate consideration of various social and cultural sectional interests within communities to ensure broad community participation and benefits.

The community, through the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), employs women attending the centre. A Job Employment and Training (JET)

program is used to resource the establishment and maintenance of onsite community child care and offers employment and training to local community women. Childcare provides the opportunity for community women to gather and build their individual skills whilst their children are being cared for. Furthermore, the centre has a seniors' program with appropriate activities. The Mowanjum men assist by taking old people out bush for cultural excursions.

The added value to this community is evidenced in the Mowanjum women's centre receipt of a grant of \$34,000 from Regional Solutions in October 2002. The Mowanjum men's centre has also received a grant approval for \$47,500 from Regional Solutions. These initiatives exemplify the community's capacity to strengthen community harmony and positive outcomes when government and non-government organisations and agencies -agency and organisational cooperate to a high level.

## 6 FINDINGS

### *Emerging Themes*

The investigation conducted over the life of the *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* project demonstrated capacity building at the individual, community and systemic levels. The following themes identify elements of increasing community engagement in self-determination in dealing with problems only a community can solve. These include:

- increasing Indigenous community participation and ownership of the project
- the value of the sub programs of the project as interventions in their own right
- recognition that a single solution does not meet the needs of all groups
- the level of resource investment influenced the types, frequency of activities engaged and the long-term sustainability of these interventions
- community perceptions of the benefit to the community from the intervention are important engaging, enabling and developing the capacity of Indigenous community workers as equal partners in the intervention. is challenging
- working with Indigenous community workers is complex and time intensive as it involves consideration of health beliefs, culture, community politics, recognition of skills' deficit and management experience
- mentoring for Indigenous community workers is a critical factor for continuity, job satisfaction and program sustainability
- training and professional development for Indigenous community workers is an important part of intervention sustainability
- locally developed school based curriculum should involve a partnership with the community and schools to enable relevant curriculum development, mobilisation of resources and implementation

### *Strengths of the Model*

#### *(What Did We Learn About Effectiveness?)*

The political and cultural dimensions of domestic, family, community and systemic violence in Derby give rise to sectional interests, which require specific targeted strategies. There must be an acceptance of the right of community people to have a choice in accessing the services they believe most adequately services their needs.

The development of interventions needs to be mindful of various social and cultural sectional interests within communities. The report of the project identified a number of issues that must be considered when establishing projects along the lines of the *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* project. Significant of these is the realisation that different groups displaying different cultural beliefs and behaviours and these require different support. One of the strengths of the current Derby project is that the sub programs of the project, (the centres, the football team, and curriculum development), acknowledge sectional groups and, properly conceived, can encourage a range of interventions to ensure broad community participation and benefits.

When considering investing into community development, it is important to identify actual or perceived overlap in project planning and implementation in order to maximise project effectiveness. Where overlaps are identified, there is a need to

facilitate a process to ensure the transfer of skills/resources to the most appropriate agency to deliver the service. At the same time, there may be occasions where an overlap of services may be of benefit given differences in the clients serviced. Furthermore, applications for funding and project planning need to reflect what has and is currently being offered, by who and to whom rather than establishing separate organisations, infrastructure and new programs. In the case of the Derby project, workshop findings indicated:

- there is no significant duplication of services in Derby. In some instances there is a duplication of the infrastructure (eg. administration) that supports these services
- delivery of services between organisations and agencies needs to be coordinated and communicated to avoid duplication and over-servicing
- delivery of services needs to be monitored and adjusted as projects develop
- the Derby community has been encouraged by the success of the *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* project to strive for more and better services to help meet community needs
- evaluation should be an integral element in project planning and implementation
- there should be a sharing of clients by referral and a respect for the consumers' right to choice and confidentiality
- people who are establishing new services should consult widely and acknowledge Indigenous historical perspectives.

The interventions adopted in this project engage community action across various sectors. The issues surrounding individual, family, community and systemic violence are multi-dimensional.

There is an emerging body of evidence from Western Australia to address this public concern (Gordon 2002, Westerman 2002). The *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* project increased an understanding about how Indigenous people and the broader Derby community define and respond to domestic, family and community violence which is becoming a significant factor in Indigenous lives.

As previously mentioned, the demographics of the Derby/West Kimberley Shire are typical of many small, isolated communities where populations are largely Indigenous and live with the heritage of loss of traditional family functions, structural change in family and kinship relationships, loss of access to land, diminished opportunities, changes in adolescent socialisation; rapid cultural change, ... and systemic violence (Swan and Raphael 1995; Smallwood 1996; Hunter 1998). These characteristics go some little way to explain why the incidence of violence in Indigenous communities is higher than in communities more representative of the general population.

Discussions with local Indigenous community people highlighted competition for scarce government resources for community-determined interventions. Interventions to target Indigenous youth were the most difficult to obtain, adding to a sense of hopelessness. Through social and cultural networks young people in and around

Derby described life in the Kimberley as an empty future. Many young people talked about becoming increasingly disconnected from their Indigenous families and communities, describing themselves as an *abandoned generation* who are *homeless at home*. These young people are rapidly approaching positions of hopelessness and are turning to high risk, self-harming behaviors. The project demonstrated an holistic approach to the problems facing young people by incorporating a range of sub-programs within the project which accounted for a range of social, historical and cultural factors.

The project provided local government and the community with an opportunity explore a range of strategies to promote individual, family and community well being. These include, developing individual skills that are health enhancing (individual approaches), creating supportive environments, building sound social policy, strengthening communities to take action, and reorienting services (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to focus on keeping people well.

#### *Limitations of the Research*

The fact that the researchers were Indigenous and had the advantage of local knowledge and cultural ties proved to be both a strength and a limitation for the study because of the sensitivities of the researchers' position within the community. The researchers made a conscious effort in determining how data would be collected and analysed, and the findings reported without compromising the identities of individuals involved. Derby is a small, remote town and the researchers are Indigenous practitioners who are connected through cultural, social and professional networks in the region. The opportunity to gather data through formal and informal processes from a range of primary sources was made possible through the relationship of the researchers with community and professional members which has been built up over the past seven years.

This relationship must be sustained and strengthened by the researchers who are currently engaged in a range of local strategies, which are designed to continue beyond the life of the project. The planning, development and implementation of these strategies are extremely fragile and can be easily undermined if community and professional members of the community are identified, or perceived to be identified in a negative or misleading way. This dual role of the researchers within the community could be seen to compromise the concept of the detached, objective observer – a feature of traditional research, yet, knowledge of what is being observed and experienced has to be enhanced by those whose own lives are embedded in the community they are exploring. The participation required by the researchers over a considerable period of time to understand and navigate their way through the social and political contexts of the study population was a key aspect of the researchers' role. It was on this basis that the study used qualitative methods to capture a snapshot of the impact of the project in both responding to violence whilst striving to generate sustainable outcomes in its prevention.

The evidence produced from the *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence Project* confirms it is unrealistic to measure a reduction in domestic violence particularly as it relates to adolescents in Derby as there is currently no tool for quantifying domestic violence statistics or referral processes between various agencies.

While it would have been of considerable benefit in promoting the sustainability of the program in demonstrating its success by measuring a reduction in the incidence of domestic violence, it has not been possible to do this. The project has identified variations in local agencies' capacities to gather and share violence statistical data. While some agencies attempt to gather and report client referrals, these processes are developed in isolation and use different data gathering criteria.

Most agencies do not have the capacity to record domestic/family violence incidents. Therefore, it is difficult to track particular encounters of domestic/family violence across agencies. The specific role of some agencies does not require the reporting of domestic/family violence as this may diminish trust with clients and potentially impact negatively on the service provided. There is clearly an ongoing need to try to rationalise data collection of a coherent kind across agencies as part of a process to develop coordinated culturally sensitive community determined response strategies in managing violence in the community.

Management and coordination of the project was relatively stable within the local context. As could be expected over a period of five years, the incidence of mobility of project staff at the Commonwealth level was higher, but the expectations that the findings of the report would be robust enough to be useful to the Shire and beyond, remained constant.

#### *Project Coordination*

Two people coordinated the project. The initial stages were coordinated by a non-Indigenous woman who had lived in Derby working in youth justice for a number of years prior to the commencement of the project. In the later stage of the project, she stepped aside to hand over to a younger local Indigenous woman.

Appointing locally based project coordinator/s has allowed them to tap into existing community and professional networks, and to respond to local initiatives, strengths and barriers. This has facilitated the creation of community support and the acquisition and mobilisation of resources to ensure the project moves beyond the establishment phase to a sustainable future. The coordinator/s have been responsible for mentoring and coaching local Indigenous people to manage programs independently.

#### *Local Government Participation*

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley has evaluated community needs and invested in staff with a view to building the community's capacity to provide opportunities for young people, their families and communities. The Shire has actively taken on the responsibility to bring local interests together to improve civic participation, and the Shire's critical role is one of the key findings of the report.

The project influenced the Shire in several ways. The Shire provided administrative support for the project in a highly significant way through the involvement of the chief executive officer. The project informed local government policy and strategic planning through the Steering Committee directly influencing the Shire Council and executive staff. The Shire provided three buildings for the project.

The Shire provided a building known as the Blue House, which supported coordination of the project. The premises provided space for the crèche and the delivery of programs to the young mothers' group. Unfortunately this building was burnt down, but a new purpose-built building is planned to replace it. This facility will include a skate park.

The demand for the skate park and youth focussed building has been generated by young people in Derby who are keen to develop the multi-functional youth activity centre to service their needs and their social and community networks. These young people are keen to work with the Shire of Derby West/Kimberley's executive manager of community development and the community services officer and other agencies that can support them in acquiring the resources to develop the premises into an inviting youth space.

The establishment of a youth centre as a space for generating youth action is generating public policy and practice based on community development principles.

#### *Reorienting Workforce Development and Services*

The project demonstrated that the development of local community governance requires the local government and chief executive officer to have the capacity to evaluate and promote local reorientation and workforce development.

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley has broadened its capacity through investing in the recruitment of locally based project coordinator/s to manage the project development and implementation. The body of evidence generated in the first year of operations guided the Shire to change the focus of local governance planning and development by recruiting a manager for community development and a community services officer to facilitate community development of youth based support networks and programs.

#### *Workforce Development*

The focus of reorienting services and workforce development is directed at building the capacity of the community to promote positive life outcomes for young people, their families and social and commercial groups. Many Indigenous adults within the Derby Community have been identified as having extremely low levels of literacy and numeracy. Being illiterate is to be powerless and unable to seek assistance in improving individual and employment opportunities to fully engage life (McMurray, 1999). The consequence for recruiting locally is limited by the availability of skills in the local workforce.

To date, the project has employed a number of local community members to coordinate and manage community initiatives. These initiatives have undergone considerable revision identifying the need to build the technical skills of program management. Mentoring is seen as a valuable strategy to strengthening this, however, mentors need to be valued and remunerated for their contribution.

#### *The Executive Manager of Community Development*

The Shire reoriented its policies and programs by creating a new portfolio to focus on community development. The executive manager of community development has the qualifications and experience to develop and evaluate community and recreational

development processes within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley. The manager is Indigenous and has an extensive local family and community networks. These characteristics have enabled the manager to identify gaps in a range of community development initiatives for young people targeted at sporting and recreational initiatives. Furthermore, the manager has created a range of sporting skills development and activities for children and adults.

#### *The Community Services Officer*

The community services officer has been instrumental in activating the Derby Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). These officers have engaged Derby youth and their families in the development of a skate park and a youth centre. Workshops have been conducted with young people to obtain their views on the design and position for these interventions. Information has been circulated to inform the broader community of the benefits of a skate park for Derby youth.

#### *Responding to Declining Services in The Bush*

The project has seen the successful reorienting of services through the collaboration of a range of key stakeholders, including community mentors. Remote areas such as Derby, have a range of influences which reduce the community's capacity to promote preventative factors and effectively respond to risk factors. The project has revealed a need for additional resources, access to training and opportunities for realistic employment outcomes. Real employment is one of the central components to long term improvement in the overall health of Kimberley Aboriginal people. The most common form of employment is the 'work for the dole' scheme-through the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP).

Long term strategies are required to reverse the current pattern of employment in the Kimberley, and to employ significant numbers of long term Kimberley residents in the range of employment available (Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan, 1999, pp 72-73). In the broader context of Derby there is public concern regarding the transfer of health staff and services to the nearby town, Broome. A local health management committee has been established to negotiate the transition of services and reduce the impact of the decision.

#### *New Horizons*

The results of recent Western Australian investigations justify the need to resource health promotion programs adequately around Indigenous individual, family and community violence. *The Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Aboriginal Communities* (Gordon, 2002) and *The Evaluation of the Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Mental Health Plan* (Westerman, 2002) highlight the journey of Indigenous people to their present circumstances of poverty and poor health profiles which diminished their quality and continuity of life.

The emerging evidence from the project confirms Indigenous young people as being the most marginalised and at risk of poor mental and physical health and general social outcomes. More importantly this evidence highlights the challenges for governments and Aboriginal communities which include:

- the urgent need to strengthen and improve responses to family and community violence in Aboriginal communities

- the need for long term strategies and solutions to address the endemic nature of family and community violence, neglect and abuse in many Aboriginal communities
- meeting the needs of current and future generations of Aboriginal children through simultaneous, long-term environmental, social and economic improvements that will result in sustainable communities

The evidence emerging from this project provides information to the local health management committee and the recently restructured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and its respective regional council to maximize new approaches to health service reform in the development of sustainable infrastructure. Furthermore, it highlights a range of other community infrastructure being developed locally which will require support from the project steering committee and local government to continue development.

#### *Building Indigenous Community Infrastructure*

The community is seeking to establish partnerships with a range of services to build the community's infrastructure to respond effectively to the needs of young people, their families and communities. The Gordon Inquiry (2002), recommended building the infrastructure of Indigenous communities to reduce Indigenous individual, family, community and systemic violence.

Young people from and around Derby had the opportunity to travel to Balginjirr community sixty five kilometres south east of Derby to go camping for five days over the school holidays to have fun and to capture the activities on film and video. The camp provided a chance for young people to work with Indigenous trainers and cultural mentors in a supportive environment. The community provided a supportive environment with Indigenous cultural mentors, trainers and community leaders.

The CD-ROM/Video *Keep 'N It Real* shows the Balginjirr community as a supportive Indigenous setting with cultural mentors and trainers who have the capacity to provide leadership and recreational and cultural experiences.

This cohort of Indigenous young people requires individual, community and systemic advocacy to support, trial and evaluate a range of interventions which:

*...reconceptualises mental health in positive rather than negative terms...the goal becomes the enhancement of potential, building psychological strengths and resilience rather than focussing on reducing disorders...adopting a competency enhancement perspective...primarily concerned with building strengths and competencies and feeling of efficacy in different life areas. The principles of empowerment, participation, equity and working in partnership are, therefore, of paramount importance in this endeavour (Barry, 2000, p.45).*

Such transfer of power to these young people is a creative approach that warrants further exploration.

The video demonstrates how leadership, governance training and developing individual competencies, including those in art, for example, create the ability for

young people to generate some income by selling what they produce. Opportunities for developing these competency-enhancing skills and the need to find mentors are critical for the overall wellbeing of young people particularly if they target specific needs. It is (clear) that health promotion interventions targeted at young people are more likely to be successful if they are based on a thorough appraisal of young people's specific needs (Green, 2002, p. 49).

#### *The Derby Enterprise Class*

The Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan (1999) identified alarming rates of secondary school enrolments in the Kimberley by year and Aboriginality. The retention rate of Aboriginal students between the years of 1990-1994 was approximately 13% whereas non-Aboriginal rates for the same period were approximately 38% for years 8 to 12. These rates demonstrate Aboriginal students are three times more likely to not complete their school education.

Although the Derby Enterprise Class has not grown out of the project, it can be seen as a derivative of the project in that it provides another example of where the specific needs of school age Indigenous people are met. The Derby District High School principal and two support teachers have recognised the need for an alternative educational approach by establishing the Derby Enterprise Class. The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley provided the Derby Enterprise Class with a building for teaching and learning intended as an extension of mainstream schooling rather than as an alternative.

The researchers have identified the Derby Enterprise Class as an early intervention and prevention strategy building key life skills of young Indigenous people. Education is the key to strengthening community action. Communities throughout the world are attempting to upgrade their knowledge and skills in a number of ways. The wellbeing of young people and their communities is reliant on quality education grounded in community aspirations and expectations (McMurray, 1999).

## **7. AN ADVOCACY MODEL FOR INDIGENOUS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE**

Systemic advocacy seeks to bring about change on behalf of a group of people or working to change a system. Systemic advocacy enables a group of people to define problems and put together a plan to achieve a positive resolution of that problem.

### *Derby- A Value Added Community Model*

Members of the project steering committee are well connected to the local community and to professional and social networks. The committee has brought benefits to local community networks. “When we first started meeting, everyone was minding their own turf. “It’s not my responsibility, it’s someone else’s. It’s not like that now” (Shire CEO, April 2003). The exchange of information and sharing of ideas have demonstrated the capacity to influence local government policy and practice. The committee is actively looking to build community and agency partnerships and a systemic advocacy model, to respond to the needs of young people living with individual, family, community and systemic violence.

Cox (1996) defines social capital as “the processes between people which establish networks, norms and social trust, all of which facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit (p.18)”. Cox states that social capital “is the glue binding the social fabric which comprises the myriad of interactions that make up the community and private lives (p.19)”. If Indigenous Australians are to find meaning in their lives, they must feel it makes a difference to be connected to what they are trying to accomplish together. Green and Kreuter (1999) list the vital ingredients for building the capacity and connectedness of healthy community life as “four inter-related constructs: trust, co-operation, civic engagement, and reciprocity (p276)”. A sense of purpose and connection also provides the foundation for long-term commitment, and creates a sense of community and belonging, fully extending social capital into local and community governance.

The case for Derby has included increased levels of civic engagement, media readership, youth leadership, sporting activities, clubs and associations highlighting community capacity building on a range of levels. “In regions with strong social capital there are numerous active community organisations, and social and political networks are organised horizontally rather than hierarchically. These communities value solidarity, civic participation, integrity, alliances across difference, and reciprocity... There is growing international research evidence that societies with strong social capital are more healthy, as well as more economically successful” (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council 2001).

The Derby model provides evidence regarding the relationship between social capital and economic capital. The project investment over three years added economic capital. Conservatively, the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley generated an additional million dollars, a cost benefit analysis has not been undertaken to measure the added economic value of other project initiatives.

### *Future Directions*

In November 1997, *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* (Partnerships) was published as an initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to

work towards the common goal of preventing domestic violence across Australia. Partnerships is concerned with building the strategic collaboration between the Commonwealth, States and Territories and communities to test new ways of doing things, to enhance and share knowledge and to develop and document good practice in preventing, reducing and responding to domestic violence. It aimed to do this by trialling a range of projects over a three-year period, to stimulate new developments as well as enhance existing programs.

The Australian Government's Office for the Status of Women through to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Legal and Preventive Services and Indigenous health agencies demonstrated government recognition of the community's role in addressing wider social and community development dimensions required to reduce family violence in Indigenous communities. [For example](#), the Kalgoorlie (Western Australian) and Cairns (Queensland) pilot models focused on addressing systemic advocacy change. These models explored an Indigenous family violence prevention and promotion framework including an opportunity for those affected to engage in negotiating an appropriate course of action which can be sustained (Poelina and Perdrisat, 2001).

In November 2002, the Premier of Western Australia, the Hon Dr Geoff Gallop MP, responded on behalf of the government to the findings of the Gordon Inquiry. The inquiry found that family and community violence, child abuse and neglect are grave endemic social problems for many Indigenous communities. The Gordon Inquiry signalled strongly that government needs to do its business differently for the better. This requires the development of a framework for effective collaboration between departments and effective inter-agency coordination of service delivery on the ground. The *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* project demonstrates a community-generated model for local inter-agency, systemic advocacy processes.

The evidence of local good practice described in this report reveals the need to engage sustainable government support to develop and implement local initiatives designed to improve Indigenous social policy and practice at a range of community and systemic levels of human service delivery.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The successful collaboration of the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, service providers, and community agencies has made a case for the mobilisation of Commonwealth, State and local government resources to invest in the promotion of an ongoing systemic advocacy model of support for the local community.

### **Recommendation 1**

That the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley lobby the Federal Minister for Justice and Customs, and the State Attorney General's Department to provide three years' funding to implement and evaluate a systemic advocacy model for the Derby community.

### **Recommendation 2**

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley Project Steering Committee should continue to develop partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Regional Council, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service and Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs.

## **9. SUMMARY**

The report considers the progress of the project aims and objectives and provides a 'snapshot' of the project's current situation.

The project has demonstrated strategies initiating change in family/community violence promotion and intervention for Indigenous youth, their families and communities. The emerging body of evidence from the Derby project is overwhelming and sits well with contemporary national and international evidence for better practice. The process piloted has proven to be valuable in promoting positive life experiences in rural and remote Indigenous settings.

Taking advantage of these opportunities has greatly increased the scope of the community to realise the potential gains of Indigenous young people, their families and the Derby community. Further investment is required for local governments and Commonwealth and State governments to improve community governance to build community harmony.

The Gordon Inquiry (2002) advocates building the infrastructure of Indigenous communities as an effective strategy for responding to Indigenous individual, family, community and systemic violence. The Derby model highlights a range of other local community infrastructure indirectly affected by the project which requires support from the local and regional Gordon Inquiry Response Committees and local government to continue targeting the needs of young people and their families living with violence, abuse and neglect.

The project has created a degree of momentum within the Shire, agencies and community, which needs to be maintained by transferring the corporate history and experience of the derby project into future local responses to the Gordon Inquiry (2002).

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Appendix 1.

Video: *Keep 'N It Real* available from the authors, Madjulla Incorporated.  
PO Box 2747 BROOME WA 6725