

**SERVICE PROVISION TO ABORIGINAL
PEOPLE IN THE TOWN OF DERBY
– WEST KIMBERLEY**

DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, PERTH

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Overview of the Report

The Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) assists government to improve the coordination and provision of policy and services for Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Mapping and Gap Analysis (MAGA) projects are conducted at regional centres to improve inter-agency linkages, to identify local achievements in service delivery and to alert governments to gaps in services to Aboriginal people. MAGA projects facilitate the direct engagement of Aboriginal organisations in this process through their participation in developing recommendations, implementing changes to service provision and measuring outcomes for Aboriginal people.

This Report covers a broad range of social service issues in Derby and surrounding communities, from both government and community agency perspectives. It provides an analysis of some of the systemic and specific problems involved in service delivery to Aboriginal people in Derby and suggests actions for improvement. The prioritising, implementation and monitoring of recommendations will occur through a partnership between government, community and non-government stakeholders in Derby.

Each section of the Report includes a demographic overview of the social service area discussed (Appendix 3 provides a detailed demographic overview of the Derby Shire), followed by an analysis of issues raised by community and government agencies and a series of recommendations based on their comments and research conducted by DIA.

1.2 Summary of Findings

Government reports have shown that, in relation to access to social services, people living in communities of between 5,000 and 10,000 face what they describe as 'considerable' disadvantage, while those living in communities of below 5,000 people face 'extreme' disadvantage. Those living in isolated areas are especially affected. They face a 'lack of information' about what is available; the absence or inaccessibility of many services; poorer quality services; higher costs associated with accessing services; inappropriate urban service and funding models and poorly motivated staff.¹

The population of the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley is estimated to be approximately 9 000 people, nearly half (about 4 200) of whom are Aboriginal. The total population of the town fluctuates greatly according to climatic and cultural reasons that give rise to the transience of the Aboriginal population.

Derby was established as the regional centre of the Kimberley (see 'Introduction') but has gradually ceded this role to Broome. While Derby remains close (Broome is only 2.5 hours by car) to the centre of power in the region, it suffers somewhat from this proximity, in comparison to its more remote neighbours i.e. Fitzroy Crossing and

¹ (17 January 2005) http://www.hreoc.gov.au/speeches/human_rights/rural_youth_suicide.html

Halls Creek and Kununurra. This has led to a competitive relationship between the Derby community and its closest neighbour. The primary issue which emerged early in interviews with agencies in Derby, was the need for closer ties with Broome Regional Managers. A first step has been taken through the MAGA process, with the meeting of Kimberley Regional and Human Services Managers in Derby in February 2005.

Derby has a relatively good range of government services and an excellent range of community based agencies. The majority of government agencies are short-staffed and must consistently balance the requirements of the remote communities and other regional towns that they serve with the needs of local Derby people. Community agencies in Derby suffer from the pressures applied to community agencies everywhere (constantly applying for funding, monitoring and reporting on program outcomes etc) but these pressures are exacerbated, and even more so in Aboriginal communities, due to geographical distance, higher costs of service delivery, and demand being higher, often more urgent and less predictable than in metropolitan areas.

While it may appear that in some instances, there are duplications in the services of community agencies, it is most often the case that agencies are serving different client groups due to their geographical and social relationship to different Aboriginal communities. This form of service provision, based around family and culture, is highly appropriate for Aboriginal populations and in Derby requires further support from and integration with mainstream agencies to improve responsiveness and accessibility. This issue is particularly relevant to addressing Aboriginal health and to this end it is recommended that a community health partnership is formed in Derby to improve coordination and integration of the Derby Aboriginal Health Service, Department of Health and community based agencies.

Interviews in Derby painted a picture of a strong, resilient town concerned about its status and its future. If it is to prosper, Derby must address the population aged 15 years and younger, 75% of which is Aboriginal. There is an immediate need for a coordinated, community led approach to improving literacy and decreasing truancy amongst Aboriginal students. This will require engaging and supporting the resources of the Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers and Aboriginal teachers in the town.

Derby must also be able to provide accessible and relevant education, training and employment opportunities within the town and in partnership with regional, state, interstate and national providers. It is vital that young Aboriginal people have a strong voice in these initiatives.

To improve services and opportunities in remote Aboriginal communities located along the Gibb River, it is recommended that options be considered to establish an agency or "shop front" at a central location on the Gibb River Road. Such an agency would also provide the opportunity to improve resources (such as telecentres and internet facilities) for training in Gibb River communities.

The large number of visitors to Derby from remote Aboriginal communities, particularly during the wet season (October to March) has a major impact on town

services and functioning. It is estimated that 1 676 people from 26 Aboriginal communities utilise Derby as a service centre.² Accommodation options for visitors must be improved. This would require: resolution of the proposed campground for visitors during the wet season; increased availability of supported accommodation for young people living away from their families, pregnant women and people with mental health problems; and more effective housing management at the town reserve communities.

Some town-based agencies consulted suggested that that antisocial behaviour and crime was detrimental to Derby residents and an impediment to tourism and economic development. Perceptions of the levels of crime and street drinking, however, were not borne out by statistics³ which showed that crime prevention initiatives were having a positive impact in the town, although these initiatives require further resourcing and structural support (eg camping grounds and designated drinking areas).

One of the major assets of Derby is its Aboriginal heritage and culture though this aspect of the region is barely acknowledged or promoted. This is reflected in the fairly minimal integration of Aboriginal and mainstream service providers and users. It is recommended cultural and heritage promotion partnerships are facilitated between Aboriginal communities and local schools, community groups and the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley.

² Taylor, J (2002) 'The spatial context of Aboriginal service delivery', CAEPR Working Paper No 16, Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU

³ See Justice, Safety and Security'

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Settlement

Studies estimate that prior to European occupation, the Kimberley region sustained a permanent population of approximately 10,000 Aboriginal people including at least 50 distinct socio-linguistic groups.⁴ The predominate group in the area that surrounds what is now the town of Derby were the Warwa people.

The Kimberley region is believed to be one of the earliest regions to be settled by human beings on the Australian continent. For a period of approximately 50,000 years the Aboriginal population of the Kimberley lived in a traditional manner. An 1879 expedition to the area by Alexander Forrest marked the beginning of a long period of upheaval for the original occupants. On his return to the Swan River Colony, Forrest detailed the availability of favourable land for sheep and cattle, which led to an initial influx of settlers into the area and by 1887, four pastoral stations had been established.⁵

The town of Derby was the first town established in the Kimberley, being officially named a townsite in 1883.⁶ It was established to provide a convenient anchorage site for the shipment of wool to London and as an administrative centre for the region⁷. The arrival of settlers into the Kimberley rapidly increased with the founding of the town, as well as the discovery of gold at Hall's Creek in 1885.⁸ The presence of Aboriginal people was seen as a hindrance to the further development of towns and pastoral stations.

These initial stages of colonisation in the Kimberley region were characterised by bloody clashes between the settlers and the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area. Conflicts between settlers and Aboriginal people of the region were commonplace, often arising from the arrival of pastoralists on traditional Aboriginal lands. Retaliation from the dispossessed Aboriginal population came in the form of attacks on cattle and other livestock. Clashes of these sorts led Europeans to deem the population 'more war-like than the south natives.'⁹

Whilst Aboriginal people were viewed as a threat to the future of pastoralism, they played a vital role in the establishment and success of the industry. Aboriginal labour was seen as part of the land to be bought. Aboriginal people were forced to work on pastoral stations as shepherds, fencers, wool cleaners, cattle musterers, gardeners and general station hands.¹⁰ They were provided with a living area "close to the station homestead, commonly called the black camp. [This] was the first form of settlement

⁴ Pederson, H (1984) Jandamarra and the Bunaba Resistance, UWA Press, p.11

⁵ Choo, C and Owen, C "Deafening Silences" in Christine Choo and Shawn Hollbach (eds.) *History and Native Title: Studies in Western Australian History*, Vol. 23, 2003, p.135.

⁶ (20 January 2005) <http://www.derbytourism.com.au>

⁷ WA Heritage Council (1998) Heritage Trail, Pigeon: Aboriginal-European Relations in the West Kimberley – 1890's p. 5

⁸ *ibid.* p. 7

⁹ *op cit.*, Deafening Silences, p. 135

¹⁰ *ibid.*

for Aborigines. It preceded the missions, which were established largely to offer an alternative to the perceived evils of pastoral stations.”¹¹

The other major area of development in the region was pearling. The early pearling industry relied heavily on the labour of Aboriginal workers. In order to acquire the vital labour needed to harvest the pearls, men and women were forcefully taken from inland areas and places such as Derby to work on the pearl boats. This practice was known as ‘blackbirding’, and despite being prohibited in the Kimberley, was virtually impossible to prevent considering ‘nearly everybody in the north of the State was involved in, attached to, or condoned the practice.’¹²

The pearling and pastoral industries were closely aligned in relation to their Aboriginal work force. Since both industries were seasonal, “leasing out” of Aboriginal workers was a common occurrence and transpired without the consideration or approval of the worker involved.¹³ The conditions and treatment for those on board the pearling boats was appalling, with workers beaten for surfacing without a shell, and forced to work even though they suffered from the bends.¹⁴

As a result of the ever-increasing accounts of the mistreatment of Aboriginal pearl divers, a series of Pearling Acts were passed in 1871, 1873 and 1875. These Acts, however, did little to hinder the practice of blackbirding, which actually increased during this four-year period, and continued well into the 1880’s and 1890’s.¹⁵ Nevertheless, these Acts acknowledged the association between Aboriginal people and their land. Previously, at the conclusion of the season, the pearling masters had dumped Aboriginal workers anywhere along the coastline, often as far south as Shark Bay. This resulted in a separation from family and a dislocation from traditional homelands. The 1873 Act sought to amend this by requiring that workers be returned to their traditional lands.¹⁶

The 1960’s heralded a mass movement in Kimberley history, the movement of Aboriginal people off pastoral stations and into regional towns. The foremost cause of the mass departure from stations was the introduction of reforms relating to equal wages, which the majority of pastoralists did not support. In response, Aboriginal people held a wave of strikes to highlight their poor working conditions and pay levels. In the period between 1966-71, huge numbers of Aboriginal people walked off the properties that had become their homes and away from the industry which they had helped build. By 1971 the number of Aboriginal workers on pastoral stations fell from 1455 to 940, and by 1985 the exodus was almost complete.¹⁷

Following the movement off pastoral stations, Aboriginal ‘communities’ were established on government reserve lands in towns and in remote areas. Communities

¹¹ Sullivan, P (1996) All Free Man Now: Culture, Community & Politics in the Kimberley Region, North-Western Australia. AIATSIS, Canberra, ACT 8-9

¹² Kwaymullina, S. (2001) “For Marbles” in Jill Milroy, John Host and Tom Stannage (eds.) *Wordal: Studies in Western Australian History*, Vol. 22, 58

¹³ *ibid.*, p.55

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.56

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 60

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 59

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 13

were also established on old mission lands and on pastoral stations purchased by government and leased to Aboriginal corporations.

The new communities often included schools, clinics, communication services, airstrips and administration centres.¹⁸ This process, of government funded Aboriginal townships with basic infrastructure and services “was created in keeping with the policy misapprehension ... that this was the future for Aborigines in the Kimberley’s – new fully services townships from which the population would seek employment on surrounding stations, in craft industries, community enterprises and in domestic duties.”¹⁹

One view is that this version of the Aboriginal ‘community’ “is a recent creation enabling [the] administration to come to terms with the fluidity and diversity of contemporary [Aboriginal] experience”. It is suggested, “Aboriginal social groupings do not at all coincide with the formal institution of an Aboriginal community corporation and barely coincide with the community as a residential entity.”²⁰

In 2001, Aboriginal people represented nearly half (46%) of the 30 000 Kimberley residents compared to around 2.6% for WA and 2% for Australia. At present, there are approximately 115 remote Aboriginal communities in the West Kimberley area, mainly clustered along the coastline between Broome and Derby, along the Gibb River and around the town of Fitzroy Crossing.

2.2 Administration

The policies of successive administrations regarding Aboriginal Australians in the Kimberley may be characterised as commencing with subjugation and violence and moving through assimilation and citizenship towards land rights and self-determination.

The shift in government policy towards self-determination has not been informed by consistent administrative or political engagement with Aboriginal organisations. Policy has not been dictated by Aboriginal priorities or measured in these terms. Whilst past and current Aboriginal leaders have repeatedly clarified the priorities of their communities, these are still being ‘negotiated’ with government. John Watson, former Chairman of the Kimberley Land Council said in 1993:

*Aboriginal people in the Kimberley have been consistent about what we mean by Self Determination. It means to us the right to own our land, to control what happens on our land, to practise our culture freely with the certainty of passing on to our children our culture and law, and the ability to control through our own organisations those services that are provided to us by governments. The colonial structure of the Kimberley retards the region’s economic progress and keeps Aboriginal people in poverty... we want to develop local economic initiatives so that we can free ourselves from the dependence and control of governments.”*²¹

¹⁸Kwaymullina (2002) p. 26

¹⁹ Sullivan (1996) 25

²⁰ Sullivan (1996) 41

²¹ Watson, J in Crough & Christophersen (1993) Aboriginal People in the Economy of the Kimberley Region ANU North Australia Research Unit, Darwin, viii

At a political level, however, mainstream “Australia is still vacillating over whether de-colonisation requires a level of Aboriginal autonomy as a socio-political entity, or simply as an ethnic element within an Anglo-dominated multicultural society. It is not by determining this question, but by ignoring it, that Europeans continue their administrative dominance of Aborigines.”²² Thus while historical legislative and policy reforms may have reduced the overt administrative restrictions that apply to Aboriginal peoples within the Kimberley, ‘self-determination’ remains largely subject to the terms of the administration.

To a large degree, this paradoxical situation is reflected in the disengagement of Aboriginal peoples in the Kimberley firstly from stations and missions, then from townships into communities established on government reserves and more recently from communities into remote outstations²³. This latter move, referred to as ‘a return to country’ has been supported by governments but has also resulted in an increased number of communities requiring infrastructure and service support.

As part of the most recent incarnation of the administration of Aboriginal Affairs, ATSIC regional councils and their offices have been abolished and Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICC’s) are being established to take their place. Regional ICC’s, managed by the Australian Government’s Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, are made up of mainstream State and Federal agencies. ICC’s have assumed ATSIC responsibilities for negotiating funding for Aboriginal services in the regions. This is being done in consultation with Aboriginal Regional Councils (Malarabah Council in Derby), the State Government and through negotiation of Shared Responsibility Agreements between communities, regions and the State and Federal Governments. The functional aspects of this complex re-structure are still being negotiated.

The objective of this project is to provide an information resource and a negotiation tool that may be employed by Aboriginal organisations and Government service providers alike. The Report seeks to improve service coordination and delivery to Aboriginal people in Derby by:

- presenting data on services and funding for use in the negotiation of regional and community objectives with government;
- highlighting existing local initiatives and priorities and advocating for action in government where required;
- providing a comparative assessment of service provision, gaps and coordination processes across regions which is relevant to government, ICC’s and Regional Councils;
- facilitating Aboriginal participation in service planning, coordination and monitoring via engagement in the MAGA process and drafting and implementation of MAGA recommendations; and
- facilitating improved agency awareness and effectiveness by improving regional linkages with local Aboriginal organisations and communities.

²² Sullivan (1996) All Free Man Now: Culture, Community & Politics in the Kimberley Region, North-Western Australia AIATSIS, Canberra, ACT 8-9

²³ Sullivan, P (1996) 9

3 LAND AND HERITAGE

3.1 Overview

In Aboriginal Australia, land, heritage and culture are contiguous. The primacy of land as a means of sustenance, connection and knowledge in Aboriginal cultures does not always sit comfortably with the Western model of land as a source of economic security and achievement. The stress between these positions underlies many of the complexities involved in the relationship of mainstream and Aboriginal Australia.

The area surrounding Derby includes tribal people of the Bardi, Ngarinyan, Nyikina and Warwa.²⁴ There are five Native Title claims currently registered with the Native Title Tribunal near Derby. These are: Nyikina and Mangala (to the south of Derby); Dambimangari and Wanjina/Wunggurr-Wilinggin (both to the north-east of Derby); Bunuba (near Fitzroy Crossing); and Mayala (Buccaneer Archipelago)²⁵ (see Appendix1).

The Aboriginal communities located near to Derby (Mowanjum, Pandanus Park and Looma) maintain close ties to the town-based families, as do the communities located closer to Fitzroy Crossing and those up the Gibb River including Windjingayre, Imintji, Kupungarri, Dodnun and Ngallagunda.

This complex network of relationships intersects in terms of family, cultural and geographical boundaries. The social service priorities identified through this report and through the Derby Revitalisation Project²⁶ exist beyond these boundaries. However, family, language, cultural and geographical allegiances do influence the manner in which services are utilized by Aboriginal communities, within and outside town and regional centers. This issue is discussed further in 'Family and Social Services'.

3.2 Managing Land and Heritage

Western Australia is now the only State or Territory in Australia which has 'Aboriginal Reserves'²⁷ and an Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) for their administration. The ALT's Land Transfer Program transfers land currently held by the Trust back to Aboriginal people, whilst ensuring that any existing Aboriginal interest on the land is protected.

The ALT has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kimberley Land Council in an attempt to expedite the Land Transfer Program across the region.

²⁴ September 2003, Interim Evaluation: Building Strong and Healthy Families in Derby Project, Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation

²⁵ (January 2005) www.ntt.gov.au

²⁶ The Derby Revitalisation Project is a consultancy being undertaken to improve social and economic outcomes in Derby, coordinated by the Kimberley Regional Development Commission, The Shire of Derby-West Kimberley and the Derby Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

²⁷ Crough & Christophersen (1993) 13

Across the State, the ALT/AAPA (Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority) hold approximately 329 properties consisting of about 27 million hectares, almost 12% of the total WA land area. The vast majority of the ALT estate comprises of reserves with the Management Order vested in the ALT. These invariably contain a provision giving a power to lease. Around 147 of the ALT properties are reserves leased to Aboriginal community organisations.

Approximately 150 ALT properties are located in the Kimberley including more than five million hectares of reserve land and nearly one million hectares of pastoral lease land.²⁸ Twenty-Eight pastoral leases in the Kimberley are owned by Aboriginal organisations, only a fraction of which are operating as businesses.

In the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley, the ALT holds 39 properties including²⁹:

- 9 Proclaimed Reserves;
- 27 Reserves;
- 2 Freehold; and
- 1 Special Purpose Lease.

For example, the ALT manages the Bungarun reserve, which is the site of the old Derby leprosarium. A small portion of the property is currently leased to the Department of Justice, which operates it as a prison work camp. The remainder of the developed section includes a museum that commemorates its former use as a leprosarium and has facilities for conferences and training courses. The ALT has commenced a process to facilitate the eventual transfer of the property back to Aboriginal owners. A project officer position will be funded by the ALT to handle this process from Broome.

As noted in the Introduction, the movement of family groups from large communities to smaller and more remote settlements is continuing, and can be seen in the Gibb River region. This movement requires a strategic approach by governments to ensure these groups have access to information and resources (eg on renewable energy) that promote sustainability in land management. Programs such as Bushlight (funded until 2006 by the Australian Greenhouse Office and administered via FACS) aim to increase access to sustainable renewable energy services in remote communities³⁰. Bushlight has an office in Derby and the team there has completed four installations in the Kimberley region, including Cone Bay in the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley.

The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) (the first land council in WA) established its first office in Derby in 1979. The organisation represents native title applicants across the Kimberley, and manages other land access issues. The KLC has recently announced that due to the huge costs of funding native title claims, including the Miriuwung Gajerrong case which took ten years and cost over \$10 million, it will be reducing its legal activities and closing offices around the region. The organisation has not received a funding increase from the Australian Government since 1994.³¹

²⁸ 21 January 2005, DIA

²⁹ At this time, the ALT is unable to transfer Proclaimed reserves as the protections afforded with the Proclamation can only be held by the Crown and not transferred to another body.

³⁰ WA, NT, SA and QLD

³¹ KLC (20 April 2004) Newsletter Number Four

While the ongoing struggle for formal land rights remains critical, the movement of family groups from large communities to smaller and more remote settlements is continuing, and can be seen in the Gibb River region. This movement requires a strategic approach by governments to ensure these groups have access to information and resources (eg on renewable energy) that promote sustainability in land and heritage management. To this end, programs such as Bushlight (funded until 2006 by the Australian Greenhouse Office and administered via FACS), which aim to increase access to sustainable renewable energy services in remote communities,³² should be extended and supported.

Aboriginal organisations in the Kimberley exercise a major influence on mainstream social and economic life in the region. “With the increase in political franchise and integration into the cash economy since the mid 1960’s ... [Aboriginal] groups [have become] increasingly diverse in economic, legal, social and cultural characteristics, as well as increasingly dispersed in new locations.”³³ Today, “the spread of Aboriginal organisations in the Kimberley region is very impressive, ranging from radio stations to resource centres, medical services, independent schools and Aboriginal-owned businesses.”³⁴

The reach of these Aboriginal organisations extends well beyond the Kimberley. Artists at Mowanjum community outside Derby, for example, were employed to decorate Qantas aeroplanes and to assist with the costumes, design and performances at the opening of the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000. Mowanjum has recently been granted \$760 000 in State funding as a contribution to a planned \$2.6m Aboriginal arts and tourism centre at the community.

In Derby, a project has been operating to collate and preserve records and cultural items relevant to the Shire’s history, which is soon to be extended across the Kimberley. Proposals have also been made by Aboriginal people through the Derby Revitalisation Project (DRP) to promote the Aboriginal heritage of Derby through exhibitions, signage, activities and events as part of a cultural tourism strategy. This would raise awareness of the contribution of Aboriginal people to the region and also provide positive feedback to young Aboriginal people in the town. Such activities also have great tourism potential, with tourism being a major growth industry in the Kimberley.

The Nyikina Association was established in Derby in 2004 to practice, maintain and preserve Nyikina cultural heritage. During 2004 the Association developed an extensive language and culture program, which is available to be delivered in schools by qualified Nyikina people. The outcome of this and similar projects planned by the Association have the potential to impact on cultural and educational tourism in the region as well as building the cultural capacity of Nyikina people. The Association is seeking funding for facilities and a project officer to complete this work.

³² WA, NT, SA and QLD

³³ Sullivan (1996) 30

³⁴ Crough & Christophersen (1993) 151

A recent workshop with Aboriginal representatives at Bungarun³⁵ identified the need to ‘keep country healthy with return to country’ and employment in looking after country activities as priorities. These approaches would be particularly valuable as a way of reducing stress on Derby-based families caused by visitors during the wet season. The workshop also indicated that getting information to young Aboriginal people about their history and responsibilities was a key factor in maintaining the wellbeing of Derby and outlying communities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Education about and access to solar power and other renewable energy resources is made accessible in Gibb River communities to support family groups that are moving to small, remote settlements. Increase resources for and promotion of the Bushlight Program following its review in 2006.

Funding is identified to promote the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Derby region through partnerships between Aboriginal organisations (such as Nunga Designs, Mowanjum Arts Centre and the Nyikina Association) the Kimberley Development Commission and the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley.

Partnerships are formed between Aboriginal organisations and sponsors to hold Aboriginal art and craft exhibitions in Derby.

The efforts of the Nyikina Association and other traditional owner groups are supported to expand opportunities for Aboriginal people in Derby and the West-Kimberley region (also see ‘Family and Social Services’ recommendations).

A strengths-based approach to Aboriginal heritage and land management skills is promoted in Derby, including the employment of Aboriginal people in looking after country activities via natural resource management forums and organisations (both government and non-government).

³⁵ September 2004

4 FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

4.1 Overview

Estimates of household income are adjusted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics according to 'equivalence factors' in order to recognise the impact of different household compositions and different households. In 2001, the mean equivalised gross household income for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was \$364 per week, or 62% of the rate for non-Aboriginal people (\$585 per week). The ABS has stated that 'this disparity reflects the lower household incomes received by households with Aboriginal person(s), and the tendency for such households to be larger than other households and hence for the equivalised gross household income to be lower'.³⁶

For Aboriginal persons, income levels generally decline with increased geographic remoteness. In major cities and regional areas, average equivalised incomes for Aboriginal persons were approximately 70% of the corresponding income for non-Aboriginal persons. This declines to approximately 60% in remote areas, and just 40% in very remote areas³⁷

The Social Policy Unit in the WA Department of Premier and Cabinet is currently developing a WA Anti-Poverty Strategy in recognition that reducing poverty requires action across social, economic and environmental issues. The Strategy will aim to:

- Ensure that concessions, rebates and subsidies reach those in need;
- Create policies, partnerships and collaborations that transform lives – particularly the lives of those individuals, families and communities that are deprived, excluded, experience financial hardship or are simply poor;
- Evaluate frameworks that show what works and what doesn't, what has been achieved and what needs to be achieved, and these frameworks will guide future policies.³⁸

It will be important that the Strategy include initiatives that respond to the specific issues of Aboriginal poverty in regional and remote areas.

Housing and household size are key indicators of poverty. As shown in Appendix 3 and 'Housing and Infrastructure', Aboriginal people in Derby live in more crowded accommodation than non-Aboriginal people, with an average of 1.57 people per bedroom in Aboriginal households compared with 0.89 people in non-Aboriginal households. The 2001 Census showed that the proportion of households requiring at least one extra bedroom (given household occupancy per room) rose from 11% in major cities and inner regional areas to 46% in very remote areas.³⁹

³⁶ (20 December 2004) <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social%5Fjustice/statistics/>

³⁷ (20 December 2004) <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social%5Fjustice/statistics/>

³⁸ (2 January 2005)

www.socialpolicy.dpc.wa.gov.au/_view/priority_initiatives/documents/speech_mark_mcgowan.pdf

³⁹ (20 December 2004) <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social%5Fjustice/statistics/>

These living situations, combined with poor health and nutrition, drug and alcohol misuse and an influx of visitors during the wet season, increase the likelihood of violent episodes within homes and in the broader community.

This is borne out by a study which reported that Aboriginal people were nearly seven times more likely to be a victim of assault (and nearly 13 times for Aboriginal females); seven times more likely to be a victim of homicide; and 3.2 times more likely to be a victim of sexual assault (rising to 3.3 times for Aboriginal females).⁴⁰ It has also been documented that violence in the Aboriginal community generally involves a range of intra-group conflicts stemming from social connections (Blagg, 2000⁴¹; Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce, 1995⁴²; Gordon et al., 2002⁴³).

4.2 Family and Social Service Delivery

There is an extraordinary range of social service program activity in Derby concerned with supporting families and young people, in acknowledgement that the population aged 14 and under (76 % of whom are Aboriginal) are Derby's future. There is a high level of awareness amongst social service providers about the negative, long-term effects of poverty, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse and low levels of educational and vocational opportunity on families and individuals. Accordingly, there is a high level of commitment to a coordinated, preventative response to these issues.

The range and quality of family and social services in Derby is buttressed by the energetic participation of the Shire in supporting the Jayida Burru family violence committee comprising almost all the key service providers in Derby. As far as is known, this is the only Shire supported family violence committee in Australia.

The Jayida Burru family violence committee was formed as an amalgamation of the participants in the 1999 'Working with Adolescents and Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence Project' and the working group of key government agencies set up to progress the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry⁴⁴ in Derby and in the communities of Looma, Pandanus Park and Jarlmadangah.

The 'Working with Adolescents' program was managed by the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Program and aimed to reduce the incidence of family violence within the community.⁴⁵ The Derby Gordon

40 (20 December 2004) <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social%5Fjustice/statistics/>

Steering Committee for the Provision of Government Service Delivery, Table 3.11.2.

41 Blagg, H. (2000). *Crisis Intervention in Aboriginal Family Violence*. Canberra: Partnerships Against Domestic Violence.

42 Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce. (1995). 'A Whole Healing Approach To Violence : Aboriginal Women's Approach To Family Violence', "It's Not Just A Domestic": An Action Plan On Family And Domestic Violence. Perth.

43 Gordon, S, Hallahan, K, & Henry, D. (2002). *Putting the picture together, Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*. Perth, Western Australia: Department of Premier and Cabinet.

44 20 December 2004,

<http://www.gordonresponse.dpc.wa.gov.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.publications>

45 20 December 2004,

<http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/www/Ncphome.nsf/Page/2E54896090FFC723CA256E740080C0AA?OpenDocument>

Inquiry working group was not sustained due to poor attendance by regional agency representatives and the fact that despite the 'Working with Adolescents' project, the Shire of Derby and project participants did not receive funding through the Gordon Inquiry implementation budget. For the purposes of efficiency and to sustain relevant local programs, Derby agencies rolled the two entities into one under Jayida Burru.

The work of Jayida Burru is channelled through the project coordinator position, funded through the Shire, the Derby ICC and the Derby Aboriginal Health Service. The Coordinator facilitates the work of the Committee and the development and coordination of a range of programs provided by community and non-government organisations, including the:

- Ngunga Women's Group;
- Garl Garl Walbu (Sobering up Shelter);
- Marnin Bowa Dumbara (Family Healing Centre);
- Derby and Mowanjum Men's Centres;
- Young Women's Centre (Blue House);
- Mowanjum Women's Centre;
- Talk Up 4 U (school based self-esteem project); and
- Gibb River community family violence and sexual abuse consultations and information sessions (including Gibb River, Mount Barnett, Imintji and Dodnun communities).

Through Jayida Burru, representatives of the Derby community have taken family violence prevention and service coordination into their own hands. While a number of Government agencies are represented on the Committee, the group operates with minimal support from the State and Federal Governments. The resulting often unique projects and approaches to family violence in Derby have essentially developed in spite of, rather than because of centrally dictated or funded policy/program objectives.

While it may appear that in some instances there are duplications between some family and social services in the town, eg both Nunga Women's Group and Jalaris provide household budgeting/management support, it is most often the case that these providers are serving different client groups due to their different locations and relationships to Aboriginal communities; Jalaris primarily serves the 'back street' communities of Derby whereas Nunga Women's Group is essentially town focussed.

This form of service provision, based around family and culture, is highly precise for Aboriginal users of non-government agencies at the local level in Derby. The fact that this style of service delivery is not replicated in Government, however, complicates the linkages between community, non-government and mainstream agencies and subsequently, reduces service accessibility and relevance.

An example is the relationship between the Jayida Burru committee and the Strong Families program, which is administered by DCD (Broome) and managed by the Human Services Regional Managers Forum (see p18) and the West Kimberley Strong Families Group. While both programs are concerned with the prevention of family violence via improved agency coordination, Strong Families takes an intensive case based approach to needs identified by families and coordinates conferences with relevant government and non-government service providers to improve the family's

situation. Fifteen families are currently registered for the program in the Kimberley, thirteen in Broome and two in Derby. Fourteen of the families are Aboriginal.

Individual organisational members of Jayida Burru attend the Derby-based Strong Families case meetings in Derby as required. In addition, the Strong Families coordinator reports informally to Jayida Burru on case outcomes, as there is no formal feedback mechanism into Derby on Strong Families due to the centralisation of regional managers in Broome.

In this instance then, a community committee (including some State Government stakeholders) is essentially filling the role of a senior government manager's forum by receiving program reports and providing feedback to the Strong Families coordinator. It would seem likely that this relationship would present a range of opportunities for improved coordination of resources and program objectives in Derby. However, Jayida Burru has neither the support (budgetary) nor the authority (from regional managers) to perform this role and is therefore severely limited in terms of its influence on the objectives or operations of the Strong Families program in Derby.

Although Derby is located only a short distance from Broome and is relatively well serviced due to its former status as major regional centre, the relationship between regional (coordinating agencies based in Broome) and Derby based agencies suffers from poor communication and coordination at management and program levels. Accordingly, some fractures are apparent amongst the Derby service providers.

DIA supports a Broome based Kimberley Interagency Working Group (KIWG) to coordinate service delivery across the region on the basis of a Framework Agreement, which is reviewed annually for new priorities. Prior to the commencement of this MAGA project, the interagency group had met only in Broome, but has since agreed to hold regular meetings in towns (Derby, Fitzroy Crossing Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham) across the region. In addition, a Human Services Regional Managers Forum (HSRMF) (also Broome based) has recently been established to report to the Human Services Directors General Group supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The function of the KIWG and the HSRMF is to improve service delivery and coordination of family and social services in the regions. The relationship between these two bodies is currently being negotiated.

These fragile management level linkages are additionally tested at the program level, by the limited terms for which non-government/community projects are funded (in many cases only 12 months funding is provided for pilot programs eg the Mowanjum Youth Centre⁴⁶) and the corresponding level of stress placed on local agency staff to make them successful. It was a common complaint that the same key people represent numerous organisations at numerous meetings while simultaneously trying to keep program objectives and funding agreements alive. This situation is immensely demanding for the individuals involved and as a result, programs can and do collapse.

At the client level, the negative impact of this situation is potentially enormous, particularly given the trust that must be established in order for family and social

⁴⁶ (20 December 2004)

<http://www.gordonresponse.dpc.wa.gov.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.publications>
Gordon Implementation-Regional Update February 2004

service programs to be successful. In most cases, it is only the commitment and familiarity of people working to provide the services that keeps those requiring them coming back. Where this relationship is subverted by systemic failures (such as lack of role clarity, poor integration and under-resourcing) the most vulnerable people in the community are put at (further) risk.

There is an acknowledgement by some key stakeholders of the lack of coordination that currently exists between existing structures (eg the Kimberley Regional Family and Domestic Violence Committee) programs put in place as a result of the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry (e.g Strong Families) and community based programs that are currently operation in Derby (eg Jayida Burru). As shown, this has ramifications at management, program delivery and client levels.

Some efforts are being made to rectify this situation. The Family and Domestic Violence Unit (FDVU) is working with the Broome based Kimberley Regional Family and Domestic Violence Committee to refocus its efforts toward the coordination of services and programs. And as a result of the MAGA process, Jayida Burru accepted an offer by DIA to fund a strategic planning day in order to identify and consolidate its objectives and extend its linkages to key government agencies and Regional Management bodies.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The DIA assist the Human Services Regional Managers to take a supportive role in family and social service activities and outcomes in Derby, through:

- the implementation of the MAGA;
- formalising networks and reporting arrangements with Jayida Burru and non-government agencies; and
- assisting the FDVU to formalise the relationship between the Kimberley Regional Domestic and Family Violence Committee and Jayida Burru.

The Kimberley Regional Managers forums hold meetings in Derby on a rotational basis with other key Kimberley centres.

Operational linkages between Strong Families and Jayida Burru, are investigated and formalised, based on the post-Gordon Inquiry MOU with Aboriginal communities in Kimberley and the Gordon Inquiry recommendation to expand concepts similar to the Kimberley Aboriginal Family Violence Education Project.

Top-up funding is identified to support the continued employment of the Jayida Burru coordinator commencing July 2005, via the Office for Mental Health and Office for Aboriginal Health.

Funding arrangements for community organisations are reviewed to ensure funding stability for pilot programs for at least three years and provide assistance with program monitoring and evaluation processes – similar to the Federal Mentoring and Evaluation Scheme provided under the National Aboriginal Family Violence Grants Partnership Program.

The WA Anti-Poverty Strategy includes initiatives that respond to the specific issues of Aboriginal poverty in regional and remote areas.

4.3 Families

DCD is the lead State Government agency for family support and child protection. The agency defines domestic violence to be: “behaviour that results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, economic deprivation, or behaviour that causes the victim to live in fear. [The agency notes that] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have generally indicated they prefer to use the term 'family violence' as it describes a matrix of harmful, violent and aggressive behaviours. The concept is considered to be more reflective of an Aboriginal worldview of community and family healing.”⁴⁷

Statistical data on family violence is maintained in different formats by various agencies and is subject to strict confidentiality rules making it difficult to assess the rates of violence or the effectiveness of prevention and response programs. Agencies in Derby have recently agreed on a trial process by which interagency data on family and family violence may be collated and shared without breaching confidentiality.

The Derby DCD office, with three field staff, serves around half of the 104 080 square kilometre Derby-West Kimberley Shire. This produces an enormous stress on agency personnel resulting in a high staff turnover and subsequent difficulties in maintaining long term relationships with clients in the community. It also restricts the types of programs that can be provided by the agency to emergency and support services rather than capacity building and strengths-based projects (eg family support groups, conflict resolution, parenting education and protective behaviours training) that, in Derby, are increasingly being provided by community based organisations.

DCD funds Marnin Bowa Dumbara (Family Healing Centre) through the Supported Accommodation Assistance program (SAAP) to provide a unique service including a refuge for family violence victims, child and family support programs, counselling, Derby Men’s Service and outreach services in family violence prevention in Gibb River communities. While the current accommodation is adequate, it was noted that improvements are needed to maintain security and improve communications between the two buildings (one for mothers and another for older male children) that make up the Centre.

While the Centre focuses primarily on victims of family violence, its approach aims to support the family group to stay together. It is within this context that the Centre was initially responsible for the Derby Men’s Service (which provides programs and support for men in Derby and local communities) however that organisation is now seeking to become independent and self-managed. The Men’s Service (the only male-specific service in Derby) has had difficulties in maintaining its direction and stability but is currently seeking a new coordinator and community interest in the service is high.

⁴⁷ (20 December 2004)

<http://familyanddomesticviolence.communitydevelopment.wa.gov.au/content/content.asp?page=information.htm>

The Family Healing Centre's Gibb River outreach service runs relatively consistently throughout the year. A key issue identified by service providers was the lack of emergency services available to victims of family violence in remote communities, particularly given that the Derby police station closes at midnight and calls are diverted to Broome for assessment.

The Centre is often utilised as a stopgap by other service providers for people with issues that cannot be addressed elsewhere. This includes:

- people under the influence of alcohol when the Sobering Up Shelter (see below) is closed or their three-day stay is up;
- people with mental health issues (including elderly people with specialist needs); and
- people who have ceased paying rent at the Kabayji Booroo Hostel (particularly during the overcrowded wet season).

These referrals would indicate a lack of services in Derby to deal with people under the influence of drugs and alcohol, people with mental health issues and people who cannot afford the limited supply of cheap accommodation. The need for more accommodation facilities (see 'Housing and Infrastructure') and increased mental health services (see 'Health') were consistently cited as significant service gaps in Derby. Currently, agencies are not equipped to cope with, or accommodate, what many providers agreed was an increasing number of people with drug and alcohol related mental illnesses.

It was estimated by the Family Healing Centre that 50-90% of its clients have drug or alcohol issues and that 70-80% of overnight visitors to the Centre are women who come in when their partner is out drinking. Data from the Kimberley Drug Service Team indicates that 67% of its 353 clients (in 2003-2004) were Aboriginal, the majority aged between 18-49, with alcohol being the principal drug issue in three quarters of these cases as compared to 37% of non-Aboriginal cases⁴⁸.

The need to protect children and teenagers from violence occurring at home was an issue raised by many service providers. Suggestions included a safe-house to provide after school care, meals and a clean bed for the night. This was also a recommendation of community consultations recently undertaken with Aboriginal people in Derby for the DRP⁴⁹. Other agencies felt that more support should be provided directly to families to ensure that the violence did not occur in the first place. An innovative proposal was for the training of local Aboriginal people to act as mediators and advocates for families experiencing pressures which may lead to family violence, to assist in prevention and management techniques and in seeking agency help where required.

The Sobering Up Shelter (Garl Garl Walbu) in Derby provides a maximum of three nights accommodation for people under the influence of alcohol and is currently open Wednesday to Friday evening each week. Over 2 400 people were admitted to the

⁴⁸ Appendix 3

⁴⁹ The Derby Revitalisation Project is a consultancy being undertaken to improve social and economic outcomes in Derby, coordinated by the Kimberley Regional Development Commission, The Shire of Derby-West Kimberley and the Derby Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Derby Centre between June 2001 and June 2004, representing approximately one third of the total admissions to similar Centres across the Kimberley in the same period.⁵⁰ Consultations with Aboriginal people for the DRP proposed that the Centre should operate 24 hour per day for at least six days per week to cater for this demand (see also ‘Justice, Safety and Security’). Children often attend the Sobering Up Shelter with mothers under the influence and a need was identified for alternative accommodation (such as the safe-house described above) for their care during these times.

Service providers recommended the expansion of the Numbud Patrol, which provides transport for people who have been drinking and need to get home, towards an outreach service. Such a service would include activities and day trips to places like Milliard Soak, outside town. Consultations for the DRP proposed establishing an out-of-town alcohol/drug rehabilitation facility similar to Milliya Rumurra in Broome (see ‘Housing and Infrastructure’). The Shelter is also investigating a suggestion that Patrol staff is employed full time to operate a truancy service for Derby schoolchildren during the day. These options require further resourcing and training of Patrol staff, which are currently casually employed for CDEP wages.

The issue of hunger amongst Aboriginal children in Derby was highlighted as a major factor in the level of truancy in the town (see ‘Education & Training’) and as a cause for home break-ins. DCD provides Food Vouchers for store purchases to eligible clients. Nunga Women’s Group also distributes these vouchers, but is given only a limited number. Agencies indicated that the Voucher system comes under pressure at certain times of the year and when families are in crisis such as pre and post-Christmas and following funerals and other costly events. This would suggest that the Food Voucher system is not functioning adequately to ensure that children are getting consistent meals.

Anecdotally, the problem of child hunger in Aboriginal communities is often put down to expenditure on alcohol, but the issue of poverty is a systemic one relating to a variety of current (low levels of health, education and employment) and historical (dispossession and intergenerational trauma) issues. The fact that more than three quarters of the people contacting DCD in Derby in 2002-2004 were concerned about financial problems⁵¹ reiterates that poverty must be approached by agencies in a coordinated manner if it is to be addressed.

A contributing factor in some of these cases is a lack of financial management skills. Some support with financial management is available to families in Derby via programs operated by Nunga Women’s Group and Jalaris but it is suggested that these types of programs need to be extended, promoted and delivered proactively. Given the distinct Aboriginal communities that exist in Derby and the Gibb River area, this type of service should be provided across a number of community organisations with coordinating/administrative support provided by central government agencies.

It is also of note that housing and financial management issues have been a key factor in the Kimberley Strong Families cases. Many families in the program have unpaid

⁵⁰ Appendix 3

⁵¹ Appendix 3

rental debts to Homeswest and household damages and maintenance needs that are left unresolved for long periods. This situation puts family health and wellbeing at risk, often producing negative behaviours generally symptomatic of poor environmental standards. This suggests the need for improved linkages between Strong Families and housing support programs (see 'Housing and Infrastructure').

Under the Cape York Partnerships initiative a trial "Family Income Management" (FIM) project is being implemented in Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge. FIM is sponsored by FACS and the Westpac Banking Corporation and aims to improve the management of family income by building understanding of individual and family responsibilities and through the prioritised and planned use of financial resources. One of the early reported successes of FIM is that "less is spent on alcohol and gambling with more on essentials and homes"⁵².

Nationally, FACS is piloting the "Indigenous Financial Management" (IFM) Initiative for which the Australian Government has allocated \$4.4 million for six trial projects at sites around Australia.⁵³ In WA, Geraldton has been selected as an IFM site and negotiations are being undertaken for a second project in the East Kimberley. By the end of 2005, FACS will also produce a financial management-training package that will be made available to Aboriginal communities across Australia. The IFM provides a basis for a coordinated approach to financial management, which in Derby, would rely upon the participation of CDEP organisations and Centrelink.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Resources are identified to improve security at the Family Healing Centre including: security cameras, intercoms and a new fence to shield the back of the compound from the adjacent empty block.

Support is provided for local efforts to improve interagency data collection to reduce family violence and to target programs to those in need, including people living in remote communities.

The Department of Health (DOH) investigates opportunities to increase the availability of visiting mental health services to Derby, with a focus on drug and alcohol issues. In recognition of the across portfolio nature of the issue, it is also recommended that agencies such as the Department of Community Development (DCD), Family and Children's Services (FACS), Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley discuss options for the joint resourcing of a community development and prevention approach to mental health problems, particularly among Aboriginal youth in Derby. Funds may be available through the WA Mental Health Strategy.

The operating hours of Garl Garl Walbu (Sobering up Shelter) are extended to maximise use of the facility.

⁵²(August 2004) www.capeyorkpartnerships.com/project/families/fim (August 2004)

⁵³ (January 2005) DIA, Wiluna Mapping and Gap Analysis Report

Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO), Derby Local Drug Action Group (LDAG), Derby Aboriginal Health Service and the Sobering up Shelter work together to increase support for the Numbud Patrol and its staff via training and better pay with the potential for development of an outreach service.

DAHS and the Sobering Up Shelter investigate establishing overnight childcare facilities for children with parents in the Shelter.

To support financial management and assist in reducing poverty amongst Aboriginal families and communities in Derby:

- Additional funding be sought to extend and coordinate the provision of existing financial management programs and possibilities for new proactive programs (such as the IFM training package); and
- The WA Anti-Poverty Strategy considers and responds to Aboriginal poverty in regional communities.

The DOH, DAHS and DCD investigate establishing a training program for Aboriginal mediators to work with families on conflict prevention and resolution prior to and during formal agency involvement and justice processes.

The re-development and extension of the Men's Centre and related services are supported.

4.4 Child Protection

In 2001-02, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (aged 0-16 years) were more likely to be the subject of a substantiation (reported, investigated and confirmed at risk of harm) than non-Aboriginal children in all Australian states and territories except Tasmania. The rate of Aboriginal children who were the subject of a substantiation was 7.9 times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal children in Western Australia and Victoria; 7.2 times in South Australia; and 3.6 times in New South Wales.

There were 4,264 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on care and protection orders nationally on 30 June 2002. This translates to a rate of 20.5 Aboriginal children per 1,000. The rate for the rest of the population is 3.5 per 1,000. The rate for Aboriginal children is 5.9 times the non-Aboriginal rate nationally and 7.9 times the rate in Western Australia.

At 30 June 2002, there were 4,199 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, an increase of 126 on the previous year. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care was 20.1 per 1,000 (compared with 3.2 per 1,000 for other children). In all states and territories except Tasmania the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care was higher than for other children⁵⁴

⁵⁴ (20 December 2004) <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social%5Fjustice/statistics/>

These figures reiterate the necessity for culturally appropriate child and family support services to be made available to Aboriginal families. The statistics also reflect the historical (eg dispossession and trauma) and current factors (eg poverty and poor health) that may have a negative effect on the capacity of Aboriginal families to support their kids.

Child protection is an emotive and culturally dictated issue. While it appears that Derby is being well serviced in this area (in the sense that service gaps were not identified in interviews) truancy, school retention (see Education and Training') and unemployment rates (see 'Income and Employment') in the town are indicative of a degree of family and community dysfunction. The work of the Jayida Burru group (described above) takes a coordinated approach to these issues, working largely within the existing resources of member agencies.

DCD has recently placed a Child Protection Worker in Derby (with Looma as a 'community of interest') and an additional new position has been identified to recruit and support foster carer's in the area. Childcare is currently provided by a number of agencies including the Blue House, Nunga Women's Group and Jalaris.

Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1994. It is an independent charitable corporation located Burrinunga, one of the four Aboriginal communities located in the town site. Jalaris serves the Derby 'backsteet' residents and visits the Mowanjum and Pandanus Park communities, providing family support services onsite to assist women, mothers and kids with daily activities including cooking, sewing, nutrition, art via a women's room established to develop and sell items via charity. Health representatives attend the site to pass on information and discuss health issues with the women. In 2002, 80 families and over 400 children attended Jalaris services or dropped in to the site to meet and talk with friends. Independent of this, the community also operates an outreach service in conjunction with medical staff from Derby Community Health, to promote health and nutrition and encourage school attendance (the school attendance officer also participates).

Addressing the service gaps identified for families in Derby (as above) and young people (as below), together with improvements in educational and economic opportunity will increase the capacity of parents in Derby to support and protect their children.

4.5 Youth

The former Australian Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti said of youth issues in regional Australia, that:

*Rural decline is directly undermining the capacity of rural families to protect, support and assist their children and young people and the capacity of communities to secure the future for themselves and their youth. And the abject neglect of remote communities systematically undermines every good intention of family and community leaders.*⁵⁵

⁵⁵ (17 January 2005) http://www.hreoc.gov.au/speeches/human_rights/rural_youth_suicide.html

The median age in the Shire of Derby –West Kimberley is 27.3 as compared to 35.3 for WA.⁵⁶ Nationally, the median age for Aboriginal population is 20.5 years compared to 36.1 years for the non-Aboriginal population⁵⁷.

The very large proportion of Aboriginal young people aged less than 14 years in Derby (76%) has focussed family and social service providers on the youth of the town. People aged 14 and under represent the future of Derby, which has lost much of its status as a regional centre in recent years as a result of the growth of Broome. The need to create a safe, engaging and positive environment for young people drives most of the family and social services in the town.

In consultations conducted by and for Aboriginal youth in the Kimberley (for the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council) in 1999, young people identified their six main concerns as⁵⁸:

- Drug and alcohol use, abuse and its consequences;
- A lack of constructive and appropriate activities, resources and support for young people;
- No support or guidance from parents, emotional neglect and poor treatment;
- Fighting within families, between different groups, violence in general and physical abuse;
- Criminal activity, breaking the law and general anti-social behaviour; and
- Boredom, lack of purpose and a sense of a positive future.

There is anecdotal information about street drinking and destructive behaviors amongst teenagers and younger kids in Derby. It is said that this generally occurs as a result of violence and/or drinking in the home and peer group pressure when visitors arrive from out of town. This situation prompted Aboriginal students of the Enterprise Class (see 'Education & Training') to list in detail the things that Derby (via the Youth Coordination Network – see below) could do to stop problem behaviors amongst their own group. This list provided the impetus for a submission by the Shire to the State Government to build a new youth centre in the town.

The need to improve community engagement via a wider variety of better-located youth recreation facilities was raised by many agencies. The current recreation centre though new and well equipped with indoor and outdoor basketball courts, is sport focussed. The consensus was that there was a need for a better range of after-school activities of a less physical nature such as darts, pool, bowling, computing and skating. It was also suggested that there was a need for a transport service to take kids to and from activities after dark to improve safety and prevent lingering.

The Shire of Derby - West Kimberley was recently awarded \$300 000 over three years to provide a youth service in Derby. Funding will go primarily towards the employment of a Youth Worker. The Shire has also received a grant of \$402 000 for construction of a central new Youth Center which will include activity areas, a commercial grade kitchen, washroom, outdoor courtyard and office space for the

⁵⁶ Appendix 3

⁵⁷ ABS, 2002, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 4714.0

⁵⁸ Aboriginal Justice Council (2000) Youth Self Harm Forum, Broome 5 October 2000, AJC, Perth

Shire Community Development Officer, the Jayida Burru Coordinator, the new Youth Worker and a Trainee Youth Worker. It is estimated that the building will be operational in mid 2005.

It is unknown to what extent the Centre or the Youth Worker role will be influenced by the broader community, but given the demography of Derby, the Shire must ensure a firm role for representatives of local Aboriginal communities to ensure youth services are accessible and relevant. It is hoped amongst youth organisations that the new youth center will draw together the energies of various groups (including church based groups) for the benefit of young people in Derby.

Agencies also proposed that the local community engage kids more actively by inviting their participation in skills based learning activities such as staffing the recently re-opened Derby Picture Gardens (see 'Employment and Training').

There is a strong Youth Coordination network based in Derby dealing with youth and youth issues. It was noted that while there is an extensive group of members on the group there is a lack of representation from the Departments of Justice, Education and Indigenous Affairs. The Network publishes a newsletter and holds regular meetings to improve awareness of youth concerns and to better coordinate current services and programs.

The need for improved recreation and employment options was confirmed in consultations with Aboriginal people for the DRP, which suggested the self-esteem of young people (see 'Mental Health') could be supported through:

- Improving the transition from school to work (see 'Education & Training');
- Supporting kids' access to traditional languages and bush knowledge;
- Developing Derby as a visibly strong cultural centre via and strengthening the profile of Aboriginal people in the broader community via arts, signage, tourism opportunities (see 'Land & Heritage'); and
- Involving young people more directly in initiating and managing programs and activities and developing their leadership skills.

One of the ways suggested to improve the engagement of young Aboriginal people in their community and in themselves, was to support linkages with older people and with traditional country and heritage. This occurs in and around Fitzroy Crossing via the Yiriman project run through the Kimberley Aboriginal Land and Culture Centre which provides opportunities to reconnect with family and country and also involves young people in land care and management projects.⁵⁹

Jalaris in Derby currently provides meals on wheels to older people and is a meeting place for them. The group seeks to join older and younger people together. Madjulla Inc and Balginjirr community have been organising cultural camps as a strategy for cultural affirmation, working with cultural mentors and educators both as a mental health promotion and crime prevention strategy. It was recommended that family and social service agencies encourage intergenerational connections wherever possible

⁵⁹ 8 February 2005 <http://www.yiriman.org.au/projectstructure.htm>

and that specialised intergenerational camps, daytrips and other activities are actively encouraged in Derby.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The Derby Youth Coordination Network, Nyikina Association and the Shire of Derby West Kimberley work together to:

- engage key representatives of relevant Aboriginal communities in the operation and direction of the new Youth Centre and the activities of the Youth Worker; and
- ensure that there is a funding strategy in place to continue the Youth service following the current three year commitment.

The Enterprise Class, Derby High School, Jalaris, Jayida Burru and Youth Coordination Network seek partnerships with local organisations to develop and promote youth self-esteem projects.

The Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering, Office of Children and Youth and DIA consult with the Nyikina Association on developing cultural activities and resources linking children, young adults and older people.

The Departments of Justice, Education and Indigenous Affairs improve support for and liaison with the Derby YCN.

4.6 Disability Services

Research suggests that although Aboriginal people have similar rates of genetic disability to the rest of the population, they have a higher rate of disability resulting from environmental and trauma related factors. There is only limited data available on the prevalence of disability amongst Aboriginal people⁶⁰ (see Appendix 3) though agency interviews in Derby suggested that the prevalence of Autism in this population is high, as is alcohol induced brain injury.

There are currently 23 people registered with the Disability Services Commission (DSC) in Derby. The agency plays a service coordination and advocacy role for its clients and works with the Shire to maintain its Disability Access Plan. In its relationship with the Shire, the DSC places particular emphasis on environmental health factors for their primary role in maintaining the wellbeing of all people, and particularly those with a disability.

The DSC also offers services to support families with children under 5 who have autism, via the Country Autism Service provided from Perth, which is currently serving some families in Gibb River communities. A training model is currently being developed in a partnership between DSC and providers in Fitzroy Crossing to assist DSC to work more closely with this client group.

⁶⁰ (10 January 2005) <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/Aboriginal/keyindicators2003/>

In 2003, the DSC conducted the Aboriginal Disability Action Research (IDAR) project to assist Aboriginal people with disabilities and their families to have input in to service development, delivery and content. The project identified a shortage of carers as a key issue. Although funding is available to families requiring carers or respite via DCD, many cannot access carer resources as they are minimal or non-existent in Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and in most remote communities in the region. DSC is to provide funding to develop a pilot project in Fitzroy Crossing to address this issue. Training will be developed to build local capacity and knowledge about caring and carers and to establish sources of respite and support in these communities.

Recommendation

It is recommended, pending the success of DSC activities in Fitzroy Crossing to improve the accessibility of disability services and to train, support and promote carers that these are extended to Derby.

5 HEALTH

5.1 Overview

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody described the health status of Aboriginal Australians people as being worse than any other population for whom records are currently kept.⁶¹

Aboriginal life expectancy is approximately 20 years less than other Australians and the health of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley is “by almost every indicator, two to three times as poor” as non-Aboriginal health.⁶²

In Derby, Aboriginal people are most likely be hospitalised for and/or die of diabetes, circulatory and respiratory disease. The ratio at which these events occur in the Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal populations of the Shire is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: West Kimberley Aboriginal to Non-Aboriginal Health Ratios⁶³

Disease Type	Mortality Rate	Hospitalisation Rate
Diabetes	7.8	11.1
Circulatory	3.4	2.2
Respiratory	1.2	3.7
Injury and Poisoning	2.0	2.7

The Kimberley also has some of the highest reported incidences of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the nation. Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and Syphilis rates in the Kimberley are far higher than those in other parts of Western Australia, being comparable with those reported from the Northern Territory.⁶⁴ In 2003 in the Kimberley, Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 years were 5 times more likely to be notified for Chlamydia than non-Aboriginal youth aged between 15 to 24 years.⁶⁵

Higher rates of injury, disease, mortality and morbidity amongst Aboriginal people are correlated to their poor socio-economic position⁶⁶. Geographical distance from health and other primary service centres and the transience of the Aboriginal population in the Kimberley also reduce health status, as do poor levels of education and employment. Environmental factors also play a significant role. In the Kimberley “there continues to be substantial deficits in terms of housing and community infrastructure such as waste disposal, water and power.” (see ‘Housing and Infrastructure’).⁶⁷

⁶¹ AAPA (1991) Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: A Summary, Perth WA

⁶² Atkinson, D et al (1999) Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan, 7

⁶³ Appendix 3

⁶⁴ (14 January 2004) Mak, B & Marshall L.J “Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and Syphilis incidence in the Kimberley” www.cda.gov.au/pubs/cdi/2003

⁶⁵ DOH (2005) Communicable Diseases Control Directorate

⁶⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

⁶⁷ Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan, 6

The HREOC commissioner summarised the philosophy of Aboriginal Health as 'the enhancement of the emotional, social, spiritual wellbeing of an individual and the community in which they live'.⁶⁸ It is also about a way of working, delivering services and support via a kinship network to ensure that community and individual wellbeing is maintained.

'Aboriginal health is not just the physical well being of an individual but is the social, emotional and cultural well being of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential thereby bringing about the total well being of their community. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.' (NAHS, 1989)⁶⁹

Because many of the key determinants of Aboriginal health lie outside the influence of the mainstream health care system, the current policy drive is to work across agencies and governments to address a range of areas influencing wellbeing. The breadth of policy and service coordination required is reflected in the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey⁷⁰, which documents the following factors as influencing healthy child development:

- Adequate physical environment to meet the basic necessities of living;
- The levels of family income available to support the development of children;
- The creation of human and psychological capital (e.g. good health, education and parenting skills) available within the family to support child development; and
- The social capital (e.g. cultural heritage and traditions, safe communities) available to individuals in the community and wider society.

5.1.2 Current Policy Directions in Aboriginal Health

A 1995-96 paper was produced for the Australian Medical Association⁷¹ on a needs-based financing formula for expenditures on health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It concluded that an equitable allocation of health care resources to Aboriginal people (defined as one which gave Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people an equal access to health care resources for equal need) would have required an increase of about 27% in total expenditures on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, or about \$245 million in 1998-99 terms.⁷²

The 1999 Kimberley Regional Health Plan⁷³ found that expenditure on primary health care (inpatient and other health services) in the Kimberley needed to be increased by two to three times the national average if the Aboriginal population is to have equitable access to preventative and early intervention and health initiatives.

Nationally, health funding is delivered on the basis of a complex series of cost sharing arrangements between the State and Federal Governments. As such, it is a constant

⁶⁸ (17 January 2005) http://www.hreoc.gov.au/speeches/human_rights/rural_youth_suicide.html

⁶⁹ (22 February 2005) www.naccho.org.au

⁷⁰ "The Health of Aboriginal Children and Young People" Volume 1; June 2004.

⁷¹ Deeble, J (2003) Expenditures on ATSI Health, ANU, Canberra

⁷² *ibid*, p4

⁷³ Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan

source of dispute in which the health deficits of Aboriginal Australia is but one of the issues.

Numerous national and state policy-based approaches are operating to address Aboriginal health:

- The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sets out the current Australian Government's principles and priorities for the area:⁷⁴
 - Strengthening comprehensive primary health care;
 - Emotional and social well being (including alcohol and drugs);
 - Addressing the pre-determinants of chronic disease (including nutrition and physical activity, and child and maternal health); and
 - Improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in custodial settings.
- In 2003, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) released 'Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003',⁷⁵. The report recognises the complex causes of the deficits in Aboriginal health and provides a unitary framework whereby governments may measure the effectiveness of policy and program responses to these. The report established a number of Headline Indicators to measure the progress of governments in reducing the disadvantages of Aboriginal Australians, including life expectancy at birth and rates of disability. The report also identified several strategic areas for action including:
 - Early child development and growth (prenatal to age 3);
 - Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3);
 - Positive childhood and transition to adulthood;
 - Substance use and misuse;
 - Functional and resilient families and communities;
 - Effective environmental health systems; and
 - Economic participation and development.
- The WA Framework Agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health underpins the way in which Aboriginal health strategies, programs and services are developed and delivered in this State. The Agreement establishes a four-way partnership between the State and Federal Governments, the Aboriginal community controlled health sector and Aboriginal communities. This partnership operates through the Joint Planning Forum and associated Regional Aboriginal Health Planning Forums in WA's seven Aboriginal health regions.⁷⁶
- The WA Office of Aboriginal Health's charter is to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities and health service providers to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people receive culturally appropriate health

⁷⁴ (12 January 2005) <http://www.aboriginal.health.wa.gov.au/htm/aboutus/default.htm>

⁷⁵ (12 January 2005) <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/Aboriginal/keyindicators2003/>

⁷⁶ *ibid*

care that meets their needs. It works within government to manage the financial, physical and human resources necessary to improve the health care and health status of all Aboriginal people. It also provides funding to non-government organisations for environmental health, primary health care, alcohol and drug, and social and emotional well being services for Aboriginal communities.⁷⁷

- The Australian Government's Primary Health Care Access Program aims to improve access and provision of appropriate primary health care. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in the Kimberley and the Pilbara are involved in partnership with the Federal and State Governments in implementing this initiative. The key objectives of the Program are to:
 - reorient the existing health system that is more appropriate to Aboriginal people;
 - increase the accessibility of appropriate primary health services; and
 - provide capacity for Aboriginal people and communities to take greater responsibility for their own health.⁷⁸

These strategies reflect the intention of governments to take a new approach to addressing the health deficits of the Aboriginal population. This approach requires mainstream health providers to form strong, meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal health providers, underpinned by jointly developed agreements to work together in a culturally responsive manner and to develop joint funding and reporting models to improve the accountability of health services and advance Aboriginal health in a sustainable way. This process requires:

- Building the capacity of non government organisations to reduce service and administrative duplication and promote good governance and practices;
- Altering health funding processes and models, for example:
 - Developing local health strategies and partnerships;
 - Resourcing non government agencies beyond the term of pilot programs;
 - Increasing community awareness of the social determinants of health
 - Increasing training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal health workers.

5.2 Health Services in Derby

Health services in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley are provided by the Department of Health (Derby Regional Hospital, North West Mental Health Services and Derby Community Health Services) and the Derby Aboriginal Health Service (DAHS). Derby is also the regional base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ WA has two PHCAP sites, both of which are in the Kimberley. The communities around Derby form part of the West Kimberley site.

⁷⁹ Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan, 115

5.2.1 Primary Health Care

Primary health care in Derby is available through the Derby Aboriginal Health Service (DAHS) and the Kimberley Population Health Unit/Derby Community Health. Primary health in the Gibb River Road communities is provided on the basis of an MOU between DAHS, Jurrugk Health Service and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) (see 'Health Services to Aboriginal Communities' below).

Derby Regional Hospital

The 54-bed Derby Hospital is the regional centre and the secondary referral centre for the Kimberley region. It provides medical, acute surgical, obstetrics, paediatric and outpatient services and an Ambulance service within Derby and surrounding communities.

Medical Specialists visit Derby between two and six times per year. Visiting specialist services include Ear, Nose and Throat, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic surgery, Dermatology, Cardiology, Rheumatology and a 6 weekly visit from a Renal Physician.⁸⁰ The Kimberley Community Physician, based in Broome, also provides clinics in Derby on a 6 weekly basis. The most serious specialist medical issues are referred to Perth via the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme. Port Hedland is the closest location for CT and other scans.

There are no private GP or private Dental services available in Derby. A GP is available at the Hospital.

While the Hospital has an allowance of 5 Allied Health professionals it has been difficult to attract and retain permanent staff to these positions. Locums are used to minimise service gaps. The Allied Health team consists of two physiotherapists (one senior), two Occupational Therapists (one senior) and a Speech Therapist. There is no Social Worker at the Hospital.

The Hospital maintains four beds at the Kabayji Booroo Hostel (with direct telephone lines into the hospital) for new mothers from remote communities attending Derby to give birth. When the hostel is overcrowded, expecting mothers are placed at alternative accommodation such as the Boab Inn (hotel) for the duration of their stay.

Youth pregnancy remains a major issue in Derby. This is seen by some providers as being linked to the lack of education and employment opportunities for young people in the town. Aboriginal teenagers' newborn babies are likely to have poor health outcomes such as: being small for gestational age; born premature; and/or requiring special and intensive care. In addition, these pregnancies frequently produce negative education and social outcomes both for teenage parents and their children.⁸¹ While ad hoc sexual education programs exist there is a need for improved targeting and resourcing of these programs in Derby and surrounding communities.

⁸⁰ (12 January 2005) <http://www.kimberley.health.wa.gov.au/services/derby.cfm>

⁸¹ (January 2005) Draft WA Aboriginal Sexual health Strategy 2005-2008

In 2002 specialist paediatric and obstetric services and the disease control branch of Public Health were moved from the Derby Regional Hospital to Broome. At the time, a coalition of interests emerged to speak out against the changes, including the Malarabah Regional Council and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. Derby Hospital has retained two resident paediatricians and an obstetrician.⁸²

Consultations indicated that people are discontent about what they see as the minimisation of hospital services due to the transfer of medical and human resources from Derby to Broome. It was also said that many Aboriginal people from the Derby and Gibb River communities feel uncomfortable about having to go to Broome for medical attention and also experience difficulties accessing these services due to the increased travelling distance. Conversely, the Department of Health indicates that there has been no transfer of clinical services to Broome, and that patients on remote communities do not need to travel to Broome for treatment as they are linked to Derby services via DAHS and the RFDS.

Corporate services to Derby Hospital are provided from Broome. Staff turnover in the Kimberley Health Services is very high, running at approximately 50% per annum for its 880 employees.⁸³ This figure reiterates the need expressed by health providers and consumers to attract and train local Aboriginal people to work in primary health care.

A \$76m capital works program is underway in State health facilities in the Kimberley, including construction of a new acute wing at the Derby Hospital. The Numbla Nunga Nursing Home in Derby is also due to be rebuilt, possibly on the hospital grounds. There is some community concern over the location of the new building, with older Aboriginal residents of the 26-bed nursing home being uncomfortable at the idea of being relocated to a place of illness where deaths have occurred. The Department of Health is coordinating a Project Working Group to oversee this process. The issue of relocation is yet to be resolved as negotiations are now occurring for the venture to be taken up by private interests.

There is a District Health Advisory Committee that includes community and non-government organisation (NGO) representation that provides a conduit between the community and Derby Health Services and has input into service development. Kimberley Health Services is also a member of the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum.

As indicated in the Overview, the complexity of cultural difference is a constant factor in the relationship between mainstream health agencies and Aboriginal communities. It is for this reason that a partnership approach between mainstream and community providers works most effectively. Consultations in Derby often referred to the Fitzroy Action Group as a relevant model that works well across primary, community and mental health services.

The Derby Health Service has recently entered into discussions to develop and formalise its relationship with the DAHS. The organisations agree that partnerships are the key to addressing Aboriginal health issues in the long term, particularly in terms of culturally appropriate prevention and treatment programs. Consultations with

⁸² It has been indicated that this compares favourably with the remainder of the State.

⁸³ 26 November 2004, Derby District Hospital

consumers indicated a high level of support for this approach, and for increasing the flexibility of all Derby health services and their capacity to address chronic health issues in the Aboriginal community.

Derby Population Health

Derby Population Health operates a child health, school health, women's health and community midwifery, health promotion, and immunisation and disease control programmes. These are community-based programmes with a strong focus on primary health care. To combat Otitis Media and conductive hearing loss, which are serious problems in the region for their negative impact on a child's learning and language development, a Regional Audiologist is based in Derby to provide screening for hearing impairments. Aboriginal Health Workers play a significant and increasing role in all aspects of Community Health service delivery.⁸⁴

Services are provided to Derby town and Mowanjum with outreach services provided to Gibb River Road communities, Looma, Pandanus Park and Jarlmadanghah. Home visits are included in the programme.

In 2004 the service also provided support to the Jalaris outreach service (see 'Family and Social Services') via the provision of Child and Women's Health nurses.

The Kimberley Public Health Unit in Broome manages population based disease control programs in the region including monitoring the incidence and spread of disease and managing the needle and syringe program. The Public Health Unit in Derby focuses on health promotion including nutrition and lifestyle education in collaboration with communities, non-government organisations and the department of Education.

Royal Flying Doctor Service

The RFDS provides aeromedical evacuation and inter-hospital transfers in the Kimberley region. It employs three full time doctors and one Primary Health Nurse in addition to aeromedical nurses and pilots.

Derby Aboriginal Health Service

DAHS operate from a newly constructed building in Derby town. It has a client base of 3,700. DAHS provide comprehensive primary health care services and employs: three full-time doctors and one GP registrar, four Registered Nurses, eight Aboriginal Health Workers and support staff.⁸⁵

DAHS manage the Young Women's Centre (known as the Blue House) that is funded by St John of Gods. DAHS also oversees the primary health care function of the three doctors employed by the Royal Flying Doctor Service who function as part of the

⁸⁴ (12 January 2005) <http://www.kimberley.health.wa.gov.au/services/derby.cfm>

⁸⁵ In interviews, it was approximated that around 50% of DAHS clients present with illnesses that are alcohol related. The agency does not provide specific drug and alcohol programs but does have a social and emotional wellbeing counsellor on staff.

primary health care team providing clinical services to Jurrugk Health Service communities along the Gibb River Road.⁸⁶

DAHS conduct regular education sessions at local schools and also provide a monthly men's clinic, including a check up, group discussions on health issues, meals and free health-packs in an effort to counter the reluctance of men to attend health services.

5.2.2 Health Services to Aboriginal Communities near Derby⁸⁷

Mowanjum, located about 9 kilometers east of Derby, has a population of approximately 300⁸⁸. Given the proximity of Derby it is not surprising that this community has close connections with Derby and also to communities on the Gibb River road. Access to Mowanjum is via the sealed portion of the Gibb River Road. This section of the Gibb River Road is not subject to closure.

Mowanjum has an onsite health clinic staffed by an Aboriginal Health Worker 4 mornings per week, a Community Health Nurse Generalist who services the community daily, weekly visits by a Child Health Nurse and a Women's Health nurse. A Diabetic Educator also visits the community each alternate month. A doctor from Derby Health Services provides clinics to the community once each week.

Looma is located approximately 120 kilometres south east of Derby off the Great Northern Highway and has a population of approximately 400. The population is very mobile and travels mainly to Derby, Noonkanbah and surrounding communities in the Fitzroy Valley.

The community's 30 kilometre unsealed access road off the highway is generally open but occasionally subject to closure during the Wet season. During the Dry season, traveling time from Looma to Derby, the community's major service centre, is approximately 1.5 hours. During the Wet season (beginning of December to the end of March) traveling time may be longer.

The unsealed airstrip, located at Camballin, approximately 10 kilometres from Looma, can not be used for evacuations as it is too narrow. Most client transfers are "Half way transfers" which involve the coordinated transfer of a client from the Community's Clinic Ambulance to the Ambulance from Derby Hospital at a location half way between Looma and Derby. Transfer is coordinated by the on-call medical officer from Derby Hospital.

The Looma Health Service is comprised of a Remote Area Nurse (RAN) and one Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) both employed full time. The RAN provides a 24 hour on-call service 7 days a week. The AHW resides in Looma, while the RAN, who resides in Camballin, commutes to the community, a return trip of approximately 20 kilometres. A second nurse will be employed once accommodation construction is completed.

⁸⁶ 22 February 2005 www.kamsc.org.au/about_dahs.html

⁸⁷ David Atkinson et al (1999) Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan pp 115-118

⁸⁸ Populations in remote communities may fluctuate between 0 and up to triple the population estimates used here depending on cultural and seasonal factors.

Once a week a clinic is held by a medical officer and allied health staff from Derby Health Service, who travel to Looma via road. Looma also receives visits from Child Health, School Health and Women's Health nurses on a fortnightly basis.

5.2.3 Health Services to Gibb River Communities⁸⁹

Two nurses employed by Jurrugk Health Service are stationed on-site to provide services to four communities. The nurse based at Ngallagunda services Dodnun; the nurse based at Kupungarri services Imintji. Three times a year the 4 main communities receive a visit from the School Health and Child Health nurses from Derby Community Health Service. The RFDS nurse provides clinic services to Yulumbu once a month and Kandiwell on a fortnightly basis.

Imintji, located 227 kilometres east of Derby, has a population of approximately 60. The population is very mobile and travels mainly to Derby. Road access to Imintji is via the unsealed Gibb River Road which is closed to heavy haulage vehicles (11 tonnes or heavier) and to small vehicles during the Wet season. During the Dry season, travelling time between Imintji and Derby, the nearest service centre, is about 3 hours.

The community has no airstrip. The closest unsealed "all weather" airstrip equipped with flares appropriate for night landings is Kupungarri approximately, 100 kilometres north east; traveling time approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes, access to this air strip is often cut by wet weather.

Imintji has an onsite health clinic which is staff 2 days per week by the nurse based at Kupungarri. The community receives a doctor visit once per month.

Dodnun, located 344 kilometres east of Derby, has a usual population of approximately 40. The population is very mobile and travels mainly to Derby. Traveling time between Derby and Dodnun (via the unsealed Gibb River Road) is about 4.5 hours.

The community has access to an unsealed airstrip, equipped with flares, which is not "all weather" and is subject to closure during and after moderate/heavy rainfall. The airstrip is located at Mt Elizabeth Station, approximately 15 kilometres away. Travelling time during the Dry Season is 20 - 30 minutes. Road access to the strip includes two creek crossings, which become impassable during the Wet.

Dodnun has an onsite health clinic staffed by the nurse based at Ngallagunda two days per week. It receives a doctors visit once per month.

Kupungarri, located 306 kilometres east of Derby, has a population of approximately 50. The population is very mobile and travels mainly to Derby. During the Dry season, travelling time between Kupungarri and Derby is about 4 hours.

The community has an unsealed "all weather" airstrip, equipped with flares, that is still subject to closure when there is moderate to heavy rainfall. The airstrip is situated

⁸⁹ David Atkinson et al (1999) Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Health Plan pp 115-118

approximately 3 kilometres away and travelling time, during the Dry season, is 10 – 15 minutes. Road access to the strip includes two creek crossings that can become impassable during the Wet.

Kupungarri has an onsite health clinic staffed by a Nurse. There is a doctor visit to the community once per month.

Ngallagunda, located 369 kilometres east of Derby, has a population of approximately 80. The population is very mobile and travels mainly to Derby. During the Dry season, travelling time between Ngallagunda and Derby is 5 hours.

The community has an unsealed “all weather” airstrip, equipped with flares for night landings, which is subject to closure due to moderate/heavy rainfall. The airstrip is situated approximately 1 1/2 kilometres from the community and travelling time during the Dry is 5 - 10 minutes. Access to the strip is via “The House Creek” which can become impassable during the Wet.

Ngallagunda has an onsite health clinic staffed by a Nurse. There is a doctor visit to the community once per month.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Closer collaborative working relationships and partnership arrangements are formed between DAHS, NWMHS, the Derby Regional Hospital and community/non-government agencies to address specific Aboriginal health issues in a holistic and coordinated manner, and where appropriate, to develop joint funding and monitoring models.

The DAHS, the DOH and other stakeholders consult with young Aboriginal people to develop incentives to support the recruitment and training of local people into health service positions in Derby.

A timely decision about the future of Numbla Nunga Nursing Home is made and an appropriate process is established to ensure Aboriginal residents of the home and their families have input into the design and location of the new residence.

Options are considered to extend the availability of emergency and longer-term accommodation for new mothers and young families in Derby and to provide appropriate counselling and social support services to this group.

WA Country Health Services – Kimberley advocate to increase the availability of dental services provided in Derby and to have a social worker position established at the Derby Regional Hospital.

5.3 Community Care

The Jalaris Family Support Outreach Service is provided via a travelling caravan to local town communities that are identified and served in a manner consistent with the

Aboriginal kinship network. The service incorporates medical and social aspects and is sometimes attended by the Derby Youth Support Officer. Funding is sourced via the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, Lotterywest, Caritas, Rio Tinto and the Shire of Derby - West Kimberley. Jalaris also operates a clinic on site at Burrinunga community in the townsite, offering a basic first-stop care and advice on first aid, nutrition and self-care.

The Home and Community Care (HACC) team based in Derby provides basic support services to eligible frail elderly and younger disabled people who would be admitted to residential care if the services were not provided in the community. Services include meals, laundry, shopping, transport, cleaning and personal care. The team, which is co-located with the Senior Citizens Centre, serves Derby town clients and extends to Mowanjum community.

Through the Remote Area HACC program, funds are paid quarterly to each remote community that has a functional HACC program, with the amount dependant upon the number of clients being served. HACC workers are paid 'top up' wages in addition to CDEP program wages. Current communities receiving funding are Dodnun, Gibb River, Imintji, Mt Barnett and Mowanjum (Gibb River Road) and Jarlmadangah, Looma and Pandanus Park. As part of the wider remote HACC program, HACC workers in each of these communities are able to attend HACC training provided by KACS. Remote HACC clients in the area can also be referred to a remote continence advisor funded through HACC for the whole Kimberley.

In summary, community health services in Derby provide a range of options for people living in town, though fewer for those living in remote communities. Although consultations suggested that the coordination between providers is ad hoc, DAHS and DOH are making gains in this area. The most commonly agreed 'gap' was the need for improved resourcing and coordination of environmental health programs as the basis for health improvement (see also 'Housing and Infrastructure').

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The primary role that environmental health plays in health prevention is promoted through increased resourcing and improved coordination in Derby (see 'Housing and Infrastructure').

Data collection is improved at an agency level to identify the gaps in Aboriginal health services and to document the positive outcomes being produced by community and non-government providers.

A community partnership for sexual health is formed, involving key Aboriginal health and education providers and youth networks under the auspices of the WA Aboriginal Sexual Health program 2005-2008.

5.4 Mental Health

In its submission to the HREOC 'Bringing Them Home' Report, the South Australian Government made the following comments on mental health in Aboriginal populations:

*For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in general, there are significantly higher levels of stress and anxiety in their lives resulting from the consequences of trauma and grief, which are inextricably linked to mental health and disorder. The history of colonisation of Australia has had a profound effect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They have, as a group, experienced considerable trauma in the form of dispossession of land, removal of children, family separation and displacement, and loss of culture. In the present day, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to live in conditions of social and economic disadvantage compared with the population as a whole, and exhibit high levels of unemployment, lack of appropriate housing and other basic services.*⁹⁰

Northwest Mental Health Services (NWMHS) provides mental health services to the Pilbara and Kimberley. Funding for resources is provided on a population basis. Two Aboriginal Mental Health Workers and a youth counsellor staff its Derby office. The Office serves the area covering Derby (hospital and community) Mowanjumb, Looma, Gibb River communities, Fitzroy Crossing and related communities, out to Balgo, Mulan and Halls Creek. A Psychiatrist visits the town once each fortnight and a specialist child and adolescent counsellor visits from Broome one day per week. A drug and alcohol counsellor employed by the Kimberley Community Drug Service Team is located in the same premises.

NWMHS receives referrals from government and non-government providers with focus primarily on clients with a mental illness or who are at risk of suicide or self-harm.

Relationship matters, family violence and sexual abuse are not specifically dealt with by the agency but by non-government organisations funded by DCD and DOH (see Family and Social Services) for example, the Family Healing Centre provides counselling and a safe place to stay for Aboriginal women in family violence situations. In general, however, there is an acknowledged lack of accessible support services for Aboriginal people in Derby as elsewhere in the State. This fact was recognised by the Gordon Inquiry⁹¹, which recommended:

- An increase in counseling services, to include Aboriginal-specific services, provided by government and non-government agencies;
- The expansion of delivery of sexual assault services in the metropolitan and rural and remote regions;
- Improvement of education and training to health care workers, agencies, communities and schools to address sexual abuse issues and provide education on preventative and protective strategies; and
- The provision of enhanced financial and other incentives to retain experienced workers in direct service delivery, particularly in remote areas.

⁹⁰ (21 March 2005) <http://www.gwb.com.au/gwb/news/sorry/stolen39.html>

⁹¹ (17 January 2005) <http://www.gordonresponse.dpc.wa.gov.au/>

Service providers identified the need for culturally appropriate, preventative mental health services focussing on sexual abuse and suicide prevention. They supported the increased integration of Aboriginal cultural networks into the approach and treatment of mental health and wellbeing and better attraction to and training of Aboriginal health workers in the area.

Nationally, in 2001, the suicide rate for Aboriginal Australians (35.5 people per 100 000) was more than twice that of the general population (13.1 per 100 000). Suicide deaths amongst Aboriginal people under 25 (67.2 per 100 000) were particularly high.⁹²

Youth suicide rates in regional areas are higher than in metropolitan areas, and Aboriginal suicide rates are higher still. In 2001, the suicide rate for Aboriginal people in the Shire of Derby was 2.3 times that of non-Aboriginal Australians.⁹³ The rate of Aboriginal youth suicide in the Kimberley as a whole is twelve times that of the national average.⁹⁴

*Suicide has a significant effect on the community as well as for family, friend's and others. The financial, social, and psychological costs of suicide are substantial. Traditional Aboriginal culture has historically offered protection from suicide. However, the recently increasing suicide rate, particularly among young Aboriginal males raises concerns. This increase is consistent with their higher rates of injury and deaths from unnatural causes. There have been many reasons suggested for this including the ongoing experience of dispossession, separation of children from their parents, social disadvantage, modernisation, and lack of services. Unfortunately mainstream mental health services have not been culturally sensitive to Aboriginal concepts of holistic physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health and the importance of connections to family, community and the land.*⁹⁵

Anecdotal information given in consultations suggested that youth suicide rates had decreased in Derby over recent years but that the drug and alcohol issues affecting young people remained threatening. Improved recreation and employment options to increase optimism and opportunity were seen as the key to improving the mental health of young people. The need for more mental health and counselling services for the 10-20 year age group was also reiterated by agencies.

Former Australian Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti proposed three critical elements that need to be built into preventive programs to address rural youth suicide⁹⁶:

- local community participation or control
- the young person's survival and well-being need to be seen and addressed in the totality of the individual, family and social context.

⁹² (10 January 2005) <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/Aboriginal/keyindicators2003/>

⁹³ (6 January 200) <http://www.Aboriginalpsychservices.com.au/research/>

⁹⁴ (1999) Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services' Council Inc "Choose Life: A report on the findings and recommendations of the Kimberley Prevention of Youth Suicide Project"

⁹⁵ (17 January 2005) <http://www.mcsp.org.au/suicide/deaths.lasso#ref5>

⁹⁶ (17 January 2005) http://www.hreoc.gov.au/speeches/human_rights/rural_youth_suicide.html

- programs must be founded on respect for young people's *rights* as well as on an ethic of care and concern.

The WA Mental Health Strategy has prioritised enhanced service delivery and accessibility with a focus on early intervention, identification and recovery as the key to improving outcomes for young people and adults. These objectives are also identified in the Kimberley Aboriginal Mental Health Plan and are largely synonymous with the gaps identified by service providers in mental health programs in Derby.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the partnership of Derby health providers discussed in ‘Primary Health Services’:

- work together with the Department of Housing and Works and the Department for Community Development to increase accommodation options and support services for people with mental health needs in Derby;
- develop a joint service plan for youth and family mental health and wellbeing;
- liaise with the Office of Aboriginal Health and the Drug and Alcohol Office to extend early intervention and alcohol and drug services in Derby;
- negotiate with the Office of Aboriginal Health to:
 - improve suicide prevention programs available to children and young people in Derby; and
 - identify funding for counsellor training and development positions to encourage local Aboriginal people to work in these areas.

6 HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

6.1 Overview

Aboriginal people are traditionally highly mobile and consistently move between their usual places of residence, major service centres, traditional country, outstation developments and to visit family and friends. Aboriginal people are also almost 50% more likely to change residence in a 12-month period than the rest of the population⁹⁷.

The area covered by this Report includes a variety of residential situations and accommodation types reflective of remote communities, town based communities, mainstream public housing and private housing. Importantly, housing and infrastructure issues in each of these situations cannot be dealt with in isolation. Although convenient to talk about discrete communities, in reality the “community” is a dynamic structure moving frequently between remote, town and transitional situations. This is particularly applicable to the situation in Derby, which provides significant challenges for service providers.

For ease of discussion, the following topics are addressed in this section:

- Town Housing and Tenancy Support;
- Town Reserve Communities;
- Accommodating Visitors to Derby;
- Remote Community Housing; and
- Environmental Health Services and Community Facilities.

6.2 Town Housing and Tenancy Support

There are 300 Homeswest houses and 150 GEHA houses in Derby. There are also a number of houses (Fund 6) allocated specifically for Aboriginal people. Homeswest advises that there is currently a 12-month waiting list for 2-3 bedroom houses. The main pressures for housing come during the wet season when people move to town from outlying communities or through referrals from Broome for priority housing.

There is one Real Estate Agent in town and there is also a waiting list for private rental accommodation.

Aboriginal households in the Shire of Derby - West Kimberley are much more likely to be in rented accommodation (88%) compared to non-Aboriginal households (55%), which are more likely to be owners of or purchasing their own home⁹⁸. Aboriginal households are also more likely to be crowded with an average number of persons per bedroom of 1.57 for Aboriginal compared to 0.89 for non-Aboriginal households.

⁹⁷ Taylor and Bell (2004), “Continuity and Change in Aboriginal Australian Population Mobility” in Population Mobility and Aboriginal Peoples in Australasia and North America.

⁹⁸ Appendix 3

A shortage of housing and short-term accommodation was raised by a number of stakeholders as an issue for Derby. The shortage of accommodation is exacerbated by the frequency of short to medium term visitors to Derby who stay with relatives, friends or camp around town. Reductions in the overcrowding of housing was a priority identified by Aboriginal people as part of the DRP, as were improvements to town facilities in Derby such as better seating, recreation facilities (eg playgrounds, barbeques etc) and improved transport services to make the town more accessible to families and older and younger people alike. These issues are discussed further below.

DHW suggested that people wishing to access Homeswest housing needed to plan ahead. Many young people leaving home or those moving from other locations turn up looking for a house rather than planning movements around the availability of accommodation and ensuring that they are registered as early as possible for public housing.

Homeswest carries out housing maintenance and generally comments received indicate a prompt and efficient response to repair and maintenance needs (with the exceptions noted in 'Family and Social Services'). It has been recognised, however, that a greater level of support is required to assist tenants to meet their responsibilities, to deal with anti social behaviour and to promote tenancy standards. As indicated in 'Family and Social Services', Homeswest has allocated funding to implement a Supported Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) and is currently negotiating for an appropriate agent (possibly Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation) to deliver the program. It is understood that SHAP will initially target 4-5 tenancies although the number of families needing this type of support is likely to be far greater.

Jalaris raised the need for a greater level of in-house support for those living in public housing. A lack of basic home living skills was seen as a major contributor to problem tenancies, poor hygiene and high maintenance costs. The "In Home Practical Support Program" (IHPS), which is based on the Homemaker programs, is currently being piloted in some of the remote communities in the Derby region through the Nunga Women's Centre. It is felt that the expansion of this program to the Derby town would be of great benefit and would also complement the aims of SHAP.

There also appears to be a need for a greater level of cooperation between DHW and agencies dealing with families with social and other problems once they have been accommodated. DHW complain that they are often pressured by other government agencies to house families in crisis but that these agencies are then quick to disengage leaving DHW to deal with a broad range of social problems. This would be alleviated by improving links between programs such as SHAP and Strong Families so that there is appropriate follow up and case management support for families dealing with a myriad of social issues of which housing is just one (see 'Families and Communities').

One of the major issues in Derby from a DHW perspective is the collection of rent from some tenancies. Those tenants who receive Centrelink benefits can utilise Centrepay to directly pay their fortnightly rent. This has proven very successful in assisting people to manage their income and to meet their financial obligations.

However, a similar facility is not offered through CDEP in Derby. Emama Nguda is the major CDEP organisation in town but does not offer direct deductions despite approaches from DHW. This needs to be reconsidered as direct deduction from CDEP wages is frequently practiced in other regions and with other CDEP organisations with beneficial results for all parties. It should perhaps be a condition of funding by DEWR that this service is made available (and funded) as part of CDEP administration.

Other issues raised in consultations relating to housing and tenancy support are:

- DHW are more likely to be responsive to “good tenants” who look after their houses and pay their rent on time than others who create problems;⁹⁹
- people get into debt and drop out of the Homeswest system because of a lack of financial awareness;
- tenants get left with unmanageable bills following an influx of visitors;
- housing designs and sizes need to accommodate Aboriginal ways of living and extended family size; and
- the DHW waiting list may not be a true reflection of housing need as some Aboriginal people do not register and therefore remain outside of the public housing system.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The In-Home Practical Support Program currently being piloted in remote communities be made available to Aboriginal tenants in Derby.

That the proposed Supported Housing Assistance Program be reviewed within 6 months of establishment in order to assess the adequacy of resources compared to the number of families in need.

That a coordinated case management approach be adopted for those families housed by Homeswest but which experience a range of social and behavioural problems. To this end strong links should be established between the proposed SHAP program and the Strong Families initiative coordinated by DCD (see ‘Family and Social Services’).

DHW develop appropriate materials and approaches to improve awareness among Aboriginal people of housing policies and waiting times in order to encourage prospective clients to register early and to reduce pressure on emergency housing options.

Emama Nguda be required and supported to provide direct debit arrangements for CDEP participants in order to assist clients with their financial management.

⁹⁹As pointed out by DHW, this also provides an incentive to those that don’t meet their tenancy obligations to do so.

6.3 Town Reserve Communities

There are 5 distinct town reserve communities in Derby: Mowanjum and the four reserves that occupy the area previously known as Karmulinunga. These communities occupy Aboriginal reserve land within the Derby town and are connected to town power and/or water supplies.

The former “Karmulinunga reserve” consists of four Crown Reserves vested in the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT). The community layout plan developed for the area effectively broke the Karmulinunga community into four separate areas based on family groups. These are now leased from the ALT to the Karmulinunga Aboriginal Corporation, the Burrinunga Aboriginal Corporation, the Djimung Gnuda Aboriginal Corporation and the Badulah Aboriginal Corporation.

The 2004 Environmental Health Needs Survey (EHNS) documented a “usual population” for these communities of:

Mowanjum	290	(45 houses)
Karmulinunga	50	(12 houses)
Burrinunga	30	(9 houses)
Djimung Gnuda	14	(no houses ¹⁰⁰)
Badulah	50	(4 houses)

The population of these communities fluctuates widely and accommodation quickly comes under pressure in the wet season or during special events with an influx of people from outlying communities. For example the EHNS found that up to 100 people may stay at Badulah (which has only 4 houses) at certain times due to sporting and other activities. The 2004 EHNS also recorded 55 people on the waiting list for housing at Badulah.

Of note is that the EHNS recorded 14 people living at Djimung Gnuda with no recorded housing at the time. More recently the Shire of Derby West Kimberley has been concerned about itinerant campers on the Badulah lease. These issues are symptomatic of the lack of short stay accommodation to visitors to Derby (see discussion below) and the pressure this places on existing town-based communities.

Problems with housing management in town reserve communities is an ongoing and State-wide problem. The Karmulinunga communities, in particular, have a history of problems relating to debts associated with rent, power and water. Generally, the adequacy of housing management will vary from community to community and be dependent upon the:

- level of cohesion and governance within the community;
- funding and support provided by DHW and others;
- standard of infrastructure;
- skills and knowledge of tenants; and
- level of social and other problems impacting on community residents.

¹⁰⁰ DHW advise that there are now three new houses constructed at Djimung Gnuda.

Mowanjum has its roots as a former mission located at Kunmunya. The community was redeveloped at its current location in 1978. The residents of Mowanjum have close connections with people living in communities on the Gibb River Road and during the wet season people from this area often stay at Mowanjum.

Housing at Mowanjum is managed by the Mowanjum Aboriginal Corporation with operational funding support of \$69,000 provided by the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate at DHW. These funds are complemented by rent collections to employ a full time housing officer and a local repair and maintenance team (using CDEP top- up) to undertake required housing maintenance. Mowanjum also provides this service to the outstation communities of Larinyuwar, Majaddin and Winyuduwa.

Mowanjum also receives funding under the Management Support Program (MSP) for the upgrade of existing housing. The MSP work team is apparently doing a good job with a consistent workforce and a high standard of upgrades. Funding for MSP is confirmed as an ongoing rolling program.

There are reports of significant overcrowding in some Mowanjum houses. The 2004 EHNS recorded 24 people on the Mowanjum waiting list for housing.

The current housing management situation at Karmulinunga, Burrinunga, Djimung Gnuda and Badulah is complicated. As described above, historically these communities came under the umbrella of the Karmulinunga Aboriginal Corporation. Since the disaggregation into the four communities, different housing management approaches have evolved. DHW, through the AHIU, have moved to consolidate housing management by funding Emama Nguda to manage housing at the four town reserve communities and Pandanus Park.

A condition of future DHW funding support is that each community signs a service agreement agreeing to the arrangement. Burrinunga has refused to sign the agreement and is therefore no longer receiving DHW funding support. Following initial objections, Karmulinunga has recently signed the agreement.

Burrinunga receives administrative and other support through the Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation. The community reports that the management of its housing has improved significantly since the break up of the former Karmulinunga reserve. The community is managing its own housing and has established tenancy agreements which are generating funds to pay housing related accounts. Water and other debts are reportedly now under control. Burrinunga sees the proposed service agreement as disempowering the community and feels that its capable to maintaining its own housing.

It is understood that DHW is considering other options and that the community must be able to demonstrate its long term capacity to maintain its own housing. A consultant has been appointed to develop specific service agreements with Burrinunga. DIA and KDC have each provided \$3 000 to Burrinunga to develop a five year community management plan. This funding is to assist the community to document and implement their aspirations for the effective management of the ALT

Reserve for which they hold the lease and the associated management of assets including housing.

The establishment of new housing management arrangements at Karmalinunga is seen as a positive step. A number of stakeholders consulted expressed concerns over housing management at the community. Although tenants were reportedly paying significant amounts into a shared fund for rent, the communities repair and maintenance needs were apparently not being met. There is also a significant outstanding water debt (approximately \$ 100 000), which is exacerbated by the large number of visitors and uncontrolled water use at communal facilities such as the hall.

Karmalinunga is the closest community to the Spinifex Hotel and suffers the most from transient visitors and anti-social behaviour. This places additional strain on community management and governance. The Aboriginal Lands Trust is assisting DHW to manage the deteriorating situation at Karmulinunga.

All four of the former Karmulinunga reserves have been earmarked for the Town Reserves Regularisation Program (TRRP). TRRP seeks to upgrade power, water, sewerage and municipal infrastructure to mainstream standards and to transfer ongoing service responsibility to the relevant utility authority. The absence of these standards as well as a reliance on communal metering systems contributes to high debts through leakage, slow response times for repairs and a lack of individual responsibility for the usage and payment of power and water accounts.

The regularisation of communities such as Karmulinunga will do much to assist in managing outstanding debt issues and ensure an increased standard of service. This should be progressed as a priority.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The increased housing need demonstrated by town based communities be acknowledged and addressed through the Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plans being developed by DHW.

DHW work with Emama Nguda, the ALT, the Shire and town communities to resolve outstanding maintenance issues as soon as possible. Maintenance arrangements should:

- Ensure that the adequacy of housing maintenance and management is the primary consideration.
- Seek to reward communities doing the right thing.
- Clearly identify and promote the role of the DHW funded housing maintenance provider as a fee-for-service available to communities.
- Ensure appropriate monitoring and accountability of housing management providers.

The Regularisation of essential and municipal infrastructure in the town based communities is given a high priority.

6.4 Accommodating Visitors to Derby

A major contentious issue for many stakeholders in Derby, relates to the pressure placed on existing accommodation options, service providers and residents by the large number of visitors who regularly come to Derby from outlying communities. It is anecdotally reported that these visitors cause many of the anti-social problems and subsequent offences that impact on Derby. They are also a very visible problem and tend to impact negatively on broader community perceptions of Aboriginal people.

Studies undertaken in Darwin and Palmerston in the Northern Territory¹⁰¹ categorise itinerants in that area as follows:

1. Those who only wanted to stay on a short time basis but may need special assistance in getting home, due to their lifestyle circumstances.
2. Those who only wanted to stay for a short-term and needed appropriate accommodation.
3. Those who had no intention of returning to their community of origin and who required long term accommodation, but due to their chronic itinerant lifestyle would also require special support to maintain such accommodation.
4. Permanent town residents and their visitors who go into parks and public places to drink either for comradeship or because such behaviour is unacceptable in their homes.

These studies and subsequent work through the Northern Territory's "Community Harmony Strategy" highlighted the variety of reasons for people's presence in and around Darwin. Interestingly, many people in Darwin were reluctant to return home due to fear of violence, aggression, family disputes and payback in their own communities¹⁰². Fear of payback in their own communities was also cited as a major contributing factor for people camping in and around Halls Creek¹⁰³.

It is important therefore to recognise that "itinerants" or visitors to Derby are not an homogenous group and visit for various lengths of time and for a variety of purposes. They are also an inevitable part of the Derby domain. Derby is a major service centre for the region and provides medical, banking, food, fuel and other consumable supplies for many communities in the West Kimberley including the Gibb River road communities, Looma and Pandanus Park. People travelling from remote areas and dry communities also use Derby as a place to drink and to socialise.

The 1999 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS) recorded the nearest town that community members used to access key services across remote Australia. That survey recorded 26 communities that nominated Derby as their major

¹⁰¹ Memmot, P & Fantin S, *The Long Grassers – A Strategic Report on Aboriginal Itinerants in the Darwin and Palmerston Area*", University of Queensland, 2001.

¹⁰² Report from the National Reconciliation Forum - Kalgoorlie 2004.

¹⁰³ Report from the National Reconciliation Forum - Kalgoorlie 2004.

service centre¹⁰⁴. This represented an additional population catchment at the time of 1,676 people.

Many communities are some distance away on unformed roads requiring visitors to stay in Derby for a period of time before returning home. Derby also serves as a key regional centre for festivals, sporting and other events as well as funerals, giving support to the proposals discussed earlier for improvements to public/recreational facilities in the town.

Given the remoteness of many communities and their inaccessibility in the wet season, many of the residents of these communities also utilise Derby for longer term accommodation for periods of three to four months.

There are a number of short-term, supported and crisis accommodation options available to Aboriginal people in Derby.

Short-term accommodation options include:

- Kabayji Booroo Aboriginal Hostel provides short-term transient accommodation.
- Caravan parks, hotels and motels.

Crisis accommodation options include:

- Family Healing Centre provides crisis accommodation and support for victims of family violence. The centre also has a “Transit House” which is used to transition clients back to Homeswest accommodation.
- The Sobering up Shelter provides short term (overnight) accommodation for those affected by alcohol.

Supported accommodation options include:

- Ngamang Bawoona Hostel for the frail aged.
- Numbla Numnga Nursing Home.

Many Aboriginal visitors to Derby choose other accommodation options such as informal camping around town (with limited or no facilities) or staying in overcrowded conditions with family. There are many reasons for these choices, some of which were described as:

- inability to afford mainstream accommodation options;
- reluctance to pay even nominal costs for accommodation;
- lack of awareness of services available;
- waiting lists for current transient accommodation;¹⁰⁵
- negative images of hostels, sobering up shelters and refuges;

¹⁰⁴ Memmott, Long, Bell, Taylor and Brown (Nov 2004) “Between Place: Aboriginal Mobility in Remote and Rural Australia.” Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

¹⁰⁵ At the time of writing there are 46 people on the waiting list for accommodation at the Kabayji Booroo Hostel.

- preference for informal and camping style way of living;
- preference for staying with family and friends; and
- wanting to drink and socialise to an extent that is not tolerated in formal accommodation.

Consultations with stakeholders identified three significant needs not currently being addressed by these accommodation options:

1. There is a need for a crisis accommodation for youth (15–20 year olds) that cannot access the above or other housing and to cater for young mothers and maternal care (see ‘Health’).
2. Formalised camping facilities are required that provide basic facilities for regular visitors and which cater for different mobs from different areas around Derby.
3. A dedicated drinking area is required to ensure that other accommodation options remain ‘dry’, to reduce street drinking and to provide a focus for policing, education and service agencies.

The Kabayji Booroo Hostel is funded by Aboriginal Hostels Limited to provide short-term accommodation (up to 12 weeks). Residents tend to be people from out of town, women in crisis, sole parents or Homeswest evictees. The hostel also provides some beds for outpatients from the Health Department. It charges \$21 per day, which includes all meals. It is understood that the hostel is filled to capacity and has a significant waiting list. The hostel manager suggested that one of the attractions of the hostel was its strict control of entry, which provide a safe and secure environment. The capacity of the hostel to meet need, however, is compromised by a number of long-term residents including some elderly people who have been there for 10 years. The provision of alternate accommodation for these people or, preferably, the provision of additional hostel beds is therefore a critical need.

A further concern expressed by some was that the visitor problem in Derby was exacerbated by the ability of visitors to continue to collect CDEP payments even though there were registered (and presumably needing to undertake work duties) in other locations such as Broome or outlying communities. This issue needs to be examined by DEWR as systems may be able to be put in place to encourage visitors to return home in order to maintain their income.

6.4.1 The Derby Camping Ground Proposal

A number of stakeholders consulted as part of this report referred to the need for camping facilities in Derby to accommodate the large number of visitors from outlying communities and to take the pressure off local families and service providers. This has been a long-term concern in the town.

A proposal for such a camp was developed following a meeting in February 2004 involving the Derby Local Drug Action Group, the chairpersons of communities in Derby and Mowanjum and the ALT. That proposal highlighted the problems caused by large numbers of visitors including:

- overcrowding of family homes;
- increased infrastructure damage;
- incurred debts;
- sexual abuse;
- violence;
- truancy; and
- substance abuse.

The model proposed that the camp should have the following key features:

- culturally attractive and in a bush setting;
- three separate areas to accommodate people from Gibb River, Dampier Peninsula and Jaradaburu people;
- close to town to provide easy access for those without transport;
- basic facilities only for cooking, ablutions and shelter;
- for transient use only;
- resourced through a regional communities and government support; and
- professionally managed with permanent staff (e.g. Aboriginal Hostels).

It is clear that there is a great demand for such accommodation. There is, however, a variety of views on the preferred model, its location and importantly its ongoing management. It is likely that there is not one solution but a variety of solutions that need to be part of a coordinated response to accommodation needs in Derby and its surrounds. Key issues that need to be resolved are:

- Should the camp be close to town and amenities; or be removed from access to alcohol; or is there a need to accommodate both?
- If the camp(s) is to be 'dry', is there a need for a dedicated drinking area? (a dedicated drinking area was recommended by Aboriginal people consulted for the DRP)
- How separate do the camping facilities need to be for the different visitor groups?
- What support will the camp(s) require in terms of health care, policing transport, welfare and education?
- What is the level of support from regional and town communities?
- What is the role of key agencies such as the Shire, Aboriginal Hostels, DHW, ICC and the ALT/DIA?
- What powers are available to move campers on who are no longer transient?
- What land is available?

It is understood that a site at St Josephs has been suggested as a possible site. Bungarun has also been raised as a potential site further away from town (see 'Land and Heritage').

Given the level of demand and the apparently high level of community support for a camping area in Derby, it is suggested that key stakeholders cooperate to undertake a proper feasibility study and community consultation process building on the work

already being done through the Derby Local Drug Action Group and successful approaches adopted in other areas.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The Shire of Derby – West Kimberley, the ICC, DIA/ALT, DHW and potentially Aboriginal Hostels Ltd jointly sponsor a feasibility study and community consultation process that recommends an appropriate model and location(s) for visitor accommodation in Derby.

DEWR review the process for CDEP payments to ensure that those participants registered as working in one location are not collecting payments in another location. This review should look at systems to encourage participants to return home within specified timeframes in order to maintain their income.

That alternate accommodation options be developed for long term residents of the Kabayji Booroo Hostel and/or additional facilities be found to ease the current waiting list.

6.5 Remote Community Housing

The services and facilities available to remote Aboriginal communities in the Derby region and their relationship to those in “mainstream” Derby have a significant impact on current service delivery and issues. However, government planning and funding mechanisms for discrete and mainstream services are disparate. The provision of adequate facilities, activities and opportunities in remote communities is an important counterbalance to population drift to regional centres and the potential problems associated with the formation of transient camps in town. The need for a close working relationship between the AHIU and the regional office of DHW is therefore vital.

Although an individual with an AHIU house in a remote community is ineligible for Homeswest housing or for additional housing support under the RHIP process, anecdotal stories abound of people with more than one house. This issue is not isolated to Derby. The ATSIC National CHIP Policy, the Malarabah Regional Council Homelands Policy and Homeswest policy specifically aim to prevent this, however, systems may need to be tightened to ensure exceptions are minimised.

Communities on the Gibb River road are generally funded for housing maintenance by DHW through the Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation (~\$140,000 pa). Winun Ngari acts as central resource centre for the Gibb River communities, also providing a central resource for CDEP and municipal services.

Essential services infrastructure (communal power, water and sewerage) in the larger communities is maintained under the Remote Area Essential Services Program (RAESP) through the Kimberley Regional Service Provider (KRSP) and funded by DHW. KRSP also provides an emergency breakdown service for all communities in the region.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, visits to individual communities on the Gibb River Road (with the exception of Windgingayr) and others such as Looma and Pandanus Park have not been possible. These communities have been explicitly included in the service mapping exercise (see Appendix 2) and analysed in terms of their impact on Derby based service providers and communities.¹⁰⁶

It was indicated that there is considerable resistance from Gibb River communities to being managed by a Derby based organisation. Communities wish to establish a resource agency (or agent) on the Gibb River that is more central to the population of that area. At present, people have to travel to Derby to use a key card or to cash a cheque. The provision of a “shop front” with basic facilities on the Gibb River may do much to prevent people having to come to Derby as frequently.

It is understood that “Aruwarri Aboriginal Corporation” was established by the Gibb River communities for this purpose but is not receiving funding support from the ICC. It is also understood that there was some conflict around the establishment and location of Aruwarri among Gibb River communities. Rather than the establishment of another incorporated group to service these communities, it is perhaps best to consolidate the role of Winan Ngari and for Winan Ngari to establish a presence through an agency on the GRR. Given its intended role the governing committee of Winan Ngari should also have representation from all the major communities on the GRR.

It may also be possible for such a body to become an agent for various government service agencies (e.g. Centrelink, Post Office, TAFE – see ‘Education and Training’) to assist those agencies in meeting the needs of these communities.

The need for a reliable all weather airstrip on the GRR was also raised as an issue. It is understood that a proposal to establish such a strip at Imintji fell through due to a lack of available land.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

A holistic approach to addressing housing needs in remote, town based and mainstream housing be adopted through a close working relationship between the AHIU and Homeswest. This approach should seek to meet current levels of demand and to minimise the potential the “double dipping” with regard to housing allocations.

The Derby ICC liaise with the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, service agencies in Derby, Winan Ngari and Gibb River Road communities regarding options to establish an agency or “shop front” at a central location on the Gibb River Road.

A reliable, all weather airstrip be established at a central location on the Gibb River Road to provide services to outlying communities and a reliable link to service agencies in Derby and elsewhere.

6.6 Environmental Health Services

The Office of Aboriginal Health provides funding (\$250,000 p.a.) to the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley to employ a full time Environmental Health Officer dedicated to Aboriginal environmental health. Also employed are two Aboriginal Field Support Officers who work with Aboriginal Environmental Health Workers and trainees to undertake a range of duties including assistance with tip management, pest control, health promotion, and surveillance.

These resources, together with in kind support from the Shire provide an important network throughout the Shire to support infrastructure improvements in town and remote communities and a vital link to service providers.

Although there has been significant improvements in environmental health services with improved town planning, needs identification and infrastructure standards, the Shire remain concerned that the expertise of the Shire and its EHO are not being fully utilised by other levels of government and service providers. With the abolition of ATSIS, there is a need for Perth based agencies such as the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate to establish close links with the Shire and to coordinate closely with local stakeholders.

The Shire expressed the need to establish a formal coordination forum at the regional level to identify and address environmental health issues and priorities. Such forums used to be convened by ATSIC in each region including the Malarabah region involving both Perth based and regional stakeholders. However, they have generally ceased to exist or meet on an ad hoc basis only. The need to re-establish such a forum in the Derby-West Kimberley region would appear to be supported by local stakeholders. This could meet on an annual or biannual basis and provide an important forum for regional coordination (linked to the Human Services Regional Managers Group); play a vital role in the Regional Housing and Infrastructure Planning process; and provide a useful linkage to Perth based coordination forums such as the Environmental Health Needs Coordinating Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Derby ICC, DIA, the AHID and the Shire of Derby - West Kimberley liaise in order to re-establish a regional environmental health and infrastructure coordination forum that meets the needs of the Shire. This should link to the role of the Human Services Regional Managers Forum and potentially include the Shire of Broome.

7 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

7.1 Education

7.1.1 Overview of Schools and School Populations in Derby

The Shire of Derby contains fifteen schools, including:¹⁰⁷ seven Government Remote Community Schools, four Aboriginal Independent Schools, two local District Schools, one Catholic School, and the Kimberley School of the Air (based in Derby but serving the entire Kimberley region).

Derby State primary and District High Schools currently have 397 enrolments including 302 Aboriginal students.¹⁰⁸ There are currently 86 students enrolled in the Kimberley School of the Air from within the Derby-West Kimberley Shire, including 35 Aboriginal students¹⁰⁹.

In 2001, more than half (58%) of the Aboriginal population in Derby had completed year 10 schooling. Only 15% of Aboriginal people had completed year 12 compared to nearly half (43%) of the non-Aboriginal population. More than one in ten (13%) Aboriginal people aged 15 years or over had never attended school at all.¹¹⁰

Aboriginal students currently form three quarters of the Derby State primary and District High School population.¹¹¹ DET records for these schools show that enrolments drop by approximately 50% between the primary and high school (ie about half the number of students finishing primary school enter high school) and only about one third of all school students enter year 11.¹¹² *

Derby District High School has the highest number of Aboriginal teachers in one school in WA (four) in addition to six Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO's) working across the local State and Catholic schools. Supplementary funding allows for additional AIEO's to be recruited but there are difficulties in maintaining recurrent funding for the positions.

7.1.2 History

Unlike their non-Aboriginal counterparts, Aboriginal Australians have not had the historical benefit of mainstream support for consistent and productive education. It was not until 1949 that Aboriginal children were generally allowed into Western Australian schools and even in the 1960s Aboriginal education was largely restricted to missions. Aboriginal education has since been characterised by lower levels of access, lower levels of achievement, lower retention rates and inadequate and

¹⁰⁷ Appendix 3

¹⁰⁸ (November 2004) Information provided by Kimberley District Education Office

¹⁰⁹ (13 December 2004) KSOTA

¹¹⁰ Appendix 3 Tables 8, 9, 10

¹¹¹ (November 2004) Information provided by Kimberley District Education Office

¹¹² (November 2004) Information provided by Kimberley District Education Office

* Due to time constraints, it was not possible to include information about the Holy Rosary primary school in Derby. It is anticipated that representatives of the school will contribute greatly to the extension of relevant recommendations of this Report in the implementation phase.

inappropriate curricula. The result is that Aboriginal people, over successive generations, have remained the most poorly educated group in Australia.

Consequently, Aboriginal communities have had very limited input into mainstream education policy and service delivery. The style and content of mainstream education does not often align with the variety of Aboriginal cultural ways and means of teaching or learning. While the WA Department of Education and other stakeholders are making efforts in this direction, the practical integration of Aboriginal perspectives on teaching and learning at the local level depends significantly upon personalities and the energy to drive curriculum and teaching style with a difference. These cultural and language barriers cannot be underestimated when analysing the ways in which education services are failing Aboriginal students.

Reduced educational participation produces a range of deficits in the capacity of young Aboriginal people to participate in our society. The Kimberley Regional Health Plan identifies the key role played by low levels of education, employment and economic opportunity in the “continuing cycle of poverty and ill health [of] Kimberley Aboriginal people”¹¹³ Lack of schooling also increases the likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system. Ninety per cent of Aboriginal prisoners received into Western Australian prisons at the time of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* had less than three years secondary education.¹¹⁴

7.1.3 Education Initiatives in Derby

There have been a number of highly innovative programs implemented in Derby to address the issues common to Aboriginal students in the mainstream education system. These multi-generational issues relate to the social and cultural impasse that continues to exist between conventional schooling styles and curriculum and Aboriginal students, families and communities.

The school experience of young Aboriginal people in Derby is characterised by truancy and very low rates of school completion, resulting in poor literacy and numeracy levels, a lack of job skills and little experience of achievement or fellowship that school is intended to provide. The regional location of Derby and the limited range of employment options in this small town exacerbate these characteristics.

These issues require strategic and coordinated approaches that promote and value Aboriginal participation in mainstream education. Given that three quarters of the population aged 14 and younger in the Shire is Aboriginal, there is an urgent need to act.

Agencies in Derby have acknowledged this fact and various programs have been implemented in Derby to date. These include:

¹¹³ Office of Aboriginal Health, 2002, “Kimberley Regional Health Plan”, 25

¹¹⁴ (2003) DIA, Port Hedland MAGA Report

- Talk Up For You, a self-esteem and protective behaviours curriculum for schools designed in Derby has been recently piloted in the Catholic primary and District High Schools.
- The Enterprise Class, an art-based program, is the most recent incarnation of a project which has operated in Derby since the 1980's to encourage attendance and learning amongst Aboriginal students at risk of truancy.
- Since 2002, Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation has operated a program to feed and support truanting children in an attempt to encourage learning and consistency outside school and to assist students with re-entry into mainstream schools. Jalaris remains a support centre and works to get truanting kids back into school.
- The Galapagos Program was introduced to Derby Primary in 1989 following initial consultation and with the support of parents and teachers. The program placed students according to cognitive entry testing. Students were shifted upwards following scholastic improvement, which was constantly monitored and evaluated. Students exited primary school with a solid year 6/7 standard, standing them in good stead for high school.
- The Kimberley District Education Office has implemented the Problem Solving- Building Capacity Program in Derby (and other Kimberley locations) to support and develop leadership skills amongst Aboriginal employees at schools. The program builds the capacity of all Aboriginal employees through workshops and training and enables them to act as role models for students. The Capacity Building Program includes an emphasis on the development of truancy prevention projects by Aboriginal staff with support from the Kimberley Education office.
- The Country Week Sport Program (run at high schools across the Kimberley) allows students with sporting skills to compete against larger mainstream High Schools in Perth. Derby District High School students competed in A Grade basketball and volleyball on a number of occasions and have won in basketball.

7.1.4 Literacy & Truancy

The dual issues of literacy and truancy were the most consistently raised issues of concern amongst service providers and Aboriginal community representatives. In Derby truanting is a symptomatic reminder of the complex social issues impacting on the community and its families and which result in poor literacy and numeracy levels, low rates of school completion and high rates of unemployment.

A recent report by the Fred Hollows Foundation showed that nationally, only 15% of remote Aboriginal students achieved required literacy levels, compared to about 90% of the broader population.¹¹⁵

The Federal Government's National Aboriginal English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) aimed to ensure (the program ceased in 2004) that every child commencing school achieved a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years of commencing schooling. The Strategy included six elements:

¹¹⁵ (11 November 2004) <http://www.abc.net.au/nt/news/200411/s1232213.htm> (Fred Hollows Foundation Report)

- lifting school attendance rates of Aboriginal students to national levels;
- effectively addressing hearing, health and nutrition problems that undermine learning for a large proportion of Aboriginal students;
- providing preschool opportunities wherever possible;
- training sufficient numbers of teachers to be effective in Aboriginal communities and schools and encouraging them to remain for reasonable periods of time;
- using teaching methods that are known to be the most effective; and
- establishing transparent measures of success as a basis for accountability for schools and teachers.¹¹⁶

In 2005 DET is implementing an Aboriginal Literacy Strategy in remote schools with the intention of bringing consistency between classes and across schools. The aim is to improve literacy and close the gap that exists in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Crucial to this Strategy is the involvement and participation of AIEO's as they bring continuity and sustainability to the school program, particularly where there is a high turnover of teachers and principals.

While these policy objectives are admirable and deserve support, they fail to acknowledge the first language, culture and heritage of Aboriginal students. Consultations indicated that while Aboriginal English is not validated in schools in Derby, Aboriginal students would remain outsiders in the mainstream system. It was recommended by Derby agencies and representatives of Aboriginal communities that there must be equitable representation of Aboriginal languages and cultures in schools and in the broader community to promote the self esteem of younger Aboriginal people and to allow their talking and thinking to influence the subjects and processes of learning and relating. For example, in New Zealand the Māori Language Commission promotes the use of Māori as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication by promoting and raising awareness of the Māori language and Māori language issues.

It is recommended that Derby schools continue the teaching of Aboriginal languages and where this is not happening, explore ways to implement such programs. This would require a two-way teaching/learning approach requiring the introduction of: materials that reflect Aboriginal languages; a strategy for the transition from first to second languages; relevant assessment and monitoring tools; and increased involvement by Aboriginal adults in class.

Currently, Derby State School attendance starts to drop around grades 5 and 6 and enrolments decrease each year thereafter. Stories abound of primary students hiding to avoid the school bus, being chased by school representatives and hanging out on the streets both day and night. Communities also indicated that there are many kids who exist outside the system (and who may not be represented in the data) that have never been to school.

A key function of the AIEO involves liaison between the school and parents on all issues impacting on student educational outcomes. In 2004 DET upgraded the status of AIEO's to level 3, which brings their salary up to that of graduate teachers. Despite

¹¹⁶ (8 December 2004) <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/Aboriginal/overview.htm>

this, stakeholders consulted were concerned that they continue to perform the role of Level 1 AIEO's when they could be more profitably viewed and treated as 'cultural consultants'. Raising teacher and principal awareness of AIEO skills and providing opportunities for additional AIEO training, such as enrolment in the AIEO teaching conversion course at Curtin University, may assist in this process.

Another concern raised was that as part of their liaison role, AIEO's often use their personal vehicles to bring students into school. Ready access should be provided to school vehicles for this purpose and where this is not possible, Officers must be appropriately reimbursed.

A Youth Support Worker is employed by the DET to work with families and children to encourage regular school participation. The Officer also does outreach work with the Jalaris outreach service in town (see Family and Social Services). The Youth Support Worker position is subject to annual funding review and as such is unstable. It was suggested that the work of the Youth Support Worker be coordinated with a bridging program (a type of half-way-school-house) helping kids commencing or returning to school, such as that once provided by Jalaris (see Family and Social Services).

A new Retention and Participation Coordinator role has been established in the Broome based Kimberley office of the DET to coordinate the work of Youth Support Workers across the Kimberley. The intention is to improve and monitor practices to reduce truancy across the Region. A strategic partnership approach to this task may engender opportunities to improve attendance levels.

Interviews suggested that a significant amount of school truanting and behavioural problems amongst kids in Derby is due to hunger. Being hungry because of a lack of regular, healthy food at home keeps the kids distracted, tired and irritable so that they cannot concentrate or behave appropriately in school. In some cases, this may lead to expulsion or suspension. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many home break-ins done by kids are for the purposes of obtaining food. This impacts on crime (see 'Justice, Safety and Security') and is an indicator of the failure of current welfare initiatives (see Family and Social Services). In terms of education, however, the issue of hunger is a central one in Derby, as it is preventing regular attendance and restricting the capacity of kids to learn.

The Commonwealth's Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program provided students with emergency meals. Funding for ASSPA ceased in 2004. New programs (under the Parent School Partnership Initiative) being implemented by the Department of Education, Science and Training require funding for all 'deliverables' to be negotiated in the context of partnership agreements requiring parental participation. This may impact on the availability of funding for emergency food in schools. Agencies in Derby recommended that the constant level of hunger amongst kids required consistent and ongoing support rather than emergency style responses.

Family violence and alcohol and drug abuse was also clearly identified as a contributing factor to truancy and low levels of school completion. Agencies recommended that a School Psychologist position be based in Derby, as was

previously the case. Due to the intensity of family and social issues impacting on the town's younger people, the current arrangement whereby School Psychologist services are provided in Derby via visits from Broome for 60 hours per year is inadequate for the increasing school population.

Students are unlikely to attend or to engage in school while their home life is demanding, their environment insecure and their nutrition and health poor. Education and social service providers in Derby indicated that the reality is that many Aboriginal students in Derby are using school as a safe-house, as somewhere to sleep, wash and eat.

Representatives of some Aboriginal communities and organisations suggested that truancy or poor attendance was also influenced by schools' strict approach to conformity of dress. It was indicated that schools sent kids home if they did not wear uniforms and shoes (these items are generally initially provided by the school). It seemed too many a waste of time to send kids back out to communities or to release them into town for the day while they could have been at school. It was recommended that schools take a more flexible approach to these issues.

Paradoxically, over-attendance at some schools is also an issue. While there are 146 students on the secondary school role, it was indicated that there were more than 300 students attending the school at some stage in 2004. These fluctuations were attributed to transience in the Karalundi school population. Karalundi is a Seventh Day Adventist boarding school located near Meekathara that many community-based children attend for short periods. They often return home unexpectedly (to communities such as Mowanjum) and then take the high school bus into town without prior arrangement. This requires a flexible approach to teaching loads and class management and good systems for information exchange between schools.

The Enterprise Class is a unique program designed to engage Aboriginal students and maintain their participation in school. The Class has been operating in some form in Derby since the 1980's when its focus was manual arts.

The Enterprise Class (now at an independent site away from the school) specialises in schooling Aboriginal kids in mainstream subjects with an emphasis on art and community, by providing an appropriate learning environment and teaching style and offering food and other support as required.

The program appears to have been a spectacular success with attendance at the school having risen from 10-20% of the 62 students enrolled to 80-90% since the introduction of formal classes in 2004. Regular contact is facilitated between students and local experts and service providers, to improve awareness and community relationships (eg Police, health workers etc). The class is located in a separate building to the District high school, opposite the town oval and playing grounds. Students access the high school for elective units although class size and range of activities is limited.

The Enterprise Class is supported by only minimal funding via the District High School. This funding is not identified within the school's budget and is 'cobbled

together' from a number of sources. The Class coordinator and her partner often provide food and lodging for their students at their own home.

The current teaching load (one teacher for the 62 currently enrolled students, ranging from 13 to 17 years) prohibits a more targeted educational approach to this unique program. Through providing at least one more teacher and funding to divide the class into upper and lower school, the benefits of the program for the students and, by extension, the town, are likely to grow exponentially.

Other community based initiatives to discourage truancy in Derby include a 'No School-No Shop' policy which has been implemented during school hours by local commercial outlets and the No School-No Pool policy which has been implemented in a number of communities and service centres nationally and in WA. Interviews in Derby indicated that truancy prevention programs must be:

- locally focused and managed;
- developed on the basis of students' interests;
- relevant to community and school expertise and appropriately resourced;
- targeted to the early years of primary school; and
- consistently implemented and evaluated.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The DET consider

- linking the role of the Youth Support Worker with that of the Level 3 AIEO's in Derby, ensuring a close working relationship with the Retention and Participation Coordinator in the District Office; and
- negotiating with Derby schools to ensure that AIEO's are provided ready access to school vehicles to transport students to and from schools or, where this is not possible, appropriately reimbursed for use of private vehicles.

That a community working group including Aboriginal staff and school principals, parents and students is formed to advise Derby schools on issues relating to Aboriginal education, with a focus on building the capacity of Aboriginal students and parents and developing locally driven truancy prevention strategies in negotiation with the Retention and Participation Coordinator.

Develop the equitable representation and teaching of modern Aboriginal languages and cultures in Derby schools. To assist in this process:

- introduce a staff check-list and induction program including compulsory cross-cultural training and emphasising child and family protection matters.
- raise teacher and principal awareness of AIEO skills and provide opportunities for additional AIEO training, such the AIEO teaching conversion course at Curtin University.

AIEO's and Aboriginal teachers work with Jalaris to investigate a 'Half-way-school-house' program for Aboriginal students entering or returning to school after a prolonged absence.

DEST and DCD ensure coordinated funding is available to provide regular meals for children at schools in Derby as required (with reference to the Commonwealth Parent School Partnership Initiative).

Derby Schools implement a more flexible and inclusive approach to uniforms (and explore ways to address this where safety is a requirement) and make attendance a priority.

DET seeks allocated funding to maintain the successful Enterprise Class, including employing a second teacher at the Enterprise Class to assist the coordinator with the teaching load and additional resources to split the class into upper and lower school groups for teaching purposes. DET also consider providing support for monitoring and evaluation of Enterprise Class programs as per the "Follow The Dream" program.

DET locates a School Psychologist in Derby to deal with issues relating to mental health and consequently school attendance and completion.

DET assists with extending the implementation and evaluation of the Talk Up 4 U program and support its extension to other schools in the Region in line with the State Domestic Violence Strategy.

A formal linkage is established between DET and the Jayida Burru Family Violence Committee to support the Problem Solving-Building Capacity Program, empower students and reduce truancy in Derby.

School-community connections are extended in Derby and in remote communities via art exhibitions, open days and sporting events that promote the talents and interests of students (ie between Croc Festival performances).

Conflict resolution and resilience programs are introduced into the local schools eg emotional IQ, conflict resolution skills and anti-racist education programs.

The BBC (Otitis Media) and Kimberley Challenge (Diabetes Type II) programs are implemented in Derby Schools. (The need for sexual health programs is dealt with in 'Health').

7.1.5 School Completion and Vocational Options

The low rates of school completion in Derby are a concern for the long-term sustainability of the town. Current levels of engagement in training and low levels of non-CDEP employment amongst Aboriginal people provide little encouragement to younger students attempting to make a connection between school and work.

Linkages must be developed to smooth the way between schools and work in Derby through partnerships between businesses, community service and education providers and representatives of Aboriginal youth. These linkages should be targeted at late

primary school level and be supported by mentoring and creative work experience opportunities. Derby's Youth Coordination Network could become a useful forum for identifying and extending such opportunities, in conjunction with the Derby Resource Centres, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other stakeholders.

From Skillshare in Derby, a single officer delivers the Jobs Pathway program (funded by DEST) to 10 schools across the Kimberley. Its objectives are to provide information and support to students making the transition between work and school by providing advice and support. The same Derby based officer runs the Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) program (funded by DEWR) across the West Kimberley. JPET takes a case management approach to young people at risk of homelessness, early pregnancy and seeks to address their needs.

Most of the 35 students enrolled in upper school in Derby in 2004 and some students in lower school were undertaking Vocational Educational Training (VET) leading towards the WA Certificate of Education (WACE) rather than the Tertiary Entrance Ranking (TER). The school attempts to be flexible in terms of the age at which students are admitted to the VET program, particularly where students are at-risk of early departure. WACE students undertake a combination of on the job and school based learning with the aim of ensuring that they are 'work-ready' at the time they complete school.

The Derby District High School has limited resources to deal with the demands of teaching upper TER subjects and has generally indicated to parents and students that they re-locate or study by correspondence should they wish to complete the TER. For the majority of the Aboriginal population, however, given the cost of relocation and the necessity for a stable and well resourced home environment to study effectively, these are unlikely options. In effect, this means that the majority of younger people in Derby (including those in the non-Aboriginal population) are more poorly educated and less likely to go to University or to achieve an income as high as their counterparts closer to Perth.

While the District High School has established linkages through VET programs with TAFE and local employers, the range of employment opportunities for young people in Derby is limited, both in range, because of the size of the town and in terms of total employment availability, as shown by the high unemployment rate. Statistics show that:¹¹⁷

- over two thirds of the Aboriginal people in Derby are in CDEP programs. If CDEP is included in the Aboriginal unemployment rate, it rises from 6.5% to 73.5%;
- more than half (56%) of the Aboriginal people employed in Derby are labourers and related workers (compared with 9% of the non-Aboriginal workforce); and
- only 7% of Aboriginal people employed in Derby are classified by the ABS as professionals (compared with 22% of the non-Aboriginal workforce).

¹¹⁷ Appendix 3, Tables 2 & 4

The innovative Follow the Dream program run via the DET provides support to primary students with the capacity to complete school to year 12 level, through partnerships involving industry partners, the Polly Farmer foundation and local community organisations. Such a program may assist students in Derby to complete upper school.

The mainstream schools in Derby suggest that the current drive to raise schooling age is likely to require more staff and resources and a long implementation period. It was acknowledged that truancy rates might increase initially due to the large numbers of students who will be enrolled under the new policy and are currently outside the system. This likelihood makes it even more important that the Derby community and service providers form strong partnerships to keep kids engaged in education earlier and for longer.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

DET and DOJ representatives attend the Youth Coordination Network meetings as regularly as possible in order to foster partnerships and develop a comprehensive approach to school and youth issues in Derby.

A network is established to develop and promote local school-to-work strategies based around mentoring and job experience to expose students to a range of employment options. This network should include students, the YCN, Derby District High School staff, Emama Nguda, Winun Ngari, the CCI and other relevant stakeholders, and consider:

- developing flexible, accredited training programs recognised by mainstream employers to upper school students;
- extending current school based traineeships to younger students.

The 'Follow The Dream' program is introduced in Derby to support students with an interest in completing year 12 for TAFE, University studies or employment purposes,

Ensure that Kimberley School of the Air is adequately resourced and promoted to remote Gibb River communities.

7.2 Training

7.2.1 Overview of Training and Student Populations in Derby

Across the Kimberley in 2003, there were 4531 people enrolled in DET funded training courses. Approximately 3 000 of these students were enrolled at Kimberley TAFE. Just over half of all Kimberley TAFE enrolments were Aboriginal students.

The Kimberley College of TAFE specialises in:

Tropical Horticulture and Tropical Aquaculture;
Aboriginal Cultural Studies;
Mining and Pastoral;
Hospitality and Tourism;
Sugar Milling;
Information Technology and Business Studies; and
Maritime Studies.¹¹⁸

Derby TAFE services students in Derby, Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing. In August 2004, 119 students were enrolled at the Derby TAFE, 54 from Derby and 65 from Fitzroy Crossing. The larger TAFE based in Broome services about half of the total Kimberley TAFE student population.

The Derby Campus has a classroom, computer & art rooms, a large industrial area where metalwork and mechanical courses are conducted and a small library where students & staff access relevant course material. TAFE courses are also run on site in surrounding Aboriginal communities such as Looma, Mowanjum, Dodnun and Imintji.¹¹⁹

TAFE provides a variety of nationally accredited training courses in addition to Aboriginal Short Courses which are non assessable and subsidised to ensure affordability. The Derby TAFE also supports an Aboriginal Economic Development Officer assisted by two field staff to visit Aboriginal communities to consult on their interests and aspirations in terms of training.

The Derby TAFE provides programs in conjunction with other Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) including the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre in Fitzroy Crossing and Nirrumbook in Broome, the latter being the only Aboriginal owned RTO in Australia (see Employment, Income and Economic Development).

Numerous partnerships also exist between TAFE and Derby service providers, including the Emama Gnuda and Winun Ngari Resource Centres, the Shire and the Department of Health (eg support and training for Environmental Health Officers). TAFE has also established partnerships with individual communities including Mowanjum, Pandanus Park and Looma to provide training programs and to oversee construction and other projects

¹¹⁸ (9 December 2004) <http://www.tafe.wa.gov.au/howtafewaworks/kimb-tafe-info.aspx>

¹¹⁹ (9 December 2004) <http://www.kimtafe.wa.edu.au/>

As a result of one such partnership, Looma community was nominated for and won the regional category of the WA Tidy Towns Competition 2004 and the Blue House (women's organisation and crèche) won the Adult Group Learner of the Year award for WA. These partnerships have boosted self-esteem and confidence markedly within communities and amongst individuals, with a number of students going on to extended training and employment in a range of areas.

Linkages are being also built between TAFE, communities and pastoralists as well as between tourism and enterprise development experts. For example, TAFE is currently facilitating a partnership between tourism operators and Mowanjum on tourism opportunities up the Gibb River Road and is working with Pandanus Park on aquaculture (see Land, Heritage and Culture and Income and Employment).

An issue raised in consultations was that some non-Kimberley based tertiary education institutions allegedly enrol Aboriginal people to attract funding, and that the students are never expected to attend courses. The extent of this practice is unknown, however, it is unlikely to assist in improving the attractiveness and status of education and training in Aboriginal communities.

Consultations indicated that there are three key factors around training in Derby: the degree to which students are attracted to and can access training programs; the relevance of program content and delivery; and the level of post training support and opportunities available. The latter is discussed in 'Income, Employment and Economic Development'.

7.2.2 Accessibility

A number of administrative and service delivery issues were noted in relation to the accessibility of TAFE services for communities in and around Derby, particularly those located along the Gibb River.

Physical access to and from Gibb River communities is a challenge for both teaching staff and students. The costs of visits to communities and community based service delivery by TAFE staff are enormous. The on costs associated with employing a lecturer in the Kimberley are high and travel allowances are paid additional to this. The operation of 4 wheel drive vehicles over great distances (up to 800 kilometres within one week) is also expensive.¹²⁰

Seasonal restrictions also play a part in reducing accessibility for up to three months of the year. TAFE Online courses do not meet the needs of students in the remote Gibb River communities, the majority of whom are without computer equipment, internet facilities or the technical expertise to use or maintain such equipment.

Administration is also an issue. TAFE currently has a requirement for 80% enrolment in order to maintain funding to run training programs. This is particularly difficult requirement to meet, given the difficulties of access are compounded by the fact that Aboriginal people in regional and remote communities often travel between

¹²⁰ Unpublished Project Brief, December 2004

communities and towns for shopping and business and around the State for cultural purposes. To try to maintain consistent enrolment numbers in these conditions is difficult, if not impossible. Stakeholders strongly recommended that opportunities to extend the flexibility of the current TAFE quota requirements be considered to better address the needs and realities of the Aboriginal community.

A small pilot program is underway to address this issue and some of the gaps in training in the Gibb River communities through a project titled 'Forming Partnerships to Learn and Work with Aboriginal Communities'.¹²¹

An educator will camp in a central Gibb River community and provide onsite computer and literacy training to four (relatively) closely located communities, enrolling differently located students in the one course to maintain enrolment numbers. By working with several communities within a relatively close proximity to one another a single roll can cover students from all communities, thereby attracting sufficient numbers¹²². The program will be facilitated with funding from DET, however, funds are yet to be sourced for the necessary IT and office equipment.

While indeed innovative, this type of program places large demands on a single provider and is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term. However, it is recommended that this pilot program is supported and evaluated to obtain information on how best to proceed in improving resources and opportunities for training in Gibb River communities. This may require the establishment of a permanent Gibb River centre from which training can be run in blocks at appropriate times of the year (see 'Housing and Infrastructure')

The TAFE run Certificate in General Education for Adults (CEGA) course provides a bridge between school and training through basic literacy, numeracy and life-skills. The course is available to TAFE students and people referred by Centrelink and other agencies. The number of young people in Derby requiring this type of assistance is estimated to grow with the population (see Appendix 3) suggesting a need to extend the availability of this course, which is currently delivered by a single lecturer, employed only part-time.

Inequitable literacy and numeracy levels and the cultural differences of the mainstream and Aboriginal student population don't sit easily within the nationally accredited TAFE guidelines for course content and assessment. While there is some freedom at the local level to run courses in a culturally friendly manner, and at an educationally appropriate level, funding for places and course accreditation is still run centrally. In the end, this has an impact upon the capacity of Aboriginal students to access, succeed in and complete training

It was highly recommended that national TAFE accreditation standards require a new Aboriginal stream to more accurately reflect the needs and expectations of Aboriginal students and the staffing and resource demands required to address these needs appropriately. This may require the implementation and extension of the 'cultural

¹²¹ Unpublished Project Brief, December 2004

¹²² Unpublished Project Brief, December 2004

inclusivity' promoted by the 'Australian National ATSI Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000-2005'.¹²³

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The Department of Education and Training:

- review current TAFE enrolment quota requirements in order to increase flexibility and better address the needs and realities of Aboriginal students, particularly those in remote communities; and
- introduce an Aboriginal-specific stream into TAFE course accreditation guidelines to more accurately attract and address the demands of the Aboriginal student population (as promoted by the 'Australian National ATSI Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000-2005').

The Department of Education Science and Training review the enrolment practices of non-Kimberley based tertiary education institutions to ensure that Aboriginal people are not being enrolled merely to attract Commonwealth funding.

The proposed pilot program to provide on-site training for selected Gibb River communities in 2005 is supported (in the form of funding for IT and office equipment to make the pilot program viable) and evaluated to discern how best to proceed in improving resources and opportunities for training in Gibb River communities. Note also the potential for an administrative centre to be located on the Gibb River Road as recommended in 'Housing and Infrastructure'.

The availability of the TAFE Certificate in General Education for Adults (CEGA) course in Derby is extended by increasing lecturer hours to full time.

7.2.3 Relevance

In the Shire of Derby in 2001, 14% of the Aboriginal people aged 15-17 years who were not enrolled at school were attending TAFE, compared with 22% of non-Aboriginal people of the same age. Attendance rates at TAFE for Aboriginal students aged 18-24 years (post secondary school age) were also lower than for non-Aboriginal students (8% and 11% respectively).

In terms of attractiveness to students, the low number of enrolments in TAFE programs by Derby students (54 students in 2004) does not compare favourably with the number of Aboriginal year 10 students qualified to commence TAFE, who left the District high school in 2001.¹²⁴

Given that the relative youth of the Shire's population is projected to remain stable to 2021 due to the demography of the Aboriginal population (76% of people aged 14 and under are Aboriginal¹²⁵), if initiatives are not developed to absorb and employ this

¹²³ Australian National Training Authority (2000) 'Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia's National ATSI Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000-2005'. QLD

¹²⁴ Appendix 3, Table 9

¹²⁵ Appendix 3, Section 2.2

population, the result will be disastrous for the social and economic potential of Derby. Local industry therefore needs to take a strong role in partnering with schools and training providers to develop and promote the links between school and work (see Income, Employment and Economic Development’).

Providers indicated that attracting and then motivating Aboriginal students once enrolled was highly complex. It was suggested that student’s parental history of disengagement with education system and their own generally negative school experience were impediments to engagement in and completion of post-school training.

Consultations also suggested that training is not a constant priority in Aboriginal communities. The transitions in community management personnel and resource cycles are constant and community priorities shift accordingly. It was noted that communities sometimes request training for a specific project such as the construction of a building where the interest lies mainly in the construction itself rather than the educational aspect, thus the leadership, skills and confidence intended to be fostered during training do not develop as they might.

TAFE is currently attempting to develop programs with greater relevance to Aboriginal people, including modification of service delivery, methods and materials. These approaches are to be commended, but in the short term there is a great need to encourage school students in Derby into training options that are delivered in a style that will encourage and allow them to complete courses.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Targets are set to improve post-year ten enrolments in TAFE training courses in Derby by increasing the promotion and relevance of TAFE training to Aboriginal students.

Train-the-trainer projects in Aboriginal communities are extended on the basis of community-initiated projects in order that participation, motivation and completion become self-supporting through community and family relationships.

The Tidy Towns successes (eg Looma) are extended to other communities via a strategic partnership between TAFE, Department of Health, Department of the Environment and the Department of Local Government and Regional Development.

8 INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Overview: Income and Employment

Nearly half (46%) of the Aboriginal population in the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley are aged 19 or younger. Of those aged 15 or younger, three quarters (76%) are Aboriginal. As indicated in ‘Education and Training’, the school experience of many of these young Aboriginal people is characterised by a lack of engagement in the school system demonstrated by high rates of truancy and very low rates of school completion. This has resulted in poor literacy and numeracy levels and a lack of job skills.

There are limited employment options in Derby due to its location, the reduction of administrative offices in the town and the lack of a robust tourist trade in the town (comparative to Broome).

The Aboriginal unemployment rate in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley is 6.5% if people enrolled in the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) (a Commonwealth funded work readiness program described below) are counted as employed, or 73.5% if CDEP workers are counted as unemployed. Around 62% of Aboriginal persons and 72% of non-Aboriginal persons in the Shire are in the labour force.¹²⁶

The majority of Aboriginal families in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley earn under \$600 per week with the greatest number are in the \$300-399 per week income bracket.¹²⁷ Aboriginal families in Derby have larger households (including 8% of homes of ten or more people) than the non-Aboriginal population. The capacity of Aboriginal families to support themselves is additionally tested during the Wet Season (October to March) with visitors from Gibb River and other Aboriginal communities overcrowding homes and swelling Derby’s population to triple its normal size.

In the main, Aboriginal families live well below the ‘poverty line’ which is currently set at \$596 per week for a couple with two children, \$682 per week for a couple with three children and \$768 per week for a couple with three children.¹²⁸ In comparison, around 40% of non-Aboriginal families in Derby earn between \$1200-\$1999 per week.¹²⁹

While non-Aboriginal Australia is ‘greying’ with the ageing of the population, Aboriginal Australia is much younger due to higher birth and mortality rates. The picture is the same in Derby, which has a young population that is predominantly made up of Aboriginal people. This youthful Aboriginal population is projected to

¹²⁶ Appendix 3

¹²⁷ Appendix 3

¹²⁸ Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (14 January 2005) Poverty Lines: Australia, September Quarter 2004

¹²⁹ Appendix 3

increase during the period to 2021, while the majority of the non-Aboriginal population in Derby will become concentrated in the 40 and over age groups.¹³⁰

8.2 Employment

Population estimates suggest that approximately 1 519 people in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley are aged 15-19¹³¹. Derby TAFE enrolments for 2004 included 54 people from Derby and 65 people from Fitzroy Crossing.¹³² The gap in these figures reflects what service providers indicated to be the general pattern in Derby, where young kids leave school early and are disengaged until the age at which they become eligible for Centrelink income support and/or enrol in a CDEP (see 'Youth in Family and Social Services').

Interviews suggested that there were fewer opportunities for apprenticeship in Derby than previously. It was also noted that those employing young people need to be steered away from the idea that trainees are a source cheap labour and encouraged to extend serious work opportunities to these young Aboriginal people.

Over two thirds (67%) of Aboriginal employees in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley are enrolled in a CDEP. Nationally, CDEP accounts for around one quarter of all Aboriginal employment.¹³³ The CDEP's in Derby are run via a number of Aboriginal community organisations and managed via the Emama Nguda (Derby focussed) and Winun Ngari (Gibb River focussed) Resource Centres. CDEP's in Derby include a range of activities from maintenance and construction of communities to community services (eg drivers for the Sobering Up Shelter).

The CDEP is the Australian Government's largest Aboriginal program, funded through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The program was formerly run by ATSISS and is now being managed from within regional Indigenous Coordination Centres.¹³⁴ The degree to which the CDEP is successful as a work-readiness program is dependent upon the quality of opportunities and incentives available as well as the level of engagement of communities.

Emama Nguda currently manages more than 100 CDEP programs in the Shire. The organisation includes around 1 000 families in its membership, which is the focus of its activities. Both Emama Nguda and Winun Ngari identified the absence of a town-based employment and economic development program as a primary concern. It was recommended that an Aboriginal led labour market program be implemented to assist school leavers to obtain meaningful employment for a positive future by creating a range of positive training and employment opportunities.

Emama Nguda has a contract with the Department of Housing and Works to build and repair GEHA and other housing (see 'Housing and Infrastructure'). It also operates an earthworks and slashing business and has the only sandblaster for hire in the

¹³⁰ Appendix 3

¹³¹ Appendix 3

¹³² Derby TAFE, 2004

¹³³ 4 January 2005 www.cdep.com.au

¹³⁴ 7 February 2005 www.workplace.gov.au/ESDisplay

Kimberley. It is currently awaiting a licence from the Department of Fisheries to develop a mud crab hatchery at the Derby wharf.

Winun Ngari Resource Centre focuses on Gibb River communities, advocating for community members by supporting education and economic development projects. Its primary focus is the coordination of services (CDEP, municipal, environmental, health etc) in communities. It has consolidated partnerships with TAFE, the Shire and other providers for this purpose and aims to obtain increased funding to top-up the wages of Aboriginal trainees in the Environmental Health Officer program.

The majority of those Aboriginal employees in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley not engaged in a CDEP are working in low skilled maintenance or repair work. This reflects the comments made by numerous agencies that there is a disjunction between the level of skills in the local community and the higher skilled jobs available in the Shire, many of which are filled by outside administrators and professionals on a limited-term basis.

Nirrumbuk in Broome is an Aboriginal owned Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that works in conjunction with the Kullari Employment office and the Kullari Regional CDEP office to train and employ Aboriginal people in the region. Nirrumbuk targets young people through its partnerships with local schools where it provides information sessions and school based traineeships. Nirrumbuk trainees are working across a range of areas and industries through partnerships with business, state and interstate RTO's.

It was indicated that the strength of Nirrumbuk is that it is owned by Aboriginal people and is highly flexible and responsive to needs, operating from a grass-roots level rather taking a top-down approach. It takes a wide-ranging regional approach to its work. The organisation does not have links with Derby but is happy to partner on projects in the area should there be interest from Derby.

8.3 Economic Development

Mining, tourism, retail, agriculture, and pearling are major contributors to the Kimberley's economic output¹³⁵:

- Agricultural activity is based predominantly on horticultural and broadacre crops grown in the Ord River area and also includes smaller agricultural holdings near Broome and Derby.
- Mineral and petroleum production represents about 2.5 per cent of the State's total (the Derby Warf is currently used to ship exports of zinc and lead).
- The Kimberley's pearling industry has become Western Australia's highest value aquaculture industry.
- The pastoral industry is based on rangeland production of beef cattle, which are exported live from the region. The cattle population represents around one quarter of the State herd.

A study by the Kimberley Development Commission¹³⁶ (KDC) found that the Aboriginal population of the Kimberley is responsible for a significant proportion of regional economic activity, attracting a large amount of public spending which provides infrastructure and social services in regional towns and centres. This funding is consistent, contrasting with the "seasonal nature of other regional industries, such as agriculture, retail and in particular, tourism."

In addition, the KDC noted that Aboriginal owned and operated businesses are increasing in number across the Kimberley and are established in several different industry areas: tourism, arts and crafts, commercial accommodation and service facilities, agricultural enterprises, cultural interpretation, mining services, community services, aquaculture and pastoral enterprises.

8.3.1 Tourism

Tourism is one of the region's major growth industries. In 2002 there were 325,000 domestic and international visitors to the Kimberley. Total overnight domestic visitor expenditure in the Kimberley for 2002 was estimated at \$237 million compared to \$203 million in 2001.¹³⁷

Derby's location, 220 kilometres from Broome (but without a beach or many of the facilities associated with Broome) and 15 minutes drive past the Gibb River Road turn-off (coming West from Broome), has not lent itself to tourism. Although 250 000 tourists are estimated to travel up the Gibb River Road to Mitchell Falls each year, only a small number (relative to Broome) visit or stay overnight in Derby. Direct flights to and from Derby airport are no longer available and this may have had a negative impact on the tourism and the entrepreneurial potential of the town.

¹³⁵ (10 February 2005) www.kdc.wa.gov.au

¹³⁶ (1 September 2004) www.regional.wa.gov.au/perspectives/kimberley/aboriginal.asp

¹³⁷ (10 February 2005) www.kdc.wa.gov.au

A number of groups are working to promote Derby to tourists, through the development of the wharf and the promotion of the heritage of the Shire. Numerous services are available from Derby for air and sea travel as well as sightseeing and bushwalking to more remote areas of the Shire.

The Mowanjum and Pandanus Park communities are also working to attract tourists travelling on the Gibb River Road. Mowanjum (located on the Gibb River Road) has recently been granted contributions from the Shire and the State Government toward an arts centre to further promote the already widely known talents of local artists (see 'Land, Heritage and Culture'). Pandanus Park (located before the Gibb River Road turn-off, coming towards Derby from Broome) is currently working with TAFE to develop aquaculture (red claw and barramundi) and horticulture projects. It is also looking at establishing a Market Garden to provide for the community and as a source of income in the future. Tourism is also being exploited via safari camps to Immitji and Marunbabidi and opportunities exist for similar ventures, given support for training and appropriate investment.

Agencies identified the need for on-going support and training to ensure that these and similar enterprises are sustainable. This need is evidenced by the fact that the majority of Aboriginal people in the Shire are working for CDEP wages.

8.3.2 Supporting Community Enterprise

Stakeholders suggested that Aboriginal communities are sometimes unable to develop and sustain employment, training and enterprise opportunities on the basis of CDEP funding due to inconsistent skill levels, staffing changes and population transience. Each new project requires new skills and without adequate and culturally appropriate training and support for community members, these projects will not succeed. Currently, training is often compromised through a cycle of difficulties in attracting and retaining teaching personnel and resources, a lack of community buy-in and a subsequent lack of results.

There is scope to improve the quality and flexibility of training to ensure sustainable outcomes. This is being achieved to some extent via community traineeships through which students eventually become trainers themselves, thereby maintaining program and knowledge benefits within the community. However, in Derby, there is an urgent need for a more strategic approach which feeds into community led enterprise.

To this end, Kimberley TAFE recently launched the Kimberley Centre for Aboriginal Community and Economic Development (KCICED), a strategy to support self-management and self-determination in Aboriginal communities. The Centre aims to address community and economic development skills; to promote forward planning; and to develop post-training support and mentoring opportunities for Aboriginal students.

KCICED programs are supported by a variety of donors. These include:

Philanthropic Sponsorship:

- Sponsorship of KCICED to support positions, or programs within the organisation

- Provision of materials, resources, time or expertise to assist in skill transfer and enterprise development
- Provision of materials, resources, time or expertise to individual community projects (eg: Aboriginal Volunteers Program)

Scholarship:

- Provision of scholarships to assist with the fees of students from remote locations to participate in accredited training.
- Provision of scholarships to assist with travel and accommodation of students to participate in practical industry based field trips
- Bursaries to assist students to attend workshops, forums and gain direct industry knowledge.

To ensure that the KCICED has currency in Derby, direct local partnerships will need to be formed to support the development and implementation of community-led initiatives.

The promotion of leadership and good governance in Aboriginal communities has become a focus of government agencies. Kimberley Development Commission supports the Australian Rural leadership Course and the WA Community Leadership program (with the Department of Local Government).

The need to increase accessibility to and relevance of leadership and governance training to enable members of Aboriginal communities to become proficient in the skills of administration and management was raised by various agencies. People also spoke about the often unrealistic demands and expectations of the Aboriginal community of Aboriginal people that were employed in positions of influence. Both factors were said to reduce the development and longevity of community based economic development.

From a Government perspective, Aboriginal communities have different priorities and ways of working to mainstream communities. These factors influence the priorities and organisational styles of community-based enterprises. While some mainstream agencies indicated that there was a need to separate the Aboriginal community from its enterprise in order to promote economic success, this is rarely the way that Aboriginal communities operate. For example, issues such as 'succession planning' and 'management transition' have a different emphasis when applied to Aboriginal family groups operating a business than in a wage-based organisational hierarchy. This requires that mainstream agencies take a different approach to Aboriginal economic development.

While issues of poor literacy and numeracy, lack of financial resources, lack of business skills and difficulties of geographic accessibility will continue to hamper economic development in Derby, investments must be made in the positive contribution that Aboriginal communities bring to enterprise.

Recommendations

It is recommended that

The Derby ICC, Emama Nguda, Winun Ngari, the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley and private sector organisations establish a partnership (possibly as part of the proposed Malarabah Regional Partnership Agreement) to:

- identify and promote training and economic development opportunities to Aboriginal communities in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley (with the Kimberley Centre for Aboriginal Community & Economic Development);
- develop a town-based employment program for Aboriginal youth (building on from the school-to-work strategy recommended in ‘Education and Training’);
- work with TAFE and representatives of Gibb River communities to identify and develop economic and employment options in the Gibb River area;
- assist the Derby Aboriginal Resource Centres to obtain additional funding and resources, possibly in partnership with Nirrumbuk in Broome, to develop and conduct training and work opportunities for young Aboriginal people and CDEP participants; and
- develop culturally appropriate governance and training guidelines to assist Aboriginal community enterprise and leadership (this may itself develop into an Aboriginal enterprise and could be developed under the auspices of KCICED).

DEST establish the Australian Government’s New Apprenticeship Access Program (NAAP) in Derby to assist employers wishing to employ school leavers and other young people who require additional skills to take on apprenticeships.

On the basis of the youth of the Aboriginal population (and the number soon to reach school-leaving age) agencies such as the Office for Aboriginal Economic Development, the Kimberley Development Commission and the Department of Local Government and Regional Development must increase the presence of professional economic development officers in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley.

DIA and KDC assist with the coordination and development of profiles of the experience of Aboriginal communities with land-based community and economic development projects as an information-sharing resource for Aboriginal communities.

9 JUSTICE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

9.1 Overview

One of the catalysts for the Derby service mapping and gap analysis project was a concern by stakeholders in Derby (e.g. the Derby Progress Society) that antisocial behaviour and crime was having a detrimental effect on Derby residents and was an impediment to tourism and economic development.

Derby, like many Kimberley towns is characterised by:

- a relatively high number of recorded offences;
- an over-representation of Aboriginal people in contact with the justice system particularly for good order, violence and property offences; and
- an over-representation of Aboriginal people as victims of crime.

Interestingly, rates of recorded crime in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley in 2002 were lower or similar to those in the State generally for all offence categories except offences against the person (but lower than the Kimberley average). When compared to the Kimberley region the rates of recorded crime were lower for all offence categories except vehicle theft. Of the 537 offenders arrested in 2002, 15% were arrested for the first time, indicating a high level of repeat offending¹³⁸.

Between 1996 and 2002, the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley experienced crime rates that were lower than or similar to those in the region for all offence categories. Crime rates in Derby have also shown a general decrease against most offence categories since 1998¹³⁹. The Derby WAPS indicate that the overall crime rate in Derby has decreased by 18% over the past 12 months.¹⁴⁰

9.2 Community Perceptions

Consultations in Derby identified continuing (and in some cases growing) concerns about:

- street drinking and associated antisocial behaviour;
- unacceptable levels of violence;
- family violence; and
- under-age drinking, drug use and prostitution.

A common theme was a concern that the high numbers of visitors to Derby from outlying communities caused many of the problems and also were a negative

Appendix 3

¹³⁹ Office of Crime Prevention – Unpublished data.

¹⁴⁰ In the same period, alcohol related incidents have risen by 34% (the majority being family violence related). The latter figure may reflect the new WA family violence legislation, which requires that police report upon all family violence incidents where previously many incidents were resolved but unreported.

influence on local people by contributing to truancy, tenancy problems and anti-social behaviour.

While overall crime rates are decreasing, public perceptions remain that crime (particularly street drinking and fighting) is a serious problem. This perception is primarily directed at transient people who camp, drink and socialise in close proximity to the town. This is a concern to the Shire, business interests and to organisations such as the Derby Progress Society who are working to promote tourism and future economic development. It is also a concern to local residents, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who are directly affected by anti-social behaviour and the consequent negative stereotypes and perceptions of Derby.

The resolution of suitable visitors accommodation (see 'Housing and Infrastructure') as well as suitable strategies to deal with street drinking are therefore vital from a community safety and justice perspective.

9.3 Managing Alcohol and Drinking Behaviours

Alcohol is a common denominator to many offences and to a high proportion of antisocial behaviour. WAPS statistics for the region indicate that in the order of 98% of offences are related to alcohol.

The decrease in rates of crime is an indicator of the effectiveness of current policing and diversionary approaches.¹⁴¹ Diversionary initiatives such as the Numbud Patrol and the Garl Garl Walbu Sobering Up Shelter are providing a vital service in preventing harm associated with alcohol consumption and potential contact with the criminal justice system.

The Sobering Up Shelter (as discussed in 'Family and Social Services') provides accommodation and support for people affected by alcohol. Interestingly, 68.3% of the 2,463 admissions to the Shelter in June 2001-June 2004 were first time admissions, more than 90% of clients had been admitted less than five times and 58 people and 2.4% had been admitted more than 21 times. This indicates that although there is a small group of consistent users of the service, the vast majority of clients use it once or rarely.

There is a close working relationship between the Sobering Up Shelter and the Numbud Patrol. The WAPS, the Shire and other stakeholders speak very highly of the services provided by the Patrol and have forged strong links with the service. Some concern has been expressed about the need for increased administrative support to improve accountability and reporting. The Numbud Patrol relies predominantly on its core DIA funding (\$50,000 per annum) although the Shire, Woolworths and the Boab Inn provide additional support. It is reported that the bus is due for replacement. It is suggested that other options for private sector support as well as support from Lotterywest for the bus be pursued.

¹⁴¹ Although some expressed a concern that the "reward" for a reduction in crime would be the loss of WAPS resources to other high need areas.

Derby has six licensed liquor outlets including the Boab Inn, the Spinifex Hotel, the King Sound Resort, two liquor stores (Woolworths and Rusty's) and the Sportsman's Club. A formal liquor Accord operates in Derby following a section 64 Inquiry under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1988*. The decision of the Director of Liquor Licensing in February 2004 imposed restrictive conditions on all licenses for an initial 12 months trial period. In March 2005 the restrictions were extended for a further 12 months.

The restrictions were applied on the basis of evidence presented to the Inquiry on the extent of alcohol related harm in Derby and the level of community concerns. Key evidence included¹⁴²:

- per capita alcohol consumption in the Derby – West Kimberly Shire was 1.81 times higher than the State average;
- Derby, like the Kimberley region as a whole, suffers high rates of alcohol related deaths, injury and illness;
- high alcohol consumption is directly related to problems of family violence and detrimental child development;
- alcohol is the major catalyst for crime and anti-social behaviour in Derby; and
- arrests for alcohol related crimes were increasing (70% between 2002 and 2003) placing an increasing burden on police and service agencies.

The restrictions imposed by the Director of Liquor Licensing in Derby have contributed to the reduction of the overall crime rate over the past 12 months. A formal review of the impact of the Accord is currently due and will present:

- An analysis of police data, including the number of assaults and incidents of anti-social behaviour that relate to alcohol consumption.
- A comparison of related injury data provided by the Derby Medical Health Service.
- An analysis of the admissions to the alcohol shelter.
- An analysis of statistics relating to the volume and nature of litter collected in the streets and public areas to be provided by the Shire of Derby.

Despite the apparent success of the alcohol restrictions, there is more to be done to tackle the underlying issues contributing to high alcohol consumption and to educate the public about responsible drinking habits. As concluded in the decision of the Director of Liquor Licensing:

“...liquor restrictions are only likely to reduce part of the harm occurring in Derby. There is, therefore, a need for a coordinated approach with the full cooperation of all government agencies towards improving standards in the town. New initiatives are required to improve health and education standards, upgrade housing conditions, encourage school attendance, create new employment opportunities and to increase the effectiveness of community patrols and policing.”

¹⁴² Sourced from “Decision of the Director of Liquor Licensing – Derby Section 64 Inquiry”.

In their submission to the section 64 review, Derby Police outlined a four pronged approach to reduce harm associated with alcohol in Derby and consequently to reduce anti-social and criminal activity. This included:

1. A Social Approach utilising diversionary programs such as the Sobering up Shelter and the Numbud patrol; and to develop culturally appropriate meeting places for Aboriginal people including a potential designated drinking area.
2. Enforcement approach utilising targeted police patrols; a zero tolerance approach to illegal supply of alcohol; and education of offenders. Licensees and the public on their rights and obligations.
3. Rehabilitation approach using diversionary and rehabilitation programs to break the cycle of alcohol abuse.
4. Licensing approach to restrict access to alcohol and reduce intoxication levels.

The Derby Local Drug Action Group has been very active in the coordination of local responses to alcohol and drug issues in Derby. The action group has recently consolidated its activities through the Jayida Burru family violence committee (see 'Family and Social Services').

The issue of a designated drinking area is a contentious one and this has not progressed beyond the concept stage. This needs to be considered in conjunction with proposals to establish transient camping facilities in Derby (see 'Housing and Infrastructure').

A Derby Aboriginal Justice Plan (AJP) is being developed under the auspices of the Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement. Madjulla Inc has been engaged as consultants to develop the plan, which has three key priorities:

1. Strengthening the safety and security of Derby.
2. Strengthening the governance, confidence, economic capacity and sustainability of Derby.
3. Improved quality of life for young people in Derby.

The Derby AJP and the MAGA process are running concurrently with the AJP having a particular emphasis on justice issues. It is noted that the principal aim of the AJP is "to reduce contact and potential contact of Aboriginal people with the criminal justice system in Derby." In recognition of the public concerns about safety and the high rate of Aboriginal victims of crime, that a further and dual aim be included, to "promote community safety and security in Derby". This is also consistent with the principles in the Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

Recommendations

It is recommended that

The success of strategies such as the Numbud Patrol, the Sobering Up Shelter, the Alcohol Accord and the work of committees such as Jayidu Buru and the local drug

action group be promoted in order to address negative perceptions of antisocial behaviour in Derby and to encourage increased resources.

Increased private sector support should be sought as well as Lotterywest funding for a replacement vehicle for the Numbud Patrol.

The issue of a designated drinking area to provide a controlled and supervised environment for outdoor drinking is explored in conjunction with the feasibility study recommended in 'Housing and Infrastructure'.

In recognition of the public concerns about safety and the high rate of Aboriginal victims of crime, the Derby AJP includes a further and dual aim to "promote community safety and security in Derby."