

## **Abstract for Presentation**

**PACCOA Conference: 24-26 October 2007, Adelaide SA**

### **Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program – The Territory & Cross Border experiences.**

During 2005 Community Corrections in the Northern Territory used some funding gained from ATSIC to implement a family violence program in 4 Indigenous communities, 2 in the Top End of the Northern Territory and 2 in Central Australia. The money was only for 12 months but enabled the Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program to be piloted in Nguiui, Oenpelli, Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Yuendumu. Due to the initial success of the program further funding from the Commonwealth Domestic Violence Partnership Program enabled the program to continue for a further 2 years which will expire on 30 June 2008. Nguiu on Bathurst Island was selected as being the site for the 1<sup>st</sup> program on 24 April 2004 which has since shown remarkable success with more than 100 men completing the 50 hour group work program and 20 women (voluntarily) attending the 20 hour women's program at Nguiu.

The program addresses: Indigenous family violence; personal values and beliefs; cultural context of violence; intergenerational aspects of violence; the law and family violence; recognising and responding appropriately to anger; violence and substance abuse; motivation to change and changing controlling behaviours; abuse of power; dynamics of family violence, functional self talk; relationships; taking responsibility for own behaviours; resolving conflict without violence and change. The participants learn that Family Violence is not acceptable, and it is a crime. Their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour are challenged in a non threatening manner. They are taught to take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. As the program is available in the community they reside in, they are then provided with the opportunity to practice strategies learned whilst supported by peer facilitators and the community.

The program in the NT is delivered by local Indigenous Facilitators who have been trained by the Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Programs Unit (CAAPS) and supported by a Community Corrections Program Coordinator. Due to the initial success of this pilot program further funding was gained from the Commonwealth Govt to continue the program and expand it to other communities. The program is also being delivered at Nauiyu Nambu (Daly River), Elcho Island, Milikapti (Snake Bay) and Pirlangimpi (Garden Point).

Offenders in the NPY Lands are supervised by Community Corrections services from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. During 2006 these services supported a successful application to the Commonwealth to gain funding for 2 years to deliver Family Violence and other programs in Naanyatjarra Pitjantjatjarra Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands in the cross border region. The NT Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program was adapted and further developed to be delivered at Amata (SA) and Warburton (WA).

The program in the cross border region is delivered by dedicated Program Officers with assistance from local community Cultural Brokers.

This presentation will share the experience and lessons learnt by the Community Corrections Program Coordinator from the Top End of the Northern Territory and the former Manager of that program who is now the Manager of the Cross Border Family Violence Program. It will explain how the program has been adapted and implemented in these indigenous communities. This program has been remarkably successful in that it has been well attended by the offenders and very few offenders have since re-offended regarding family violence.