



**AMA**

## **GOOD NEWS AND BEST PRACTICE 2009**

The AMA believes that great promise in stemming the rate of death and illness among Indigenous males lies in Indigenous men and their communities taking opportunities to build their capacity for better health. Many of the initiatives that are successful in addressing the health of Indigenous males are developed and operated at community level by Indigenous men for Indigenous men. There are also initiatives in the broader Australian community that are successfully attuned to the needs of Indigenous males.

### **Danila Dilba Men's Clinic, Darwin**

Danila Dilba Men's Clinic is based in a converted house in Darwin. Its aim is that "Every man reaches 80". The Clinic provides screening for "well men's checks", and care plans and interventions that have an emphasis on the illnesses that cause most Indigenous male deaths – cardiovascular disease, injury, cancer, and respiratory illness. High priorities in the Clinic also include offering vaccinations, pharmacological aids to quit smoking, nutritional dialogue, and screening for depression. The Clinic is a male-only space, but females are welcome by invitation – for example female carers, partners, and health professionals.

Characteristics of the Clinic that have been effective in attracting and retaining clients include:

- orienting the waiting area towards local males – including a display of art produced by clients, a display of positive media articles about clients who are role models, and books, magazines, music and movies relevant to Aboriginal culture;
- seeing men punctually at their appointed times;
- a flexible mode of service delivery – many problems are solved over the phone obviating the need for clients to travel long distances to the clinic unnecessarily;
- on-site specialist clinics (endocrinologist, nutritionist);
- point of care pathology testing which allows immediate positive reinforcement for lifestyle changes that have been recently made;
- clear role definitions for Aboriginal Health Workers and GPs, with clients receiving services which are complementary, from each clinician, at each consultation;
- reminder calls to clients the day before their appointments (which has seen daily attendance proportions average around 90%);
- customer service that fosters a relaxed and welcoming environment before any clinical business begins;
- stability of staff, allowing development of friendships with clients and continuity of care.

**Nathan Zweck, Danila Dilba Male Health Service, GPO Box 2125 Darwin NT 0801**

### **"I'm an Aboriginal Dad" Support Program**

This community-based program in Victoria is aimed at building the capacity of fathers in raising their Aboriginal children. The program offers ongoing support specific to fathering, grandfathering and step-fathering. It also provides counselling on relationship difficulties, anger management, and anxiety. The program is part of the broader "I'm a Dad" early intervention initiative which is a partnership between Victoria's Mercy Hospital for Women and the Children's Protection Society. The program focuses on helping fathers develop supportive relationships with their partners and families. "I'm an Aboriginal Dad" also makes use of therapeutic groups or 'yarning up' circles, where fathers can make contact and share experiences and perceptions with other fathers. Established groups meet on a regular basis to share knowledge and any difficulties the men might be experiencing. The group has a mixture of men that have either just become fathers or expecting fathers.

An individually constructed case management program is developed in collaboration with each father in the program. An early evaluation has recommended that the "I'm an Aboriginal Dad" program needs to be invested in and has the potential to be further expanded to other urban and rural locations. 20 to 30 participants have so far been involved in the program. All have said that "I'm an Aboriginal Dad" gave them the necessary skills and knowledge to be more confident and involved in the rearing of their children.

**"I'm an Aboriginal Dad", Child Protection Society, Heidelberg West, Victoria. [cps@cps.org.au](mailto:cps@cps.org.au)**

### **The Clontarf Foundation**

The Clontarf Foundation, a not for profit organisation, was established in WA in 2000 to improve the discipline, life skills and self esteem of young Aboriginal men so that they can participate meaningfully in society. The Foundation currently has contact with 2000 young Aboriginal men in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The Foundation's programs for young Aboriginal men are delivered through a network of 25 Academies, each of which



operates in partnership with (but independently of) a school or college. Football is used to attract the young men to school and then keep them there. In order to remain in the program, participants must continue to work at school and embrace the objectives of the Foundation.

The program is characterised by rich relationships between staff and students, and staff are employed full-time to work in the partner schools. Each Academy has a team who provide daily mentoring and support, addressing many of the negatives impacting on the young men's lives. Many of the Academy staff are former educators or ex AFL players and have worked with youth at risk in some capacity. Participation by young Aboriginal men in the Clontarf Foundation has resulted in significantly increased retention rates for the participants through to Year 12 and then on to participation in the workforce. By the end of 2008, 41 graduates of the 2007 program were employed. In April 2009, 51 of the 76 graduates of the 2008 program were in full time employment.

Further information at [www.clontarf.org.au](http://www.clontarf.org.au)

### **Panyappi Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program**

Panyappi is an early intervention mentoring program working with Indigenous young people in Adelaide at risk of contact with the juvenile justice system. The Indigenous youth that Panyappi focuses on are usually disengaged from education, have substance use and social/emotional issues. These youth are also less likely for cultural and other reasons to access other available youth services. Panyappi seeks to provide one-on-one mentoring and case-management of Indigenous young people to establish and build trusting relationships, and to motivate and support them to re-engage with education, training and recreational activities, so they can transition back into the community. Panyappi also has a focus on programs to teach at risk Indigenous youth practical living skills, and decision-making skills, to facilitate their move toward independence. Panyappi places emphasis on rebuilding and strengthening relationships between at-risk Indigenous youth and their families, and provides advice to parents on ways to deal with their children.

Panyappi was successful in decreasing the contact that young Indigenous people had with the juvenile justice system. Further positive results, such as re-engagement with schooling, have been achieved, as well as the development of friendships and relationships with non-offending peers. An important element in this success is the fact that Panyappi provides support and mentoring to at-risk Indigenous young people which goes beyond the initial point at which they are in trouble. The success of Panyappi has made demand for its services high.

***Panyappi Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program: External Evaluation Report, Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth Team, South Australian Department of Human Services, Adelaide, 2004***

### **The Uncle-Nephew Program**

The Uncle-Nephew Program deals with Aboriginal men's issues by providing a space for men to address the disempowerment they live, and to discuss and share their feelings in a culturally safe environment. The program emphasises mentoring. Men's health programs can be facilitated through the Uncle-Nephew framework, including programs on nutrition, family violence, substance use, diabetes, smoking, and weight loss. The Uncle-Nephew program seeks the empowerment of Aboriginal men and their communities, and relies on cultural ways of teaching and relating through family kinship and ceremonial responsibility. By supporting and affirming the values and beliefs that are fundamental to Aboriginal men's view of the world, men's self-esteem is raised, with consequent flow on to their quality of life, health status and spiritual wellbeing.

This program has been recognised as a good practice model and has been implemented in various Indigenous organisations throughout Australia, including Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation in Nhulunbuy NT and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service in Narrabundah ACT.

### **Social Inclusion SA - Aboriginal Boys and Young Men's Program**

#### ***Binnanendi - Juvenile Justice Project***

Binnanendi (a Kurna term 'to grow up into manhood') was an art and cultural project exploring the paths Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and young men walk as they find their way to manhood, responsibility and culture. Binnanendi featured a portraiture exhibition to challenge first impressions of young Aboriginal men, digital stories from 15 young men and boys growing up in Adelaide, and a fashion parade. The project was guided by a Reference Group comprised of: Kurruru Staff, a guest artist and representatives from the Justice Strategy Division, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, Metropolitan Aboriginal Family and Youth Services, and Department of Education and Children's Services.

#### ***The Boys Dance Ensemble***

The Boys Dance Ensemble has developed a successful performance troupe from the boys and young men's program (which teaches traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance). Achievements by the Boys Dance Ensemble include a Boys Cultural Camp and construction of a fire sculpture depicting a Kurna Shield.

#### ***Blak Traks 08***

The Blak Traks 08 Project produced a 20 track CD of songs from young Aboriginal people in regional South Australian communities, as well as recordings from young Aboriginal people in juvenile detention centres (Cavan and Magill Youth Training centres) and emerging young Aboriginal independent artists.

Information at <http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/page.php?id=125>