

Proposal to Implement Best Practice Youth Diversionary Programs in Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River, Aputula and Similar Communities in the Southern Northern Territory.

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

In late 2005 the Australian Government announced a series of interventions designed to tackle petrol sniffing in the four communities of Imanpa, Mutitjulu, Docker River and Aputula, otherwise termed the '8-point plan region' (see Map of the region in Appendix B). As part of this package of initiatives \$3 million was allocated by the Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) Advisory Committee to fund youth diversionary programs in the region. The Advisory Committee stipulated that a plan for this funding must be developed with the key agencies that operate in the region, namely Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) and CAYLUS (Central Australian Youth Link-up Service).

This document sets out a proposal, developed by NPYWC and CAYLUS, for the use of the \$3 million allocation from the Aboriginal Benefits Account to develop diversionary and rehabilitation programs for communities in the 8-point plan region.

The proposal includes a number of different options for the ABA Advisory Committee to consider:

Option 1. ABA funding for infrastructure for Youth Programs in the 8 point plan region

In order to deliver sustainable youth programs essential infrastructure is needed in all the communities in the 8-point plan region. This infrastructure should take the form of a Recreation hall, accommodation for two youth workers (one male, one female) and two Troop Carriers (one for males, one for females). Should demountable housing be provided in some or all of the communities covered below, as is being discussed, we are of the opinion that these structures will fill a temporary need only, as they are not as robust as the buildings we have costed, and would need replacing in the medium term. Should they be provided, the construction of more substantial buildings could be implemented over a longer time frame.

In total the funding required to develop this essential infrastructure so as to run youth programs in all communities in the 8-point plan region is \$2,950,000

Option 2: ABA funding for infrastructure for Youth Programs in all Southern NT communities

Only four central Australian communities are included in the 8-point plan region. The coverage of Opal fuel is, however, much wider. CAYLUS and NPY believe that the benefits that are currently being seen in combating petrol sniffing due to Opal will only succeed if the roll out is complemented with diversionary youth programs in all communities. These youth programs are in need of the same essential infrastructure, as discussed above.

Costing is also provided for the following Southern NT communities for the required youth infrastructure (see map of the region in Appendix C):

Willowra - \$600,000
Yuendumu - \$350,000
Kintore - \$500,000
Nyirripi - \$700,000
Ntaria - \$900,000
Areyonga - \$550,000
Papunya - \$800,000
Mt Liebig - \$950,000

In total the funding required to develop this essential infrastructure in order to run youth programs in all communities in the Southern NT region is \$5,350,000.

Option 3: ABA funding for recurrent Youth Program costs in the 8-point plan region

Although we are aware that the ABA does not usually fund recurrent costs, we also provide a costing for the provision of youth services (including management and operational costs) in Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Aputula and Docker river (8-point plan communities): **\$1,300,000.**

Option 4: ABA funding for an analysis of youth infrastructure in communities in the Top End

CAYLUS and NPY are aware that at present most major petrol sniffing initiatives are focused in central Australia. It is important that similar initiatives are directed at Aboriginal communities in the Top End that also face petrol sniffing problems. Option 4 proposes that the ABA fund an analysis of youth infrastructure needed in Aboriginal communities, to be undertaken by Darwin's Community Alcohol Program Support Services (CAAPS) Costing for an analysis of this type is estimated at **\$50,000.**

ABA funding proposal

This document sets out a proposal for the use of the \$3 million allocation from the Aboriginal Benefits Account to develop diversionary and rehabilitation programs in the four communities of Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Aputula (Finke).

This proposal has been developed by NPY Women's Council (NPYWC) and CAYLUS (Central Australian Youth Link-up Service) and is based on the agencies' combined knowledge and experience in providing youth services in southern Central Australia.

This proposal develops a model for the delivery of youth services that will have the maximum chance of long-term success and sustainability. As agencies with many years experience in this area of work, it is our view that the presence of an active and viable youth program in remote communities is essential for the development of young people, and one of the most important means of preventing and intervening in the misuse of substances, including and especially inhalants (mainly petrol). Youth programs should be considered an essential service in remote communities, particularly given that many communities are in a dysfunctional state with very few activities available to young people.

This proposal details a best-practice model for delivering a sustainable, long-term youth service in central Australia. The following elements make up a model of "Good practice in youth program development":

1. Adequate access to resources and infrastructure
2. External co-ordination by a youth service management body
3. Skilled and committed youth workers
4. Regularity and consistency of activities
5. Gender and age status appropriate activities
6. Activities that are meaningful, stimulating and culturally relevant
7. Promotion of self-esteem and coherence for young people in their lives with their families
8. Involvement of role models
9. Promotion of strong intergenerational relationships
10. Knowledge of families
11. Community development and participation

Option 1: ABA funding for infrastructure for Youth Programs in the 8-point plan region

There is an urgent need for adequate resources and infrastructure with which to operate youth programs. Put simply:

- a) Youth programs will not work unless skilled workers can be employed, and they cannot be employed unless there is reasonable funding for salaries and operational costs, and decent accommodation.
- b) Communities need at the very least a basic recreation hall from which youth activities can be run.

In terms of employment in remote communities, it is not expected that Council clerks, school teachers, store managers or clinic nurses will live in communities without decent housing, and there is no logical reason to believe youth workers should do so. A lack of suitable accommodation has been a major problem for NPYWC in trying to place youth development workers in member communities. Since 1999, when the organisation first obtained Commonwealth Health funding for what was then called the

‘Petrol Sniffing Project’ at Fregon, SA, it has struggled to accommodate workers. Community Councils have at times promised accommodation, then failed to deliver, leaving the organisation and worker scrounging around for temporary alternatives within the community, such as staying with acquaintances or living at outstations or homelands quite a distance from their place of employment.

NPYWC has experienced the situation of having to move a youth program to an alternative community in order to get housing, then to find that, despite community commitments, nothing was forthcoming. Moreover, NPYWC has this year had a worker who was based at a southern NT community resign, and is now faced with the inability to continue the program in that place because there is no available accommodation. The program was able to operate previously only because the worker was residing in a CDEP house with a family member. The same community had, prior to this appointment, only been able to offer some small, cramped accommodation which, because of its location and design, left the then (female) employee feeling exposed and unable to have any privacy outside of work hours.

NPYWC and CAYLUS appreciate that many communities simply have no housing to offer. The objective circumstance is that there is usually no accommodation to spare. This is why any attempt to improve and increase youth service in communities in the region must include provision for decent housing. It is difficult enough to recruit capable, skilled staff even when accommodation is provided. It is virtually impossible without accommodation being provided.

Youth worker accommodation

A significant allocation of funding under this proposal to the ABA would be for youth worker housing in the four communities of Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Finke/Aputula.

It is possible that the Commonwealth may decide to allocate demountable buildings for staff housing in remote NT; however details of the Government’s intentions in relation to the use of Woomera demountables that it already owns are as yet unclear. If such buildings were to be used for youth housing, it is likely they would need extensive refurbishment. There would also be costs associated with their re-location. If this particular use eventuates, the cost of providing accommodation for youth workers would obviously be lower than if new buildings were to be purchased and put on site, or constructed in a community or communities. However, we are of the opinion that the demountables proposed would not last, and would need replacing within a few years. Thus, our costing for sturdy housing for youth workers still represent the best long-term investment in the region’s capacity.

The demountables that may be provided will not replace the recreation halls required, which need be much larger buildings. Our costing for recreation halls therefore stands.

Whilst a major focus of this proposal is on infrastructure, we also include salary and other operational costs analysis as part of this minimal level of resources required to establish a youth service based on the model of “Good Practice in Youth Program Development.” At present there is a variety of funding for positions in some communities, but the vast majority is not recurrent, and some is for as little as one year. It is therefore preferable to consider the total cost in order to obtain a clear picture of what is needed.

An audit of the four communities (see Appendix B) suggests additional infrastructure is needed in each of the communities to meet the base level of resources, as detailed above. Costing has been provided on the allocation needed in each community to bring all infrastructure up to the base level. This can be seen on Table 1.

Table 1

Costs of youth Infrastructure needs in 8 -point plan region for Imanpa, Aputula, Docker River and Mutitjulu					
Imanpa					
Housing	\$ 500,000.00				
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00				
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00				
Recreation Hall	\$ 100,000.00				
ABA funding requested	\$ 700,000.00				
Docker River					
Housing	\$ 500,000.00				
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00				
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00				
Recreation Hall	\$ 100,000.00				
ABA funding requested	\$ 700,000.00				
Mutitjulu					
Housing	\$ 500,000.00				
Vehicle 1					
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00				
Recreation Hall	\$ 100,000.00				
ABA funding requested	\$ 650,000.00				
Aputula					
Housing	\$ 500,000.00				
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00				
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00				
Recreation Hall	\$ 300,000.00				
ABA funding requested	\$ 900,000.00				
Total ABA funds requested	\$2,950,000				

The management of housing stock

Another question that must be resolved before any additional housing is provided is the control and ongoing management of the housing stock. CAYLUS and NPYWC are strongly of the opinion that youth worker housing should not be controlled by community councils. This is because, in the experience of both agencies, the chronic housing shortage in communities means that houses that are supposedly dedicated for youth workers are often reallocated. This has the flow-on effect of undermining the provision of youth services when housing again becomes available.

A long term solution must be found to the problem of who controls the youth worker housing at a community level. One option could be that an NTG housing agency control and manage the property and offer a medium term lease, for a term of ten years, to the agencies responsible for the placement of the youth worker. Once this lease had expired NTG housing would own the housing assets outright. Under this lease arrangement agencies could pay rent to cover the cost of repairs and maintenance of the housing stock.

Another option could be to place the housing stock under the control of NPYWC. NPYWC would however, be reluctant to take on this administration of capital assets under its current funding regime, which involves annual funding for some operational and administrative costs and in general, inadequate resources for administration. At present the organisations is stretched in trying to administer properly a fleet of around sixteen vehicles, most leased, some owned, plus three staff houses and two offices in the cross-border region.

Option 2: ABA funding for infrastructure for Youth Programs in all Southern NT communities

Only four central Australian communities are included in the 8-point plan region. The coverage of Opal fuel is, however, much wider. CAYLUS and NPY are of the opinion that the benefits that are due to the introduction of Opal will only continue if the roll-out is complemented with diversionary youth programs in all communities. These youth programs are in need of the same essential infrastructure, as discussed above.

This proposal also reflects on the other NT communities affected by petrol sniffing but who are outside the 8-point plan region that also have a great need for youth programs.

The cost of implementing good youth services into these communities using a similar formula as used for the four designated communities can be seen in Table 2

Table 2

Infrastructure Needs in the South West region of the NT

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Willowra			
Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Housing	\$ 500,000.00		
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Recreation Hall			
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total By Year	\$ 710,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$210,000.00

Willowra Total 3 years \$ 1,030,000.00

Total ABA funding requested \$ 600,000.00

Yuendumu

Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Housing			
Vehicle 1			
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Recreation Hall	\$ 300,000.00		

Casual/trainee			
Total By Year	\$ 430,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$130,000.00

Yuendumu Total 3 years **\$ 640,000.00**
Total ABA funding requested **\$ 350,000.00**

Kintore

Youth worker 1		\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Youth Worker 2			
Housing	\$ 500,000.00		
Vehicle 1			
Vehicle 2			
Recreation Hall			
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total By Year	\$ 530,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$110,000.00

Kintore Total 3 years **\$ 750,000.00**
Total ABA funding requested **\$ 500,000.00**

Nyirрпи

Youth worker 1	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Youth Worker 2	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Housing	\$ 500,000.00		
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Recreation Hall	\$ 100,000.00		
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 890,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$290,000.00

Nyirрпи Total 3 years **\$ 1,370,000.00**
Total ABA funding requested **\$ 700,000.00**

Ntaria

Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Housing	\$ 500,000.00		
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Vehicle 2	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Recreation Hall	\$ 300,000.00		
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 1,010,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$210,000.00

Ntaria Total 3 years **\$ 1,330,000.00**
Total ABA funding requested **\$ 900,000.00**

Areyonga

Youth worker 1	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Youth Worker 2	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Housing	\$ 500,000.00		
Vehicle 1	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Vehicle 2			

Recreation Hall			
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 700,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$200,000.00

Areyonga Total 3 years \$ 1,050,000.00
Total ABA funding requested \$ 550,000.00

Ikuntji

Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2			
Housing			
Vehicle 1			
Vehicle 2			
Recreation Hall			
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00

Ikuntji Total 3 years \$ 90,000.00
Total ABA funding requested \$ nil

Papunya

Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2		80,000	80,000
Housing	500,000		
Vehicle 1	50,000		50,000
Vehicle 2	50,000		50,000
Recreation Hall	200,000		
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 830,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 210,000.00

Papunya total 3 years 1,150,000
Total ABA funding requested \$ 800,000

Mt Liebig

Youth worker 1			
Youth Worker 2	80,000	80,000	80,000
Housing	500,000		
Vehicle 1	50,000		50,000
Vehicle 2	50,000		50,000
Recreation Hall	350,000		
Casual/trainee	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Total by Year	\$ 1,060,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 210,000.00

Mt Liebig total 3 years \$1,380,000
Total ABA funding requested \$ 950,000

Total ABA funding requested for region	\$5,350,000
Total ABA funding for region - vehicles	\$ 600,000.00
Total ABA funding for region - recreation halls	\$ 1,250,000.00
Total ABA funding for region - housing	\$3,500,000.00

Option 3: ABA funding for recurrent Youth Program costs in the 8 point plan region In addition to housing, other basic infrastructure is required to run a sustainable, long-term youth program. The resource base in each of the four communities should be at minimum:

- Designated community housing adequate for the needs of two workers (as discussed);
- Two youth workers, one male and one female;
- Two 4WDs to enable separate activities for each gender;
- Youth program base for activities in the community ;
- A recreation shed or hall;
- Basic equipment; and
- Provision of line management of the youth workers including support, supervision, training and other human resource services.

This model is based on the aim of good practice in youth work. Ms Pauline Fietz was commissioned to document a model of “Good Practice in Youth Program Development”. Pauline is an anthropologist who previously worked for NPYWC as a youth worker at Docker River. Along with Mark Swindells, a youth worker employed by the Docker River Council and the young leaders of the Docker River Youth Committee, Pauline developed the well-regarded youth program which is often cited as the “Docker River model” (see Appendix A).

To bring each of the communities of up to a level of resources as described in the “Good Practice” model, that is, two youth workers per community, the following resources would need to be put in to staffing and operational costs for youth workers as seen in the budget in Table 3.

Table 3

8-point plan region			
Staffing and operational budget per community			
Excluding GST			
	Notes		06/07
		\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>			
Grant Funding			291,649
TOTAL INCOME			291,649
<u>SALARIES</u>			
Youth Workers L7.2 * 2		102,478	
Youth Worker Casual L7.2 * .5		30,743	
District Allowance (Lands & dependents		11,400	
Superannuation		13,016	
Workcover		5,785	
TOTAL SALARIES			163,422
<u>OTHER STAFF COSTS</u>			
Staff Training		3,000	
Recruitment/Relocation		12,000	
TOTAL OTHER STAFF COSTS			15,000
<u>TRAVEL & ACCOMODATION</u>			

Travel & Accommodation		8,000	
TOTAL TRAVEL			8,000
<u>MOTOR VEHICLES</u>			
Fuel, R & M, Cleaning, etc		16,000	
TOTAL MOTOR VEHICLES			16,000
<u>BROKERAGE</u>			
Individual		5,200	
TOTAL BROKERAGE			5,200
<u>OPERATIONAL OTHER</u>			
Housing - Rent, Repairs & Maintenance etc.		10,400	
Utilities		2,500	
Telephone/Fax/Internet		5,200	
Printing & Stationery		1,000	
Program Materials & Supplies		5,200	
Minor Equipment:			
Office Furniture & Equipment		2,000	
Satellite Phone		2,500	
Computer, Printer & Copier		7,500	
Recreational Equipment		5,000	
IT & Equipment Maintenance		2,500	
Accounting Fees		15,085	
Administration		25,142	
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES			84,027
TOTAL EXPENSES			291,649
Surplus/(Deficit)			0

This budget is for one community and the budget for the four communities can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

**8 point plan region communities
Total Budget for staffing and operational costs
(Excluding GST)**

	\$
Manager	133,408.00
Youth Program - Aputula	291,649.00
Youth Program - Imanpa	291,649.00
Youth Program - Docker River	291,649.00
Youth Program - Mutitjulu	291,649.00
	<u>1,300,004.00</u>

Management of Youth Services

As discussed in the “Best Practice “ model the provision of line management of the youth worker positions, including access to support, supervision, training, and human resource services is essential. The costs can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5

8-point plan region - Manager Salaries and operational budget Exc.GST

	Notes	06/07
	\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Grant Funding		133,408
<i>TOTAL INCOME</i>		<u>133,408</u>
<u>SALARIES</u>		
Manager	58,278	
District Allowance (Lands & deps)	4,560	
Superannuation	5,655	
Workcover	2,514	
<i>TOTAL SALARIES</i>		71,007
<u>OTHER STAFF COSTS</u>		
Staff Training	1,500	
Recruitment/Relocation	6,000	
<i>TOTAL OTHER STAFF COST</i>		7,500
<u>TRAVEL & ACCOMODATION</u>		
Travel & Accommodation	4,000	
<i>TOTAL TRAVEL</i>		4,000
<u>MOTOR VEHICLES</u>		
Fuel, R & M, Cleaning, etc	8,000	
<i>TOTAL MOTOR VEHICLES</i>		8,000
<u>BROKERAGE</u>		
Individual	2,600	
<i>TOTAL BROKERAGE</i>		2,600
<u>OPERATIONAL OTHER</u>		
Housing - Rent, Repairs & Maintenance etc.	5,200	
Utilities	1,250	
Telephone/Fax/Internet	2,600	
Printing & Stationery	500	
Program Materials & Supplies	2,600	
Minor Equipment:		

Office Furniture & Equipment	1,000	
Satellite Phone	1,250	
Computer, Printer & Copier	3,750	
Recreational Equipment	2,500	
IT & Equipment Maintenance	1,250	
Accounting Fees	6,900	
Administration	11,501	
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES		40,301
TOTAL EXPENSES		133,408
Surplus/(Deficit)		0

Total costs of the model of “Good Practice in Youth Program Development”.

In summary, the cost of having youth work staff, managed and equipped as per the “Good Practice “Model in the four communities is seen in Table 6 :

Table 6

8-point plan region

Total Budget for salaries, operational and management costs

(Excluding GST)

	\$
Manager	133,408.00
Youth Program - Aputula	291,649.00
Youth Program - Imanpa	291,649.00
Youth Program - Docker River	291,649.00
Youth Program - Mutitjulu	291,649.00
	<u>1,300,004.00</u>

Current resources for youth services in Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Aputula

It should also be noted that there are already significant resources for work with young people going into these four Southern NT communities in a variety of ways. Some of these grants are ongoing, while others are renewable each year or are for one year only. The grants all have a different focus depending on the Departmental guidelines of the funding body, eg sport and recreation, substance abuse, crime prevention. Estimates, where known, for funding to these communities can be seen in Table 7. These

estimates are incomplete as this proposal does not intend to provide an audit of what is there, rather to make the point that diverse funding for youth programs is already available in the Region.

Table 9 Current resources for youth services in 8 point plan region.

Funding body	Program	Location	Funding amount (total)	Auspice
Family Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA)	Reconnect	Aputula, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River	\$375,000	NPYWC
NT Police	Juvenile Diversion	Mutitjulu and Docker River, Proposed for Imanpa also	\$160.000 (approx)	Community Councils
FACSIA	Outside School Hours Care	Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River	unknown	Community Councils
NT Dept of Sport and Recreation	Sport and Recreation	Mutitjulu.Aputula	Unknown	Community Councils
ABA	Youth diversion program to combat petrol sniffing	Aputula, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River	\$120.000	NPYWC
NT Dept of Health and Community Services	Remote area alcohol and other substance abuse projects (RAAS)	Variable Aputula, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River	variable	Community Councils , NPYWC
Other				

The wide variety of funding sources, types and length of funding in the four communities raises questions of co-ordination and efficiencies and lends weight to one of the features of the “Good practice in youth program development”. That is, the need for an external co-ordination body for youth services. Such a body could be an existing one, already involved in youth service provision, such as NPYWC or CAYLUS, or a new special purpose organisation that would be able to provide crucial services such as human resource management, external co-ordination and networking and youth advocacy.

Option 4: ABA funding for an analysis of youth infrastructure in communities in the Top End
 CAYLUS and NPY are aware that at present most major petrol sniffing initiatives are focused in central Australia. It is important that similar initiatives are directed at Aboriginal communities in the Top End that also face petrol sniffing problems. Option 4 proposes that the ABA fund Darwin’s Community Alcohol Program Support Services (CAAPS) \$50,000 (six months’ wages plus travel) to provide a similar assessment of the need of Top End communities in order that an ABA submission be generated addressing this need in that region. The proposed CAAPS position will also identify and advocate for funding from the NT and Federal government to supplement the ABA funding and provide the recurrent costs for the youth programs (wages, operational costs etc).

Appendix A

A GOOD PRACTICE MODEL FOR YOUTH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

Pauline Fietz

Background

The provision of youth services in Aboriginal communities has generally been ad hoc, irregular, and based on the assumption that young Aboriginal people have the same aspirations, needs, and interests as mainstream Australian kids. In addition, those youth programs that do exist are tend to be subject to the vacillations of community functionality, the insecurity of ongoing funding arrangements, and the difficulties of recruitment and retention of quality youth workers.

Young Aboriginal people in the remote southern region of central Australia are often bored, in bad health, hungry, and faced with inconsistent care from family members or struggling with the pressures of maintaining relationships with young partners and with parenting responsibilities. Many turn to escapist practices for relief or engage in risky behaviour designed to attract the attention of families. The consequences of these behaviours may damage the health and well being of individuals, as well as contributing to severe social disruption and trauma in Aboriginal families and communities.

The demographic profile of Aboriginal communities in the southern central Australian region shows an age pyramid heavily weighted at its base towards young people, with over 52% of the population aged 24 or under. Around 44% of the population is in the 10-24 age groups. Regarded as the lifeblood of their communities by their families, these children and young people are central to the ongoing vitality of unique Aboriginal identity. For these reasons there is a clear imperative to the provision of meaningful services for young people living in these communities. Unfortunately, the instances of sound youth community programs are far too rare.

The operational model for developing youth programs in Aboriginal communities is almost invariably premised on mainstream youth programs, in which young people are isolated from their families, and role models and activities alike are drawn from popular culture. Typically stuck in the 'Sport and Recreation' approach to youth work, and delivering football trainings and the odd weekend disco, these programs fail to gain and retain the attention of young people in a meaningful way.

In order to decrease levels of risk behaviours (such as petrol sniffing and vandalism), and to provide young people with meaningful alternatives, youth programs must take account of the culturally specific aspects of young people's lives. In these communities, most young people cease school attendance at 15 years, boys are initiated at adolescence, and girls and young women play important roles in the provision of care to infants. The cultural imperatives of Aboriginal kinship systems continue to dominate the relationships, behaviour and aspirations of young people.

The following principles of youth program development are broadly based on the experience at Docker River, where a strong and vibrant youth program has been in operation for two and a half years. Whilst personal and social well-being is not easily quantifiable, the Docker River program has already notched up some significant achievements. The program has reduced petrol sniffing by 80%, turned school attendance around from the community with the lowest to the highest levels of attendance, and dramatically improved young people's health. Levels of anaemia, underdevelopment, and underweight

children now approximate or equal mainstream Australian population levels for children of these age groups.

This description of the features of youth program development draws on the Docker River model, but is intended as a guide only. A fundamental component to the success of the program at Docker River has been the involvement of young people themselves, and the support of their families and the community. Rather than seeking to be prescriptive, these principles emphasise the necessity of developing each program in accordance with local needs and community conditions. The involvement of young people and their families ensures that youth program initiatives are locally driven and not externally imposed.

In summary, these are the core principles of good practice in youth program development:

1. Resources and infrastructure;
2. External coordinating youth services management body;
3. Skilled and committed youth workers;
4. Regularity and consistency of activities;
5. Gender and age status appropriate activities;
6. Activities which are meaningful, stimulating, and culturally relevant;
7. Promotion of self-esteem and coherence for young people in their lives with their families;
8. Involvement of role models;
9. Promotion of strong intergenerational relationships;
10. Knowledge of families;
11. Community development and participation.

The Features of Good Practice in Youth Program Development

1. Resources and Infrastructure

There is an urgent need for a shift in thinking about the nature and content of youth services across the region. Youth services need to be recognised as of equal, if not more importance, as other essential services on communities, and be resourced accordingly. Youth programs which feature the above principles can function, at least initially, on relatively basic resources and infrastructure. The following list represents the minimal level of resourcing required to develop successful youth programs:

- Two youth workers, one male and one female;
- Designated community housing adequate for the needs of these two workers;
- Two 4WD vehicles, preferably Toyota troop carriers, to enable the maintenance of gender separate activities – one Toyota for girls, and one for boys and young men;
- A youth program base or headquarters, in the form of a youth centre, such as the Recreational halls commonly found on communities. This building would ideally be multi-purpose, containing a large open space for indoor sports and games and other activities, a kitchen, storeroom and possibly extra smaller spaces which function as areas for smaller group activities;
- A range of equipment to be built up over time. Basic items would include sporting goods, camping gear, kitchen and cooking utensils. Further equipment needs would unfold gradually in accordance with the scope of the program;

- The provision of line management of the youth worker positions, including access to support, supervision, training, and human resource services.

Many youth programs become unnecessarily focused on the need for the newest equipment and extensive infrastructural development. There is a case to be made for modest infrastructure in communities, as over-resourced facilities can become targets for resource benefit and political manipulation. In addition, youth program facilities are always heavily used and therefore need to be simple and easy to maintain.

2. External Co-ordinating Youth Services Management Body

Youth diversion and development policies have typically emphasised the need for ‘community responsibility’. This assumes a high degree of community capacity, when communities are frequently divided, riven by internal family politics and by dysfunctional administration. Equally, some communities are characterised by exceptionally good local governance, however the inherent challenges of remote Aboriginal community governance mean that this may be highly changeable. In addition, community administrative systems are usually overburdened and unable to provide youth workers with the requisite support they need in order to maintain the delivery of youth services. This places the sustainability of youth programs at risk.

An external co-ordination body for youth services, such as the NPY Women’s Council or CAYLUS (Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service) or a new special purpose organisation would be able to perform crucial youth services such as human resource management, external co-ordination and networking, and youth advocacy. Community councils alone are unable or ill-equipped to supply this level of servicing. The existence of this body thereby acts as a safeguard to ensure that youth programs, their funding, or their workers do not flounder along with the vacillations of community functionality.

3. Skilled and Committed Youth Workers

The problems associated with the lack of a stable, skilled youth workforce are commonplace in communities across the southern region. All too often youth worker positions are filled unsuitable people as qualified youth workers are always lacking. Similarly, inexperienced community members often find themselves attempting to manage the substantial logistics and administration of providing programs for over 50% of the local population without sufficient support, and in the face of massive community and family pressures. Throughout these familiar scenarios, it is young people who inevitably stand to lost the most.

Youth workers employed in these positions need to be multi-skilled, with the ability to plan and implement a broad range of activities, and to maintain and repair equipment and infrastructure, drive long distances, manage bush trips with dexterity and confidence, provide crisis support and care, mentoring, referrals, health treatments and counselling and support to young people and their families. A substantial amount of administration, planning and reporting is also required of youth workers, including the rigors of applying for ongoing funding grants. The most critical aspect of youth work is the ability to develop relationships with young people and their families. They must be capable of understanding the complexities of Aboriginal family life and of using this understanding as a reference point for working with and supporting young people. Needless to say, this requires enthusiasm, commitment, and energy.

4. Regularity and Consistency of Activities.

Far too often, youth programs in these communities are impermanent, unstable, and fleeting. Youth workers, as well as funding, come and go with rapidity. Short-lived bursts of activity tend to do more damage than good, as youth workers arrive with a rush of ideas and activities, only to be gone in a matter of weeks or months, or before most of these big ideas can be implemented. The expectations of young people, briefly raised, are once again dashed leaving an ever-deepening void.

A basic level of youth program provision must be constant, involving a platform of daily or near-daily activities to provide a reliable and stimulating environment for young people. Gradually youth programs develop their own regular pattern, on which young people and their families can rely.

Regular and consistent activities are of particular importance for young people during the school holidays, periods known to induce high levels of boredom and potentially outbreaks of petrol sniffing.

5. Gender and Age Status Appropriate Activities.

During the period between childhood and adulthood young Aboriginal people in the Central Australian region proceed through various developmental categories distinguishable by levels of biological and social maturity. Ritual processes and institutions such as initiation for boys serve to further demarcate these age status categories. Gender separation at adolescence is also maintained. A range of social expectations, responsibilities and behavioural protocols are attached to these gender and age status categorisations.

Youth programs need to uphold these protocols and cultural obligations by featuring separate activities for children (*tjitji*) age 3-11, young women (*kungka*) and young men (*wati* or *yungpala*) age 12 upwards. New initiates are required to distinguish themselves in behaviour and practice from uninitiated boys and younger children according to their newly acquired status as young men. Similarly young men and young women are expected to maintain minimal interaction.

The need to provide meaningful and consistent activities to the different categories of young people presents ongoing practical challenges in the operation of youth programs. Once an activity has been identified as 'for *tjitji*' or 'for *kungka*', for example, this effectively prohibits other categories of young people from engaging in the same activity.

Relevant activities must be developed which cater exclusively for these gender and age status categories. The capacity to provide exclusive activities is dependent on having male *and* female youth workers and a platform of constant, ongoing regular activities for younger children.

6. Activities which are Meaningful, Stimulating and Culturally Relevant.

Typically limited by funding regulations and by mainstream assumptions about young peoples' needs, most community youth programs are lacking in depth and focused on the 'Sport and Recreation' model of youth work. Young people need to engage their bodies *and* their brains, and youth programs should include a range of multi-dimensional activities which go beyond this to include educational, cultural, and Recreational components. Meaningful activities should focus on the fostering of self-esteem and confidence in young people, and be based around such themes as personal development, nutrition, positive adolescent health, and the development of valued cultural skills.

7. Promotion of Self-Esteem and Coherence for Young People in their Lives with their Families.

The relationships Aboriginal children and young people have with family members are critical to the process of growing and learning; for the development a whole person, and for the reproduction of the social order. The social obligation to look after, care for, nurture, and nourish young people is shared by family members as young people move through the different age status categories. In order to be effective, youth programs must seek to support these crucial socialisation processes.

Mainstream youth program models which envisage a category of 'youth' isolated from intergenerational structures of socialisation, from mothers and fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and from younger children, are culturally inadequate.

Young people keenly desire to gain the attention of their families, and youth programs need to be directed towards achieving this goal in a positive way. Activities must be designed which cultivate both the expression of youthful identity as well as a strong sense of pride, stemming from the consciousness that what they are doing makes their families proud. The core objective of the program at Docker River is 'to make young people, and their families, proud'. The accomplishment of this goal effectively enables the development of coherent and meaningful young lives.

8. Involvement of Role Models

Young leaders from within the community can play a fundamental role in the provision of relevant and consistent activities. The involvement of a number of young men and women who demonstrate leadership qualities is vital in directing, supervising and managing youth program activities. They are also essential in ensuring an awareness and observance of local cultural protocols, community tensions and familial dynamics, which youth workers from outside may overlook. Community youth leaders are typically self-selecting in that they express an explicit sense of wanting to make something happen on their communities. The involvement, guidance and support of a group of young leaders, which may be in the form of a community 'Youth Team' or youth committee, ensures that the ideas for activities which make up the youth program come from young people themselves. These young leaders are able to represent the voice of young people within the community and are crucial role models for their younger kin who follow their example.

In the Docker River example, the Docker River Youth Team meets regularly to discuss all details regarding the operation of the youth program, including planning upcoming events, and discussing issues or problems which may have arisen with the program or with individual young people. This forum also serves as an entry point for any and all youth related business, so that both community members and external service providers are able to consult with the Youth Team. The Youth Team represents the community at meetings, attend leadership and youth development training, and promote the youth program widely within the region. Selection of new members of the Youth Team is made by existing members, with some young people trialed initially on probationary status until they have proven their suitability for the role. The crucial role played by the Youth Team is broadly acknowledged and a position on the Team is much sought-after.

9. Promotion of Strong Intergenerational Relationships.

The introduction of mainstream models of learning and development such as school and Recreation has significantly altered the way in which caring and rearing of children was managed in the past.

Mainstream institutions separate children and young people from multigenerational structures of socialisation and fundamental aspects of cultural knowledge transfer may be impaired as a result.

The participation and support of older family members is of critical importance to the success of youth programs. Senior family members are able to give advice on the cultural content of youth programs, and strongly influence the levels of broader community support upon which programs are ultimately reliant.

Youth programs should aim to foster strong intergenerational relationships and to encourage intergenerational transmission of knowledge. A range of intergenerational activities may be supported within youth programs, including day trips and camps for bush tuckering, hunting, damper making, *inma* (ceremonial) training, seed and bush medicine collection and preparation, artefact making (such as digging sticks, spears, boomerangs), and involvement in visits to country and sites of significance, and land management work. These activities should consist of young people together with senior members of their families.

10. Knowledge of Families

The centrality of family is evident in every aspect of young people's behaviour. A large component of youth program work focuses on development of intervention strategies with families to divert young people from high risk behaviours which are both individually and socially damaging. In order to have a chance of success, these strategies must be founded on finely-tuned understandings of the dynamics of young people's lives with their families. Youth programs need to begin developing detailed family records, such as family trees and family histories, which can be used to aid workers in their attempts to support young people and their families.

Past programs have rarely placed any emphasis on a thorough understanding of family dynamics, yet it is clear that it is these dynamics that are at the core of the issue for many young people on communities. Knowledge of family is the key to the understanding of the problems facing individual children and should be a core responsibility of youth workers.

11. Community Development and Participation

The constant presence of inter-generational interaction and the participation and guidance by community members and youth leaders means that the program is part of an overall process of community development. This ensures that youth development does not become a segregated domain within the community that only furthers generational dislocation. Crucially, this also means that youth development is of benefit to the whole community, and that youth development is the task and responsibility of the community at large.

Conclusion

Youth programs on Aboriginal communities have historically been accorded the lowest of priorities. In addition, through a combination of under-resourcing, mismanagement, and neglect, they have often been dysfunctional and ineffective. Only recently, and probably prompted by a combination of petrol sniffing related deaths and sensationalist media reporting, has the need for youth programs been recognised as critical, and of equal, if not more importance, than other basic community services.

The principles and practices outlined above were developed in collaboration with young people and in accordance with cultural expectations and protocols. They are intended as a guide upon which the history of ineffective youth program delivery can be turned around. Rather than prescribing a formulaic model which will work everywhere, these principles and practices suggest that the most effective programs will be those developed in accordance with the specific needs, conditions, and aspirations of young people, their families, and their local communities. This submission posits a radical rethinking of the entire approach to youth program development. It is this kind of approach that is necessary before true gains can be made that will provide real opportunities for young people to develop strong youthful identities for the future, and for the future of their communities.

Appendix B. Audit of community requirements to provide base level infrastructure

Part one: “8-point plan region communities”

Mutitjulu

Recreation Hall needs renovation

One Sport & Recreation worker house owned by Mutitjulu Council. This has been available for the position as required. Position funded by Sport and Recreation plus Commonwealth FACSIA, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC).

Housing for Community Cultural Development Worker (position primarily provides services to young people). Owned by the Store – ongoing use not guaranteed – currently there is consideration of giving this house to community members. Position funded by Council on Gate Royalties.

Vehicle status unknown.

There is funding at the Health Service (clinic) for a Substance Abuse Worker – currently unfilled.

Health Service housing provided.

Visiting service by Reconnect youth worker employed through NPYWC and based in Alice Springs.

Imanpa

Recreation hall needs renovation.

There is a demountable at Mt Ebenezer previously funded by the Juvenile Diversion Unit. It needs repair and refurbishment eg plumbing for toilet facilities. One secondhand Troopie – needs replacing.

Visiting service by Reconnect youth worker employed through NPYWC and based in Alice Springs.

Aputula

No Recreation hall, no accommodation. One position funded by Reconnect through NPYWC, was filled part-time by the daughter of the CDEP Manager working with two part-time Anangu workers. Non-Aboriginal worker left the community and lack of housing now restricts recruiting to the position.

Visiting service by Reconnect youth worker employed through NPYWC and based in Alice Springs.

Two Anangu youth workers now work on a casual basis. NPYWC vehicle attached to the position, but as noted, cannot recruit without housing.

Docker River

Two Youth Workers housed in accommodation provided by Community Council. Losing housing options would seriously undermine the program. One position is funded by the NT Juvenile Diversion Unit (NT Police), the other funded by NPYWC Reconnect. NPYWC Reconnect also provides a visiting youth worker from Alice Springs office as needed and as available. They use their OSHC and Reconnect funds for operational costs. Two Troopcarriers. Replacement will be required.

Recreation Hall satisfactory.

Part Two: Other communities in the South Western region of the NT who are not included in the current 8-Point Plan region

Willowra

There is a Recreation Hall that has been funded for renovation by Commonwealth FACSIA.

There is a youth worker funded by NT HCS, plus operational funds and a vehicle which will come from Commonwealth FACSIA. The position is auspiced by Mt Theo and CAYLUS.

There is no accommodation.

It should be noted that Willowra is not a Community Council, having lost its incorporated status several ago. There is no local capacity to administer grants.

Yuendumu

There is a Recreation Hall which is described as dangerous and needs rebuilding

There are two duplex houses for workers' accommodation

There are funded positions through the Mt Theo program, one of these, a youth worker position, was AERF-funded. This funding expires this year.

Kintore

There is an operational Recreation Hall which needs renovation.

One Recreation Worker (funded by OSHC and Sport & Recreation) is in a council flat – not guaranteed.

One Substance Abuse Worker (funded by NTHCS to June 2007 thru the Council) who does case work and recreation activities. This worker is renovating a community house after hours, as there is no Council accommodation.

There is a Substance Abuse worker position funded at the local Health Service, but this has never been consistently filled and has done little to address the substance abuse issues in the community. There is Health Service accommodation for this position (should it be filled) which is not available to non-health staff.

One Council vehicle (donated by the JDU) is available for the Substance Abuse Worker, one secondhand vehicle is being purchased at the moment for the Council Recreation Worker.

Nyirrpi

There is a community hall which needs renovation and could be used for youth activities. There is no funding for youth, OSHC or recreation programs, no accommodation, no vehicles.

Ntaria

There is a small recreation hall which needs renovation.

There are two local p/t recreation workers funded by Sport & Recreation plus OSHC. There is no accommodation.

There is a car that is shared between other Council projects.

Areyonga

There is a Recreation Hall that needs renovation. There is a pool, which uses most of their recreation funding to keep going.

There is no accommodation for a youth worker, nor a vehicle.

There is some Sport & Recreation money and OSHC funding – not enough for a f/t position. The Council cannot apply for more funding due to lack of accommodation.

Papunya

No Recreation Hall – there is a community performance space that is used for bands, but access is restricted because of expensive sound and lighting equipment kept there.

No youth worker accommodation – current Recreation Worker (funded by OSHC) is staying in a flat in an NTEETA building, which may end at any time.

The Council has funding for a second position (Youth Outreach Worker- funded by the NT Dept Education, JDU NT Police and a grant from the Office of Crime Prevention) but has no capacity to house a worker and may have to give the funding back.

There is an old 24-seater Coaster bus that has recently cost \$11,000 to keep on the road. Needs replacing.

Mt Liebig

There is a small Recreation Hall – needs air conditioning. It is used almost exclusively by the men of the community.

No Recreation Worker currently, tho they have OSHC funding. No structured activities.

No accommodation for the worker. The community has had to recruit workers within the community, which seriously limited the capacity to hire qualified or experienced workers.

No vehicle.

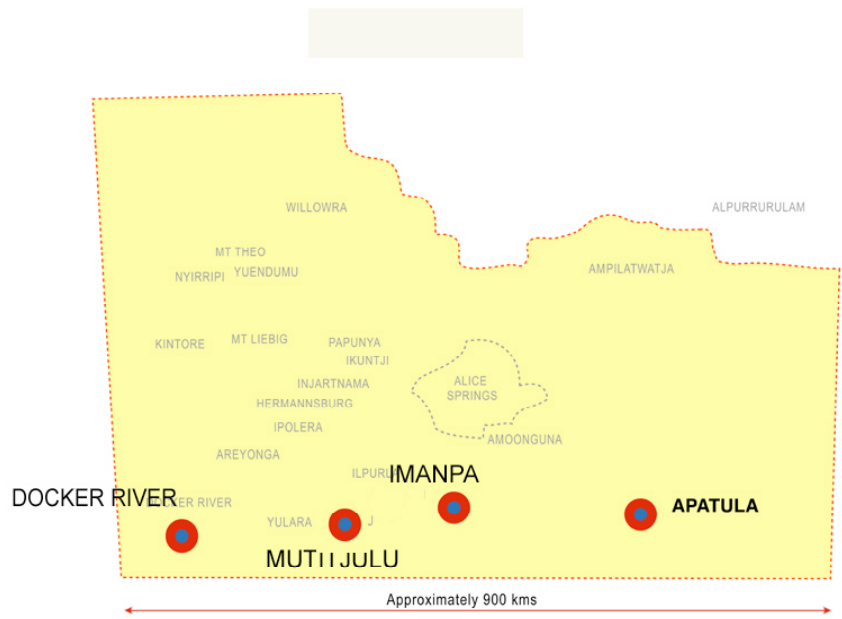
Ikuntji

There is a Recreation Hall which is only used for discos and bands. There is a renovated homestead with space for youth activities.

There is one bedroom house for the OSHC/Sport & Recreation funded Recreation Worker, Council owned, use not guaranteed.

There is a Troopie for the position donated by the JDU.

Appendix B
Map of 8 point plan communities



Appendix C
Map of Central Australian region

