

My Life, My Lead

Implementation Plan Advisory Group (IPAG)

Consultation Notes

Fitzroy Crossing – 27 March 2017 and Broome – 28 March 2017

A range of face to face consultations, coupled with an online submission process, were established to hear from stakeholders and community on how to best address the social determinants and cultural determinants of Indigenous health.

The fourth of 13 consultations was held in Broome on 28 March 2017. The consultation held in Broome on 28 March 2017 was complemented by a small, informal session at Fitzroy Crossing on 27 March. Outcomes from the forum are below (and include notes from the Fitzroy Crossing session).

The session focused on what can be done to address the social and cultural determinants of health. The following themes were raised.

Key Observations:

Recurring themes and observations

- Lack of coordination within and between governments is a major factor limiting flexibility and progress
- Culture is central to health and wellbeing
- Food security is a major challenge for the people of the Kimberley
- Kimberley has some good things happening, including Empowered Communities, Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum and Fitzroy Futures Forum
- Cultural safety/racism are issues across systems
- Environmental health is a big factor and needs a higher profile
- More holistic approaches are needed (joining up; referrals) No ‘wrong door’ approach
- Need better involvement of Aboriginal people in planning, implementation and evaluation. Co-design should be a fundamental principle.
- Would get better outcomes if medical profession focused on family, rather than the individual
- Access to information/data is difficult/impossible, making progress slow
- Government needs to be able to enter genuine partnerships with Aboriginal providers
- Long term vision requires a long term funding strategy – short termism is counterproductive
- Place based appears to be still just a term – needs a concerted effort to make it real
- The demise of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) had major knock on effects that are still being felt by communities today

Session One – Small group discussions on social and cultural determinants

Connection to family, community, country, language and culture

- Strengths-based culture can't thrive where racism undermines it
- Yirriman Project – takes kids on country to reconnect with themselves and their culture
- Ranger programs – rangers provide excellent mentors and connect young people with country
- Culture is dominant in the Kimberley and locals are working with State Government to adapt traditional practices to enable people to ‘walk in both worlds’ – looking for local solutions. The local

health service providers understand the needs of the communities; that health and wellbeing is a family matter.

- There is a strong suspicion that even though government no longer says it's going to close communities, it will stop funding them, hoping these smaller communities will integrate with bigger communities.
- Fitzroy Valley communities want to stay in their traditional country. Defunding communities has a bad impact on health outcomes, as it is often this connection to country and culture and removal from larger community that helps to avoid temptations (such as alcohol).
- Hospitals not asking if patient is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Racism

- WA Country Health Service employed a dedicated person to drive Aboriginal workforce development and promote cultural safety.
- Cultural safety/capability – Local protocols and relationships need to be done locally by local groups – eg Yawuru in Broome
- People are treated differently by some services. Eg asking for ID. Need staff training and awareness

Employment and income

- Debt – many people have huge debts – behind the 8 ball and can't get out. Eg damage to houses and the 'renter' responsible. Adds to feeling of hopelessness – leads to substance abuse, suicide, etc
- View of issue areas separately (need more holistic view: social determinants plus SEWB all informing approach) – links to workforce (need for generalist, multiskilled workers).
- The demise of CDEP had a major negative impact on the Kimberley. CDEP was the original place based approach, where communities could target areas of need and make an impact. Income in remote communities has declined substantially since CDEP was removed. This has had an impact on housing, food choices, etc.
- Estimated (ABS) that around 40% of adults in the Kimberley are on no income. They are not 'on the grid'. CDEP gave people pride and a purpose. They want nothing to do with the new programs.
- Difficult to generate income when contracts for housing maintenance are awarded to Perth-based companies that do not utilise any local labour.

Education (early childhood, school age and youth)

- Yawuru taught in schools to all students to raise the profile of Yawuru people and culture.
- Positive outcomes in remote communities where 'schools as community hubs' with links to community/clinic/broader services. Often reliant on relationships in spite of system (ie created by committed people from within existing resources, using the goodwill of others).

Housing, environment and infrastructure

- Housing – no opportunities for community employment (state level contract with Fly-in-fly-out/Drive-in-drive-out workers means no skills transfer locally)
- Housing maintenance Contracts ie Lakes – number of visits to communities is insufficient to meet need.
- Community housing – lack of planning (causes environmental health issues)
- Not investing in training of local people to upskill (due to whole of state approach to contracting maintenance)
- The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing is an example of working in silos. Going out to communities and building 15 four bedroom houses.

- No one has looked at innovative solutions on housing relating to aged care accommodation. For example, 1 or 2 bedroom units to reduce people in Bran Nue Dae and other aged care facilities. This would promote aged care training and employment in communities to support ageing population.
- Kimberley has an environmental health organisation (Nirrumbuk) that works closely with housing and others to reduce environmental health impacts and educate families/community.

Interaction with government systems and services

- Environmental Health organisation (Nirrumbuk) is highly respected and getting great outcomes, but struggles to have its voice heard and to get collaboration from other sectors.
- Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum (KAHPF) – working well across the health sector. Meets four times per year. Strong, valued, working well. Working on place based processes – local level planning – need to align plans with local aspirations (co-design!). Government departments and other health stakeholders sit on it to make regional health decisions
- Proper planning of evaluation and monitoring – shared (ie all affected stakeholders) measures/shared outcome targets (this relates to co-design)
- Fragmentation – across commonwealth/state/other – regional and local planning/implementation. Rich data exists but is not being shared with right people.
- Lack of transparency about who is funded to achieve what outcomes
- Funding should be targeted at local level priority needs/outcomes and co-designed models (rather than one size fits all national approaches). This relates to co-design
- A long term development agenda (30+ years) that all parties sign up to can help to mitigate risks.
- Competitive (eg commissioning) structures don't encourage partnership. Funded bodies seek to protect their respective patches. Funding/contracting model should reward partnership and collaboration.
- Place based/co-design and partnering (including end users) is essential to get sustainable solutions. The co-design must be done with service users – this takes time, so can only happen with longer term, sustained funding, not funding that is at the whim of political cycles/changes of government.
- The 2013 MoG changes where SEWB was moved from DoH to PM&C were a mistake. The Government is not looking at the whole person and does not understand the complexities of living in a remote location.
- Trial overload: Kimberley is the site for at least six major trials - the East and West Empowered Communities, suicide prevention trial, state reform, etc. Can become difficult to line up.

Law and justice

- Kimberley Police Superintendent was present
- Police keen to work across sectors (including alcohol availability and impact on families).
- Juvenile justice needs to be more focused on diversionary activities;
- Research has found that support for families and individuals living with FASD produces better outcomes, for example, reduces incidence of children passing through juvenile justice system.

Health choices

- Terminology of 'choice' was considered inappropriate and suited to non-Indigenous policy makers. Need a better term, as choice is not necessarily there...
- Lack of choice in accessing services – and accessing appropriate healthy food and drink.
- Community stores are not owned by community. Profit motive drives stocking.
- Not easy to make healthy choices given affordability and the need to feed large numbers of people

Food security

- Each community store is run independently and only a few stores are owned by the community they service. Much food is grown in Kununurra, transported to Perth for re-distribution, including back to the Kimberley. Excess food grown is ploughed under. A lettuce in Halls Creek can cost \$6.00 and be inedible.
- Freight costs are high. Fitzroy Valley has eight stores and freight costs can't be absorbed. Extra freight costs for off bitumen access can be as high as \$6.00 per kilometre. Fuel costs \$2.60 per litre and can be prohibitive for people to drive to town to buy food. The impact of tourism has increased prices.
- Eating bush tucker is the healthiest choice. Food is too old by the time it reaches supermarkets. Communities could look at stores as a business; invest in existing resources on country and create a community bush food market. Technology can aid food production.