

Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000 - 2004

Hervey Bay
Indigenous
Community
Leadership
Training
Project



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Contents

Annotated Acronyms	iii
Summary	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of the Study	1
1.2 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-2004 (the Strategy)	2
1.3 National Evaluation	2
2 Methodology	4
2.1 The Study Team	4
2.2 Information Collection	4
2.3 Analysis and Reporting	6
2.4 Ethical Issues	7
3 Context	8
3.1 Wide Bay Burnett Region	8
3.2 Hervey Bay	9
3.3 Mainstream Human Service Sector	12
3.4 Indigenous Service Sector	15
4 Background	21
4.1 Indigenous Leadership Development	21
4.2 Leadership Development Projects	22
4.3 Initiation of the Hervey Bay Project	24
4.4 Leadership Summit	27
5 Findings	30
5.1 Overview	30
5.2 Confidence Building	30
5.3 Women and Youth	31
5.4 Skills Transfer	32
5.5 Social Cohesion	34
5.6 Community Activities and Events	35
5.7 Leadership Development	36
5.8 Mentoring	37
6 Conclusion	40
6.1 Overview	40
6.2 Processes	40
6.3 Intended Outcomes	40
6.4 Unintended Outcomes	41
6.5 Lessons for FaCS	41
References	43



Annotated Acronyms

AIFS Australian Institute of Family Studies

AIFS hosted the Stronger Families Learning Exchange and has an ongoing role in the SFCS 2004-2009 hosting the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA). www.aifs.gov.au

ARACY Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

ARACY is a national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines to generate and translate knowledge to enhance the well-being and life chances of children and young people. ARACY is now using online conferencing technology to conduct presentations and discussions with the Communities for Children Facilitating Partners at 45 sites around Australia. www.aracy.org.au

CAFCA Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

Funded by the SFCS 2004-2009 the CAFCA, within the AIFS, aims to improve access to current information and resources to assist those working in the field of early childhood and community development. It continues the work of the [Stronger Families Learning Exchange](#) which supported the 2000-2004 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/index.html

FaCS Department of Family and Community Services

The Australian Government department with responsibility for administering the Strategy until January 2006. www.facs.gov.au

FaCHSIA Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The Australian Government department with responsibility for administering the SFCS 2004-2009. www.facsia.gov.au



SFCS Stronger Families and Communities Strategy - also referred to as the Strategy www.facsia.gov.au/sfcs

The first phase of the Strategy, 2000-2004, funded 7 linked community based initiatives, as well as several broader initiatives, to strengthen families and communities.

The renewal of the Strategy (Phase 2) was announced in April 2004 with funding of \$365 million, which was subsequently increased to \$490 million, with a specific early childhood focus. In the new SFCS, attention has been focussed on early intervention in early childhood and is the primary vehicle for implementing the Government's National Agenda for Early Childhood (NAEC), which focuses on improving national coordination.

Phase 2 of the Strategy commenced in 2004 and will continue over five years until 2009. It aims to help families and communities build better futures for children; build family and community capacity; support relationships between families and the communities they live in; and improve communities' ability to help themselves. Phase 2 of the Strategy comprises four streams, the Communities for Children initiative, Invest to Grow, Local Answers and the Choice and Flexibility in Child Care initiative. Under the new Strategy, support to funded projects will be provided by Communities for Children (CfC) Facilitating Partners. In addition through CfC and Invest to Grow (ItG) the department has funded Local Evaluators to assist with project design, action research, and evaluation. Three streams of the new Strategy (all streams except for small equipment grants) are provided with support through the Communities and Families Clearinghouse House (CAFCA) and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).



Summary

Introduction

This report presents the results of an evaluative case study undertaken as one part of the National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-2004 (the Strategy).

This report describes how one project was carried out and assesses the extent to which it achieved the following intended outcomes:

- improved confidence of participants;
- improved ability of women and youth to represent their communities;
- the transfer of skills to other committee members and volunteers;
- the development of greater social cohesion (i.e. communities working together);
- positive community activities and events;
- the development of local leaders;
- the establishment of an on-going program of leadership mentoring.

The Project

The project was the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project located in the Wide Bay Burnett region in south-east Queensland.

The aim of the project was to develop the capacity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to manage their own affairs.

The project primarily consisted of two training workshops:

- K'gari Leadership Workshop (September-October 2002);
- Hervey Bay Indigenous Leaders Development Summit (June 2004).

The auspicing organisation for this project was Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd.

The project was initiated by the local Indigenous community in Hervey Bay because leadership was identified as an area of critical need i.e. too few leaders carrying too much load.

The main project objectives were to:

- enable participants to take a more active role in their community;
- skill up committee members;
- enable emerging leaders to take on more responsibility;
- create role models.

Women and youth were priority groups targeted by the project.



Project Funding

Project funding of \$46,182.40 (inclusive of GST) under the Potential Leadership in Local Communities program element of the Strategy was approved in July 2002.

FaCS funding of the project ceased on 30 June 2004.

Funding was primarily directed towards the delivery of two workshops intended to equip participants with knowledge, skills and understandings to better manage their community affairs.

Methodology

Data collection for this study included a site visit to the project, interviews with project participants and other stakeholders, and examination of documentary sources contained on relevant FaCS files.

All interviews with project participants were undertaken by local Indigenous people so as to engender trust in the case study and minimise the risk of misinterpretation.

Local Indigenous perspectives have been given priority over other perspectives in the analysis of the data.

The RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee approved the conduct of this case study.

All participants in this study were provided with a 'Plain English Statement' informing them about the study.

All interviews were conducted with the written consent of participants.

Background

Hervey Bay is in the Wide Bay Burnett region in south-east Queensland.

Hervey Bay has a population of about 50,000 and is one of Australia's fastest growing cities.

The Indigenous population of Hervey Bay is estimated to be 955 (2.3% of the population).

The area is disadvantaged by relatively high unemployment, a narrow industry base, low income levels, social isolation and the high incidence of single parent families.

There are gaps in human services and service coordination is problematic.

The need for more early intervention and prevention services in areas such as life skills education, parenting programs and specialist counselling services has been identified.

Social issues that especially impact on segments of the Indigenous population include lack of housing and employment, poverty, family dysfunction, ill health, substance abuse and violence.

There is a broad range of human services working to build capacity, social capital and family and community resilience in this area, but most experience heavy demand and are overstretched.

Anecdotal sources suggest that Indigenous usage of most mainstream community services is low.

Indigenous organisations in Hervey Bay have an impressive list of achievements in cultural, employment and other spheres.



Indigenous Leadership Development

Leadership is about providing direction.

Leadership is a scarce resource in many Indigenous communities, including Hervey Bay.

Indigenous leadership development is currently a national policy issue.

There are a range of views about the desired attributes, knowledge, skills, and style required of a leader, and there are a range of different theories about leadership.

A House of Representatives (2004) Standing Committee report has addressed issues of capacity development in Indigenous contexts, with a particular focus on leadership development.

There are several Indigenous leadership initiatives currently operating in Australia, some of which are funded by FaCS.

The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC) is a training facility established to develop knowledge, skills and understandings about leadership.

Findings

(1) Processes

There is a high level of 'customer satisfaction' amongst participants in this project, but the general view is that it has only been the beginning of what needs to be a much longer process.

The Summit was attended by a cross section of the local Indigenous community in terms of both gender and age range.

The Summit process gave participants frequent opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

Women and youth comprised a substantial proportion of Summit participants and some were frequent and enthusiastic contributors.

Some people lacked the confidence to speak in the Summit.

The non-attendance by some people was attributed to certain differences within the community and/or insufficient communication.

There was a considerable turnover of participants over the course of the project, with very few people participating in the whole process and this inhibited opportunities to develop new leaders.

Project participants would like to establish a working group of local people with responsibility for continuing the process of leadership development beyond this project.

(2) Intended Outcomes

This project did significantly contribute to:

- raising the confidence of some participants;
- enhancing the ability of some women and youth to represent their community;
- bringing people together.



Other intended outcomes have not yet been achieved such as:

- skills transfer that enhanced the capacity of local community organisations to more effectively manage their own affairs;
- other leadership development events and activities beyond the conduct of two workshops;
- the development of identifiable new community leaders;
- the establishment of a program of leadership mentoring.

(NB: Some of these outcomes may be achieved beyond FaCS funding of this project.)

(3) Unintended Outcomes

This project gave participants a deeper understanding of what 'leadership' means in an Indigenous context, especially in relation to the need to demonstrate respect.

This project has fostered some dialogue and reflection about the critical need for greater community cohesion in Hervey Bay.

This project has clearly identified the priority Indigenous community needs in this area especially in the relation to conflict mediation, youth development and access to community services.

This project lost momentum because of the prolonged elapse of time between the conduct of the first and second workshops.

(4) Lessons for FaCS

The development of Indigenous leadership capacity is a long-term process requiring engagement and professional development over a sustained period of time.

Leadership development with Indigenous peoples is at least as much about attitudinal and behavioural change and the re-building of confidence and self-belief, as it is about the transfer of knowledge and skills.

The use of Indigenous role models is widely seen as an effective strategy.

Lack of social cohesion is a significant impediment to capacity building in Indigenous contexts.

Opportunities to build on the achievements of this project include:

- further governance training in areas such as organisational structures, constitutions, ethics and behaviours that foster mutual respect;
- establishing links with other organisations already effectively involved in the mentoring of potential leaders;
- involving the AILC in supporting leadership projects in much the same way that AIFS was involved in Stronger Families Fund projects;
- resourcing the formulation of a regional plan in Hervey Bay to capture the local learning from this project and strategically continue the process.

Leadership is instrumental rather than an end in itself, so leadership development always needs to occur in the context of local activities intended to address identified priority local needs.



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Study

We all know that few people are born leaders. Leaders require nurturing, coaching and supporting. Leaders need exposure to experiences which build skills and role models to inspire and drive change. Leadership authority must be culturally sanctioned and transferable into wider environments and contexts.

Professor Mick Dodson, Director, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, and Chair Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. (Cited in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2004: xiii)

This report presents the results of an evaluative case study undertaken as one part of the National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-2004 (the Strategy). The project that is the focus of the case study is the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project located in the Wide Bay Burnett region in south-east Queensland. This report describes how this project was carried out and assesses its outcomes. Our purpose is to reflect on 'where to from here' for Indigenous leadership development in the area drawing on insights and 'lessons learnt' from the project about effective Indigenous leadership development strategies.

The aim of the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project was to develop the capacity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to manage their own affairs. For the purposes of this report the following United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition of capacity development has been adopted:

The process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives, and to understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner.
(Cited in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2004: 14)

According to Stake (1995) a case study can serve two purposes.

1. A case study is said to be *instrumental* when a typical case is examined in order to develop a general understanding of similar cases elsewhere.
2. A case study is said to be *intrinsic* when the purpose is to understand a specific situation as an end in itself.

This study is *instrumental* because the intention is to inform our understanding of the Strategy more generally beyond this particular project in Hervey Bay. In particular we wish to inform the Department about how it might improve future implementation processes and outcomes to inform the development of similar projects in other remote Aboriginal settings.



This case study is *intrinsic* to the extent that it provides information that is useful to local Indigenous peoples. It is hoped that this case study can serve as a 'mirror' that enables participants in this project to see more clearly what has been achieved so far and the challenges that still lie ahead. It should be noted that some contributors to this study made it clear that they would like to receive a copy of the final report to inform their future activities.

1.2 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-2004 (the Strategy)

Strategy projects aimed to strengthen, empower and support families and communities, including Indigenous families and communities by increasing their capacity to meet the challenges of economic and social change and to cope with the pressures that can lead to family and social breakdown.

There were over 600 projects from this Strategy across Australia. The Strategy focuses on assisting local communities and families to work together to address factors that impact on their social health and wellbeing. It was underpinned by eight key principles:

- working together in partnership;
- encouraging a preventative and early intervention approach;
- supporting people through life transitions;
- developing better integrated and coordinated services;
- developing local solutions to local problems;
- building capacity;
- using the evidence and looking to the future;
- making the investment count.

Over the 2000-2004 period, leadership development was identified as a priority under the Potential Leadership in Local Communities component of the Strategy. This component of the Strategy has not been continued into the second phase of the Strategy over the 2004-2009 time period, although leadership projects may apply for funding under the Local Answers Initiative.

1.3 National Evaluation

In 2002 CIRCLE, (the Collaborative Institute for Research, Consulting and Learning in Evaluation) at RMIT University was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) to undertake an evaluation of its \$226 million Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-2004 (the Strategy). John Scougall Consulting of Perth was in turn contracted by RMIT to evaluate various Indigenous Strategy projects, such as this one at Hervey Bay in Queensland.



Detailed case studies of particular projects form an important part of the National Evaluation. The decision to include this particular case for detailed examination has been influenced by several factors:

- the project focus was on the crucial policy issue of leadership development in Indigenous contexts;
- the potential to learn about what works and why (both in terms of outcomes and processes) in relation to Indigenous capacity building;
- the project added diversity (in terms of context and content) to the mix of the Strategy projects that have been selected for case studies in this National Evaluation;
- this type of project is relevant to many other Indigenous organisations.



2 Methodology

2.1 The Study Team

A team of four people undertook this case study: John Scougall, Sylvia Cobbo, Raymond Dawson and Troy Broome. John, a Perth-based non-Indigenous consultant, was the primary researcher. Sylvia, Raymond and Troy are Aboriginal people who reside in the study area and who were recruited to work on this study because they were well positioned to ascertain the views of local Indigenous people. In addition Dr Patricia Rogers of RMIT was responsible for providing broad oversight of the study.

John's role was mainly to design the methodology of the study, review documentary sources, make and record on-site observations, discuss the project with local stakeholders and to write this report based on all of the information collected. In April 2004, prior to the commencement of the study, John conducted face-to-face discussions with staff of the project auspicing organisation, Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd, to plan the conduct of the study in a collaborative and culturally-sensitive manner in accordance with:

- ethical requirements relating to the conduct of research in Indigenous Australian contexts;
- the expressed wishes of local community members.

The role of Sylvia, Raymond and Troy was to informally interview local Indigenous people. They played a valuable role in assisting participants to understand what the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Project and this evaluation were about. This was crucial in obtaining participants' informed consent to be interviewed, particularly in ensuring that people understood that their participation in the project was entirely voluntary. Their involvement also reduced the risk of inadvertent misinterpretation of participants' comments that is always present when a non-Indigenous researcher is working in a cross-cultural context. Perhaps most importantly the involvement of Sylvia, Raymond and Troy helped to build trust in this study because they were already well known to local people. Their pre-existing relationships and networks provided a useful point of connection and engagement with the people who agreed to be interviewed.

2.2 Information Collection

Three data collection sources have been drawn upon in conducting this case study: a site visit to Hervey Bay, interviews with stakeholders and documentary sources. Each is discussed in turn.

Site Visits

A visit to the study area by researcher John Scougall took place between June 28 and July 2 2004. It involved attendance as an observer at a three day Indigenous Leadership Summit followed by two days of consultations with representatives of agencies involved in Indigenous affairs in the region to hear their perspectives.

The site visit was very informative. It provided background information about the project and assisted the process of triangulating (i.e. confirming) data collected from other sources such as documents and interviews. It also helped to identify and clarify the particular issues that needed to be addressed in this report.



A final site visit was undertaken in January 2005 to provide feedback to Dhugamin on the findings and conclusions of the case study. This provided a final opportunity to check that the local community was comfortable with the content of this report and to rectify any misinterpretations. It also provided a valuable opportunity to discuss 'where to from here' in respect of future Indigenous capacity building initiatives in the region, especially opportunities to build upon the achievements of this project.

Interviews

A total of twenty-five Indigenous people (seventeen men and eight women) from Hervey Bay and nearby Maryborough were interviewed individually using a semi-structured approach. The interviews were conducted over the period July 2 2004 - July 16 2004. They focused on hearing local community views about the leadership training that had been provided and local views about what still needed to happen to further raise the capacity and wellbeing of Indigenous people in the area.

All interviews with project participants were conducted with their informed consent. Most lasted about half an hour. No information of a personal or confidential nature was collected. The interviews were not taped because prior research experience in remote Aboriginal contexts suggests that recording is often treated with suspicion and can inhibit free and open discussion. Detailed notes were taken and written up in a journal. The interviewers received some on-the-job interview technique training and practice from researcher, John Scougall, prior to commencing their fieldwork.

In planning the interview process we were conscious of the central place that 'right' relationships play in facilitating the conduct of social research in Indigenous contexts. As previously mentioned, the use of local interviewers was considered necessary to engender trust in the process and to enable the interviewees to talk freely. The risk of misinterpreting what people said would also have been greater if the interviews had been conducted by 'outsiders' who were not familiar with the context.

The original intention had been to employ one local Indigenous person to undertake the interviews with local people. However in response to the views of local Indigenous people it was decided that:

- the interviews should be undertaken by a man and a women working together (Sylvia and Troy);
- a young person should be added to the team to enhance the capacity to engage with youth (Raymond).

It is for these reasons that all of the interviews with local Indigenous community participants were undertaken and recorded by Sylvia, Raymond and Troy working together.

The interviews provided participants with an opportunity to reflect upon where things were at in their community, what had been achieved to date, and what needed to happen to build capacity in the future.



Document Review

The case study has been informed by information contained in project files and policy documents held in the Brisbane office of FaCS. These files contained project application and approval documentation, project progress reports, general correspondence and file notes. These documentary sources were used to:

- provide background information about the region;
- provide specific data about the project;
- provide relevant information about Strategy policy;
- triangulate (confirm) data collected from other sources (i.e. the site visit and interviews);
- identify particular issues and concerns relevant to the project.

Project documentation was accessed on the authority of FaCS. Under contractual arrangements with RMIT, FaCS assesses and approves the involvement of everyone employed on the National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. Once such approval has been granted, the researcher may access relevant departmental records, subject to certain confidentiality provisions.

2.3 Analysis and Reporting

Every effort has been made to privilege local Indigenous voices and perspectives in the conduct of this study. The primary focus of the fieldwork was on hearing what local people who participated in this project think about this initiative and the way in which it had been carried out. All of the information collected has been analysed and reported in a manner that seeks to give priority to their views and experiences.

Some quotations, generally without attribution to specific individuals, have been drawn from interviews and documents to add depth, richness and authenticity to the analysis contained in this report. These are not extensive because the interviews were not taped and written notes had to be relied upon. Recorded observations and documentary sources were also used as supporting evidence to help build a comprehensive picture of the project.

The dissemination of this case study report is at the discretion of FaCS. However it is recommended that copies of the report be made available as a resource to:

- all organisations and individuals participating in this study;
- FaCS staff at a policy and project level;
- other agencies involved in policy formulation and/or program delivery relevant to Indigenous leadership development and capacity building;
- community organisations that may be interested in conducting a similar project.



2.4 Ethical Issues

The conduct of this study has been subject to strict ethical standards and principles. The RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee approved the case study prior to its commencement. In accordance with established practice in relation to all research undertaken in Indigenous Australian contexts, the NHMRC document *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research* also informed our consideration of ethical issues related to this study. Furthermore other relevant research ethical protocols and guidelines were examined.

Initial telephone contact in relation to this proposed case study was made by researcher John Scougall with the then Coordinator of Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd, Davena Munro, and with the Brisbane based FaCS Project Officer. This was followed by a preliminary visit to Hervey Bay in April 2004. The purpose of this visit was to develop the case study proposal and to negotiate the specific objectives of the study. Formal approval to proceed with the evaluation was subsequently sought from, and granted in writing by, both the governing committee of Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd and by FaCS in Canberra.

All participants in the study were provided with a 'Plain English Statement' informing them about the study. They were advised that:

- their involvement in this study was entirely voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time and that, if they wished, they could also withdraw any unprocessed information that they may have previously supplied;
- the source of any particular comment quoted in the case study report would not be revealed;
- the information collected from the interviews would not be used for any purpose other than the National Evaluation of the Strategy;
- all information collected would be securely stored by the consultants in a locked filing cabinet during the study and passed to the RMIT University (CIRCLE) for secure storage on completion of the evaluation;
- participation in this study would not prejudice any current or future applications for assistance from FaCS;
- all responses would be kept confidential (subject to legal constraints);
- participants could contact the Human Research Ethics Committee at RMIT in the event that they had any concerns about any aspect of this Study, and to assist this process they were provided with a contact name, telephone number and postal address at RMIT University.

The 'Plain Language Statement' further assured participants that:

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) a court order is produced, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

The information contained in the Plain Language Statement and the content of the Prescribed Consent Form were explained by the interviewers to make sure that people understood what they are agreeing to do when they consenting to be interviewed.



3 Context

3.1 Wide Bay Burnett Region

The Wide Bay Burnett region in south-east Queensland has a total population of about 236,248 which accounts for about 6.47% of the state population (personal communication, FaCS Brisbane office based on most recent Census). The main provincial centres in the region are Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie and Kingaroy. The proportion of the population who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is generally very low across most of the region, with the exception of the Cherbourg Aboriginal community near Kingaroy which has an Indigenous population of about 1100.

The region is bounded by the Shires of Burnett and Monto in the north, Eidsvold in the west, and Cooloola and Nanango to the south. To the east lies the Pacific Ocean and K'gari (Fraser Island). The region encompasses some twenty local government areas, however fifty-nine percent of the regional population is concentrated in just three; the provincial cities of Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Bundaberg.

The regional population has a pronounced aged profile because of two factors:

- in-migration of retirees to coastal centres;
- out-migration of young people from stagnant rural economies in the hinterland due to a range of factors including the deregulation of the dairy industry.

The overall regional population growth rate is projected to be gradual, with the notable exception of coastal centres that are expected to continue their current pattern of rapid growth.

The Wide Bay Burnett region emerges as generally 'highly disadvantaged' in the FaCS Targeting Plan for the State of Queensland (2001). This is primarily because of the extent of unemployment (especially youth unemployment), low income levels and the high incidence of single parent families. Of the region's twenty shires, fourteen are classified as 'highly disadvantaged' (including Hervey Bay), four as 'disadvantaged', one as 'moderately disadvantaged' and only one as 'advantaged'. This classification relies entirely on statistical analysis of Census data that FaCS acknowledges does contain some flaws.

Social issues and gaps in human service provision are apparent right across this region. Community organisations and all levels of government acknowledge that a more coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery is required i.e. more flexible funding arrangements, improved teamwork and less territoriality.

FaCS identified a need for more early intervention and prevention services in areas such as life skills education, parenting programs and specialist counseling services (family counseling, drug and alcohol counseling, child sexual abuse counseling and financial counseling). FaCS noted with concern that within this region there are almost no services that can provide any form of sustained long-term intervention with dysfunctional families.



Service delivery issues and the gaps identified in the provision of services that impact on the regional Indigenous population are similar to those that affect the mainstream populace. Particular priorities identified are the need for:

- family support programs including parenting, relationship education, and support services for grandparents who have carer responsibilities ;
- leadership programs for children, youth, professional workers and Elders;
- education of mainstream agencies about Indigenous issues and processes;
- the development of positive working relationships and networks between Indigenous organisations and mainstream service providers.

To address some of these issues in the Indigenous sector, a regional partnership network, known as the Wide Bay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Group and Human Services Network, has been established. Government agencies involved include FaCS, Centrelink and Queensland Health.

3.2 Hervey Bay

This section of the report outlines the demographics of Hervey Bay, describes the local economy and highlights the main social issues in the area.

Hervey Bay has a population of about 50,000, with a further 25,000 residents in the nearby City of Maryborough, located 37 kilometres inland on the Mary River.

Over the last thirty years Hervey Bay has been one of Australia's fastest growing cities. In 1976 the population was only about 10,000. By 2021 it is projected to reach 75,000, with the biggest gains being in the retirement and pre-retirement age groups (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 11-12). The area already has an aged population profile, with an average age of 41 years. Most of the population growth is due to inward migration from interstate and from inland areas of Queensland.

According to the 2001 Census, the Indigenous population of Hervey Bay was 955, accounting for 2.3% of the population (477 males and 478 females). The Indigenous population of the area is growing rapidly due to both inward migration and natural increase arising from a high Indigenous birth rate. The 1991 Census estimated the Indigenous population to be just 344 people (1991 Census). Five years later it had almost doubled rising to 611 (1996 Census). As a result of these demographic changes, the local Indigenous population now encompasses both local Butchella traditional owners and an equally substantial group of 'newcomers'. It is noted, for instance, that some families from the large Aboriginal community of Cherbourg near Kingaroy have moved to Hervey Bay in recent years.

The Indigenous population as a proportion of the total population of Hervey Bay is also growing. At the 1996 Census Indigenous people comprised 1.8% of the population, but by 2001 this had risen to 2.3%.

The local economy is primarily based on tourism and retirees. The region attracts somewhere between 230,000-300,000 tourists per annum due to its proximity to Brisbane, the natural sub-tropical environment and the year-round warm climate. The main attractions are whale-watching tours, the natural values of the World Heritage listed Fraser Island and fishing. Historically Hervey Bay was a family holiday destination. In the last twenty years it has also become a popular destination for international backpackers.



Unemployment in the Hervey Bay area is in the vicinity of 10% of the labour force, with a youth unemployment rate of about 16%. Both rates are well above national levels. The rate of long-term unemployment is also disproportionately high, especially for Indigenous peoples. For many Indigenous people in this region the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) – a long running ‘work for the dole’ initiative – is realistically their only source of potential employment.

The extent of unemployment reflects the fact that this region lacks a broad industry base. In recent years there have been some successful efforts to diversify the local economy and, as a result, the level of unemployment is now falling in accordance with the national trend. Education services are one example of an increasingly important new industry, most notably the establishment of a University of Southern Queensland campus includes the Indigenous Buallum Jarl-Bah Higher Education Centre.

This area has a higher proportion of low-income earners than any other comparable area in Queensland, with more than half of the population earning less than \$200/week. This reflects the lack of employment opportunities, a high incidence of single parent families and a high number of retirees who are no longer in the workforce. Poverty has certain flow-on effects such as lack of private transport leading to an increased likelihood of social isolation.

For many years affordable property prices helped to fuel the population growth of this area. This is no longer the case. Housing prices and rents have risen exponentially in recent years in line with the national trend. As a result of the escalation of prices, “Hervey Bay is in crisis with regard to housing for newcomers seeking to rent and those on low incomes” (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 28). Insufficient facilities offering accommodation for youth pose a particular problem.

Rapid population growth, the relative lack of economic opportunities and low income levels have given rise to numerous social issues that had previously been virtually unknown in this area. These include a high incidence of family dysfunction, a large number of children and youth at risk, heavy demand for emergency relief services, and until recently growing crime statistics (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 7). Social isolation is also an issue for many new residents who have moved to the area and away from the support of their extended family networks.

The Indigenous population is not immune from these same social issues that impact on the mainstream population. This means that a lack of affordable rental accommodation, lack of meaningful employment opportunities, inadequate access to public transport services, social isolation, family dysfunction, children and youth at risk and crime are also major issues for most people in the Indigenous population as well. However these factors impact more severely on the Indigenous community because of factors such as low education standards, lack of professional skills and prejudice from some in the wider community.

The rapid growth of Hervey Bay has also left some members of the local Indigenous community overwhelmed by the process of rapid social change. In particular some feel that their cultural heritage and central place in the identity of this area is in danger of being swamped.



In-migration and tourism have resulted in growing diversity, cultural richness innovation and enthusiasm in the local community, and this is a source of real strength and sustainability in Hervey Bay. While we have actively embraced these changes, we have still to do considerable work to properly acknowledge and embrace the history that was here before Hervey Bay grew – the rich history and knowledge of the area’s Aboriginal and Islander communities... Hervey Bay has a long and rich Aboriginal and Islander cultural history, and we have local Indigenous residents whose families have always lived here. They carry the knowledge of local history and our unique natural environment. We need to find ways to work together to protect our natural resources, and to more publicly acknowledge the cultural significance of places in Hervey Bay – for local residents as well as visitors. People want the Hervey Bay community to be one built on respect for all members. (Hervey Bay City Council 2003:11, 22)

One of the strategic goals of the Hervey Bay City Council is to promote community cohesion by fostering acceptance and reconciliation, and a sense of belonging and identity. It is noted that the City Council supports the annual Yag’ubi Multicultural Festival celebrating community diversity, is committed to undertaking a cultural heritage survey and that it is also seeking funding sources to establish an Interpretive Centre.

In summary the major social issues impacting on the local Indigenous population are:

- behaviour of some youth e.g. truancy;
- alienation from the education system;
- lack of cultural sensitivity and respect displayed by some sectors of the mainstream community;
- housing shortages;
- pathways to education and training;
- loss of self-respect and dignity;
- substance abuse;
- all forms of violence (family violence, inter-personal, suicide and self harm, child abuse);
- child care and protection;
- poor health and wellbeing.

Recently the Queensland Government has announced several initiatives that are directly relevant to many of these local issues. These include:

- the construction of new public housing, as well as upgrades for low income tenant families;
- planned improvements to services in the areas of health, employment and disability services;
- reforms to the child protection system and the establishment/expansion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childcare agencies;



- new alternative care arrangements for young people who are unsuited to conventional foster care;
- new 'Smart State' programs intended to improve education and training outcomes.

The extent to which these initiatives will have a positive impact on social and economic wellbeing of Indigenous people in Hervey Bay remains to be seen, but they do create new opportunities for engagement between community and government.

3.3 Mainstream Human Service Sector

This section of the report provides a brief overview of mainstream services in Hervey Bay that are particularly relevant to the needs of the Indigenous community. Indigenous-specific services are discussed in the following section.

In the Hervey Bay area there are a broad range of human services working to build capacity, social capital and resilience through the adoption of preventative early intervention approaches that address local issues (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 5). However, rapid population growth has placed many local community organisations under considerable pressure and consequently "service development lags behind demand; many funded services are small and struggle with viability issues, many cannot keep pace with demand and have little capacity to respond to crisis situations" (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 32). Services are overstretched and service coordination is problematic. Furthermore there are some gaps in the service delivery network in the area, most notably the absence of a women's refuge in Hervey Bay.

Community Connect Fraser Coast (formerly known as Community Solutions Hervey Bay Association Inc) is a collaborative local response to this issue that commenced in 1996 and is funded by the Queensland Government's Department of Communities. Effectively it is a kind of community development board. Its role is to:

- assist in keeping services open and in establishing new ones in areas of identified priority need (e.g. the FaCS funded Reconnect service for homeless youth);
- bring community services together to develop joint proposals (e.g. the introduction of a 'Continuum of Care' case conferencing model of integrated family care;
- facilitate the co-location of community services.

According to the local government authority, Community Connect Fraser Coast "has become recognised across the State as an innovative service developer, in terms of its unique partnership between Council, Government and community, and its ability to develop and manage integrated service responses, and is now approached by funding bodies to establish new services" (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 9). Nevertheless it does appear that there is still some way to go in developing partnership arrangements with the Indigenous sector, as discussed later in this case study.



The Hervey Bay City Council has adopted a participatory and inclusive approach to social planning through its Social Plan Committee and through the regular conduct of community forums. In recent years the Council staff have built a supportive relationship with many local community organisations. City Council staff lobby on behalf of local community organisations and assist with funding submissions. Consideration is currently being given to the development of training kits to assist the work of members of management committees. Furthermore formal Memorandum of Understanding have been developed between the City Council and some community service organisations, although not yet with the Indigenous sector.

Actions, or strategies, seek not only to further community's wishes, but also to do this in a way that builds community capacity (develops skills, organisations, resources and commitment to improve community wellbeing) and which build social capital (trust and a common sense of 'civic' responsibility)... Council works in partnership with community organisations and aggressively seeks funds to add value to rates investments to assist sporting and community groups to develop facilities and services. (Hervey Bay City Council 2003: 17, 30)

In recent years the City Council has begun to consciously work to build links with the local Indigenous community. Council has committed itself to the following specific actions:

- having an annual schedule of forums with Elders to discuss local issues and concerns ;
- jointly addressing development issues that impact on Native Title and cultural heritage;
- facilitating the involvement of the Indigenous community in planning processes;
- working with Indigenous people to seek funding for family events and cultural activities;
- investigating employment opportunities for local Indigenous people in areas such as environmental protection and interpretive facilities (Hervey Bay City Council 2004: 23);
- on-going cultural awareness training of council staff.

Another prominent local organisation is the Hervey Bay Family Centre that was established in 1999. It aims to empower families to identify and resolve issues that impact adversely on their lives. Services offered include parenting support, in-home support, family therapy, and child therapy. The Parent Aide Program addresses the needs of young parents with children under five years of age trying to cope with difficulties such as isolation, lack of transport, ill health, disability, financial management and housing. It endeavours to provide both practical and emotional support. FaCS funded this service under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.



The Family Centre is testimony to a truly collaborative approach, with contributors including State Government, Local Government, Service Clubs, other service providers, local businesses and tradespeople, Greencorps and young people on community service orders... The Hervey Bay Family Centre has become known across the state as a model for bringing services together, value adding with limited resources, and for its unique focus on strengthening and supporting families. (Hervey Bay City Council, 2003: 44)

The Hervey Bay Community Health Centre provides a broad range of health and wellbeing services including a school health nurse, social worker, alcohol and drug information, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, paediatric services, and home help through its family services team. The service employs one Indigenous Health/Drug/Alcohol Worker. It also delivers a Positive Parenting Program that aims to provide parents with the management skills and knowledge necessary to build and maintain a positive relationship with their children and encourage desirable patterns of behaviour by parents and children experiencing behavioural difficulties.

The Wide Bay Burnett Area Youth Justice Service has been a much-valued recent addition to the human services sector in this region. It was established in 2002 as a hub service to deliver a range of programs for young people subject to juvenile justice orders in order to assist them to successfully complete their community service obligations. The service seeks to address behavioural problems, develop life skills relating to living harmoniously with others, and it also seeks to engender respect for people and property. Programs include:

- a Graffiti Solution Program involving the refurbishment of bus shelters undertaken in collaboration with the Hervey Bay City Council;
- the provision of alternative education and training for youth at risk provided in association with the Glendyne Youth Training Centre (affiliated with the Baptist Church);
- crime prevention work undertaken in association with local schools.

The Service has grown rapidly and now employs seventeen staff, about half of whom are Aboriginal people including the CEO. The service has developed close working relationships with the Indigenous community in Hervey Bay and with a range of other relevant service providers. The 'drop out' rate from its programs is reported to be low and there has been a significant twenty-five percent fall in the number of juvenile offenders placed on court orders since the inception of the service (personal communication with CEO). As a result this service has quickly developed a reputation for 'best practice' in the field of juvenile justice.

There are a great many other mainstream community organisations working in the area that provide family and community services. Those with particular relevance to the Indigenous community include:

- the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre offering financial counselling and occasional care services;
- the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) which offers school holiday programs for youth, after school programs, and classes in fields such as art, craft and music;
- Fraser Coast Tenancy and Advocacy Service;



- Legal Aid Queensland;
- Wide Bay Burnett Dispute Resolution Centre;
- Relationships Australia (counselling services);
- Fraser Coast Renal Support Group.

There are also playgroups, a toy library, disability services, substance abuse services, a Home and Community Care program, emergency accommodation and adult literacy programs. At the time of the site visit undertaken for this case study, Queensland Health was running a 'Rumble in the Jungle' youth project on the outskirts of Maryborough designed to build esteem, increase awareness of substance abuse issues, and enhance life skills. It is understood that there was a high level of Indigenous involvement.

Although all these services described above are directly relevant to many of the needs of the local Indigenous population, anecdotal information received during consultations with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations suggests that access by Indigenous people is generally low. Given that the local Indigenous population represents only 2.3% of the total population, in most cases it is not realistic to expect that most community services could ever be replicated in the Indigenous sector. This means that achieving improvements to service delivery for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is inextricably bound up with enhancing the cultural security, and ensuring better access by Indigenous people to the existing network of mainstream community services. Unfortunately many of these are generally already overstretched and struggling.

3.4 Indigenous Service Sector

This section of the report briefly highlights some of the impressive achievements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations in Hervey Bay. It also outlines current activities within the Indigenous sector.

Amongst the local Butchella and other Indigenous populations there is a strong sense of pride in what this community has achieved through hard work and determination over the past two decades. Several participants during the Leadership Summit and in the subsequent interviews took the opportunity to acknowledge the community contribution of 'Aunty' Francis Gala who "did a hard and good job to get things where they are today" (Interview).

Specific achievements identified by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples are as follows:

- The resurgence of Butchulla (traditional and contemporary) cultural practices in recent years:
 - Butchella language classes;
 - the reknowned Butchella dance troupe;
 - NAIDOC Week celebrations e.g. Black Magic Dance Talent Quest;
 - art and craft activities.



- The establishment of several local Aboriginal organisations that deliver services to the local community:
 - Management of community rental housing by the Koorawinga Aboriginal Corporation;
 - Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd which provides employment and training services;
 - Ka'lang aged care facility;
 - Wandinity RAPASS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation.
- Obtaining leasehold title to land on K'gari within the Fraser Island National Park.
- The establishment of the Koorawinga Scrub Hill Community Farm.
- The development of youth projects such as vacation care, Ghundu's Kids and 'Wanna Be Deadly'.
- The recent establishment of two Indigenous men's groups in Hervey Bay.
- Growing involvement in the tourism industry e.g. bush tucker tours, dance performances, art and craft.
- The beginning of a more constructive relationship with relevant mainstream organisations and more effective networking.
- Numerous individual and team sporting achievements.
- Participation in the inaugural Young Indigenous Leaders Program in 2003 by two young people from Hervey Bay (Juanita Mason and Aaron Henderson).

These achievements provide a broad platform of identified strengths (skills, ability, confidence, resources and capabilities) upon which this community can build.

Korrawinga Aboriginal Corporation

The Korrawinga Aboriginal Corporation was the first Aboriginal organisation established in Hervey Bay back in the early 1980's. Although Hervey Bay is the ancestral homeland of the Butchella people, membership of Koorawinga has always been open to all Indigenous people in the area and the right of all members of the community to have a say in community affairs is respected. In 1984 Korrawinga purchased a 67.5 acre property in an elevated position on Scrub Hill overlooking Hervey Bay and beyond to K'gari (Fraser Island). There are five houses on the property used to provide community rental accommodation. In 1995 the Korrawinga Scrub Hill Community Farm was established on the property. Koorawinga has also been instrumental in the establishment of Ka'lang, an aged-care facility for local Aboriginal people.

Korrawinga is also widely accredited with enabling a substantial process of cultural re-awakening to occur amongst Butchella people, most notably through the conduct of language classes. The value of teaching youth their cultural traditions has been stressed. Both the local community and the FaCS Project Officer see this process as having a central and on-going role to play in contributing to improved self-esteem, confidence, family relationships and sound values. The intention is that all activities and initiatives be undertaken within a cultural context.



A group of Indigenous men associated with Koorawinga have recently established an active men's group. Another Indigenous body addressing the needs of Indigenous men, known as the Wandiny Rapass Mens Group, has also recently started in Hervey Bay with the expressed purpose of 'building each other up'.

Dhugamin CDEP

Dhugamin CDEP Pty Ltd was incorporated in 1999 under Queensland state corporation law. Dhugamin is owned by Koorawinga Aboriginal Corporation, the organisations are co-located and they have always worked closely together. There is a CDEP workforce of about fifty and an annual wages budget of about \$1.4m. In addition Dhugamin CDEP oversees CDEP projects in the towns of Gin Gin and Childers, also located in the Wide Bay-Burnett region. Administrative staff includes a CDEP Coordinator, an Assistant Coordinator, an Administrative Assistant and a bookkeeper.

There is also a Farm Manager who bears overall responsibility for the operation of Koorawinga Scrub Hill Community Farm. The farm has been (almost literally) 'carved' out of what was previously solid rock that was thought to be almost incapable of growing anything commercial. This achievement is a source of local pride.

CDEP activities undertaken on the property include:

- the production and sale of soaps and cosmetics from natural 'bush' resources;
- art and craft production e.g. woodwork, didgeridoos;
- market gardening and free-range egg production;
- the production of hothouse cut flowers;
- tours of the farm for tourists including a 'bush tucker' walk;
- traditional dance performances.

Dhugamin is widely regarded as one of the most effective CDEP's in Australia and other Indigenous groups often visit to raise their awareness of the potential scope of this program. The organisation has also demonstrated sound project management skills and an administrative capacity that is not always present in community organisations. In 2002/2003 the organisation received an unqualified audit report.

Other activities undertaken by Dhugamin include the operation of a kiosk, kitchen and child-care facility to service the needs of its workforce. There is a partially constructed sport and recreation facility and Dhugamin has recently been successful in obtaining funding for a Sport and Recreation Officer position. Dhugamin is also the auspicing body for the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training program that is the subject of this case study. This additional responsibility appears to have placed some added administrative pressure on an already 'full on' office with overstretched management capacity.



Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Support Program

The regional Wide Bay Burnett Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Support Program (IFVSP) is based in Bundaberg, 120 kilometres north of Hervey Bay. It was established for the three-year period 1 July 2002-30 June 2005 as part of the Stronger Families Fund, a Strategy initiative. This preventative early intervention project advocates on behalf of, engages with, and provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth at risk in the 16- to 30-year age range. In particular it seeks to facilitate youth access to culturally secure and appropriate services and programs. The IFVSP service advocates the adoption of a 'whole of family' approach that simultaneously works with parents and children. It is keen to expand its activities by initiating a pilot project with a few families in the region. The IFVSP already runs a healing program for the victims of sexual abuse elsewhere in the region, but not in Hervey Bay.

A key initiative of IFVSP has been the 'Sistagirl' network. The aim is to establish support groups for young women throughout the region to develop leadership, facilitate the identification of needs and to foster a sense of local ownership over 'local solutions to local problems'. One of these groups has been established at Hervey Bay in collaboration with the Koorawinga Aboriginal Corporation and in nearby Maryborough there is also a Young Mothers Support Group. The 'Sistagirl' project is widely credited with raising the confidence of young Indigenous women and enabling them to be more outspoken. The IFVSP is currently lending its support to the establishment of a regional Young Indigenous Women's Association.

Another IFVSP initiative called 'Murri Chicks Talking Up' was held in Hervey Bay in May 2004. This was a three-day forum developed, organised and facilitated by young local Indigenous women. Key strategies employed were peer education and the use of role models. Issues discussed included domestic violence, sexual abuse, educational opportunities and cultural issues. Representatives of key service provider organisations also participated. Approximately forty-five Indigenous women attended this event. The Office for Women in the Queensland Premier's Department Office assisted with funding, supplementing the Stronger Families Fund input from FaCS. The IFVSP is now lending its support to encouraging the running of a similar regional event for young men called 'Butterboys'.

The Australian Institute for Family Studies (AIFS) worked with the IFVSP to develop its capacity for self-evaluation. Like all Stronger Families Fund projects, the IFVSP was assigned a member of the AIFS Learning Exchange Training and Support Team to assist the process. AIFS provided a participatory action research framework, practical ideas on how to provide family support, advice on how existing approaches might be improved, some professional development and counsel to project staff and guidance in identifying the lessons learnt from the experience of delivering the project so far.

'Wanna be Deadly'

The 'Wanna be Deadly' project is a crime prevention initiative directed towards young Indigenous people at risk in Hervey Bay. The project is an extension of the 'Diverting Youth from Wayward Thinking and Behaviour through Physical Sporting Activities' project initiated in 2001 by the Hervey Bay City Council in response to community concerns about crime, vandalism and youth 'on the streets with nothing to do'. Factors believed to contribute to youth issues in the region include school truancy, boredom and conflict with family.



The Hervey Bay City Council funds project administration costs, donates the building where the project is based and provides the salary of an Indigenous Youth Worker to coordinate activities. The Mental Health Promotion Program of the Wide Bay Public Health Unit also supports the project.

'Wanna be Deadly ' is oversighted by a Steering Committee that includes representation from the Koorawinga Aboriginal Corporation. The project is linked into a broader Youth Sector Network that involves regular meetings of all community workers involved in youth work in this area. It is also affiliated with the Wide Bay Burnett Indigenous Youth Council.

The main activities of 'Wanna Be Deadly' involve participation in sport and music. There are touch football, basketball and beach volleyball competitions and sporting carnivals and coaching panels are held periodically. Sport is seen as an especially valuable way in which to engage Indigenous youth. The benefits of a sporting program are seen as broadly encompassing:

- improving confidence, self-esteem and self-belief, particularly in young people;
- the development of social interaction and communication skills;
- learning respect (for team mates, for coaches, for umpires and for property);
- improving fitness, health and stamina;
- building relationships with family and peers;
- the development of leadership qualities.

This approach accords with the available literature which suggests that physical activity programs are generally effective means of promoting the personal and social development of young people. It is also in line with the view that leadership is best developed through participation in real life experiences and from practice, rather than in a formal learning environment.

Other project activities include family and school visits, raising awareness about education pathways, the development of life skills, health promotion carried out in association with local health providers and an 'Adopt an Elder' initiative intended to repair the sometimes damaged relationship between youth and the older members of the Indigenous community. The 'Wanna be Deadly' project has also lent support to the Sistagirl initiative and the work of the Area Youth Justice Service that were discussed earlier.

Several participants in this study commented favourably on 'Wanna Be Deadly'. The project reports both an increasing level of Indigenous youth participation and growing parental involvement in youth activities as evidenced by attendance at games, parents helping out at training and social interaction at events such as BBQ's. 'Wanna be Deadly' is widely regarded as a successful initiative.



As team players, they have to learn discipline and communication, and ways to manage their anger; skills which are of great benefit at school and home as well. This is borne out by feedback from schools regarding improved school performance by young people involved in the program... [Youth Workers] have seen great gains for young people in terms of self esteem, achievement, and values of working together, taking responsibility, and addressing personal issues... the greatest gains appear to be for young people who have experienced difficulty or conflict, but have reasonable family support to reinforce the gains made by the program. Immediate impacts are less evident for those young people who have extremely dysfunctional families. These families are difficult to engage, and largely beyond the scope of the program. (Hervey Bay City Council, 2003: 14)

There is still much to be done in the youth field in Hervey Bay. This project would like to expand its activities to incorporate the conduct of youth camps, but is currently hampered by limited resources, particularly the lack of access to a four-wheel drive 'troop carrier' vehicle. The provision of transport is seen as crucially important. Funding is also being sought for an additional position for a full-time crime prevention worker.



4 Background

4.1 Indigenous Leadership Development

The development of Aboriginal leadership capacity is a policy issue that has now come into sharp focus. A Parliamentary inquiry in 2004 concluded that "Effective leadership is crucial to building and maintaining the capacities of Indigenous communities, as it is to all Australian communities" (House of Representatives, 2004: 136). It recommended (amongst other things) "the incorporation of capacity building into the design and implementation of programs delivering services to Indigenous communities, including funds to enable mentoring of community members and organizations" (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2004: xxix). It further argued that government should "continue to invest in and further develop appropriate training and mentoring programs in partnership with Indigenous people ..." (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2004: xxix).

Leadership is essentially about providing direction, but there are a range of views about the knowledge, skills and attributes required in a leader, about what is the most appropriate leadership style, and about different theories of leadership. These perspectives have directly and indirectly influenced the development of Indigenous leadership projects in Australia.

The House of Representatives (2004) report makes the observation that leadership needs to be seen as legitimate. It notes the damage that is sometimes done by the inappropriate external recognition of 'leaders' who, in the eyes of the local Indigenous community, may lack legitimacy, respect, trust and authority.

Indigenous leaders face many challenges including:

- the demands of continually operating bi-culturally at the interface between mainstream and Indigenous societies;
- the sheer scale of the family and social issues that need to be addressed;
- the risk of 'burnout' that is ever present when people feel overburdened.

A submission to the House of Representatives (2004) inquiry noted that:

Individuals in communities ... are loaded up with responsibilities – sitting on councils and committees, translating at meetings and responding to many competing demands. These few people are often targeted by external bodies and agencies because of their skills and become the main means of communication and 'consultation with communities' ... (The Fred Hollows Foundation, 2004: 36)

The House of Representatives (2004) report commended the work currently being done by the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC). This facility has been established to develop leadership knowledge, skills and understandings. The Centre offers both certificate and diploma courses. It is primarily funded by corporate and philanthropic sources, most notably the Citigroup Foundation. In 2001 the AILC received funding from FaCS through the Strategy to deliver leadership certificate course training in six regional centres. The purpose is to make leadership training more accessible to Indigenous Australians. It is noted that the AILC had no involvement in this project.



4.2 Leadership Development Projects

Around Australia there are several projects and different approaches to the development of Indigenous leadership. A particular focus is on the development of the leadership capacity of young people to enable them to positively contribute to their communities. This arises out of the recognition that “much of the rural and remote younger generation may have neither the knowledge nor the skill to assume leadership roles” (House of Representatives, 2004: 138). There is also a growing appreciation of the need to spread the leadership load more broadly.

By increasing the capacity of existing and future leaders, and increasing the number of leaders, the load could be spread over more people and this could potentially increase the likelihood of leadership roles being an attractive option, rather than a burden. (House of Representatives, 2004: 142)

A FaCS Project Officer in Brisbane made the point that another important benefit of increasing the number of Indigenous leaders involved in community activities is that it provides the leadership group with access to a wider range of skills than would otherwise be the case.

Some important examples of Australian leadership development projects are as follows.

Rumbalara Football/Netball Club

The Rumbalara Football/Netball Club in Shepparton, Victoria used sport as a point of engagement with young people (House of Representatives, 2004:140). Strategies employed include the use of role models such as football stars, regular contact with strong male role models out of recognition that many male participants have grown up in single parent families without a father figure, and a peer educator approach which actively uses earlier participants to work with new ones. This project appears to have many features in common with the ‘Wanna Be Deadly’ project that is already operating in Hervey Bay and which was discussed earlier in this report.

Fairbridge

Fairbridge located in the south west of WA is a large non-profit and non-Indigenous organisation that provides youth services to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The Fairbridge Pathways for Young People Program received Strategy funding through FaCS. It also attracted diverse support from other government, corporate and philanthropic sources. The project adopted a ‘whole-of-person’ model to foster the development of an active, non-traditional style of leadership. The aim was to provide youth with greater choices and options in their lives. Key strategies employed included:

- outdoor adventure activities such as hiking, abseiling and rafting;
- building social competence and life skills through communal living and group learning activities such as music and art;
- the development of life skills such as teamwork, interpersonal communication, acceptance of personal responsibility, problem-solving and citizenship education;
- the involvement of participants and their families in program development and delivery.



Bilydar Leadership and Cultural Awareness Project

The Bilydar Leadership and Cultural Awareness Project, also located in the south west of WA, was a Strategy funded initiative based in the town of Pinjarra. It was initiated by members of the local Nyoongah Aboriginal community, and had been developed with the support of several local government and non-government agencies, many of which served on its broadly-based Project Advisory Committee. The project sought to enable young people to realise their full life potential by developing their leadership qualities and capacities in areas such as:

- cultural awareness;
- communication;
- group planning skills;
- dealing with conflict;
- health issues facing youth (such as substance abuse);
- knowledge of education, employment and training opportunities.

The recruitment of project participants was through schools, the Police, youth agencies, the Aboriginal community, the Department for Community Development, the Ministry of Justice, health agencies and youth centres. Strategies employed within the project included camping trips, the training of peers as mentors and role models, structured life skills training, and the use of guest speakers on topics identified by the participants.

Tomorrow's Leaders Camps

The Tomorrow's Leaders Camps project was a Darwin-based Strategy Indigenous initiative that sought to enhance the sense of self-worth and cultural identity of Indigenous participants. Strategies employed on the camping trips include the teaching of bush skills, the use of Elders as youth mentors, and the development of life skills in areas such as teamwork, self-control, coping strategies, self-confidence, cultural health and wellbeing. The emphasis was on giving participants a fun experience, as well as providing participants with strong male role models.

Lajamanu Horse Sports Project

The Lajamanu Horse Sports Project was a Strategy Indigenous project based in a remote community in the Northern Territory undertaken in partnership between the Lajamanu community and the NT Rural College. The project used the participants' interest in horses as a point of meaningful engagement with local youth. Project activities centre on learning to ride and the construction of stockyards. The project was reported to be beneficial in building relationships between youth and older men in the community (who still retain their horse skills and their knowledge of the pastoral industry). Through this project they were able to pass their knowledge and skills on to a younger generation. This was a source of community pride because it gave prominence and recognition to the skills of existing leaders.

These project examples are indicative of what is currently occurring elsewhere in Australia, rather than a comprehensive guide.



Common features shared by all of the projects described above are:

- the adoption of a preventative early intervention approach to youth issues;
- a grounding in community development and capacity building principles;
- a point of meaningful engagement with youth (eg sport, horses, camps, music);
- the use of peers as mentors and role models;
- linkages to health and wellbeing, education, training, employment and justice services;
- the raising of participant self-respect, confidence, self-esteem, motivation, knowledge and (above all) pride in Aboriginality;
- a focus on developing a positive value system within an Indigenous cultural context,
- the development of communication, teamwork, leadership, self reflection, problem solving and other life skills;
- encouragement of broader community involvement in the project.

All of these projects were built on a recognition that factors such as social isolation, marginalisation, feelings of powerlessness, poverty and recurring contact with the justice system make it difficult for many people to contribute to their communities. Many not only feel alienated from mainstream society, but also undervalued and unsupported by the Indigenous community. A lack of motivation, initiative, self-esteem, social competence and life skills are typically the end result. In part it is a recognition of these very same factors that has also driven the development of the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project. It also shares some features in common with these other leadership projects that have been undertaken elsewhere. However this project has not been developed in consultation or collaboration with any of these initiatives and does not appear to have been informed by experience elsewhere or by the leadership literature.

4.3 Initiation of the Hervey Bay Project

The purpose of the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project was to provide community members with opportunities to develop their leadership capacity. In this way the project sought to contribute to the building of a stronger, more self-reliant community.

The project was initiated because the local Indigenous community in Hervey Bay identified leadership training as an area of critical need if the community was to attain sustainable self-management. This was recognised at a community meeting attended by approximately fifty people representing a broad cross-section of the community – Elders, women, men, youth, CDEP employees, and representatives of Korrawinga, Dhugamin, Ka'lang and the United Ministries Church. It is clear from this and our own consultations undertaken as part of this evaluation that there was broad community support for this project and that it was community-driven from the start.



Specifically it was identified that there were too few leaders carrying too much load and that new leaders needed to be encouraged to come through from the younger generation. It was decided that a capacity building project was required directed towards those who were already involved, or had the potential to become involved, in assuming leadership roles within the local community. In particular women and youth were identified as priority groups that ought to be targeted by such a project. Specifically it was felt that many women and young people were keen to take a more active role in their communities and share more responsibility, but that they often lacked the confidence, knowledge and skills necessary to do so.

Leadership development was not the only area that was identified as being of critical importance. Local people at the meeting also saw a need for early intervention and preventative programs to support the development of parenting skills. Better links between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and existing mainstream community organisations were seen as the key to achieving this.

Another identified need was that of culturally-appropriate alternative education to provide access to higher education and employment opportunities. The aim was to provide a 'second chance' and to foster positive learning experiences for those who had experienced difficulties coping in the mainstream education system. Some saw an opportunity to further develop the Fraser Island lease to equip it with education and training facilities located within a cultural context. Particular services named as especially relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community included family counselling and anger management.

The final area that was prominent in the discussions was youth issues. Support for at risk youth, youth health and wellbeing services (especially substance abuse services) and the need to provide more support and tutoring for children to remain in the education system were all highlighted. Some also saw a need to foster positive social interaction between young people and Elders through a mentoring program to foster a healthy sense of contemporary cultural identity amongst young people.

The Dhugamin CDEP originally applied for FaCS funding for the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training project in April 2001. Project funding of \$46,182.40 (inclusive of GST) under the Potential Leadership in Local Communities program element of the Strategy was approved fifteen months later in July 2002. Originally the project was approved to run until 30 September 2003, but it was subsequently extended by FaCS to complete on 30 June 2004.

The funding was directed towards engaging consultant facilitators/trainers to deliver workshops designed to equip participants with knowledge, skills and understandings to enable their own community organisations to better manage their own affairs. Specific objectives identified in the original project documentation were:

- to enable participants to take a more active role in their community ;
- to skill up committee members;
- to enable emerging leaders to take on more responsibility;
- to create role models for others.



The intended outcomes were:

- the development of local leaders;
- improved confidence of participants;
- improved ability of women and youth to represent their communities;
- the transfer of skills to other committee members and volunteers;
- positive community activities and events;
- the development of greater social cohesion (i.e. communities working together);
- the establishment of an on-going program of leadership mentoring.

The extent to which these outcomes have been achieved is discussed in the 'Findings' of this report.

The first workshop was conducted on Aboriginal leasehold land on Fraser Island in September-October 2002. A local non-Indigenous private training provider (Fraser Coast Training) facilitated the workshop. This location was chosen because of its cultural significance to Butchella people and also because this environment is free from social distractions such as alcohol.

Approximately thirty Indigenous people attended the six-day event. Some of the participants were already active within Korrawinga or Dhugamin i.e. they were committee or staff members. Young people were also in attendance. The need to encourage further youth attendance at future workshops was identified as one of the key learnings to emerge from the review of this workshop.

The content was about developing some core competencies. Topics covered included assertiveness, managing emotions, communication and creative thinking. There was reference to some theoretical material such as Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'. Teaching/learning methodologies employed included experiential 'hands on' learning, presentations, use of reference resource materials, informal discussion and group work. The 'hands on' component was about practising submission-writing skills. Clearly in the limited time available it was not possible to develop any of these skills in any depth.

According to a report on the workshop by the facilitator:

It was an excellent workshop for almost a week with all participants turning up each and every morning... Real needs were identified and the skills and knowledge gained will enhance communities in the future – the visions and dreams shared assisted people in many ways and all began to realise the benefits of working together (within a team) – shared goals and the learning of assertiveness, listening skills, conflict resolution and mediation skills assisted in communication – better communication towards leadership skills. (FaCS project file)



One participant took a somewhat different view:

This course I believe was very informative and gave a great outlook for leadership within an organisation and the community. But speaking as an Indigenous person, I do not believe that the modules addressed certain sensitive issues related to working and being associated to an Indigenous community in today's society. I believe that an Indigenous person would have best delivered this type of leadership course and unfortunately I was not involved in the process of the appointment of the training provider.

(FaCS project file)

The governing committee and staff of Dhugamin also felt that the approach had not been as effective or as appropriate as they had hoped. The workshop had focused on the development of certain generic leadership skills. On reflection it was felt that it had not provided sufficient opportunities for community members to discuss the issues that were of central importance to local Indigenous people, especially strategies to build community cohesion. The feeling was that future leadership workshops would need to provide community members with greater opportunities to identify and speak about their concerns. It was also felt that an Indigenous facilitator would be in the best position to achieve this. After a long period of deliberation (during which time the approved duration of the project was extended by FaCS) the governing committee decided that a different approach to leadership development would be required in the future. Rather than only adopting a skills deficit approach, in future Dhugamin wanted to also challenge participants to think and act like leaders. Some nineteen months were to elapse before another leadership development activity was conducted. Staffing issues and changes within both Dhugamin and the FaCS office in Brisbane appear to have contributed to this. As a result throughout much of 2003 there was almost no contact between FaCS and the project. This may have contributed to the project losing momentum over this period.

4.4 Leadership Summit

The Hervey Bay Indigenous Leaders Development Summit was conducted over three days from 28 June to 30 June 2004 at the Susan River Homestead facility about fifteen kilometres from Hervey Bay on the Maryborough road. The purpose of the Summit was to empower participants with the potential to lead. Bundaberg-based Indigenous consultants, Graham and Debbie Tanner, were recruited to facilitate the Summit.

A process of pre-planning and consultation preceded the Summit. Three meetings were conducted over the April-June period of 2004 between the consultants and a small group of people associated with Dhugamin and Koorawinga to plan the content and processes of the Summit. These meetings identified what were to become key issues discussed at the Summit:

- the need for community healing and relationship building;
- the on-going detrimental effect of 'old baggage', community politics, negativity and internal community divisions;
- the importance of a strong sense of identity as an essential foundation for good leadership and personal stability (i.e. knowing who you are and where you come from).



It was decided that the focus of the Summit should be on providing participants with some leadership 'tools', rather than prescribing solutions to community problems. In terms of process it was decided that it was important that participants:

- be exposed to positive role models by creating opportunities for them to meet with actual and potential leaders;
- have opportunities to debrief about what had occurred in the past so that the process of healing could begin;
- be made aware of the standards of behaviour expected of a leader.

Dhugamin took responsibility for encouraging broad community attendance at the Summit and the provision of bus transport from Hervey Bay.

At the Summit the facilitators defined 'leadership' as: "The art of how to be effective and change the world we live in" (Summit Facilitator, Graham Tanner). The point was made that leadership is always essential to the achievement of positive social change. There was some discussion about how leadership is a concept that is often misunderstood, especially the meaning of leadership within an Indigenous context.

Leadership was explained as being primarily about embracing a particular value system. Participants were challenged to think and act like leaders and to serve as role models to guide and support others in their communities.

*Leadership is a privilege but with the privilege comes much responsibility.
If you aren't prepared to accept the responsibility, don't take the privilege.
(Graham Tanner).*

The following desired attributes of an Indigenous leader were identified progressively over the course of the three days.

- Someone who accepts responsibility for initiating and achieving change.
- Someone who exhibits integrity in all that they do (i.e. in personal interactions with family as well as in the public domain).
- Someone who can inspire and unleash a vision ("The best way to predict our future is to create it" – Graham Tanner).
- Someone with the ability to project confidence and influence others.
- Someone with a positive outlook and attitude ("long before it's an action, it's an attitude" – Graham Tanner).
- Someone with the capacity to build trust, bond, network and 'knit' the community together by embracing unity rather than division.
- Someone who displays diligence (i.e. consistency and perseverance).
- Someone who behaves in ways that are consistent with Indigenous values (e.g. compassion, forgiveness, sharing, caring).
- Someone who has control over their own emotions, especially anger and bitterness.
- Someone who follows through on their own commitments.
- Someone who is open to accepting constructive criticism.



- Someone who demonstrates wisdom in their choices, decisions and actions.
- Someone whose focus of attention is on the needs of people, rather than on personal power.

The Summit stressed the importance of realistically targeting those things that the community can address and implementing strategies that not only meet local expectations, but also build on community strengths and are within peoples abilities to perform i.e. “Let’s start small but not necessarily stay small... not creating a situation whereby we get our ambitions mixed up with our abilities” (Summit Facilitator, Graham Tanner).



5 Findings

5.1 Overview

This section outlines the findings in relation to the extent to which this project achieved the outcomes specified in the original FaCS documentation for the Hervey Bay Indigenous Community Leadership Training Project. These outcomes were:

- improved confidence of participants;
- improved ability of women and youth to represent their communities;
- the transfer of skills to other committee members and volunteers;
- the development of greater social cohesion (i.e. communities working together);
- positive community activities and events;
- the development of local leaders;
- the establishment of an on-going program of leadership mentoring.

The findings in relation to each are considered in turn below.

5.2 Confidence Building

This project has contributed to raising the confidence of some participants. This was borne out in the follow-up interviews conducted with participants at the Summit.

The meeting found the positives and negatives and gave people the courage to speak out. (Interview)

Don't be frightened to speak up and achieve your goals. (Interview)

We have to stand up for ourselves and look after the younger and elder generation. (Interview)

These comments are especially encouraging given that there is some cynicism in this community about the value of workshops based on past experience.

Participants were particularly pleased that the Summit process gave them frequent opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

Everyone had their say. (Interview)

The summit gave community members a chance to voice their opinion and say what they feel. (Interview)

Lots of constructive opinions. (Interview)

Everyone got in there and had a dig. (Interview)

It allowed everyone to express themselves and show what they really felt. (Interview)

Everybody had their say including myself. (Interview)

It was especially heartening to observe that during the Summit some participants found the strength to speak in front of a group for the first time in their lives.



The interviews make it clear that experiences of prejudice are still raw experiences for many Indigenous people in this area and this has sapped the confidence of many.

It's hard and a bit of a struggle because we get a lot of racism put on us by the white community because we're Aboriginal. (Interview)

I was knocked back on a job because of my Indigenous background. (Interview)

It's very hard. There are many barriers and racial aspects within the Hervey Bay area from education, employment, health and housing. (Interview)

It's not fair how the non-Indigenous community looks down at us. They judge everyone else for what one person has done. (Interview)

It was somewhat heartening to hear that two of the participants who were interviewed felt that discrimination was now less prevalent than it had been in the past. Nevertheless it remains the case that within the Hervey Bay Indigenous community there is still widespread mistrust of mainstream society. Despite all that this Indigenous community has achieved, the overwhelming perception is that there is still a fundamental lack of acceptance by some in mainstream society. The Summit touched on the internalised self-oppression that can occur when marginalised peoples begin to believe the negative stereotypical definitions of themselves that mainstream society puts on them.

The Summit stressed the importance of leaders portraying a positive outlook and of searching to draw positive lessons and inspiration from the past and what people had succeeded in overcoming. The facilitators stressed the value in "visiting past seasons for positive reasons" (Summit facilitator Graham Tanner) i.e. drawing inspirations from what Indigenous people have achieved and overcome in the past, rather than falling prey to feelings of bitterness and hatred that ultimately harm self and family. The general feeling is that it is important to know what has happened to Indigenous people in this region in the past and acknowledge the depth of hurt that people feel so that they can begin to move on.

Some work was done at the Summit to enable participants to look at things in a different manner than previously, showing them "... how to turn a negative situation into something positive" (Summit facilitator Graham Tanner). The notion that a process of debriefing of the Indigenous past is necessary before people can begin to heal clearly resonated with some participants. But it is equally clear that some participants remain deeply scarred by their past experiences and are struggling to see how they might draw much from it that could be positive. In these instances access to intensive one-on-one counselling may well be necessary to assist people to move on. Unfortunately in Hervey Bay there is a dearth of such specialised counselling services, as previously noted.

One of the main learnings to emerge from this project is that leadership development with Indigenous peoples is at least as much about re-building confidence and self-belief as it is about enhancing particular skills.

5.3 Women and Youth

The target group of this project included existing and potential leaders of the local Aboriginal community, but within this group it was always intended that there be a special focus on fostering the participation of women and youth. This study finds that this project has contributed to the ability of women and youth to represent their community.



The Summit was attended by a fairly representative cross-section of the Hervey Bay Indigenous community in terms of both gender and age range.

Women comprised about half of the Summit participants and were frequent and enthusiastic contributors. However, it cannot be concluded that this is necessarily because of the Summit. Indeed Hervey Bay has a long history of community leadership by women. The Summit provided another opportunity to demonstrate this fact, although it was noted that some women chose not to speak publicly.

There was a substantial contingent of young people in attendance at the Summit, constituting about a third of all participants over the three days. By 'young people' we mean those participants who were estimated by the principal researcher to most likely be under the age of 21 years. No information was collected at the Summit about the actual age of the participants as it was considered that this might be seen as intrusive.

A high level of youth involvement was not accidental. After reflecting on the experience of the previous Fraser Island workshop, there was a conscious effort to invite more youth participation in the Summit. A few young people confidently expressed their views throughout the meeting, while the remainder appeared to lack the confidence to do so. Nevertheless some commented that it had still been valuable for this 'silent majority' to hear a little of the views and stories from some Elders about how things had been for this community in the past and some of the hardships that they had endured and overcome in their lives. This was seen as an important part of developing a stronger sense of cultural identity amongst young people, and as a source of inspiration for the future.

At the Summit and also in the follow-up interviews, several participants commented favourably on the fact that so many young people were in attendance. It was noted that in the past difficulty had been experienced in engaging and motivating some young people. The Summit provided ample evidence of increased involvement by youth in community activities, as well as a continuing high level of participation by women.

5.4 Skills Transfer

There is little to suggest that this project has made a significant contribution to raising the knowledge and skill base of the Hervey Bay Indigenous community or to raising the capacity of local community organisations to more effectively manage their own affairs. Indeed the Chairperson of Dhugamin, 'Aunty' Francis Gala, has stressed that there is a critical need for governance training, particularly for youth in areas such as understanding organisational structures, constitutions, ethics and patterns of behaviour that foster mutual respect. In particular she sees a need to expose young emerging leaders to positive role models.

Some important learning did occur at the Summit and participants found it to be a valuable experience.

I enjoyed the summit ... a very good learning experience for me.
(Interview)

It was open and well done. (Interview)

Information was good and more people came because of it. People talked because of it. (Interview)



One participant complained “I couldn’t understand what they were saying because they were speaking too European” (Interview). However, this appears to a view at odds with the other participants.

Most came away from the Summit with a deeper understanding of what it meant to be a leader. In the Summit, and in some of the interviews undertaken for this evaluation, a key message was the need for a leader to demonstrate self-respect before expecting to earn the respect of others. This had resonated with some participants.

Learnt how to be a responsible leader... it opened up my mind to become a better leader. (Interview)

Everyone needs to believe and respect themselves first so then they can all come together and be strong. (Interview)

At the Summit there was considerable discussion about the need for leaders to display respect in all that they do; respect for their country, respect for women, respect for family, and respect for the wider community. It was noted that ‘respect is a two way street’. Some Elders complain that some young people fail to display the respect that is their due. Equally some youth complained that the behaviour of some Elders did not always show respect for them. Some of those interviewed expressed support for the strategy of developing youth leadership by taking opportunities to bring Elders and youth together. Others said that some young people felt ‘put down’ and too intimidated to speak up in the presence of older people. They stressed the need to create spaces where youth could speak and gain confidence away from Elders, at least initially.

When this project was first envisaged, it was conceptualised as being about transferring management skills so that participants could take up positions such as members of governing committee in community organisations. It was envisaged that participants would learn more about their roles and responsibilities in managing community organisations. It was seen as being about enabling local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to collectively better manage their own affairs.

The experience of this project has enabled at least some participants to appreciate that management and leadership are not the same thing. People with management skills are not necessarily leaders, and leaders do not always possess management skills.

The initial Fraser Island workshop had focused on skill development. This workshop was only of a few days duration and clearly it would be unrealistic to expect significant skilling to occur in this limited time. As a result of what was learnt from the experience of this initial workshop, the Summit primarily focused on contributing to attitudinal change rather than skilling. Indeed a key theme of the Summit was that there could be no substantive movement towards achieving sustainable self-management in this area without attitudinal change as an initial building block. The Summit was essentially about fostering ‘right’ attitudes and behaviours.

Management is about the efficient control of resources. Leadership is about creating a vision of a better future and establishing the social conditions necessary to move towards its realisation. It is about innovative ideas that motivate people and celebrate their achievements. In the initial stages of the project leadership development and management skills training were treated as if they were synonymous, however leadership capacity should not be confused with management capacity.



The House of Representatives (2004) report notes that leadership comes in many forms and draws attention to styles of leadership that are “unrelated to administration, management and accountability requirements... relating to other values (such as tradition, knowledge, pride, wisdom, language or stewardship) that may contribute to Indigenous wellbeing in other ways” (House of Representatives, 2004: 138). The Committee also notes that the development of leadership does not always have much to do with formal education and training (House of Representatives, 2004: 141). In this instance there was not much evidence of increased skills being attained by management committee members as a result of this project, but there was evidence of learning and deeper reflection on what leadership really means in this Indigenous context.

5.5 Social Cohesion

Participants in the Summit and in this workshop stressed that a cohesive community is the foundation upon which a stronger community can be built.

The overwhelming view was that the Summit had helped to bring people together. Participants had come away with a greater appreciation of the prospects of community unity and several found cause to reflect on the value of teamwork.

It pulled people closer together. (Interview)

We can benefit if the community gets together. Everyone that was there got along well... It opened my eyes up that some of the community was there and that we could all relate to what was being said... I wish it could have went longer than 3 days. (Interview)

Need to work together with other Murries without arguing. (Interview)

We could all work together if we wanted to. (Interview)

By coming together and talking we can resolve things. (Interview)

By everyone pulling together you can achieve what you want. (Interview)

One participant was pleasantly surprised to discover that many of the people present at the Summit actually shared the same opinions.

Lack of community cohesion within the Hervey Bay Indigenous community was identified as a major challenge to be overcome by almost everyone interviewed.

Sometimes there are families arguing between themselves where they should be sitting down and talking about it. (Interview)

Need to trust one another before we can move forward. (Interview)

It was suggested that the Summit had helped participants to see more clearly the destructive impact of forms of community politics that embrace division rather than unity. Evidence of this includes:

- family feuding;
- disagreements relating to native title issues;
- conflicts between some youth and older members of the community;
- some tensions between the Indigenous community of Hervey Bay and other communities in the region;



- an entrenched culture of negativity, jealousy and 'finger pointing' in some sections of the community;
- substance abuse;
- violence (including inter-personal violence, family violence and self harm).

The cumulative effect of all this was likened to 'shock waves' continuously passing across the community.

Despite this there are some positive signs for the future. To begin with the Summit was well attended by a broad cross section of Indigenous interests:

- Day 1 - 33 participants;
- Day 2 - 50 participants;
- Day 3 - 36 participants.

Some participants expressed surprise at the number of different family groups that were represented. Residents of both the Hervey Bay and nearby Maryborough Indigenous communities attended, as did Butchella Traditional Owners and other people who had moved to this area to reside but who are not of this country. There was a significant contingent of Dhugamin CDEP participants in attendance on account of a bus being provided to transport them from Scrub Hill to Susan River each day. The provision of transport is important because some people cannot afford to own private vehicles.

Despite the high attendance, some disappointment was expressed that certain Elders were not present. One interviewee suggested that a "full picture" of 'how things are' could not emerge because of this. Absences were attributed to community division as well as 'people not knowing it was on'.

Even though there were 30 – 40 people, there was not enough of the community there because of lack of communication and conflicts.

(Interview)

As yet there is no hard evidence of greater social cohesion within the Hervey Bay Indigenous community as a result of this project. But many did come away from the Summit with a more positive outlook and were more hopeful than they had been previously about the future prospects for social cohesion.

Things are getting better with the community and with the people and the support of the community. (Interview)

At the very least, this project has fostered dialogue and reflection about the critical need to create a more inclusive community.

5.6 Community Activities and Events

An intended outcome of this project was the conduct of positive community activities and events. The Summit and the earlier Fraser Island leadership workshop were both positive community events in their own right, but the intent here was that these would give rise to other community and capacity building activities. This has not happened in any significant way during the lifespan of the project.



What has happened is that many participants in the project have come to a realisation that the social interaction that occurs during community functions has a central place to play in building community cohesion. During the interviews and at the Summit several participants expressed a desire for more bonding activities such as community BBQ's, sporting events and camping trips to bring people together. Some also saw a need for activities that provided opportunities for local people to hear and learn their oral history in order to foster a greater sense of shared belonging.

The overwhelming view of participants is that the Summit was just a beginning and that it is now important to find ways to continue the process and "find ways of working together within the community." Several participants stressed the need to build on the good feeling that had been engendered by now working through and enacting the ideas that had emerged from the Summit.

Community involvement is a big 'must'. (Interview)

I want to see more Summits where the community comes together as one, where we can all have our own say, and express what we feel. (Interview)

Summits like this one bring people together. There should be more. (Interview)

The participants in this project regard the development of leadership as being as much a function of meaningful social interaction as it is of formal development activities. This is seen as an important means of developing and embracing communication as distinct from confrontation. But it must be said that this project has not substantially improved opportunities for social and economic participation, at least not yet. This will depend on where the community chooses to take this project from here.

5.7 Leadership Development

The leadership training was intended to develop participants into community leaders, however there is little evidence to suggest that this project has so far achieved this outcome.

One factor inhibiting the development of leaders in this instance is that there was considerable turnover of participants over the course of the project. Very few people participated in the whole process and there was almost no cross over between participation in the original 2002 Fraser Island workshop and the Summit (i.e. very few people attended both events). If Dhugamin is successful in gaining support to continue this leadership development initiative in the future, consideration will need to be given to strategies which 'lock' in people's commitment for the whole 'journey'. For example, in some locations it has been found that it is easier for people to free themselves up from work and other commitments where each workshop is limited to a single day.

In hindsight 'leadership development' appears to have been an overly ambitious outcome to have expected when it is borne in mind that this project effectively only consisted of two short workshops each of a few days duration. The development of leadership capacity is always a long-term process requiring engagement and professional development over a sustained period. This project was never designed to achieve this.



The general view of participants was that although the Summit was a valuable experience, by itself it was “not enough” (Interview). Several stressed that the Summit would only have a lasting impact in making the community stronger if “there’s people willing to follow up and put in the hard work and make it happen” (Interview).

We need to start doing things instead of just saying it. (Interview)

If we say we are going to do it, do it. (Interview)

There’s too many chiefs and not enough Indians. (Interview)

Action speaks louder than words; let’s do it. (Interview)

There was general reference to the need for on-going support from community and government to carry the process forward. However as yet there was not a clear view about specifically what now needed to happen to progress this.

The unanimous view of the Hervey Bay community appears to be that the process of capacity building that has now commenced needs to be carried forward. The participants at the Summit agreed to establish a working group of local people charged with responsibility for deciding ‘where to from here’ so that the process does not lose momentum.

While we cannot yet point to new leaders that have emerged as a result of this project, there is a high level of satisfaction within the community about the effectiveness of a process just begun.

5.8 Mentoring

One of the intended outcomes of this project was the establishment of an on-going program of leadership mentoring. This has not yet occurred in any systematic and planned way, but there is enthusiasm for the idea, particularly for the mentoring of potential leaders drawn from the youth population.

Mentoring is seen as the most effective way to multiply the currently scarce leadership resource in this community. This is seen as a crucial issue because the handful of local Indigenous people who are currently working in leadership positions – both within community organisations and government – report difficulties in coping with the stress of trying to balance the requirements of their job on the one hand, with the expectations of their community on the other. At the Summit some participants suggested that any plans for mentoring of potential leaders must ensure the provision of greater support to Indigenous community leaders than is currently the case. Support means opportunities to debrief together, to share ‘survival’ strategies and to be there for one another.

The community consultations that occurred in pre-planning for the Summit laid stress on the importance of creating opportunities for potential leaders to meet and talk with actual leaders. As a result former Hervey Bay resident Carol Lee Ober, currently with the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research Centre at the University of Queensland, was invited to address the Summit on her own experience of leadership. In the follow-up interviews there was broad agreement about the value of utilising Indigenous role models to motivate, inspire and teach the next generation of leadership.



There's no role models to look up to so they can receive guidance.
(Interview)

We need someone like in the local council that has an Indigenous background to have a say for us, but also to show that we can do the job too! (Interview)

One participant stressed that it was important that the use of role models not be limited to sporting heroes, but rather draw on Indigenous achievers from all walks of life.

One of the learnings from this project is that leadership cannot be developed in a vacuum or as an end in itself. Rather it exists to achieve particular social purposes that address community needs. The project consultations, the workshops and the interviews undertaken as part of this evaluation all provided participants with an opportunity to name up and reflect upon what they saw as the main issues. Taken together they provide a fairly comprehensive picture of just what local people perceived their needs to be. Although it was not an intended outcome, this project has nevertheless made an important contribution to raising local awareness of what needed to be done into the future.

The three dominant issues to emerge re:

- Dispute Resolution: The need for mediation and negotiation services and anger management counselling to assist the process of community healing.
- Youth Development: The need to develop the leadership potential of young people through governance training, mentoring arrangements, the use of role models and access to relevant accredited training courses.
- Service Delivery: The need to fill service gaps in crucial areas such as the lack of trained Indigenous Sport and Recreation Officers, child protection resources and facilities, health awareness, accommodation (including transient and emergency accommodation) and high school retention initiatives.

These are the things that local people want addressed in order to strengthen their community. The identification of these key issues defines the specific purposes which this community needs and wants leadership to serve. This could form the foundation for the formulation of a regional plan that strategically points the way forward, clearly setting out what now needs to be done.

Local suggestions as to what needs be done about these issues are, as yet, still not well defined. Some are saying that 'community members should do more'. Some are saying that the 'government should do more'. Comments included:

Families need to get more involved with children's education. (Interview)

Need more commitment from the government, federal and state, on issues of domestic violence, health and education. (Interview)

There's a lot more services that could be provided for the Aboriginal community. (Interview)

The Summit did emphasise the need for community leaders to enact change by relying upon their own strengths, at least in the first instance. However it is clear that some in the community still conceptualise government as the body that must initiate and resource this process.



No linkages have been made with Indigenous or mainstream organisations already involved in the mentoring of potential leaders, such as the AILC, the Foundation for Young Australians and Rotary Youth Leadership.

As yet there is no Indigenous leadership mentoring program in place in this area, but this project has contributed to an emerging clarity about precisely what the next generation of leaders need to be mentored to achieve.



6 Conclusion

6.1 Overview

This section of the report summarises the main findings of this case study in relation to the effectiveness of the process, the achievement of both intended and unintended outcomes and the identification of some 'lessons' for FaCS which may be important to bear in mind when planning other similar initiatives.

6.2 Processes

While there was a high level of 'customer satisfaction' amongst participants with this project (especially the Summit), there was a strongly held general view that the process had only just begun.

Other findings about the process were as follows.

- The Summit was attended by a cross-section of the local Indigenous community in terms of both gender and age range.
- The Summit process gave participants frequent opportunities to contribute to the discussion.
- Women and youth comprised a substantial proportion of Summit participants and some were frequent and enthusiastic contributors.
- Some people lacked the confidence to speak in the Summit.
- The non-attendance by some people was attributed to differences within the community and/or insufficient communication.
- The K'gari Leadership Workshop primarily focussed on management skills, while the Summit was mainly about providing community members with an opportunity to discuss local issues.
- There was a considerable turnover of participants over the course of the project, with very few people participating in the whole process and this inhibited opportunities to develop new leaders.
- Project participants would like to establish a working group of local people with responsibility for continuing the process of leadership development beyond this project.

6.3 Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of this project were:

- improved confidence of participants;
- improved ability of women and youth to represent their communities;
- the transfer of skills to other committee members and volunteers;
- the development of greater social cohesion (i.e. communities working together);
- positive community activities and events;
- the development of local leaders;



- the establishment of an on-going program of leadership mentoring.

The findings of this case study are that the project did significantly contribute to:

- raising the confidence of some participants;
- enhancing the ability of some women and youth to represent their community;
- the achievement of greater social cohesion by bringing people together.

It is also found that this project did not significantly contribute to:

- skills transfer that enhanced the capacity of local community organisations to more effectively manage their own affairs;
- other leadership development events and activities beyond the conduct of two workshops;
- the development of identifiable new community leaders;
- the establishment of a program of leadership mentoring.

Of course it is still possible that some of these outcomes were achieved beyond the expiry of FaCS funding for this project at the end of June 2004.

6.4 Unintended Outcomes

This project had a number of (mostly positive) unintended outcomes that were not envisaged when the decision to fund was made by FaCS.

- This project gave participants a deeper understanding of what 'leadership' means in an Indigenous context.
- This project fostered some dialogue and reflection about the critical need for greater community cohesion in Hervey Bay.
- This project clearly identified the priority needs of this Indigenous community in the areas of conflict mediation, youth development and access to community services.

An unintended negative outcome was that this project lost momentum because of the prolonged elapse of time between the conduct of the first and second workshops.

6.5 Lessons for FaCS

The experience of how this project unfolded would seem to carry some important learning for FaCS which may assist the process of planning and resourcing similar interventions elsewhere. This would include leadership, confidence and other capacity building initiatives conducted with indigenous people, some of which have been funded under the "Potential Leadership in Local Communities" initiative funded under the Strategy. Examples of some prominent Indigenous leadership projects have been discussed earlier (refer to pp 23-25).



The lessons for FaCS are as follows:

- The development of Indigenous leadership capacity is necessarily a long-term process requiring engagement and professional development over a sustained period of time.
- Leadership development with Indigenous peoples is at least as much about attitudinal and behavioural change and the re-building of confidence and self-belief, as it is about the transfer of knowledge and skills.
- The use of Indigenous role models is popular amongst participants and widely seen as an effective strategy.
- Lack of social cohesion can be a significant impediment to capacity building in Indigenous contexts.
- This project may have been more effective if it had been linked to other leadership initiatives at an early stage.
- Leadership is instrumental rather than an end in itself, so leadership development always needs to occur in the context of local activities intended to address identified priority local needs. (This point will be the subject of further discussion in a forthcoming Issues paper on leadership to be developed as part of this National Evaluation.)

Most importantly for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Hervey Bay, there are still some valuable ways in which the development of local leadership might be supported in the future. These opportunities include the following.

- Linking Hervey Bay to other projects that involve the mentoring of potential Indigenous leaders e.g. through the establishment of leadership learning exchange, by funding a national Indigenous leadership conference.
- Involving the AILC in providing on-going support to this leadership project in much the same way that AIFS supported Stronger Families Fund projects in the first phase of the Strategy 2000-2004.
- Resourcing the formulation of a strategic plan in Hervey Bay to capture the local learning from this project and strategically continue the capacity building process that has been commenced but which still has a way to go.
- Linking this project to potential new sources of on-going funding and support e.g. the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) through its Sustainable Regions initiatives relevant to leadership, governance, community planning and other capacity building initiatives.
- Governance training, particularly for youth in areas such as organisational structures, constitutions, ethics and patterns of behaviour that foster mutual respect.

Finally, it is important to note that the lessons for FaCS that emerge from this case study may well have applicability beyond the Indigenous sector. Their relevance to mainstream Strategy projects is discussed in the Potential Leadership in Local Communities Paper developed as part of this National Evaluation.



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