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Inside this Issue:

Meeting with Minister Scullion 2

Family Praises Winnunga: Kyha's Story 3, 4

From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fifty Years Since the Gurindji Walk Off Wave Hill 5

Auditor reveals that 'Rehabilitation at the AMC' is an Oxymoron 6

Child Protection in the ACT-Time for the ACT Government to Step Up 7

AMA Calls Again for Governments to Work With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to Develop Solutions to Health Needs 8

Vacancies on Elected Body 8

Incoming NT Govt Sets Precedent for Next ACT Government 9

Online NAPLAN Exams Raise Questions 9

Outcomes and Evaluation 10

Prisoners Aid 11

AMC Staff Resolve to Continue to Deny Detainees Basic Health Care 11

Colonial Paternalism? 12

Staff Profile 13

Winnunga News

SEPTEMBER 2016

CEO Update

Winnunga is extremely pleased that both the Liberal and Labor Parties have announced in the lead up to the coming ACT election that they will support the construction of a new purpose built health facility for Winnunga. The Labor Party has costed the commitment at \$12 million.

This is fantastic news and has been a cause of great excitement for all staff and clients at Winnunga. I would like to thank both Jeremy Hanson and Andrew Barr for recognising the clear need for a new health centre and for their support of the Aboriginal community.

I also wish to acknowledge the other major commitment which the Liberal leader Jeremy Hanson and Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Andrew Wall have made to fund over three years an additional ten social health workers at Winnunga, at a cost of \$1million dollars. I have written to both the Chief Minister Andrew Barr and Leader of the Greens Shane Rattenbury asking them to offer bipartisan support for this initiative.



Liberal leader Jeremy Hanson and Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Andrew Wall at Winnunga

We continue to negotiate with the ACT Government in relation to the management of Boomanulla Oval. The negotiations are more complex than Winnunga initially imagined they would be, however we remain confident an outcome will eventually be achieved that allows this very important facility to be reopened to the community. Thank you for your continued patience.

I have met with Mr Phillip Moss on a number of occasions to discuss his review into the incarceration of Steven Freeman prior to his tragic death in custody. I continue to support Steven's mother Narelle King and her family. I have made a formal submission to Mr Moss in which I have highlighted a number of major concerns about the treatment of Steven and that of his family. I have again urged there be a full review of the model of health care available to Aboriginal detainees in the AMC and have proposed that the comprehensive, holistic model of care provided at Winnunga should be extended to the prison. Winnunga is extremely pleased that Mr Moss has appointed Professor Ngaire Brown to the review.



Julie Tongs OAM, CEO



Meeting with Minister Scullion

Julie Tongs was pleased to meet recently with Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Hon Nigel Scullion.

Julie briefed the Minister on the death in custody of young Aboriginal man Steven Freeman and of issues relevant to the ongoing Phillip Moss and Coronial inquiries into the circumstances of his incarceration and death.

Julie raised with the Minister concerns about the concept and operations of the Primary Health Network and advised the Minister that her concerns were that the Network was remote from the Aboriginal community. She noted for example that the Capital Health Network did not have an Indigenous person on its Board and did not currently have any Indigenous staff. She also advised the Minister that there was no meaningful formal consultation by the Network with Indigenous service providers.

Julie advised the Minister she would support a requirement, if the Primary Health Networks were to be retained, that a member of each Aboriginal Health Service be automatically appointed to the relevant regional Network.

Julie said that from her observations the Network structure lessened the transparency, accountability and evaluation of expenditure of Indigenous specific funding. She said it was difficult to not conclude that one of the reasons for the establishment of the Network was to simply distance the relevant Commonwealth Departments from responsibility for Aboriginal health programs and outcomes.

Julie also briefed the Minister on the process being employed by the ACT Government for returning Boomanulla Oval to Indigenous management and the role Winnunga is playing in that. The Minister was surprised to learn that Boomanulla had now been locked up for two and a half years.

Julie said she was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Minister Scullion and for his interest in issues of importance to the Canberra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Hon Nigel Scullion

Julie briefed the Minister on the death in custody of young Aboriginal man Steven Freeman and of issues relevant to the ongoing Phillip Moss and Coronial inquiries

Fact: Nigel Scullion has been the Minister for Indigenous Affairs since 18 September 2013.

Do it with us, not to us

Family Praises Winnunga:

Kyha's Story

We knew our youngest daughter, Kyha, had hearing problems although we didn't fully appreciate the extent of the problem until she was about two-and-half years old.

Canberra mother Rebecca Lester, of the Wonnara Nation from the NSW Hunter Valley, has praised Canberra's Winnunga Nimmitjyah Aboriginal Health Services Aboriginal Hearing Program for saving her daughters hearing and supporting her look forward to a productive and promising school career.

'We knew our youngest daughter, Kyha, had hearing problems although we didn't fully appreciate the extent of the problem until she was about two-and-half years old. Until then she suffered from continual middle ear infections and general poor health. However, as a three year old she began attending one of Canberra's Koori Pre -Schools, Narrabundah Early Childhood School and was scheduled for a routine hearing check by Winnunga's Hearing Program team. She was tested and the test found that she had hearing loss in both ears as a result of her middle ear infection problems', Rebecca said.

Winnunga continued to monitor Kyha and subsequently Winnunga facilitated surgery at Canberra's John James Hospital for grommets to be inserted in both ears.

'That was wonderful'.

However, as Winnunga's audiologist Jeanette Scott explained the insertion of the grommets failed to overcome Kyha's hearing problems and it was decided, after further tests, that Kyha may be best assisted by having a special hearing aid fitted.

'Kyha was then referred to Australian Hearing – a Federal Government funded program – who provide hearing aids for children. This hearing aid is called a bone conduction aid and bypasses the middle ear via a vibrator (bone conductor) that normally sits on the bony area of the skull, just behind the ear. In Kyha's case it is part of a specially fitted headband and its capacity can be adjusted via a computer program that enables the hearing aid to respond best to different voice patterns', Jeanette said.

'It is a marvellous piece of new hearing technology', said Rebecca.



Kyha wearing her special hi-tech hearing aid

Fact: For Indigenous children in particular, hearing loss is widespread and much more common than in the broader Australian population.

Do it with us, not to us

Family Praises Winnunga: Kyha's Story (cont'd)

Ms Tongs said every year program officers undertook surveillance tests at more than 30 Government Koori Pre Schools or primary schools throughout the national capital.

'Kyha wouldn't be without it. We got a laugh when one day, when the batteries were running a bit flat Kyha ran up to me and said: Mummy, mummy, it's not talking to me'. Rebecca added that although it was attached to a headband and initially some pre-schoolers were inquisitive and asked about it, nowadays it is just something Kyha wears every day and they accept it as being normal everyday wear.

"But it has made such a big difference to Kyha's life and the wellbeing of our family," said Rebecca who is the manager of the long day care component of the Narrabundah Early Childhood School's programs.

When we visited the school Kyha was talking to Winnunga's trainee Ear Health worker Reeion Murray, a Wiradjuri man from Dubbo, who has now worked within the program for just over 18 months and has nearly completed his Aboriginal Health Worker qualifications with specialisation in ear hearing health.

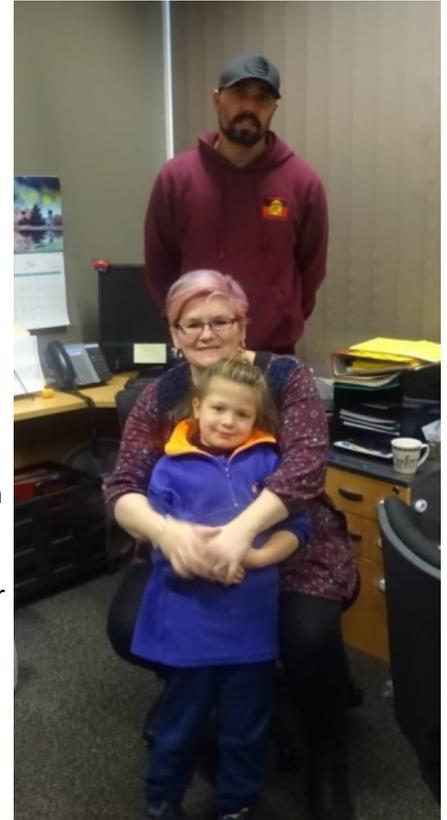
'Kyha just fits in. She's a really happy little girl', said mother Rebecca.

Winnunga's CEO Julie Tongs said the program – originally known as the Otitis Hearing Health Program – had operated from Winnunga for more than 14 years.

'In fact, back in 2006-2007 we reviewed the program so that it was more widely promoted'.

Ms Tongs said every year program officers undertook surveillance tests at more than 30 Government Koori Pre Schools or primary schools throughout the national capital. 'Last year we tested about 400 children from pre-schools or primary schools with a significant additional number of hearing tests being conducted as a result of referrals under Winnunga's ongoing allied health programs'.

Ms Tongs said given the still unacceptably high levels of hearing problems within the Aboriginal population such programs as the hearing health program made a significant difference. 'They are hugely important', Ms Tongs said. 'We know, over the years, this program has made a big difference to the hearing health of thousands of members of Canberra and District's Indigenous population'.



Winnunga's trainee ear health worker Reeion Murray, a Wiradjuri man from Dubbo, with Kyha's mum Rebecca (middle) and Kyha

Fact: Winnunga's audiology service delivered 516 encounters in the 2014-15 financial year.

Do it with us, not to us

From Little Things Big Things Grow

Fifty Years Since the Gurindji

Walk Off Wave Hill

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam met with the Gurindji and transferred title to Wave Hill back to the Gurindji, symbolically pouring soil through the hands of Vincent Lingiari

It is fifty years since Vincent Lingiari and 200 hundred Aboriginal stockmen and other workers and their families walked off Wave Hill Station to strike for fair pay and conditions.

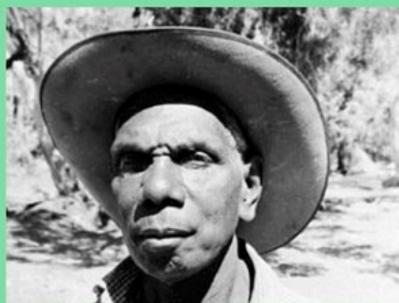
While the strike started as a protest for better pay and conditions it became a test case for Aboriginal land rights as well as a touch stone for exposing systemic racism and entrenched disadvantage.

After almost a decade of resistance and struggle Prime Minister Gough Whitlam met with the Gurindji and transferred title to Wave Hill back to the Gurindji, symbolically pouring soil through the hands of Vincent Lingiari.



The legacy of the protest initiated by the Gurindji is enormous and remains an inspiration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still striving for equality and justice in their own land.

VINCENT LINGIARI



A Biography - Aboriginal Rights Activist

Fact: On 7 June 1976, Lingiari was named a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to Aboriginal people.

Do it with us, not to us

Auditor reveals that ‘Rehabilitation at the AMC’ is an Oxymoron

The August 2016 report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety into the Auditor-General’s report on Rehabilitation of Male Detainees at the AMC contains very revealing extracts from the evidence of the Auditor, Dr Maxine Cooper to the Committee.



Dr Cooper gave evidence to the Committee of difficulties faced by the audit as a result of a lack of data, planning, evaluation, programs or costings relevant to rehabilitation.

Dr Cooper’s evidence included the following statements:

‘It became apparent early in the audit that data relating to Corrective services rehabilitation efforts for each detainee or for each program and activity was very patchy, difficult to assemble and difficult to aggregate.’

‘We found that there was an absence of a current rehabilitation framework.’

Dr Cooper did advise the Committee, however, of the planning documents that were prepared by the Government prior to the opening of the AMC and which set out the Government’s intentions in relation to the rehabilitation of detainees. The audit therefore compared these with what had in fact been achieved in the six years since its opening.

The Auditor-General summarised the analysis in these terms:

‘The obvious question to pose then was: how active did the Government intend detainees to be and how active are they? That is sort of pivotal to what the team looked at. Rehabilitation plans prior to the opening of AMC in 2008, with detainees coming in 2009, refer to six hours a day, 30 hours a week. In reality, activity levels were around 5 hours a week plus an indeterminate amount of time for the two in five detainees that work. The achievement of a structured day with purposeful activity was not evident in the first five years of operation of the AMC.’

To put the Auditor-General’s finding in context the AMC was after five years of operation providing detainees with 16% of the rehabilitation and structured activity which the Government had decreed should be provided.

In reality, activity levels [in the AMC] were around 5 hours a week plus an indeterminate amount of time for the two in five detainees that work.

Fact: Alexander Maconochie (1787 – 1860) whom the AMC is named after, was a British naval officer, geographer, and penal reformer. He instituted policies that restored dignity to prisoners, achieving remarkable success in prisoner rehabilitation. These policies were well in advance of their time and Maconochie was politically undermined. Could it be Maconochie’s polices continue to be undermined today and after over 100 years continue to remain ahead of their time?

Child Protection in the ACT-Time for the ACT Government to Step Up

Julie has asked the Minister if his assessment was part of an initial formal evaluation of the program or if it simply reflected his personal opinion, or that of the Directorate.

Winnunga CEO Ms Julie Tongs has written to ACT Minister for Children Mr Chris Bourke MLA to request information about the evaluation framework and criteria for the 'A Step Up for Our Kids' program.

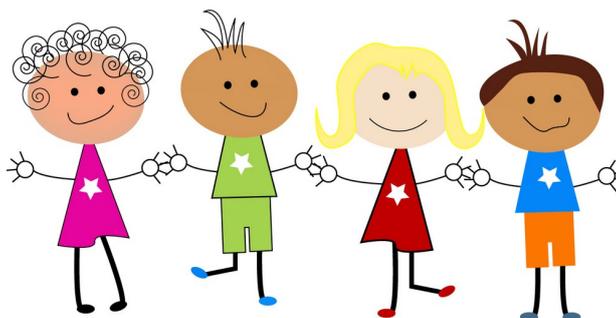
Julie said she was aware of recent comments from the Minister about the already apparent impact of the program on vulnerable Canberra families. Julie has asked the Minister if his assessment was part of an initial formal evaluation of the program or if it simply reflected his personal opinion, or that of the Directorate.

While she was aware of considerable feedback from the Aboriginal community about the 'A Step Up for Our Kids' program, Julie said that unfortunately little of it was positive. The greatest risk for the Canberra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the 'A Step Up for Kids' program was that it fitted almost exactly the description of that huge raft of programs which are designed and implemented by Governments and non-Aboriginal NGO's for mainstream clients, without any regard to the need for the programs in their application to the Aboriginal community to be informed, managed and led by local Indigenous service delivery organisations.

Compounding the failure to engage with the ACT Aboriginal community in the design and implementation of 'A Step Up for Kids' is that the mainly non Indigenous organisations which have been funded to manage the program are anchored by interstate NGO's including bizarrely an Aboriginal organisation based somewhere on the central coast of NSW that has absolutely no connection with the ACT or the Aboriginal people who live here.

'A Step Up for Our Kids' is a classic example of 'doing it to us, not with us.'

Julie said it was with sadness that she was forced to acknowledge the issues raised and opinions expressed on the distressing ABC 7.30 Report-Behind Closed Doors, reflect the experience of many members of the Aboriginal community with child protection services in the ACT. The revelation that a young boy whose death was a focus of the 7.30 Report has been laying in a mortuary for seven months since his death because his mother could not afford to bury him challenges both the claims of the Government and the ACT community to be caring and compassionate.



Fact: Self determination is an 'on going process of choice' to ensure that Indigenous communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs (Australian Human Rights Commission).

Do it with us, not to us

AMA Calls Again for Governments to Work With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to Develop Solutions to Health Needs

The President of the AMA Dr Michael Gannon, in a major speech to the Press Gallery in August called again for Governments to work with the Aboriginal community in order to be able to respond appropriately to their health needs. This is such an oft repeated plea of Aboriginal Health organisations and medical and health professionals throughout Australia which makes it so disappointing that it continues to fall on deaf ears, including sadly here in the ACT.

Dr Gannon concluded his remarks by saying 'The AMA has repeatedly said that it is not credible that Australia, one of the world's wealthiest countries, cannot address the health and social justice issues that affect a three per cent minority of its citizens. The fact they are our First Peoples only adds to the moral imperative to act.'

That Aboriginal residents of Canberra, the wealthiest city in that wealthiest of countries, have a range of social and health indicators consistent with most of the rest of Australia, is a reflection on our response to that moral imperative.

Winnunga believes as the current term of the ACT Legislative Assembly draws to an end there is an opportunity for a fresh start and for members of the incoming Assembly to commit to genuinely engage with the Canberra Aboriginal community. Far too many policies and programs directly affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens in the ACT are being imposed without the benefit of the insight which only Aboriginal people with lived experience and a deep understanding of the local community and service delivery to Aboriginal people can provide.

Vacancies on Elected Body

The current vacancies on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body are unable, it appears, to be filled because of an absence of eligible candidates. In light of the recommendations of the recent review into ATSIEB and the Government's commitment to ensure detailed community consultation before responding to the recommendations, it is important that ATSIEB have its full complement of members.

The ATSIEB Act contains provisions for casual vacancies such as currently exist at this point in the life of the current Body, to be filled by the Minister. Recognising that ATSIEB is a democratically elected forum it is vital that any eligible member of the Canberra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who is interested in being appointed to a temporary vacancy have an opportunity to express interest in appointment.

Winnunga believes that the ACT Government should immediately call for expressions of interest to ensure that the vacancies can be filled as soon as possible.

The fact they are our First Peoples only adds to the moral imperative to act

Incoming NT Government Sets Precedent for Next ACT Government

The new Government in the Northern Territory has outlined the approach it will take to empowering and engaging with the Aboriginal community. It is an approach which the next ACT Government should emulate. NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner has made the following commitment:

'The newly elected NT Government will deliver the most extensive return of local decision making to the Indigenous community since self-government...it will introduce a road map...that will see Indigenous communities take control over:

- * Housing
- * Education and training
- * Health
- * Looking after children
- * Law and justice

The shift is huge. But it's also an obvious step in progressing reform to improve the way government supports and respects the will of Indigenous Territorians'.

Online NAPLAN Exams Raise Questions

The recent announcement that Canberra schools have taken part in online mock NAPLAN testing in order, according to the Minister for Education, Shane Rattenbury, to 'ensure the systems are up to the task.'

The significant decline in NAPLAN results in the ACT over the last four years, including most particularly those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, raises the more fundamental question of whether the ACT Education system is up to the task of ensuring that all children in the ACT receive the best possible education.

ACT outcomes in the 2015 NAPLAN tests have been reported as the worst since testing commenced. The decline is mirrored by the even greater decline in the outcomes being achieved by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In light of this the Aboriginal community of Canberra would welcome an assurance that the decision to conduct NAPLAN testing online will have no adverse effect for children from poor or disadvantaged families, many of whom do not have home computers or internet connection.

Winnunga believes that any advice or information which the Education Directorate has prepared or obtained about the implications of online testing for students from disadvantaged families who either do not have a home computer and/or do not have well developed computer skills, should be made publicly available.

ACT outcomes in the 2015 NAPLAN tests have been reported as the worst since testing commenced

Fact: As part of the ACT Education Directorate's 2016 Action Plan, the Directorate is committed to achieving more equitable education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Winnunga will be keeping a close eye on this commitment.

Do it with us, not to us

Outcomes and Evaluation

It is pleasing to see the announcement in the latest ACT Closing the Gap report that a whole of government implementation plan and outcomes framework is being developed for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.

The report also advises that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Sub-committee, which has been established by the ACT Public Service Strategic Board, is tasked with setting strategic direction and monitoring ACT Government performance and accountability in improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. Winnunga looks forward to seeing the outcomes framework and the reports of the Sub-committee when they become available later this year.

The establishment of the plan and framework comes as the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) released the findings of a major study into the evaluation and outcomes of a total of 1082 programs costing a total of \$6 billion, aimed at Indigenous welfare across Australia.

CIS reported that less than 10% of the programs have ever been evaluated and of the few that had been evaluated the methods used did not in the main provide evidence of effectiveness. The research took into account spending by federal, state and territory governments and the Indigenous not for profit sector. The study did not have regard to programs delivered by non-Indigenous NGO's.

In the ACT the expenditure on services to Aboriginal people was estimated at approximately \$230 million in 2012-13. More than 91% of this expenditure was through mainstream programs and services. Only about \$20 million or 8.8% was through Indigenous specific programs.



Detailed information on how the Indigenous specific services are delivered is not readily available, however, it is clear that a major portion of the \$20 million worth of Indigenous specific programs are being delivered by mainstream service providers.

The reported ACT Government expenditure per person on services to Aboriginal people is more than three times the per person expenditure on non-Aboriginal people. The annual Closing the Gap Reports highlight nevertheless the continuing significant and in some instances worsening gap in the socio economic outcomes of Aboriginal people in the ACT.

Questions must be asked about the effectiveness of ACT Government expenditure and of mainstream service delivery to the Aboriginal community. There is a need for much better data on issues such as the extent to which mainstream services are accessed by Aboriginal people and whether mainstream services are best placed to deliver culturally safe services that Aboriginal people will access with trust and confidence.

The CIS provides a wakeup call to Governments about the fundamental importance of rigorous evaluation and accountability for outcomes of all Aboriginal programs including those delivered by non-Indigenous NGO's.

...it is clear that a major portion of the \$20 million worth of Indigenous specific programs [in the ACT] are being delivered by mainstream service providers.

Fact: There are only two Aboriginal Community Controlled service delivery agencies in the ACT.

Do it with us, not to us

Prisoners Aid

Winnunga would like to congratulate and thank Prisoners Aid for the valuable service it provides to people imprisoned in the ACT.

Prisoners Aid is a particularly important member of the ACT community sector supporting as it does one of the most marginalised groups of people in society.

Community sector partners such as Prisoners Aid are fundamental to the AMC meeting both its statutory obligations for the rehabilitation of prisoners and the Government's stated policy expectations and vision for the AMC as a human rights compliant and rehabilitation focussed prison.

In light of the failure, as outlined in detail by the Auditor-General, of the AMC to develop relevant policies or a coherent approach to the rehabilitation of prisoners at the AMC the role of organisations such as Prisoners Aid is doubly important. The fact that the AMC has been embarrassed by the Auditor-General's exposure of its serious shortcomings does not, however, excuse its aggressive and untoward attack on Prisoners Aid.

Winnunga wishes to assure Prisoners Aid that it has its support and applauds it for supporting and being prepared to publicly advocate for vulnerable and marginalised members of our community.

AMC Staff Resolve to Continue to Deny Detainees Basic Health Care

The decision by staff at the AMC to continue to deny detainees at the AMC the same level and standard of health care available to all other Australians was emblematic of the failure of the AMC to live up to the Government's or community expectations for the prison.

Access to clean needles by injecting drug users is taken for granted in the community. It is a vital preventative health measure and to deny it to one group of Australians is to breach their human rights and entitlement to care. It is understood that in the time since the AMC opened, up to twenty prisoners have contracted Hepatitis C whilst incarcerated in the facility. It is surely only a matter of time before a class action is commenced against the ACT Government for breach of its duty of care.

Julie Tongs, Winnunga CEO said she will not abandon her commitment to ensuring the health needs of Aboriginal detainees are met, including through the provision of clean needles. If prison officers maintained their opposition to the provision of clean needles in the prison then the Government needed to investigate alternative models for their provision. It would be possible, for instance, to provide a needle and syringe program from a mobile clinic. Detainees could be escorted to the van from the prison with prison officers having minimal or no involvement.

It is understood that in the time since the AMC opened up to twenty prisoners have contracted Hepatitis C whilst incarcerated in the facility

Fact: Winnunga operates a NSP from Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm, free of charge.

Do it with us, not to us

Colonial Paternalism?

Bruce Haigh's article should be compulsory reading for all Public Servants involved in any way in the delivery of services or development of policy affecting Aboriginal people.

Bruce Haigh is an eminent retired diplomat and a regular political commentator. He wrote recently, in the Fairfax media, about the continuing disempowerment of Indigenous people in Australia. His commentary prompted NACCHO to ask: 'Are bureaucrats blocking Indigenous empowerment? Yes or No?'

A straw poll conducted at Winnunga returned a unanimous 'Yes' vote.

Bruce Haigh's article should be compulsory reading for all Public Servants involved in any way in the delivery of services or development of policy affecting Aboriginal people.

Here is some of what Bruce had to say about you, or at least about some of you.

'Colonial paternalism is alive and well. Noblesse oblige still buzzes around inside some coiffured white middle-class heads. The "dear little black baby" syndrome still exerts some pull. But overriding all notions and motivations of duty on the part of bureaucrats, churches, non-government organisations, social and anthropological research institutions and business groups is the fixed belief that Aborigines cannot handle money.

All of the above will tell you that many Indigenous people have a propensity to burn it up, piss it up and give it away. Maybe they do, but then, when you treat people like children, they tend to behave like children. When you offer people no respect, they tend not to respect themselves. When you are racist, you tend to make people angry.

Now the white man with his burden may not believe him or herself to be racist, they may go out of their way not to be racist, they may suppress it in non-white company, but the person who is not white and middle class will pick it up in a flash. It's the condescension, it's the awkwardness, it's the body language, and it's the conversational tone. It's the inability to converse in any meaningful way, to get on the wave length. It's the lack of understanding of others lives, struggles and pain. Of course there are exceptions to the rule.

But Aborigines are not allowed to make mistakes with money, so they are quite often not allowed to manage it or even to have it. Never mind that less-than-paternalistic whites allowed to manage the money pinch it or rip it off with poor quality work in housing and other infrastructure. Some blacks have joined forces with the whites to steal and rip it off their brothers and sisters; that's what happens when you put a race of people in a metaphorical ghetto...So what about empowerment? Well it's not happening because an industry has developed around Aboriginal despair and hopelessness. It's now sustained by fleets of Prados and zealous white middle-class and middle-aged whites, who know what is best for the dispossessed. Funding policies are designed in Canberra and Sydney with scant regard to empowerment.

These projects are designed to rescue the natives from themselves, from breakfast programs to foster care, to housing, health and education, white public servants and NGO service providers know best. They know that Aboriginal children should not be taught in their own language and scant resources are spent on developing educational tools around language. Nor are kids and parents consulted on the most appropriate way of teaching. White teaching models are dumped on communities'. (Read the full article <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/white-prado-brigade-blocking-indigenous-empowerment-20160902-gr7d91.html>)



Staff Profile

Name: Marley Powell

Position: Home Maintenance

Who is your favourite singer/band?

Kendrick Lamar/ Red Hot Chili Peppers

What do you do on the weekends?

Chill out with mates/sport

What is your favourite food?

Butter Chicken

What do you like most about working at Winnunga?

Working with such a good bunch of people.



What is your pet hate?

When people lie

Who is your most respected Aboriginal leader/hero and why?

Johnathan Thurston, because he's a good role model and does a lot for the Indigenous community

