

RED OCHRE LINKS DUBBO, NSW

The project setting

Dubbo is the largest community in the vast Wiradjuri lands. It is the regional centre servicing the central wheat belt and has an official Indigenous population of 2714 according to the 2001 census, but a more accurate figure is 4000 and can increase to 8000 at times.

In July 2001, the ATSIC-sponsored Dubbo Aboriginal Summit was hosted by the Binaal Billa Regional Council. It brought together more than 250 local community members and service providers over a period of three days. Many representatives from all levels of government and administration also attended. During the summit, many issues of concern were identified, and possible strategies to address them were discussed.

Why is the project needed?

The Summit was convened as a mechanism to discuss service provision for Indigenous people in Dubbo. Many issues emerged from that process. Improved access to existing services and provision of a coordinated service system were identified as priorities for Indigenous families.

What are you trying to do in the project?

Red Ochre Link aims to work with the Dubbo community to:

- develop local strategies to improve access to existing family services for the approximately 4000 Indigenous population;
- provide better and more coordinated support for Indigenous families, including parents, grandparents and carers; and
- reshape services where appropriate.

Through meeting with current service providers and networks on a regular basis, the needs of Indigenous families can be highlighted and discussed. Information and ideas can be shared about improving networks and making better use of the supports currently available. Alternative delivery modes and systems can be pursued.

How are you going about it?

The working party formed from the Summit has continued to meet regularly. Their terms of reference have been widely circulated. A clearly defined statement of purpose, set of objectives and proposed strategies have been developed.

Project Coordinator, Anne Cobb, and Koori Liaison Officer, Luke Ah See are based at the Dubbo Local Aboriginal Land Council building. They are embarking on an extensive program of consultation and networking,

raising awareness, and providing avenues and opportunities for strengthening links between services and the local Indigenous community.

They have used a variety of mechanisms to promote communication and increase understanding about services and the needs of the community. These include: a morning tea with community leaders and six local parliamentarians to discuss the problems related to alcohol consumption; promoting NAIDOC week activities and writing and distributing the Working Party's newsletter, circulation 1,500. Anne and several working party members attended a major Koori women's consultation day with over 80 local community members, elders and service representatives; support of the Women's and Men's groups in east and west Dubbo; and many other formal and informal meetings with key agencies and networks. The team also conducted a major Youth Forum to support the women's and men's groups in east and west Dubbo and are involved in many other formal and informal meetings with key agencies and networks.

As a result, service providers are recognising the expertise of the Working Party and are keen to consult them about service enhancement and strategies for improvement.

WELLINGTON COMMUNITY NETWORKERS PROJECT DUBBO, NSW

The project setting

This Indigenous family support program aims to improve parent and family access to parenting programs as the need arises and to give them a local link within their community via Community Networkers. The program will formalise and validate the role that some community members already undertake, and strengthen the informal networks within the community. It will also strengthen the capacity of communities to be self-determining.

Why is the project needed?

The need for the project came out of the planning process undertaken for Families First in 2000. Key agencies and Aboriginal communities throughout the Orana Far West area were consulted during the planning process. An Aboriginal focus group comprising key Aboriginal agency and community members helped shape this project.

What are you trying to do in this project?

Community networkers have consulted extensively with the Aboriginal community to gain a better understanding of the services people are familiar with, how people find out about services, the barriers to accessing services, and the service gaps for families with children.

They have also talked with people in the community about what a community means to them and what could be done to make the community stronger and safer for families and children.

How are you going about it?

We have mapped local agencies providing services for families, young people and children and are working out the best way to disseminate this information within the community. As a result of the community consultations, we are planning to hold a number of family fun days which we hope will break down some of the barriers in the community and encourage people to work together on strengthening the community.

