

Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre’s Response to the Australian Government’s *Closing the Gap Refresh*, public discussion paper.

<https://closingthegaprefresh.pmc.gov.au/>

March, 2018

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Executive Summary

The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre's (KALACC) response to the Commonwealth Government's *Closing the Gap Refresh* paper, draws upon sustained community experience and cumulative evidence of the crucial role culture plays in achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

KALACC's experience of successful outcomes through community designed, driven and independently evaluated cultural programs underpins the eight recommendations provided within this response and across the following key themes;

- **Overturning the deficit approach** that has failed Aboriginal peoples;
- **Changing the narrative** from one of deficit to an up-stream, strengths-based approach;
- **Supporting on-ground effective solutions** through a national cultural investment strategy;
- **Immediate and significant response to Aboriginal Youth Suicide** through supporting community culturally-based programs that have been evaluated and identified as successful;
- **Responding to recommendations** from the *Learnings from the message stick - The report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas* (2016).
- **Investing in cultural transmission** to uphold authority in emerging leaders as change agents in our communities;
- **Real collaboration** that leads to impacts at the community level through federal and state agency engagement with regional Aboriginal community bodies and strategies;
- **Developing the evidence base** of the impact of investment in culture to refine and sustain ongoing actions to affect positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

For too long; the foundational and transformative power of Aboriginal cultural expression, cultural governance and cultural authority to affect positive social, emotional, educational and health outcomes, has been ignored.

KALACC Welcomes this refocussing on cultural foundations through the *Closing the Gap Refresh* and stands ready to support on-ground actions for the benefit of our people.

Repeated and Ongoing Recommendations for Implementing Cultural Solutions

KALACC welcomes the Commonwealth Government's commitment towards instigating a new strengths-based agenda for Indigenous policy in this nation. Since 1987, KALACC has operated as the Kimberley region's peak indigenous law and culture centre. Our mission is to:

...encourage and promote the rescue, maintenance and development of the traditional forms of Aboriginal cultural expression, including song, dance, ceremonies and related activities of the 30 Aboriginal language groups of the Kimberley.

For ten years we have as a nation engaged in a deficits-based discourse predicated upon the colonial view that Aboriginal communities were deficient and that Aboriginal people were delinquent. In this context, culture has played no role. The outcome from the deficits discourse approach has been that we now plough over \$33 billion annually into mainstream, conventional, Western – European programs and strategies that fail to deliver on the Closing the Gap targets.

On page 40 of the Human Rights Commission *2011 Social Justice Report*, Commissioner Mick Gooda wrote as follows:

I have an ongoing concern that recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and cultural differences is too frequently confined to the margins of the policy development and implementation process. The Australian Government's Indigenous policy is driven by the COAG *Closing the Gap* targets and building blocks. There is currently no specific culture building block. It is true that culture, language and identity should inform the COAG agenda through the Indigenous Engagement principle in the Service Delivery Principles scheduled to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement. However, it is my concern that culture is often an afterthought in the development policy and programs. In Chapter 4 of this Report I will demonstrate the importance of creating a culturally competent bureaucracy. It is important that government policies and programs are designed in a manner that

protects and promotes our culture or they will not have the maximum potential impact. However, respecting and protecting culture extends beyond a means to an end. It is a positive outcome in itself.

This same notion is echoed in the West Kimberley pages of the ***Empowered Communities Overview Document***:

Culture is at our core. Rarely, if ever, is our Aboriginal culture considered when Governments design, develop and deliver policy and services for the West Kimberley. (p. 70)

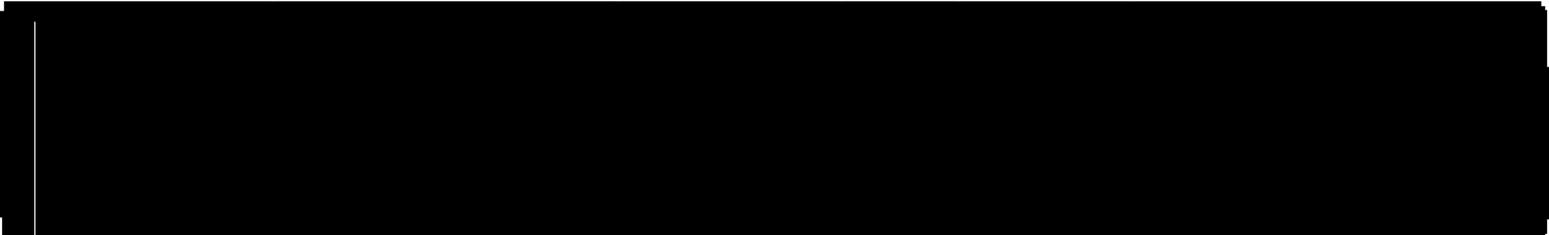
The repeated affirmations from Aboriginal people about the importance of culture have consistently fallen on deaf ears of Labor and Liberal Governments at both State and Commonwealth levels. In February 2011 the WA Indigenous Implementation Board handed down its ***Final Report***. That report states:

Aboriginal people and their culture are critical to the future of our State. Their unique knowledge is the defining element in building a sustainable future for Western Australia. [front cover]

Many of the accepted indicators of the effects of Council of Australian Government programs, i.e. education participation, health, engagement with the justice and corrective systems, are worsening for Western Australia. This suggests that the ongoing philosophy of assimilation that is obvious, if unstated, in underpinning “overcoming disadvantage” and “closing the gap” programs, may be a contributor to growing Aboriginal alienation and dysfunction. (p. 1)

Evidence from the broad data available suggests that, despite the growing wealth of the State, the foreseen costs, both financial and social, are, in all probability, unsustainable.

The Board has developed the view that the help and cooperation of Aboriginal people are required if this trend is to be turned around. The fundamental premise is that only Aboriginal people can solve Aboriginal problems and they can only be empowered to do this through shared strategies and plans developed in a



partnership that is based on equality and recognizes and respects their cultures and knowledge. (p. 1)

Those words were written in February 2011. In other words, the failures of the deficits-based *Closing the Gap* discourses, despite the expenditure of billions of dollars annually, were entirely foreseeable and were obvious to anyone who cared to look as far back as 2011. In the *Closing the Gap Refresh Prosperity Narrative* from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet we read as follows:

We need to lift our sights beyond improving health, education and employment.
(p.1)

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission in its *2011 Social Justice Report* called on the Commonwealth to recognize the importance of culture and of a strengths-based policy, but the then Government and all subsequent governments ignored that call. In the same year, 2011, the WA Indigenous Implementation Board called on the WA Government to abandon its assimilationist deficits-based approach to Aboriginal affairs because that philosophy was actually contributing to growing Aboriginal alienation and dysfunction. But the then WA Government and all subsequent WA governments have ignored the clear need to work 'in a partnership that is based on equality and recognizes and respects their cultures and knowledge.'

KALACC applauds the Commonwealth Government on the *Closing the Gap Refresh* initiative. It is long overdue. We look forward to the day when the platitudes about the importance of culture are translated into actual actions and into tangible policies and funding. Currently, culture is peripheral to Government and represents less than 1% of Government expenditure on Indigenous Affairs. We will know that Governments are serious about developing positive social outcomes for Aboriginal people when Governments finally get serious about investing in strengths and culturally based programs. We hope that this submission provides some clear guidance to the Government on how to achieve those outcomes.

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KALACC Recommendations

1. Develop a National Aboriginal Cultural Plan.

(as has been considered by the Commonwealth since 2016)

2. Allocate a minimum of \$20M per annum specifically for the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Cultural Expression.

(This would be consistent with the following words from page 88 of the *Creative Australia* policy of October 2013.)

The rich cultural practices, knowledge systems and Traditional Cultural Expressions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are a source of great strength, resilience and pride. The goal of this policy means future investment in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to protect, maintain and develop their cultures, languages and their contemporary expressions, is of the utmost importance

3. Allocate a minimum of 5% of Indigenous Advancement Strategy funds to the Culture and Capability Stream of IAS and, within that stream, clarify the guidelines so as to specifically support cultural maintenance activities.

(This would rectify the current situation in which the Ministry for the Arts divested itself of Cultural maintenance responsibilities, effective as of 01 July 2016, and no other Government agency has to date accepted that responsibility.)

4. Work with the WA Government on its proposed *Close the Gap Refresh* Statewide focus areas and collaboratively implement a trial of a Cultural Investment Strategy in at least two regions of WA.

(This would build on the yet to be implemented WA Aboriginal Cultural Investment Strategy of 2016 and would enable State and Commonwealth Governments to comprehensively explore issues relating to the instrumental value of culture and of how to measure and validate that instrumental value.)

5. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to work with KALACC, Murdoch University and the Telethon Kids Institute in trialling evaluations of specific cultural programs.

(This would build on item #4, above, and would be a tangible strategy for addressing concerns about how to measure and validate the instrumental value of culture.)

6. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services to contribute towards the implementation of cultural outcomes for the *Kimberley Suicide Prevention Regional Trial*.

(The *Operational Plan* to the *Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial* was endorsed by the Federal Government and by the community in December 2018. It is time for the Government to now take action on investing in strategies arising from the plan.)

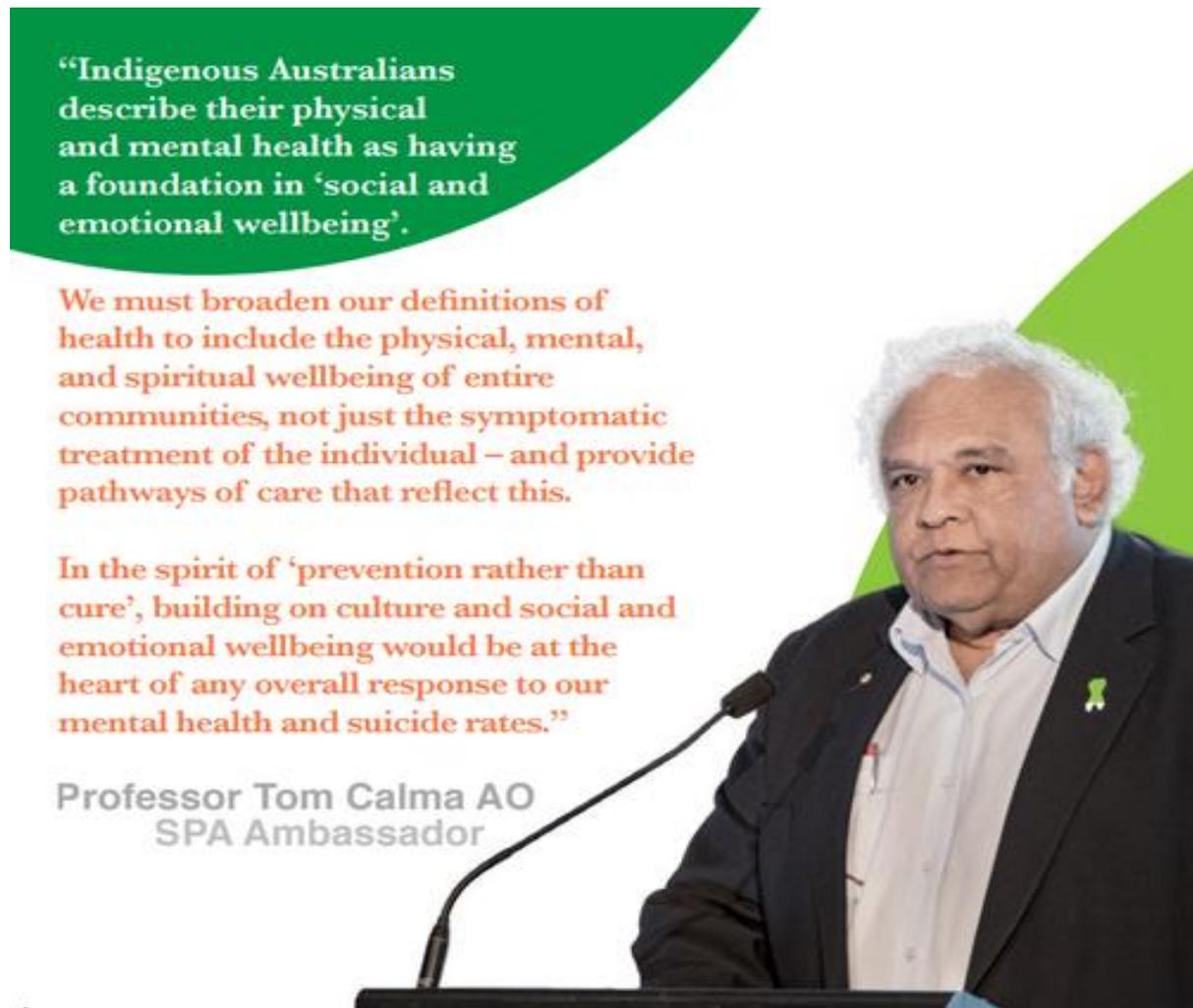
7. The Department of Health, through the *My Life My Lead* policy and strategy, to allocate specific funds to support culturally based Social and Emotional Wellbeing programs.

(The Minister for Aboriginal Health periodically writes to KALACC advising us of the quanta of investments in mental health programs for Aboriginal people. But *My Life My Lead* recommends investments in culturally based programs, and for those, KALACC is unaware of any significant resources which are available.)

8. Commonwealth Government to respond to the November 2016 *Message Stick Report Recommendations*

(In November 2016 the WA Parliament Standing Committee on Education and Health tabled; *Learnings from the message stick - The report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas*. The Report found that nothing works better than Aboriginal culture to reduce rates of youth suicide. To date we have seen no recognition from the Commonwealth of this important Report and no responses from the Commonwealth.)

Aboriginal Voices – Culture Is Integral to *Closing the Gap*



“Indigenous Australians describe their physical and mental health as having a foundation in ‘social and emotional wellbeing’.

We must broaden our definitions of health to include the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of entire communities, not just the symptomatic treatment of the individual – and provide pathways of care that reflect this.

In the spirit of ‘prevention rather than cure’, building on culture and social and emotional wellbeing would be at the heart of any overall response to our mental health and suicide rates.”

Professor Tom Calma AO
SPA Ambassador

Source: Suicide Prevention Australia, 2017, *25th Anniversary Report* Ms June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, National Suicide Prevention Conference Thursday 27 July 2017.

Cultural strength is key to suicide prevention:

Our very survival in this country, is testament to our strength as a peoples and to our ability to adapt to our conditions. It is evidence of the strength of our culture which we know must be the bedrock of any solutions to many of the challenges that we face...

The power of our culture in healing and the necessity of community designed and led solutions are key antidotes for change

We know the healing power and protective role that culture plays in our communities. Our culture kept us safe and healthy long before the British arrived on our shores and long before we even had words to describe the devastation of suicide. It has been a reservoir of strength that has sustained us throughout time.

Research tells us that strong cultural connections are a necessary ingredient for good health and wellbeing. Of course, we already know this, but we need to build the evidence base around what works. ¹

Senator Patrick Dodson, 2017

Mabu liyan - I hope you feel good in your heart

The coronial inquest into 13 suicides in the Kimberley

We have a crisis in the Kimberley. Our young people are prematurely ending their own lives at seven times the national average, said to be the highest suicide rate in the world...

Liyan is about relationships, family, community and what gives meaning to people's lives. Yawuru people's strong connection to Country and joy in celebrating our culture and society is fundamental to having good liyan. When we feel disrespected or abused our liyan is bad, which can be insidious and corrosive for both the individual and the community.

When our liyan is good our wellbeing and everything else is in a good space. Mabu liyan was once at the centre of Yawuru society and culture. It informed our obligations to family, community and Country. The impact of colonisation has been traumatic for our people. It has contributed to a loss of connectedness through the destruction of culture and respect. This has resulted in harmful behaviors and

¹ <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/national-suicide-prevention-conference>



dysfunctional relationships, substance abuse, family violence, and ultimately the loss of hope and the loss of the will to live...

Programs that value cultural imperatives like connection to Country, and initiatives controlled by Aboriginal people must be given priority. We should be listening to Aboriginal organisations such as Aarnja, KALACC (Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre) or Nyamba Buru Yawuru, organisations that are actively engaged in promoting mabu liyan...

Kimberley Aboriginal Cultural Bosses from across the Kimberley region met in Kununurra on 27 July 2017 to reaffirm our commitment to cultural solutions to building communities on foundations of culture:

“We call on the Commonwealth and Western Australian Government to work with us to design and deliver a Cultural Investment Strategy to create pathways to sustainable, healthy, and prosperous communities based on cultural solutions that work for our people.

Solutions do not come from outside our communities. Solutions that work for our people have always come from our Cultural leaders and have been driven by our own organisations.

Now is the time to cut through and to build on the nice words, promises of change and short-term, fragmented and piecemeal program approach that governments and communities have been burdened with for too long. Real change means working from the cultural strength that has been the key to our survival. To heal our people, we must heal our families. To heal our families, we must heal our communities. Culture is the key.”

KALACC Principles (Cultural Solutions)

KALACC Directors endorse and affirm cultural solutions guided by the 16 Recommendations (Opportunities) made in the September 2017 KALACC Cultural Solutions Position Paper and the following 10 Statements of Principle:

<p>1. Cultural solutions are crucial to empower Kimberley Aboriginal communities; families and individuals to heal the cultural and social trauma that has taken hold for many of our people.</p>
<p>2. Our young people are our future. Building stories in our young people, connecting to Country, community, and family is how we build their future.</p>
<p>3. Investing in cultural solutions on Country prevents young people from becoming trapped in the criminal justice system, setting them on the right path instead of spending millions of dollars locking them up.</p>
<p>4. Cultural solutions have the greatest impact in preventing youth suicide utilising an 'upstream methodology' to engage young people through culture, Country and community.</p>
<p>5. Cultural leadership is based on cultural authority. Cultural authority is respected, empowering and effective in delivering real cultural and social change that our communities need and value.</p>
<p>6. Our young people need to be strong in two worlds – culture, language and education go hand in hand.</p>
<p>7. Cultural governance, when respected and supported, upholds cultural and social values and increases community responsibility and effectiveness.</p>
<p>8. Kimberley Aboriginal communities are founded on respect for family, Law, culture, language and Country.</p>
<p>9. Remote communities are the lifeblood of Kimberley Aboriginal community; supporting culture, language, education, connection to Country, belonging, identity and responsibility.</p>
<p>10. Cultural economies empower Aboriginal families to build on cultural assets of Country, language, culture, and Indigenous Knowledge to create direct employment and wellbeing.</p>

Systemic Impediments to Implementing Cultural Solutions - The Failed Deficit Approach

A Narrative around culture, wellbeing and achieving actual outcomes in Aboriginal Affairs

What are the outcomes which we note in the Kimberley region as a result of the \$33B national annual expenditure on Aboriginal affairs? The *Medical Journal of Australia* advises as follows:

Suicide rates among Indigenous people in the Kimberley region of Western Australia are among the highest in the world. During the period 2001–2010, age-adjusted suicide rates among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians were respectively 21.4 and 10.3 per 100 000 population per year. ²

And despite the investment of tens of millions of dollars in downstream clinical, therapeutic and psychological services, the rate of suicide in the Kimberley has, according to the *Medical Journal of Australia*, in fact nearly doubled in a five-year period. ³

The alarming rate of suicide amongst Aboriginal youths in remote areas of Western Australia was the subject of a November 2016 Report by the WA Parliament Standing Committee on Education and Health - *Learnings from the message stick: The report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas*.

The key findings in that report are as follows:

- Perhaps the most important, yet least enacted, were about the role of Aboriginal culture, both as a primary protective factor building resilience in young people, and also ensuring that programs and services are culturally appropriate (Chairman's Foreword).

² <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2016/205/1/increasing-indigenous-self-harm-and-suicide-kimberley-audit-2005-2014-data>

³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-27/indigenous-suicide-rates-in-remote-wa-among-worst-in-117542600>

- Aboriginal culture and identity has been degraded by colonisation and discrimination. Restoring this culture and sense of identity has been consistently identified as a key protective factor. Previous reports and inquiries have recommended that this can be achieved through various means, primary of which is culturally-based programs, such as on-Country camps and activities (ii).
- Finding 1: The Western Australian Government has failed to adequately respond to recommendations made by previous inquiries for more than 15 years (p. 13).
- Finding 8: There is increasing evidence that culturally based programs have the greatest impact in preventing suicide; however, the Western Australian Government has demonstrated reluctance in funding programs of this nature (p. 57).

There is no lack of investment in to regions like the Kimberley. The WA Department of Corrective Services implemented a \$60M expansion of its Regional Youth Justice Services program. At the end of the four-year program, 2011 to 2014, the juvenile offending rate had increased by 10%.

In 2011, the Indigenous Implementation Board described these repeated large investments in failed mainstream programs as being both 'assimilationist' and 'unsustainable'. The key recommendation from the *Message Stick Report* is:

Recommendation 13 Page 79:

That the Western Australian Government shifts its focus from government owned and run programs and services for Aboriginal people to Aboriginal owned and run programs. The Committee acknowledges that this will be a gradual process; however, it can begin immediately by designing strategies, services and programs with the aim of empowering Aboriginal communities.

Why do repeated Aboriginal calls for culturally based solutions always fall on deaf ears in Government?

The *2011 Social Justice Report* and the *2011 Final Report* of the Indigenous Implementation Board, both urged Governments to fundamentally reframe their Indigenous affairs policies so as to place culture at the centre of policy development. Those calls fell on deaf ears. The Message Stick Report cites no fewer than 40 reports to Government over a 15-year period which have fallen on deaf ears. Why is this message about the centrality of culture so existentially difficult for Governments to accept? The answer is that governments may see these myriads of reports as indeed representing threats to their existence.

KALACC has long advocated to the Government the importance of culturally based solutions. In his Anthropology 2009 PhD dissertation, Martin Preaud describes KALACC's advocacy endeavours as being a 'dialogue of the Babel.' The 60,000-year-old traditions and beliefs of the Kimberley butt up against the liberal colonialist views of Government and rather than intersection, one observes a dialogue of disregard and disinterest.

Country, Law and Culture, Anthropology of Indigenous Networks from the Kimberley, page 64.

Dr Lisa Slater of the University of Wollongong, writing about the experience of white philanthropists at KALACC Festivals, makes a similar finding:

Listening to the Kimberley people is of vital importance and necessary, however, more so, I think what is needed is to interrupt the discourse about Aboriginal people: vulnerability, lack of capacity, in general the deficit model. It is a frame in which everything becomes interpreted – felt and understood. My sense is that the festival activates 'alternative affective capacities'. At the festival the guests are drawn into a world of difference that one doesn't necessarily understand but begins to trust that 'it's real'.

Dr Lisa Slater, University of Wollongong, Lecture Presentation, 18 March 2016.

Dr Slater is entirely correct. At no point in this nation's history has Aboriginal affairs policy and practice been anything other than the imposition of the colonial will upon the colonized. The inevitable consequence is trauma. Real progress can only be made through 'alternative affective capacities' ie the willingness of the mainstream Australian population to allow their post-colonial narratives about Aboriginal deficits to be interrupted by the realities of Aboriginal lives, commencing with the strength of culture.

Previous Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda, characterizes the colonial roots of trauma thus:

In order to establish power and control, the colonising powers positioned the groups being colonised as inferior to themselves, ignoring their basic humanity as well as their cultural identity, existing power structures and ways of life. Despite often fierce resistance on the part of the colonised groups, theorists such as Paulo Friere and Frantz Fanon argue that the colonised groups internalised the values and behaviours of their oppressors, leading to a negative view of themselves and their culture. This results in low self-esteem and often the adoption of violent behaviours.

Colonisation robbed groups of their power, autonomy and land. Living in a world where they are constantly portrayed as second-class citizens at best, but often not even citizens at all, it is not surprising that colonized groups have struggled to maintain their own identities and confidence in their abilities. Their anger and frustration about the injustices has manifested itself in violence, not 'vertically' towards the colonisers responsible for oppression, but 'laterally' towards their own community.

2011 Social Justice Report, page 57.

And current Social Justice Commissioner, June Oscar, describes things this way:

This reality jars against the image of Australia as a prosperous nation. Our country ranks as one of the richest OECD countries on earth and yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not sit at this table of wealth.

We know that our nation's prosperity and our people's place amongst the most socially and economically disadvantaged are no coincidence. These events are inextricably linked.

The colonization of our country has come at a great cost for our peoples. We see it every day in the health and wellbeing of our peoples, in the lack of jobs and in the trauma and disadvantage that surrounds us.

Cultural strength is key to suicide prevention - National Suicide Prevention Conference Thursday 27 July 2017

KALACC's approach to colonization and the root causes of trauma is to avoid lateral violence, to dismiss deficits discourses and to instead assert a strengths-based, culturally centred development agenda. In October 2010 the KALACC Board of Directors released the following Statement:

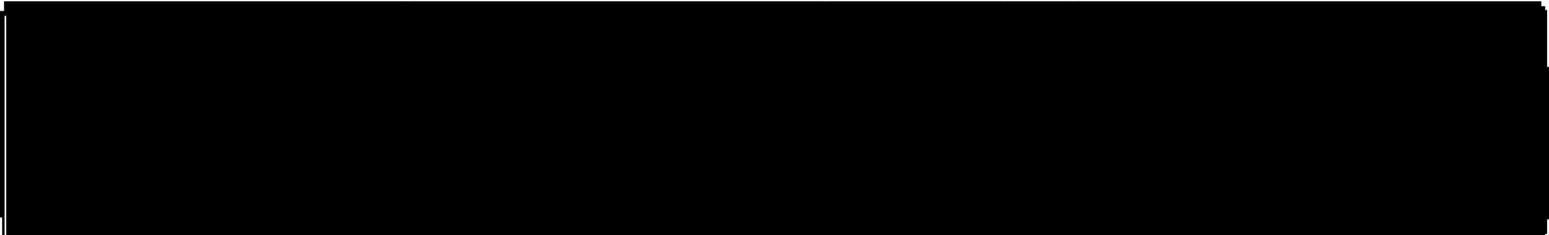
We the KALACC Directors in principle:

1. Demand that governments must listen to, understand, respect and recognize the role, value and authority of culture bosses in their own right
2. Wish for discussions by senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women across Australia to get solid agreement to make this happen
3. Call for new, adequate resources to support this process.

For over thirty years we have been calling for Aboriginal empowerment. Now is the time for a new dialogue based on genuine respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law, culture and language.

More recently, in September 2017, KALACC published its ***Cultural Solutions Position Paper***. That paper acts as a clear guide as to how positive community outcomes can be achieved in the Kimberley:

This paper situates KALACC's work in the context of up-to-date evidence that supports its methods, outputs and outcomes. It links KALACC's priorities with recent and significant recommendations of parliamentary enquiries, national and



regional evaluations of Aboriginal youth suicide, Kimberley regional partnerships, as well as the organisation's role in the national 'Empowered Communities' model. This paper also identifies five interrelated themes within which KALACC operates to deliver its culturally designed and community-owned activities, and provides case studies of KALACC's work. The five key themes and eight case studies are:

1. Cultural solutions, resilience and healing;
2. Cultural foundations, emerging leaders;
3. Land, law, culture and governance;
4. Investing in culture – cultural enterprise;
5. Remote communities – our homelands.

At time of writing, some six months after the *Cultural Solutions Position Paper* was presented to Commonwealth and State Governments, neither Government had sought to engage meaningfully with KALACC in regards to advancing this agenda in the Kimberley.

KALACC absolutely welcomes the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (PMC) *Closing the Gap* 'Prosperity narrative', which states in part:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be empowered - own community, cultural and economic development.

Governments must ensure the right structures and incentives are in place to enable this development.

Change the way we think and talk - too much emphasis is given to disadvantage, the problems and the deficits.

And we absolutely welcome PMC's 'Cultural narrative', which states in part:

We cannot talk about improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples without also talking about the central role of culture.

The importance of culture is shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Country, family and kinship, language, heritage, customary law and ceremony shape peoples' identity, their connection to others and to the world.

Closing the gap in health, education, employment and other outcomes is very important.

However, prosperity is more than just material wellbeing.

It is about being able to enjoy the same opportunities as non-Indigenous Australians while also preserving, practicing and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' unique cultures.

The Aboriginal community's calls for culturally based, strengths-based policy agendas have consistently fallen on deaf ears. The root cause of this is that the Government always wishes to empower itself and clearly there is no way that it can deliver culturally based programs. Through the *Closing the Gap Refresh* we see the Government, for the first time, affirming the vital role of culture. This seems to be an inevitable consequence of a decade of failed deficits discourses. But only Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations can deliver culturally based solutions. The challenge for Government is to demonstrate that it is genuine, and to empower and enable community to deliver culturally based solutions. We are yet to see if the current Commonwealth and State Governments are seriously up to this challenge.

Should Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture be incorporated in the *Closing the Gap* framework? How?

What do you think are the key targets or commitments that should be measured in a refreshed *Closing the Gap* agenda?

Through the *Closing the Gap Refresh* Discussion Paper, the Commonwealth Government has posed to us the two questions above.

In response, we note that the Commonwealth has provided State jurisdictions with a degree of latitude and scope to develop *Closing the Gap Frameworks* which are applicable to their individual jurisdictions. In Western Australia, the State Government

has proposed the implementation of some nine *Statewide Focus Areas*, including the following six:

- COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP - Empowered Aboriginal Community-controlled organisations and leaders to design and delivery vital wrap around support services so every place has a core level of culturally competent supports;
- CULTURE - Keeping our culture strong and part of our lives is critical to reciprocity, where others also respect and promote our cultural identity;
- HEALING - Recognition of our colonial history of displacement / dispossession and the recognition of the enduring impacts of the stolen generation;
- BELONGING - Strong kinship, and connection to country, history, heritage, elders and role models;
- FAMILY SUPPORTS - Restoring and increasing resilience through the range of culturally appropriate services to prevent and manage life stressors, grief and trauma.

KALACC endorses the adoption by the WA Government of that proposed Statewide focus areas framework.

The ***Closing the Gap Refresh*** national community consultation processes commenced in Broome in early November 2017. Despite a number of requests, PMC has not to date provided KALACC with a set of minutes or notes from that meeting. But subsequently there have been a number of smaller, district and community-based ***Closing the Gap Refresh*** meetings. One of those took place in Fitzroy Crossing on 29 November 2017. This is part of what the community said to Government on that day:

We should take a strengths-based approach – we need to respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal resilience. Everyone has good points, positive things, we must have done something right to still be here as Aboriginal people. We no-longer want to be seen and treated in the deficit...

Government works with individuals; however, Aboriginal people are communal in nature and practice – so we need communal approaches to family support services. Grand-parents and elders have a big say in child rearing practices, but they are often not brought into conversation with government.

This extends to economic and land development – it is not a council of people but communal benefits and engagement practice. It's not about individual gain and benefit; it is actually about nation building amongst Aboriginal people as traditional owners working in the best interest of everyone.

Culture and place in Aboriginal society are grounded in respect – it may seem like little things but it is big because it helps address conflict, issues, problem solving – we have cultural advisors to manage issues our way. Elders need to be validated and included in good community governance, and justice issues. Without culture, Aboriginal people can go mad, have conflict and be chaotic. We need to balance our community norms through respect for elders.

So much grief, loss and death is having a big impact on family and community well-being. Sorry business is a lore we need to carry as it's our healing to sit down with families having dramas or going through loss. We have cultural healing.

Communities need to come together and play an active role in community healing – leadership is about looking after every language group in Fitzroy Crossing. We want communal continuity.

Aboriginal males are overrepresented in the justice system and have a punitive relationship with government. All current programs and policies are about restraining orders, arrest, court orders, etc. We need prevention and earlier intervention programs to build up our men, provide alternative spaces for them to cool down, rest, engage elders, get help and recover from their own trauma. Jail should not be the option. Jails hurt the whole family; we need to intervene earlier because our kids are suffering – our kinship system is hurting. We need to shift this to rebuilding the hope and resilience of our men to be present in their family lives. We want a community empowerment framework.

We respect our elders but some problems are so complex it cannot be fixed by KALACC and elders alone. We need to work together and negotiate solutions and ways of working together. It's not always what we do but how we choose to work together. History tells us government likes to see us in conflict. We need to rise above the past and fix our differences and work as a united community that respects each other's rights and responsibilities. We need to come back to the camp fire and have long healthy conversations about how we move forward together.

KALACC looks forward to receiving from PMC a copy of the notes or minutes from the Broome consultation which commenced the national dialogue process. But what we can see from the comments of the Fitzroy Crossing community is that culture is absolutely central to a positive Aboriginal development agenda. And the comments from the community of Fitzroy Crossing are consistent with, and supportive of, the Close the Gap Refresh focus areas proposed by the WA Government.

Earlier in the document we provided a number of recommendations to Government, and those recommendations include these:

4. Work with the WA Government on its proposed ***Close the Gap Refresh*** Statewide Focus Areas and collaboratively implement a trial of a Cultural Investment Strategy in at least two regions of WA.

6. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services to contribute towards the implementation of cultural outcomes for the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Regional Trial.

If Government accepts and implements those recommendations then that would enable State and Commonwealth Governments to comprehensively explore issues relating to the instrumental value of culture and of how to measure and validate that instrumental value.



In regards to the issue of how to measure outcomes, particularly cultural outcomes, there is very considerable work that has been done and which is being done in this area. Some of the work which KALACC is aware of includes:

- ***Mayi Kuwayu***: the National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing ⁴
- ***My Life My Lead***: Opportunities for strengthening approaches to the social and cultural determinants of Indigenous health ⁵
- ***Living Culture***: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing ⁶
- ***Interplay*** between culture, community, empowerment, education, employment, health and wellbeing in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. ⁷

In addition to that, we attach as Appendix 1 to this current submission the following - ***Evaluating programmes where culture is a significant element of programme success, A Short Discussion Paper***, Professor Patrick Sullivan, Nulungu Research Institute, University of Notre Dame Australia.

On a following page in this current document you will find a copy of the Western Australian Primary Health Alliance's Outcomes Map, against which KALACC is required to report, in relation to funding for the Yiriman Youth Project. The 16-box matrix requires us to report to the funding body on activity indicators and outcome indicators in regards to each of the following:

- Person
- Clinical
- System

⁴ <https://rsph.anu.edu.au/research/projects/mayi-kuwayu-national-study-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-wellbeing>

⁵ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/indigenous-ipag-consultation>

⁶ <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/living-culture/>

⁷ <http://www.firstnations.com.au/>

- Provider.

This reporting framework, which is currently in use, is one tangible example of how a culturally based program such as the *Yiriman Youth Program* can report its outcomes even within the constraints of a mainstream reporting methodology.

But beyond that we are actively exploring more fundamental ways of evaluating and measuring the outcomes from specific cultural programs. Recommendation 6 within this present document is:

6. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services to contribute towards the implementation of cultural outcomes for the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Regional Trial.

KALACC is currently proposing to design and test evaluation tools using the following criteria. Research will:

1. Be two-way: will synthesise Indigenous knowledge frameworks with Western measurement parameters.
2. Use Nyikina, Mangala, Walmatjarri and Karajarri and knowledge, and will add to the scholarly work about Indigenous Knowledge Systems.
3. Be led by Aboriginal law bosses.
4. Create reciprocal benefit to the communities involved.
5. Employ a full partnership approach. That is, there will be co-design, co-production and co-authorship between local cultural leaders and the research team.
6. Use deep listening and framing in Aboriginal language, knowledge and culture.
7. Be deeply connected to Country, language and action; and deliberately connect to Yiriman practices.
8. Recognise Aboriginal cultural bosses have a serious contribution: it will be strengths-based, then engage the cultural bosses in responding to the challenges confronting Aboriginal young people.

9. Use film, video and other user-friendly digital tools to store data and create stories in a range of forms for current and future monitoring and evaluation. (Palmer, unpublished, pp. 22-26; reworded for brevity requirements).

KALACC is in the advanced planning and negotiation stages of discussions with Murdoch University and with the Telethon Kids Institute, in regards to the best way to measure and evaluate the cultural, personal and systemic outcomes from a particular program (Yiriman). We would welcome having a dialogue with the Commonwealth Government in regards to this proposed research.

Outcomes Map



Service Name Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre Aboriginal Corporation (Mental Health Suicide Prevention Yiriman Project)

THE SERVICE

Describe what the service is trying to do. Support back to country trips, opportunities for cultural immersion, language maintenance and intergenerational transmission for young people in the Fitzroy Valley as a means to build resilience against suicide.

	OUTCOMES (What is success for each?)	OUTCOME INDICATORS (What will we see if we're on track?)	ACTIVITIES (How will we achieve outcomes?)	ACTIVITY INDICATORS (How is each activity going?)
PERSON	<p>Country (perhaps use 'Ngurra') Young people spend time on the country of their ancestors. Family and community (perhaps kanginyinpa or a word for holding young people). Young people spend quality time with other generations from their communities. Culture (language word for it) Each day while on country young people safely visit important cultural sites and are deeply immersed in Indigenous cultural activities and cultural knowledge systems (as established and monitored by senior cultural bosses).</p>	<p>Cultural bosses governing decisions about who attend trips and where people visit. Cultural bosses leading cultural activities, speaking language on country, teaching cultural content and taking young people to sites. Young people, middle aged members and elders traveling together on country. Signs that visited country is healthy (as established by cultural elders) Young people speaking language, carrying out identified cultural activities (ie. making artifacts, dancing, walking, singing out to each other in language, hunting and collecting food, working with elders etc)</p>	<p>Clients participating in suggested activities. Identification of gaps and innovative suggestion on how best to improve program activities.</p>	<p>Maintain records that note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - names, ages, groups and skin of all participating in trips - any formal workshop activities - reflections from any visiting individuals (from other organisations) - referrals to and from other groups - daily records of cultural activities, sites visited - digital e-book with young people's records of work - audio records of bosses assessment of strength of cultural work - photos of activities
CLINICAL	<p>The Yiriman Project will work in conjunction with the Community Psychologist employed by Fitzroy Crossing Mental Health Consortium (KALACC, Nindlinggarri, Marra Worra Worra and Marninwamtikura) to provide culturally safe clinical services.</p> <p>Invitations will be offered to culturally safe clinical practitioners to attend Yiriman trips</p> <p>Invitations will be offered to services to frame a short workshop on mental health first aid and other</p>	<p>A formal process for identification of most at risk young people is co-designed with new Community Psychologist.</p> <p>Agreements are made between consortium representatives and Yiriman about pathway models for follow up support for young people who access Yiriman's programs.</p> <p>An increase in the number of culturally safe clinical services</p> <p>An increase in referral to cultural safe clinical services</p>	<p>The new Community Psychologist meet with all Yiriman cultural bosses over their first year.</p> <p>The new Community Psychologist receive a formal cultural induction designed by Yiriman cultural bosses.</p> <p>The new Community Psychologist participate in at least two Yiriman programs in the first twelve months of their work.</p> <p>Yiriman staff and the new Community Psychologist co-design a twelve month strategy and program of activities.</p>	<p>The co-designed strategy and program of activities is reviewed by cultural bosses, Yiriman staff and representatives of the consortium at the end of twelve months.</p> <p>A written review of cultural safety training is produced by the new Community Psychologist.</p> <p>At least one agreement with a clinical service to have them undertake cultural safety training, visit, join in Yiriman activity, co-design a short workshop/s.</p> <p>Recent invitations to clinicians to attend a Yiriman trip</p>
SYSTEM	<p>Clinician and support services (including the new Community Psychologist) work in conjunction with Yiriman to build their capacity to offer culturally safe services for Yiriman participants (with emphasis on cultural knowledge and practice being used in conjunction with clinical and medical knowledge and practice)</p> <p>The Yiriman Project work in conjunction with clinical and support services to incorporate clinical and medical knowledge and practice into Yiriman business</p>	<p>The new Community Psychologist has developed a 'cultural safety practice plan' for their work with the Yiriman Project.</p> <p>Clinical and medical services adopt knowledge and practice from Indigenous cultural systems in their core business</p> <p>The Yiriman Project build at least one workshop that draws in medical and clinical knowledge into each trip.</p>	<p>This plan will include protocols for how they will incorporate Indigenous cultural practice and knowledge into their clinical practice.</p> <p>The 'cultural safety practice plan' will include protocols for how they will incorporate Indigenous cultural practice and knowledge into their clinical practice.</p> <p>Build a network and data base of referral clinicians and other support services.</p> <p>Yiriman will host an event to discuss with representative partners</p>	<p>Annual cultural assessment of the activities of the new Community Psychologist by at least four cultural bosses and Yiriman staff.</p> <p>Number of clinical and medical practitioners taking up the invitation to attend a Yiriman trip</p> <p>Number of services that feature on the network/data base</p> <p>Cycle of reflection/review/planning undertaken and recorded after each workshop session</p>
PROVIDER	<p>Yiriman staff (full-time, part-time and paid cultural advisers) include representatives from local groups.</p> <p>Staff are culturally safe when doing business on country</p> <p>Yiriman is governed through strong involvement of cultural bosses</p> <p>Staff are culturally competent and/or led by cultural interpreters</p>	<p>Staff stay healthy.</p> <p>Staff do not visit country on their own.</p> <p>New staff are welcomed to community and country in culturally appropriate way.</p> <p>Cultural bosses lead decisions about country visited, participants invited, languages spoken and cultural content shared.</p> <p>A network of cultural interpreters are employed and guide key staff.</p>	<p>The new Community Psychologist receive a formal cultural induction designed by Yiriman cultural bosses.</p> <p>Whenever the new Community Psychologist visits country they are accompanied by an appropriate cultural boss for the area.</p> <p>Cultural advisers are involved in recruitment and selection of key staff.</p> <p>New staff are supported with strong cultural induction.</p> <p>New staff have safe and affordable accommodation</p>	<p>Records are kept of the travel of the new Community Psychologist.</p> <p>Records are kept of cultural bosses involved in recruitment of staff.</p> <p>Records are kept of areas and kilometres traveled by staff.</p> <p>Records are kept of leave taken by staff.</p> <p>Records are kept of staff professional development.</p>

Appendix 1: How we Develop the Evidentiary Basis of Cultural Solutions from Community Driven Programs

A Short Discussion Paper

Professor Patrick Sullivan, Nulungu Research Institute, University of Notre Dame Australia.

Culture Matters

In the only study of its kind, a team of researchers from Melbourne and La Trobe universities demonstrated that culture matters. They examined thirteen peer-reviewed scholarly articles covering eleven studies ‘that reported quantitatively expressed health and wellbeing outcomes involving Indigenous Australian participants’. They found ‘evidence that interventions that include opportunities for expression of cultural identities can have beneficial effects for Australian Indigenous peoples’. Eight of the eleven studies ‘showed significant improvement in at least one psychosocial, behavioural or clinical measure, with two showing a positive direction of effect and one showing no improvement’.⁸

This simply confirms what field staff already know. Culture is good for people. Yet, the cultural component of a programme is often neglected because programme planning and evaluation methods have not yet evolved enough to deal with complex, value-laden, behaviour. Evaluations focus, instead, largely on stats and money, because these are easier to measure.

Value in Evaluation

Professor Don Nutbeam is an expert in evaluation techniques. He says:

The word ‘evaluation’ has at its core, both literally and metaphorically, the concept of ‘value’. The value we place on a particular action and its outcome

⁸ MacLean, S, Ritte, R, Thorpe, A, Ewenc, S and Arabena, K Health and wellbeing outcomes of programs for Indigenous Australians that include strategies to enable the expression of cultural

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/PY16061>

defines its importance, how we interpret information and, in many cases, how we assess success or failure. These values are contestable ... Policy makers, academic researchers, frontline staff and the wider community may all have different views on what represents 'value' from public investment.⁹

Aboriginal people in remote areas such as the Kimberley value traditional culture. This is true even of the educated youth of the towns and large settlements. This observation leads to two questions: How can we build cultural support into development programmes; and how can we evaluate programmes with a significant cultural component?

These are really aspects of the same question, because programme evaluation must be planned and carried out as programmes are devised and implemented.

The mainstream evaluation literature offers only a partial solution, since it is mainstream, and Aboriginal people are not. Nevertheless, it can offer insights and point to various ways forward, that can be built on by more culture-centred techniques, such as the well-being schema outlined at the end of this short discussion paper.

Coalface versus Centre

Nicholas Gruen, a management expert who has written on 'the travesties of "evidence-based" policy making', says:

To establish a good monitoring and evaluation regime you need to work methodically from general objectives to delivery at the coalface. But here's the thing. Those at the centre of the system need to listen to those at the coalface every bit as much as those at the coalface need to listen to those at the centre. After all, those at the coalface are where the action is ... So the coalface and those at the centre of the system must listen conscientiously to each other to jointly serve the wellbeing of the whole system. Yet the centre

and the coalface of the system are also respectively, the top and bottom of a hierarchy. Now those at the bottom of the system listen intently to the wishes of those at the top as if their career prospects depend on it (they do). But when it happens at all, those at the top listen to those below as an act of noblesse oblige.¹⁰

This is unfortunately true of much Indigenous programme evaluation, and it must change. Sara Hudson, from the Centre for Independent Studies, tends to be typecast as supporting the villains in the drama that Gruen has outlined, but there is a counter-narrative in the paper on Indigenous evaluation she recently produced for CIS that can offer useful pointers to improved evaluation.

Mainstream versus Slipstream

At first glance, she favours the laboratory ‘rats and stats’ approach, saying that she considers a ‘strong’ evaluation programme to be

a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data with evidence of triangulation of data. Evidence the program is having an impact through the use of pre and post data or other benchmarking data. The use of experimental design/random control trials/ or control group. Or in the absence of that, evidence the evaluation utilises in addition to triangulation of data and benchmarking one or more of the following: an economic component through either a cost benefit or cost effective analysis or some mention of the financial impact of the program and or meta-analyses — reviews of multiple evaluations.¹¹

¹⁰ Gruen, N. 2016. *Why we accept travesties of ‘evidence-based’ policymaking*, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/64557-nicholas-gruen-evidence-based-policy-part-one>

¹¹ Hudson, S. 2017. *Evaluating Indigenous Programmes: a Toolkit for Change*, Page 12 <https://www.cis.org.au/publications/research-reports/evaluating-indigenous-programs-a-toolkit-for-change>

Later in the paper she gives more credence to qualitative and process aspects of a good evaluation. She produces a table,¹² which follows in summary form:

Methodology	Mixed methodology is important, not just qualitative data. Case studies or reviews can be as rigorous, or even more robust, than many evaluations. Participants should not receive a benefit.
Data	Data collection must be consistent across all programme locations. The right administrative data must be collected if changes in behaviour are to be measured. Strategies for accessing and recording administrative data must be mapped out before the programme starts, particularly where there are privacy concerns.
Analysis and reporting	Strong analysis can overcome the limitations of a small sample. The operating environment of the programme is important, lack of appropriate authority may minimise the impact of a programme. Evaluations must be clear about whether they are reporting on the process of delivery of the programme or on the outcomes.
Program design and delivery	Policy-making and programme delivery must be aligned. The general model of a programme may be transferable, but its success may depend on a combination of people with knowledge and skills. Up-to-date training in best practice approaches is important. When programme staff make an effort to establish positive relationships with participants their feedback is more likely to be honest.

These are sound guidelines, but they are not tailored to Indigenous circumstances (despite the topic of Hudson's paper), and they do not offer any insight into how to design appropriate interventions where Aboriginal culture is a significant component. Indeed, these guidelines can lead to evaluation of a

¹² Hudson, S. 2017. Evaluating Indigenous Programmes: a Toolkit for Change, Page 14
<https://www.cis.org.au/publications/research-reports/evaluating-indigenous-programs-a-toolkit-for-change>

programme as successful (meeting its objectives), even where it makes matters worse for the people on the ground.

The Wellbeing Approach

The internationally recognised development economist, Joseph Stiglitz, has tackled this problem. He is supported by development philosopher Amartya Sen, and their views adopted by the OECD.

Stiglitz and Sen tell us:

- Material improvements in human life are not an end in themselves, they must sustain and improve human wellbeing
- Some material improvements may be detrimental to wellbeing
- Ways of measuring material development (economic and statistical data) are not sufficient for understanding human wellbeing, they must be refined and new metrics must be found.¹³

Their focus on wellbeing is common sense. What is the point of material development if it reduces wellbeing? More controversially, where is the need for material development if wellbeing is already high? The authors of the *World Happiness Report* have resolved these questions by pointing out that material development and wellbeing are not binaries, but interlinked in a surprising way. Wellbeing comes first. It does not follow from material development.

Assessing the 'Objective Benefits of Subjective Wellbeing' they find that research tends to increasingly show 'levels of subjective well-being are found to predict future health, mortality, productivity, and income, controlling statistically for other possible determinants'.¹⁴

¹³ Stiglitz et al. 2009. Report on the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, passim. <http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/index.htm>

¹⁴ De Neve, J-E., Diener, E., Tay, L., Xuereb, C., 2013 The Objective Benefits of Subjective Well-

being. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 43(1), 1-10. *World Happiness Report* (2013)

In other words, if you can raise Aboriginal wellbeing they will better engage with education, employment, health systems, criminal justice and all of the other things the wider society desires. Focusing on these things in a piecemeal fashion in a situation of low wellbeing will fail.

The OECD supports these findings, producing *Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*. It defines wellbeing in three dimensions. These are: life evaluation (reflection), affect (feelings), and eudaimonia, an Aristotelian concept, perhaps the most important of the three, indicating a sense of meaning in life or good psychological functioning.¹⁵

This brings us closer to the possibility of welding together the hard-headed measurement proposals of the CIS's Sara Hudson, and the perceived urgency of building culture into programme delivery and evaluation of those at the coal face. It can be done by adapting the work of ANU scholar Dr Mandy Yap with the Yawuru people of Broome.

Yap's ground-breaking PhD thesis, *In pursuit of culturally relevant indicators of Indigenous wellbeing: Operationalising the 'recognition space'*, came out of hours of painstaking interviews with Yawuru people, in partnership with the Nyamba Buru Yawuru native title organisation, and it is based in her own significant expertise in statistical data analysis.

The following schema for programme design, delivery and evaluation, has been adapted from Yap's methodology:¹⁶

A Wellbeing Schema for Programme Design and Evaluation

- Assess the current, or baseline, state of wellbeing of the target group or community by asking qualitative questions. Add to this contextual

¹⁵<http://www.oecd.org/statistics/guidelines-on-measuring-subjective-well-being.htm>

¹⁶ Ibid. and *Indigenous Wellbeing: A Guide to the Yawuru People of Broome*, p. 10.

data from the local clinic, police, school, pastoral care professionals etc.

- Interview a representative sample of the target group or community about life events/activities that contribute to wellbeing, and/or detract from it. Label these strong, moderate or weak contributors, if possible.
- Construct a matrix of potential interventions that would assign a place on a grid to these wellbeing contributors with one axis reflecting 'low/high wellbeing potential' and the other axis 'easy/difficult to achieve'.
- In consultation with the target group/community, service providers and funders, discuss the practicalities of delivering a programme that meets the needs of the provider while addressing an appropriate wellbeing marker on the grid. If, for instance, an activity is easy to achieve and produces high wellbeing, but is not built in to the proposed programme, discuss ways that it could be. If, on the other hand, a programme does not address any of the activities on the grid, question the merits of the programme.
- Through interviews, surveys (consider using social media), and other data, monitor the wellbeing indicators at the various milestones of the programme or its activities and adjust these accordingly.
- Measure wellbeing at the conclusion of the programme.

This a cross-cultural methodology for the design and evaluation of development programmes that is adapted to distinct Aboriginal cultural and material circumstances. It allows for the inclusion of cultural goals, where these will contribute to wellbeing. In the Kimberley achieving cultural maintenance goals will contribute to wellbeing in the majority of cases. In regions where culture is valued, such as the Kimberley, this schema allows for culture to be built-in at the heart of programme delivery and evaluation.

Appendix 2: Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, 1982

<http://www.culturalrights.net/en/documentos.php?c=18&p=190>

Summary

The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies was adopted by UNESCO in 1982, during the Mundiacult World Conference on Cultural Policies. The objective of the conference and the Declaration was to define new lines of cultural cooperation and closer communication among people.

Therefore, expressing trust in the ultimate convergence of the cultural and spiritual goals of mankind, the Conference agrees:

- that in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs;
- that it is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations.

The main related issues are cultural identity; cultural dimension of development; culture and democracy; cultural heritage; artistic and intellectual creation and art education ; arts education; relationship of culture with education, science and communication; planning, administration and financing of cultural activities; and international cultural cooperation.

The Declaration also proclaims that everyone has the rights to participate in the cultural life and to enjoy the arts. The aim is to open up new channels for democracy through equality of opportunity in culture.

The Mexico City Declaration has expanded the concept on culture and cultural heritage, as well as marked the need to include cultural perspective in development policies. The Declaration highlighted such important issues as cultural identity, pluralism, mutual respect for other cultures, among others. It affirms that the assertion of cultural identity therefore contributes to the liberation of peoples.