

Suggestions and comments for

Productivity Commission submission into Aged Care 2010

From a group convened at the AAG (SA) Conference in Darwin, 12 August 2010

- From our observation, many community aged care services are struggling to remain viable and many more communities do not have an adequate aged care services
- Many co-ordinators and workers battle on doing their best, and there are many examples of excellent care, even under these circumstances. Avoiding isolation, regular support and continuous skills development are necessary.
- Funding and reporting processes are far too complex and give insufficient control to communities
- Governments need to avoid the “silo effect” of isolating funding and administration into a single program – in practice, they need to work in together
- In our communities, aged care cannot operate separately to health care
- We already know what works well – research and experience have confirmed many of the answers. Key factors for success are
 - genuine community planning and control,
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in service design and delivery and
 - community planning and control when using non-Indigenous providers
 - regional networking and support for service development, administration, training and cultural development
- Repeat: Nothing will work well without proper consultation and ongoing, genuine community control of services
- To maintain and strengthen our culture, it is essential to keep our elders in the community, interacting with other generations. We believe that pride in culture and heritage is the MOST important factor in overcoming and repairing family and social damage. Passing on elders’ knowledge and wisdom to younger generations requires them to be available to each other.
- Beware of setting up pilot projects which start, then withdraw, services even when they are shown to be successful and badly needed
- A systematic and regular, adequately funded training program, appropriate for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers’ learning styles, is urgently needed. Networking; on-the-job training; targeted training, specifically designed consistent with local/ appropriate cultural elements; apprenticeship; schoolkids’ work experience and CDEP work experience have all worked well.
- Basic caring skills can be demonstrated, documented, observed and accredited.
- This offers a good pathway into the formal education system and flexibility for career progression.
- We believe that Aged Care, with some effort at raising profile and status, has potential to be a MOST important pathway to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in remote, rural and urban communities.

Contact: Lena Morrison Rumbulara Aboriginal Corporation
MOORoopna VIC 3629