



SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO INDIGENOUS VOICE CO-DESIGN REPORT AND PROCESS

MURRI BINDA ELDERS' GROUP

POSITION: (Where we are now)

A case study

We are a Consortium of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

The name Murri Binda was gifted by Elders having its roots in both Darumbal and Gangulu languages. Symbolically it comes from where the 3 main rivers in Central Queensland meet, that is, where the McKenzie and Dawson flow into the Fitzroy. The imagery was captured in the name Murri Binda meaning 'people sitting and yarning', expressed as, 'people sitting - yarning and healing'.

In Rockhampton alone, the ABS Census 2016 shows Rockhampton's population in Indigenous people at 5,867 Indigenous (5,143 Aboriginal, 359 Torres Strait Islander, 375 both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander).

The current partner organisations are:

- Bidgerdii Community Health Service, Consortium Leadership Group (CLG), CEO Thalep Ahmat
- Helem Yumba CQ Healing Service (Helem Yumba) CLG, CEO Lynette Anderson
- Gumbi Gumbi Rehabilitation Centre CLG, CEO John Buttigieg

- Darumbal Community Youth Services (DCYS) CLG Stella Doyle Acting CEO
- Juwarki Kapa Lug, CLG, Sharon Kemp CEO

Key points

- Murri Binda and the five member organisations all have existing and appropriate governance mechanisms, which involve Elders.
- The CEOs meet regularly as the Consortium Leaderships Group in accordance with our Statement of Cooperation. The CEOs have considerable collective experience in working within non-government and government agencies and the corporate sector. They have a strong commitment to culturally safe practice grounded in daily experiences of cultural obligations and responsibilities to community and family and often a deep, long-standing connection between the heads of organisations. Beyond that they also contribute to the fabric of civic life generally through participation, volunteering and contributing personal resources.
- We coordinate regular meetings with our Elders to ensure that the Consortium model remains culturally informed to enable the development of culturally informed services. Collectively the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Elders who participate in guiding Murri Binda have well over 500 years of experience living and working in justice, health, housing, accommodation, human and community services, child safety and participating in activities of the broader community. Many have helped build the organisations currently in the Consortium mix from the ground up.
- The development of our governance model of working with our Elders has been an organic process and we have persisted in the development of a model with fluid membership appropriate to our close-knit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Our tools and processes will also be appropriate to a community where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership team and the Elders know each other well.

We are currently looking, with the involvement of our Elders, to expand our consortium to include other services. At least 4 other services have expressed an interest in joining the Consortium.

We are about to commence a collaboration with Yulang Indigenous Evaluation where we will co-design a monitoring and evaluation framework for the five services that will allow for monitoring and evaluation at both an individual and service level and consortium.

PROBLEM (Why we can't stay here)

These culturally driven collaborations and processes as outlined above are not always appreciated for the health and wellbeing benefits of building on organic sources of connection, satisfaction, and safety. Often ad hoc changes implemented by government undermines the inherent strength in communities maintaining their own sense of connection, satisfaction and safety and run the risk that they will keep taking the community back to square one with the only option available is to start all over again.

PROPOSAL (Where we should go instead)

What the example as outline above has in common with the Uluru Statement from the Heart is that it puts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the centre. The people are to have a voice in the structural changes that are needed to preserve, protect, and respect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Therefore, we propose that:

1. The government must honour its election commitment to a referendum once a model for the Voice has been settled.
2. After the referendum has been held enable legislation for the Voice.
3. Ensure the processes put in place are just ones that empowers connection, satisfaction and safety for First Nations people.