

Case Study: Napranum Aboriginal Shire

Whole of Community Change - Creating a Thriving Community

THE SITUATION

The old hand-out philosophy did much to destroy the development and initiative of aboriginal and islander people. We must try to restore their pride and initiative. –Eric Deeral, MLA Maiden Speech 18th March 1975

Country:
Australia

Community:
Napranum,
Queensland

Population:
830

Society has struggled to help improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people, as reflected by the current record levels of youth suicides, incarcerations and child removals in Australia. The major approach based on intervention, paternalism and prohibition has not worked; rather, it has further disempowered Indigenous peoples.

What would happen if things were done differently?

Website:
[Napranum
Aboriginal
Shire Council](#)

Consultant:
Annalise
Jennings

Our communities are not problems to be solved. Our communities are full of gifts and assets. Our children are not offenders or 'youth at risk'. Our children are young entrepreneurs who are just yearning to be discovered. Let's feed the gifts of community, rather than the deficiencies and needs. –Annalise Jennings

Rather than try to 'fix' the individual, Jennings helped a whole community heal and become a safe environment in which people are empowered and connected. In 2009, Jennings and two Cape elders began a conversation around how the transformation of a corporate community might be adapted to an Indigenous community. They decided to undertake a program based on these fundamental premises:

- Raising awareness of the power of self-belief
- Community engagement and ownership
- Providing opportunity with responsibility
- A shift from institutionalised intervention to true community ownership

THE PROCESS

The Napranum community adopted Jennings' Whole of Community Change (WOCC) program. The purpose-built initiative is designed to enable economic opportunity, positive social change, and spiritual growth. The idea is to facilitate a shift from welfare to wealth creation, as well a shift in thinking and behaviours across the entire community to create true and lasting change.

The WOCC began with extensive community engagement, the identification of core community values, and the creation of a community owned vision and



blueprint for the future. WOCC helped build a strong mutual understanding between the community, government, and strategic partners (NGOs and other entities), where collaboration was focused on the priorities of the community. Council staff and community liaison officers supported each stage of the program, which was funded by the community, Council, some State and Federal assistance, and in-kind support from Jennings' Dynamic Exchange.

Integral to the overall program was a component known as Men and Women of Worth. The Women of Worth program involved elders and young women spending time together and re-establishing trust between the generations. The transformation was not only obvious but immediate. Deep personal exchanges in the process and activities took the women out of their comfort zones and broke down personal barriers. At the same time, the Men of Worth program saw the men confronted with personal conflicts around values, behaviours and lifestyle. This program ignited a community responsibility around domestic and family violence never achieved in mainstream intervention programs. Whilst the impact was profound at a personal level, the shift in the community came within a matter of weeks and months.

OUTCOMES

The WOCC program evolved over five years, and a clear theme emerged: Community growth, when aligned to economic opportunity, provides the fundamental basis for social reform.

Economic Development: Napranum's status as principal contractor for Housing resulted in 34 homes and accommodation units created within a two-year period. This led to both State and Federal recognising and trusting Napranum's capacity to build further infrastructure such as a Civic Centre with library, Council Chambers, Cultural and Tourist Information Centre, and supermarket. Expected ROI is significant with government agencies renting premises with a direct financial return to the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council (NASC).

Social Reform: Napranum experienced a significant reduction in negative social indicators. There is greater community cohesion and participation in community events and employment. The program reinvigorated the elder's position in the community and a greater connection to Lore and Custom.

Evaluation: A Wellbeing Index provided accurate information on what worked and what didn't, so services and policies could be fine-tuned for best outcomes. Barrett Values Centre's Community Values Assessment was used to assess the impact of intervention and empowerment strategies that were put in place. Napranum recorded an outstanding reduction in cultural entropy from 32% in 2012 to 9% in just over 18 months as a direct result of implementing WOCC.

The statistics

- 40% increase in community owned infrastructure



Barrett Values Centre

- 60% increase in employment
- 80% reduction in adult domestic violence
- From 12 victims at any one time to 'Zero' children in the Safe House
- Over 90% of goals identified in the 2011 visionary plan implemented

The concepts of community engagement and ownership developed in WOCC now underpin State government's policy on economic development and community growth. QLD Government Economic Participation Framework and Action Plan ensures that government agencies and service providers do not commence any undertaking in the community without 100% engagement and ownership with Council. Infrastructure and services must align with the community-owned vision and plan, which have been co-created based on core community values. The vision and values are then used as a benchmark by which to evaluate future policy, services and funding.

Whole of Community Change is the best thing that has ever happened in our community. Annalise Jennings mingled with us. She spoke in our language and with understanding. She listened to us. We trusted her and opened up to her. The energy in the workshops was open, making it possible for us to be clear about our hopes, dreams and future. –Maryann Coconut, Napranum Thaynakwith Elder

Self-esteem of the people has lifted. There is an increase in local jobs and opportunity. Families are supporting one another. We feel hopeful and excited. –Relena A., Napranum Community Member

In her unique work, Annalise Jennings has shown what Indigenous people can achieve when given the opportunity to shape their own destiny. This is real community healing in action. –Professor David Clark, Founder, Sharing Culture

NAPRANUM ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

CORE VALUES

Community Ownership: We take responsibility to create a community that belongs to us.

Accountability: All our actions are transparent, seen, felt and heard.

Community Engagement: Listening and hearing with mutual respect ... creating a sense of belonging.

Fairness: Community in Unity. Focused effort.

Working Together: A 1,000 'deadly' voices singing the same song.

VISION

Our legacy is the creation of a sustainable community ... based on choice, trust and respect!