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Bob Debus MP

Further to our conversation Friday 5th March at the Dubbo PCYC and your request for further information, re indigenous birth certificates please attached documentation re Aboriginal Birth Certificates and please call at any time should you require additional information

In addition I have made some note for consideration, gained from past projects and roles;

As a point of reference, my working background has included;

Ten years working in the training and employment sector specialising in developing and delivering services to clients within the Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services sector.

Four years project development in international education (school structure and resource) development, Tanzania and Cambodia and:

Five years as Regional Coordinator/Regional Manager - Western Region NSW Communities - Sport and Recreation.

Board Member and establishment of the Dubbo Youth Foundation and manager of the Dubbo Youth Strategy.

Thank you for coming to Dubbo and listening to the respective groups, I am confident that the group in the room, including the Dubbo Youth Foundation Committee are the passionate and relevant people and all those present have contributed to the overall social change success that Dubbo has realised in the past five years.

I acknowledge the need to establishing programs that support the whole family and the difficulty in legislating and or managing parental responsibility as the greatest challenge behind juvenile Justice issues, our agency has tried to engage parents directly over many years and through them the children, but in most cases this approach has failed, as the underlying issues in the community are far greater than the capacity of agencies to address and the lifestyle choices being made by the parents of JJ clients ingrained.

In contrast there has been some success (and at this time the only likely process for lasting outcomes) is the engagement with children directly and mentor and support them through to adult hood, at times it appears that state and federal agencies are looked upon as surrogate parents to some of these children, which is not ideal, yet in some cases the parents are engaged through there children to engage with the wider community, but this is an exception rather than a rule.

As you can see from the above comment this process takes commitment and continuity and it should be acknowledged that to undertake a social change plan, to reduce youth incarceration or contact with JJ system, through to its conclusion, would takes eights (8) years minimum if all goes well and resource provision rarely reflects these time lines or the communities need for consistency in service delivery over this type of duration.

Disregarding the need to support the whole family (at this time) and focusing on the child, the following has seen cost effective results.

High level principals of service delivery;

1. Mutual obligation for community, individuals and service providers is enforced through open reporting,
 - a. This process has been commenced several times and nearly always is abandoned when one or more parties fails to deliver, often programs are abandoned to allow sections of the community to "save face".
 - b. In most cases the obligation extends only to the service provider and not the community or individuals that have made a commitment to the program outcome.
2. Resource continuity and crisis management.
 - a. Often the same level of funding (that a project may have received in the past) can be provided with greater responsiveness and over a longer period to much greater affect. It is not the level of funding but in the delivery timing that provides the outcome.
 - b. It is difficult for communities to receive services until there is a "crisis". Then the funds and announcements and local delegations are provided and a concerted effort to address the issues occurs, once the crisis leaves the media or wider community's radar an almost complete withdrawal of services, delegations for local or regional management and funding follows and a steady return to crisis, until the cycle recommences.

In this intervening time (between crisis issues) there is an unseen social damage occurring, where lack of service affects individuals, their families and the staff of agencies and NGOs as they try to continue to address issues and manage clients without resources until the system collapses or individuals slip through the net, to be picked up at far greater community expense when they enter the health or legal system, often too late for a solution to be provided.

It should be noted that even though all may appear calm on the surface, support services are a continued need even at reduced levels.

In come cases individuals and communities have learnt to play this system and create crisis in order to get funding and resources to their communities, and this should not be allowed to the situation.

It should also be acknowledged that while the discussion continues there are silent victims suffering at a social and personal cost and at funding costs that will be in time far greater and longer lasting than the cost of continued preventative and or intervention service delivery.

3. Local solutions to local problems

- a. All too often the "seagulls" fly in with funding and announcements of being the saviours of a situation or community.

Announcements and agencies discussions should address resource needs, not funding levels, talk of funds create division.

Our smaller western communities are cynical to these announcements, or see them as an opportunity to seek employment for family members, or seek resources (cars office house, status) for their families. These announcements often drive factions and divide family groups.

The planning of services should be slow, open, ongoing and regular process and responses from government and services agencies should be in step with the mutual responsibility agreements made of all parties.

Local governance structures should be acknowledged and allowed to participate, before resources are applied to a solution.

For the disadvantaged child or young person isolated not yet, but at risk of entering the legal system:

1. Continued education,

In many communities education delivery is seen as a waste of time to parents and youth alike, with some communities have only 45% school attendance. The curriculum is aligned and delivered in and to an environment that appears alien to these youth, particularly Aboriginal youth and particularly in remote communities.

The national curriculum now allows for a more flexible approach to education and as a recommendation (in targeted communities) the mainstream curriculum could be thrown out as having failed almost all students in the past and replaced with practical and relevant education standards, under the national AQTF VOC Ed training programs system.

In many cases when a young Aboriginal person has first contact with the training under the national standard for adult education, it is the first time that they really start learning in a way that is relevant to them and provides a practical experience that they engage with. Great results have been achieved both in school and post school under these national standards and to the credit of remote schools, more are embracing this training as a sound model for increasing school attendance.

As an example, in 2008 NSW Communities developed a pilot program with 20 partner agencies, NGOs and Peak Sports Bodies, to deliver Certificate II in Business to Aboriginal youth in 18 communities of the West, Far West and Riverina Murray region of NSW.

This training program is delivered in School to those that have left (previously) and at risk youth and provides a qualification in Business skills delivered in a way that is relevant to these youth.

These young people are required to run a business for two years (while at school) as a practical training tool and the business is Sport, Arts and Cultural event management in their respective communities.

This provides educational outcomes through relevant topics and recognition to these students. These students are engaged within the community as volunteer events managers and assist developing them as future leaders, while providing sport and social participation and recognition. This program as a pilot has proven to increase school attendance and school retention and increase social well being in these youth. The program has expanded each year as more young Aboriginal people ask to take up this training program.

Again it is a pilot project and ongoing resources remain uncertain.

2. Social participation;

Sport has proven to be the most effective and fastest means of engaging large numbers of Aboriginal youth with the wider community; Art and cultural events to a significant but lesser extent.

Resources don't need to be significant to support youth into engagement, but they need to be available on demand, timing is everything.

While the Dubbo Youth Strategy and subsequent Dubbo Youth Foundation has had success, this model is limited to the community of Dubbo and has the potential to be a significant force in the future throughout the region given the correct resources for a full time administration executive.

There are a range of impediments to participation that are addressed by the Foundation and these include;

- A- Administrative support to youth and parents to complete sport registration paperwork (to overcome literacy and numeracy issues) including obtaining birth certificates (see attached documentation).
- B- Administration of the ICC DoHAs indigenous small grants program, that provides small (up to \$200) part funding grants for sport, arts and cultural equipment, registration fees to allow for club membership registration.
- C- Transport subsidisation for those with access issues.
- D- Introduction to mainstream sport, by creating links with and for clubs to disadvantaged youth.
- E- Club governance advice and support, club committee and volunteer training facilitation and membership advice support.
- F- Contracting external NGO community providers to conduct school Holiday diversionary and education programs.

It should be noted that there is no future in conducting, Aboriginal exclusive programs, clubs or structures, unless driven by the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal people have the capacity to be part of the mainstream community if given assistance and ongoing support to do so.

For the child or young person that has entered the Juvenile Justice system, prior to incarceration or pre realise clients.

1 Continued education.

Provision of skills relevant to employment along with social skills development in a practical training environment not a curriculum academic environment.

2 Socially stable living environment.

In many cases home is not a safe place. In many cases JJ is a safe secure and protected environment compared to home and seen as a career option.

In most cases youth enjoy the skills and experience of training provided as opposed to academic education, learning to use tools and equipment and making things, learning a trade is far favourable to academic learning which is seen as irrelevant and conducted in an artificial environment for the class room.

There are considerably cheaper and far softer options to incarceration (in some cases): below is a highlight of a pilot project no longer funded, run in 2001 through 2004.

JJ clients and Corrective Services Clients were provided with employment training, along side numeracy, literacy and life skills, in a community environment, whilst removed from the influences that lead to crime.

Youth were taken on a supervised journey to a remote residential location; both remote in distance and sociologically, which provided them with a break from the influences that caused there demise in the first place.

At this location conditions are not prefect, but functional and where a family environment is established, it is not a government type facility and relates better to the less salubrious environments and living conditions from which they have come. Each client has a rotating role within the team to contribute to the teams living conditions and all must participate in preparing meals, cleaning and maintaining health and hygiene. On top of these clients undertake vocational training 6 days per week in a range of relevant and practical skills designed to tire, educate challenge and reflect.

This program had an 80% long term employment outcome over three years, and an 80% non return to the legal system measured after 18 months post exit for each client.

This type of program costed at approximately \$1000 per JJ client per week, or about 20% of the current average cost of servicing clients in the system, for far greater outcomes over time.

3 Employment

Every community's success is firstly based on economic stability and the number of people employed in the community.

Aboriginal youth are no different, in the absence of gainful employment, volunteering in the community provides a recognition and fulfilment that assists this end, and perhaps a benefit linked to volunteering may assist to increase volunteer numbers.

To provide the vehicle for volunteering and employment the community in question needs to be supported to fulfil its mutual obligation requirements.

Service delivery should be avoided by people external to the community unless unavoidable and continued skills development of the community people should be pursued over a long time frame.

Yours Faithfully

Mark Horton

Phone;

Committee Member - Dubbo Youth Foundation

Project Manager - Dubbo Youth Strategy
- Certificate II Business (Business is Sport)
- Aboriginal Birth Certificate Pilot 2008-09

NSW Sport and Recreation: Dubbo birth registration project

When a team from NSW Sport and Recreation in Dubbo were working on helping Indigenous youth to participate in community sport, they found that a lack of identification was a real barrier.

“Sports clubs and community organisations often require valid ID for insurance purposes,” explained NSW Sport and Recreation Regional Coordinator, Mark Horton.

“This meant that people without formal ID were unable to join local clubs and take part in community sport clubs.”

The NSW Sport and Recreation team started a pilot project that would help people who wanted to participate in community sport to obtain birth certificates, a widely recognised form of identification.

“A number of cultural and economic factors made it challenging for some people to gain identification,” said Mark.

Some of those factors include:

- Collective family child raising sometimes confuses biological heritage.
- People are sometimes known by different names, depending on the situation, location and who is around them at the time.
- Children are often not given a name until some time after birth.
- A court house is sometimes seen as intimidating and not a place to go to for assistance.
- A transient lifestyle makes it difficult to store paperwork safely and securely.
- Applying for a birth certificate can be relatively expensive.
- Distance and lack of transport can make it difficult to get to a registry site.
- Poor literacy and numeracy.

“Our team had the trust of many in the community because they had already worked together on a range of programs, like after school activities and the development of the Dubbo Youth Strategy,” Mark said.

“The plan was simple but hard work— the team went out to the communities to find people who would like to take part in the project and receive help in applying for a birth certificate.”

The project received significant support. NSW Premiers and Cabinet facilitated NSW Attorney General’s Department to provide \$20,000, as a trial to subsidise the payment of birth certificates and the costs associated with the Office of Births Deaths and Marriages (BDM) in registering applicants. Dubbo City Council acted as the banker and distributed funds as instructed by NSW

Sport and Recreation and BDM. NSW Sport and Recreation provided an administration role and support for individual applicants.

“The project was a great success,” Mark said.

“In fact, the team encountered a much higher birth registration rate than they had ever expected.”

More than 750 registrations were administered in Dubbo over a 12 month period. Approximately 500 Indigenous people who previously did not participate in mainstream community sport were able to start because of the birth registration project and related support programs.

“If rates for birth certificate applications continue across communities at current levels, it is possible that the Indigenous population in NSW could turn out to be up to 25% larger than originally thought in some areas,” added Mark.

“This could change the way we deliver services to Indigenous communities in the future.”

The original pilot project has now finished. However, its success has attracted plenty of attention and plans to expand the project state-wide are being considered.

“For the time being, I’m just happy to see that everyone who has applied has the chance to take part in community life and enjoy playing sport.”

NSW Communities – Sport and Recreation

Aboriginal Birth Certificate Project – Overview

In early 2006, the NSW Sport and Recreation (NSWSR) team based in Dubbo recognised that lack of definitive identification among Indigenous people was a significant barrier to participation in mainstream community activities. In some Indigenous communities up to 25% of members lacked birth registration and birth certificates. If more Indigenous young people were to become involved in sport and recreation, and be covered by insurance, they needed assistance with obtaining definitive identification records, in particular birth certificates.

The challenges of this project were to identify who was missing out on mainstream sport, what the barriers were to their obtaining documentation and how these could be addressed. Success depended on two factors: building trust within the Indigenous community; and working collaboratively with other state agencies, particularly Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) and the Attorney General's Department, as well as local government, to facilitate the documentation, payment for and issuing of certificates.

Trust was built through the NSWSR delivering a range of programs to the Indigenous community in Dubbo including after school and school holiday programs as well as recognising their special needs in the development of the Dubbo Youth Strategy and the Dubbo Youth Foundation. Collaboration with other government agencies was assisted by funding from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet through the Whole of Government Process. The Attorney General's Department provided funds to cover the cost of BDR registering applicants and issuing certificates. Dubbo City Council held and distributed the funds and NSWSR staff provided assistance, office accommodation and administration services. The Aboriginal Lands Council, the Aboriginal Health Service and Community Working Parties all provided assistance with developing definitive identities for the applicants.

Issues that needed to be solved included: the Indigenous practice of matriarchal heritage meant that individuals might not know the name of their biological father; individuals could be known by more than one name, depending on the situation, location and group they were with at the time; it costs money to get a birth certificate and young people have to go to the Court House to do it (and this is not seen as a place for Indigenous people to go to for assistance); transitory and communal lifestyles mean paperwork is lost or has never been issued.

Altogether 500 families were assisted by the project and the process was well accepted by the Indigenous community. BDM also engaged Indigenous staff to work on the pilot and this proved rewarding for all participants. The success of the pilot demonstrated:

- The importance of building trust through street level culturally applicable access
- The benefits of interagency partnerships
- The need for flexibility in the process of seeking information to establish identity

- That NSW can be a leader in developing innovative projects to encourage mainstream participation by Indigenous people. This is apparent in the development of similar pilot projects in Queensland and Victoria.

Aim

The aim of this project was to address inequity in access to mainstream social activities through membership of sport and community organisations. For Aboriginal people in Dubbo the lack of definitive identification meant they could not join such organisations. The project researched and identified an acceptable system of administering and issuing birth certificates to these people to enable this inequity to be overcome.

Rationale

With proof of identity, comes acknowledgement as a citizen of Australia and a resident of NSW. This recognition provides a range of benefits to the individual, the community and the State, including accurate provision of services by agencies through recognition of the resident population numbers and increasing the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in the mainstream community and to enhance employment opportunities, to gain passports, drivers licences, bank accounts and loans etc.

Key Features

Key features contributing to the success of the project were:

- **Collaboration:** NSWSR and BDM needed to work together to develop trust in the community so that they could gather definitive evidence of an individual's heritage. Significantly, in many instances this was the first time such an attempt had been made.
- **Community engagement:** Land Councils, Aboriginal Health Services and Community Working Parties all contributed to the information gathering.
- **Flexibility:** The Agencies involved were prepared to recognise community statements and statutory declarations, as well as oral evidence, as proof of identity.
- **Commitment:** Dubbo NSWSR staff door knocked every known Aboriginal home in Dubbo, visiting over 500 homes in all.
- **Initiative:** When information gathering efforts still left many applicants with little or no supporting evidence of their identity or that of their parents, BDM visited the community and conducted interviews. NSWSR facilitated these visits, providing transport, accommodation and office support.

Main Outcomes

The outcomes of this process of definitive identification through birth certificate registration and support programs were that;

1. A significantly higher registration application rate was encountered than expected; for example over 750 registrations were administered in Dubbo over a 12 month period. In Brewarrina in a 48 hour period, 480 applications were requested which represents approximately 25% of the community's known population, with similar figures in Coonamble and Walgett;
2. In Dubbo, along with other support programs, it has led to an increase in participation in mainstream community sport of 500 previously non participating Indigenous people;
3. If rates of applications for birth certificates continue at current levels, the size of the NSW Indigenous population could increase by up to 25% over known figures. This impacts directly on resourcing and service delivery models used for all agencies. It may impact on the levels of GST received by the state, in response to a rising Indigenous population through the more accurate recording of births;
4. Interest has been generated nationally and similar programs have been mooted for Victoria and Queensland;
5. The project has been extended with NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs taking on the role of lead agency (whilst being supported by NSW SR, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Department of Community Services and NSW Attorney General's Department where appropriate) to negotiate a process to operate state wide under a culturally applicable child registration system;
6. Birth certificate registration requests greatly exceeded expectation and the high numbers of Aboriginal people without a birth certificate was significantly under estimated;
7. NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs has taken up the program on an ongoing basis as a valid high level need and that the process will (with funding) remain ongoing is a benefit to the whole community;
8. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has identified this project as being of national significance.

Identified Need

The initial identification of need was minor compared to the impacts that evolved as the project progressed. The initial need was to provide club membership insurance to Aboriginal people within a community mainstream sporting context.

It later became clear that there was far greater need for this service among Aboriginal people generally. The lack of definitive identification has a negative impact on every aspect of their lives and goes to the very core of their recognition as citizens and their potential involvement in mainstream society, through access to services, drivers licences, passports, employment and a wide range of support mechanisms that cannot be accessed without definitive personal identification.

Meeting the State Plan

Relevance to the State Plan, the Dubbo Community Whole of Government 2020 Plan, and the agencies' regional business plan is significant and meets the outcomes of more than one measurable requirement and more than one agency outcome for the state.

Increased community participation through sport being the most visible, harmonious communities through cultural recognition and service delivery in line with cultural requirements is a key component.

The State Plan requirements met are:

- R3- Reduced levels of anti social behaviour, through mainstream sport and community participation.
- R4- Increased participation and integration in community activities, as above.
- S8- Increased customer satisfaction with government services.
- F1- Increased social outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- P3- Cutting red tape.
- E8- More people using parks, sporting and recreational facilities and participation in the arts and cultural activity.

Project management

In early 2006, staff at Dubbo NSWSR recognised that lack of definitive identification among Indigenous youth was a barrier to their participation in mainstream sport. A pilot project was proposed to identify the level of unregistered people in the targeted community.

In late 2006, NSWSR staff door knocked every known Aboriginal household in Dubbo, visiting over 500 homes. This direct interaction with the client base enabled them to assess the level of assistance that would be required to work one-on-one with families to collate the information necessary to register births and obtain birth certificates. NSWSR staff gathered available evidence for the families and sent this to Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) for assessment.

BDM then identified gaps in the information and issues needing resolution before registration could be completed. Equipped with this, NSWSR staff returned to the Aboriginal families seeking further evidence. When the families knowledge was exhausted, and with many still having little or no supporting evidence of the applicant's identity or that of his/her parents, the direct assistance of BDM staff was requested.

NSWSR staff facilitated the visits of BDM staff to the region, providing transport, accommodation and administrative support. They arranged for BDM staff to meet the applicant either at home or in a suitable alternative venue and to conduct interviews with the applicant as well as with the wider community, including Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Health Service centres and Community Working Parties.

Once an acceptable level of documentation was achieved, individuals were issued with birth certificates.

Project participants

NSWSR as lead agency provided the project coordination role, access to individual's and to the community, administration of the application and support for the work of BDM.

Births, Deaths and Marriages was a significant project partner working closely with NSWSR to achieve the project's objectives. It provided advice and sent officers to work directly with NSWSR in the Dubbo area.

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet assisted with the facilitation of funding procurement following a presentation through the Whole of Government process in early 2006.

NSW Attorney General's Department provided \$20,000 to cover the costs of issuing birth certificates; the costs associated with the Office of Births Deaths and Marriages in registering applicants in Dubbo; and additional funds for the communities of Brewarrina, Walgett and Bourke.

Other organisations

Dubbo City Council acted as the banker and distributed funds as requested by NSWSR and BDM. Support was provided by the West Dubbo Community Centre and East Dubbo Womens Group (Apollo House) as an access location and in assisting the marketing of the project services.

Thubbo Aboriginal Health Service supported identification of individuals as a reference point to verify statements collected from other sources.

Dubbo Aboriginal Community Working Party also assisted with this role.

Success

Success for this project depended on close consultation with other government agencies and with the Indigenous community in the Dubbo region. As outlined above, NSWSR worked closely with BDM to identify the level of documentation required to register births and acceptable alternatives where this was not available. NSWSR also consulted extensively with members of the local Aboriginal community. Formal discussions with organisations such as Land Councils and Aboriginal Health were complemented by informal community get-togethers such as through community days, and barbecues as well as through community radio, the ABC and flyers.

Innovation

This method of service delivery is innovative both to NSW SR and other agencies. A significant shift in the administration process was required by BDM to allow for alternate methods of gathering information for proof of identity from outside sources. BDM engaged Indigenous officers for the project to address the specific cultural needs of service delivery.

For NSW SR this work is very much on the periphery of mainstream service delivery, yet fundamental to the outcome of greater community participation through sport and physical activity. It is highly relevant to achieving State Plan objectives outlined earlier in this application. The service delivery process is innovative in that it requires staff to enter homes and meet clients at neutral locations and in a culturally acceptable way. This methodology is highly labour intensive but ensures that total target group penetration is achieved. It also overcomes the divisiveness which may exist with unrepresentative community leadership in communities where there is diverse interest. Utilising staff in face to face door knocking is rare but is very effective. The cost factor was significantly overcome by utilising NSW SR Indigenous sports trainees and flexible working arrangements.

The strategically important issue identified by the project is Aboriginal peoples access to services generally. Further, the implications of a higher identified and recorded Indigenous population in NSW will be significant in providing greater recognition of the Aboriginal community in the wider domain, greater participation opportunities and access for Aboriginal people across a wide spectrum of services and recognition by agencies of the higher levels of need in Aboriginal communities.

The process evolved out of need and remained flexible throughout. The method of service delivery reflected the passion of staff of NSW SR and BDM to meet community needs. The limitations on resources forced staff to remain creative in community interaction and process development.

The high number of applications and subsequent registrations has provided evidence that Aboriginal people recognise the benefits of birth registration. It has also provided evidence to many government agencies of a willingness by Aboriginal communities to embrace this service delivery methodology generally. It has also demonstrated a successful process for Aboriginal birth registration to exist as a permanent service.

The project did not build on previous internal practice. Direct service delivery for birth certificate registration to the Aboriginal community has not previously been undertaken. The delivery and administration processes used required changes to procedure, documentation and communication processes to achieve a streamlined outcome. The methodology is dependent upon a high level of trust being developed within an Indigenous community. This was developed by NSW SR through sport and community development projects over a number of years. How and if other government agencies embrace this methodology will depend heavily upon their capacity to utilise flexible working

arrangement and the skills of their staff in engaging and maintaining relationships within aboriginal communities.

Outcomes

The main initial outcomes of this process were that:

- A significantly higher registration application rate was encountered than was expected; for example over 750 registrations were administered in Dubbo over a 12 month period. In Brewarrina in a 48 hour period, 480 applications were requested which represents approximately 25% of the community's known population, with similar figures in Coonamble and Walgett;
- In Dubbo, along with other support programs, it has led to an increase in participation in mainstream community sport by 500 previously non participating Indigenous people;
- There is the potential if rates for birth certificate applications continue across communities at current levels, that the Indigenous population in NSW could be increased by up to 25% over known figures. This impacts directly upon resourcing and service delivery models used for all agencies. It may impact on the levels of GST received by the state, in response to a rising Indigenous population through the more accurate recording of births;
- Interest has been generated nationally and similar projects have been mooted for Victoria and Queensland;
- The project has been extended with NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs taking on the role of lead agency (whilst being supported by NSW Sport and Recreation, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Department of Community Services and NSW Attorney General's Department where appropriate) to negotiate a process to operate state wide under a culturally applicable registration system;
- The systems and processes employed in the pilot have found traction and proven to be more successful than originally anticipated;
- Birth certificate registration requests greatly exceed expectation and the high numbers of Aboriginal people without a birth certificate was significantly under estimated.

Future scope

At a meeting in March 2008 of the western region Regional Coordination Management Group (RCMG), NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs undertook to lead the project and provide a permanent footing for Indigenous birth registration across the state.

In February 2008 NSWSR was contacted by the Australia Bureau of Statistics fertility unit indicating that under-registration of Indigenous people was an issue identified some time back and may impact on state revenue through GST returns to the state and regions if this process was expanded.

In mid 2007 the respective state agencies of Victoria and Queensland through direct contact with NSWSR Dubbo staff and BDM staff instigated trials using similar models to investigate the level of under-registration in Indigenous populations in those states and to pilot methods of access and service delivery.

NSW BDM has undertaken trials using this process in a number of Indigenous communities outside of the western region and the demand continues to outstrip the allocated resources.

It would be hoped that efforts to continue this service would eventually see a comprehensive registration of births in the Aboriginal community.

Project summary

The Aboriginal Birth Certificate Registration project sought to provide an acceptable system of administering and issuing birth certificates to Aboriginal people in Dubbo. The lack of birth certificates impacted on the opportunity for Aboriginal people to access mainstream social activities through membership of sport and community organisations.

End

Mark Horton
Regional Coordinator _ Western
NSW Communities – Sport and Recreation
PO Box 2913
Dubbo NSW 2830