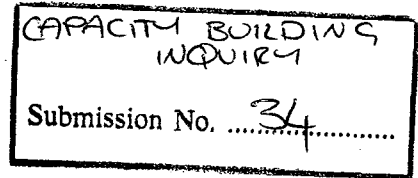


M.C. Pittman  
8 Hargraves Street  
GOSFORD 2250



22<sup>nd</sup> September 2002

The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir or Madam:

**INQUIRY INTO CAPACITY BUILDING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of my submission and I thank you for the extension of the submission date.

Capacity building in Indigenous communities is of paramount importance and long overdue. It has been going on for some time now but in my opinion this has been in an ad-hoc way. I work in the field of Aboriginal Health and have seen some very good examples of Capacity Building as components of programs conducted within Aboriginal communities.

The points listed on the following page are provided for your assistance and I hope they are of some benefit to the Inquiry.

Please don't hesitate to contact me as listed below to discuss my submission further:

- At work on email [mpittman@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mpittman@doh.health.nsw.gov.au) or phone (02) 4320-2694, or
- At home on email [mpittman@coastal.net.au](mailto:mpittman@coastal.net.au) or phone (02) 4323-3307.

Yours truly,

Mick Pittman

## **Inquiry into Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities**

The following points are offered for consideration.

- A major consideration must be the 'inclusion' of Aboriginal people at all stages of any proposal coming out of the Inquiry. This should commence with consideration of and recommendations from the Inquiry.
- Effort and costs may be minimised by utilising Aboriginal people currently working at Commonwealth, State and Local levels. This includes both government and non-government sectors. Many of these people have extensive experience working with Aboriginal communities/organisations and some in capacity building.
- Commonwealth, State and Local government departments could be required to increase Aboriginal employment targets, eg. from two to three per cent, and encouraged to work closely with Community Development Education Programs (CDEP) to develop pathways from 'work for the dole' to positions within mainstream employment.
- An increase in Aboriginal people in management positions and attending leadership courses is long overdue.
- In lieu of 'creating an entirely new empire', direct funding to programs with significant commitments to building the capacity of individuals and communities. Placement of staff within Area Health Services for example, could have a responsibility for ensuring that all Aboriginal community programs have a capacity building component. This could take the form of a 'Capacity Building Statement', which must be inserted in each and every program. I'm sure this would be similar within other departments, eg. education, employment, training, local councils, etc.
- The Health Promotion fraternity has driven capacity building within Health and experts in this field are likely to have much to offer the Inquiry.
- Please note that the need to build capacity in Aboriginal communities exists in city, rural and remote areas.
- Employment awards, which fail to recognise qualifications, continue to impede advancement and deter Aboriginal people from undertaking intensive courses of education. One such award exists within NSW Health. In 1999 I attained a Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion from Sydney University. My years working within Aboriginal Health were recognised by Sydney University and Central Coast Health making me eligible for the Graduate Diploma program. However, the NSW Health award requires an undergraduate degree that prevented acceptance of the post graduate degree for transfer to a graduate award for salary purposes. This appears to be a contradiction of purpose and a continuation of past inequities, and works against the concept of building capacity.
- Government Departments providing funding to non-government organisations (NGO) should be required to ensure the NGO has the ability to appropriately acquit Funding and Performance Agreements. In not doing so, they are setting the organisation up to fail. Capacity Building can play an important part in this area and exhibits responsibility on the part of the funding body.