

Details that I would like to discuss include:

1. The one size fits all approach did not work. Robinson River has gone backwards. Improvements we had planned have been delayed.
2. The Departmental decisions (policy) being made now do not take the remote factor into consideration.
3. The Departmental decisions (policy) being made does not take into consideration the fact that we are dealing with remote Aborigines (not urbanised, educated and assimilated Aborigines.)
4. Robinson River Community had a very good attendance at the kid's Health checks (over 100%). The follow ups are still not complete. When the Dentist came to Borroloola our kids couldn't get there because the roads were still flooded and patient travel will not fly patients unless the distance is greater than 200 kms.
5. The Intervention cost a little over \$9million per prescribed community. No where near that level of expenditure came near Robinson River (other Communities report the same) so where did the money go? Is it true that the major beneficiaries have been outside contractors and public servants that were seconded to work on the intervention?
6. Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation has not heard results from the investigation into the fraud committed by the "Community Clean Up" house maintenance contractors in Robinson River and other Communities.
7. Building has not started on the House building (SIHIP) programme. The programme has \$647m - \$88m goes to the Territory Government to Administer the programme. Of the remaining \$559m, 45% will go in other expenses leaving only \$307m in actual construction. This does not represent value for money. I have been informed by a person working within one of the alliances that the overall cost per house is anticipated to be over \$1 million.
8. Robinson River has only 28 houses. We have 17 families on the waiting list for new housing. We are told it is unlikely that we will get new houses in the next 10 years. If this is true isn't this a serious backwards step?
9. This Community wants to establish enterprises to develop jobs and improve economic independence. However we have had four and a half feasibility study consultancies and are still no closer. The enterprise is the consultancy not the establishment of new businesses.
10. The Robinson River GBM does not work with the Community Board and management and has achieved nothing. He has worked behind the scenes to undermine Community Governance.
11. The Community Employment Broker in Robinson has done a good job and been very proactive arranging training. The CEB positions are being discontinued. This makes no sense.

The whole saga on the contaminated containers is ridiculous. This has been going on now for twelve months and is still not solved. We put a proposal to FaCHSIA to pay us to progressively strip a container and have it tested after each "stripping" but this was denied. We then suggested that they pay us \$80,000 to gut and rebuild the contaminated containers but this was also denied. Robinson River has no visitor accommodation and we desperately need the complex for visiting trainers and officials.

In 2002 when I took over as CEO of Robinson River the Community was broke and heavily in debt. At that time I had three local girls working with me in the office and used an outside accountant to do the books. At the moment we have \$1,840,989.00 in the bank and a considerable amount of that are untied funds from Community generated income – i.e. not Grant money. To meet Government reporting requirements on Grant funds, we now employ 4 local girls in the office as well as a full time accountant. I can no longer get out of the office to "Manage" the Community. Hence progress has now severely declined and with the Government's push to bring outside contractors into Communities to do everything from fixing a toilet to building a fence and constructing houses, the future looks even worse.

Why have we moved away from getting the local people to do things themselves and why have our "Field Officers" who once helped us in the field now become "Compliance Managers"?

In Communities that have lost CDEP I have been informed it is now necessary to send repairers out from Katherine to do jobs that were done by local CDEP people in the past.

I simply cannot believe that the elected members of Government (especially the Minister) know what is happening on the ground in remote Communities in the NT.

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