

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

#### **Purpose of the guidelines**

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist planning at the States and Territories level for placement of "trained counsellors", such as psychologists and social workers, within their State or Territory. These guidelines aim to:

ensure adequate population coverage;

ensure that the Counsellors will service those individuals and communities identified within the Report;

ensure that existing services, such as the substance misuse services, are utilised to enhance service delivery to individuals or communities;

ensure professional and personal support for the Counsellors to establish and maintain long term commitments to individuals and communities;

ensure the ability of the Counsellors to provide outreach services to surrounding Indigenous individuals and families;

allow detention centres to access counselling support for short and long term Indigenous inmates

These guidelines are intended to be flexible. Flexibility is important to allow regions to determine their needs for primary mental health (well being) services and the appropriate type of service mix. Some of the guidelines will increase and decrease in importance to particular States and Territories. States and Territories may wish to consider other issues of relevance to them which have not been addressed at the Commonwealth level.

The five (5) proposed guidelines are

#### **1. Population**

Population distribution should identify:

the locations and population of Indigenous communities;

estimated target population which is proposed between the ages of 20 and 75 + years;

estimated percentage of those removed or those who are immediately effected by separation, such as children of those removed.

2. Existing services and support for Counsellors

Access to and support for Counsellors through existing Indigenous mental and primary health services including cooperating between State based services, such as substance misuse services and mental health workers.

3. Professional support for Counsellors

The proposed community controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service, Regional Centre or other culturally appropriate health care facility in the region should be able to provide professional and personal support for the Counsellors placed in those organisations.

Further supportive work practice may also include the ability by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service, Regional Centre or other facility in the region to provide, where necessary, interim cross cultural training.

4. Outreach Services

Ability of the Counsellors to be accessed by and to provide outreach services to surrounding Indigenous families and or individuals.

5. Detention Centres

Locations of and accessibility to detention centres to provide counselling support to short and long term Indigenous inmates.

] TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH SERVICES

<i>State</i>	<i>Total 1994 population<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Est. %<sup>1</sup> removed</i>	<i>1996 Usual residence population</i>	<i>Population according to target age<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Those living in rural<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>remote</i>	<i>urban</i>	<i>How many<sup>3</sup> p h c</i>	<i>mental health</i>	<i>substance misuse</i>	<i>counselling</i>
<i>Tasmania</i>	10 700	2.5	13 938	5 200	8 922	299	4 655	2	1	0	1
<i>Victoria</i>	20 400	10.5	21 477	10 800	9 772	367	11 200	19	5	10	1
<i>New South Wales<sup>4</sup></i>	83 500	8.1	101 602	43 200	47 009	7 624	46 458	26	12	22	12
<i>Queensland</i>	83 900	9.2	95 477	42 400	38 005	26 896	30 042	19	7	13	9
<i>Northern Territory</i>	48 700	6.9	46 342	25 100	1 227	37 854	7 061	23	1	15	8

South Australia	19 500	18.6	20 413	10 300	6 817	4 259	9 050	7	3	13	0
Western Australia	50 300	16.8	50 710	24 800	8 324	25 277	16 814	20	3	13	0
TOTAL								116	32	86	31

1 taken from National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994 and age indicates range from 20 - 75+ years of age

2 taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996 Usual residence

3 taken from ORAC Service Type, OATSIH

4 includes the Australian Capital Territory

The ABS in the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey asked the following question in both their personal forms “persons aged 12 years and under” and “persons aged 13 years and over”:

The next question is about forced separation of children from their families. Please tell me if you

don't want to answer this question:

Was (insert Child's name) taken away from his/her natural family by a mission, the government or

welfare? Or

Were you taken away from your natural family by a mission, the government or welfare?

Answer:    Yes —————  
               No  
               Don't want to answer.

During that time you were taken away, who brought you up?

Unrelated Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people

Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander adoptive or foster

The following was taken from the ABS's 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey “*Survey and Methodology*” Paper (Feb 1994)

‘The basis for collection of this information was the finding by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report that of the 99 deaths investigated, 43 had been separated as children from their natural families. This suggests that people who had been separated from their families were more likely to come into conflict with the law.’

The information collected from the above question provided the first national indication of the extent of forced separation of children from their families. It also provided the opportunity to show any links with the legal system and other issues covered in the Survey.

