

SUBMISSION BY LINGIARI FOUNDATION INCORPORATED

PRESENTED BY CHAIRMAN (PATRICK DODSON)

Capacity Building  
Inquiry

Submission No. ....67.....

BROOME, 08 AUGUST 2003

SPEAKING POINTS FOR ORAL PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS.

### Terms of Reference

Strategies to better manage the delivery of the services.

Building the capacity of

A. Community members to better support families, community organisations, representative councils for better outcomes.

B. Indigenous organisations to better deliver and influence the delivery of services in the most effective, efficient and accountable way.

C. Government's agencies so that policy direction and management structures will improve individual and community outcomes.

### 1. Strengths of the Aboriginal Society.

- **Social organisation and order: Kinship.** The existence of kinship structures within Aboriginal societies has been the basis for relationships, responsibilities, social order and cultural responsibilities. A proper understanding, acknowledgement and incorporation/adoption of the social organisation, incorporating Kinship structures and rules, protocols and practices is needed and indeed necessary if capacity building under the broader banner of effective, acceptable (to Aboriginal people) and sustainable government and governance is to be realistically and practically achieved.
- **Mutual responsibility and caring for each other:** Aboriginal people are far more concerned and responsive to the needs of others beyond their own individual and extended family responsibilities.
- **Spirituality:** the essence of aboriginal spirituality has within it the foundational values and principles for ethical and moral behaviour, including personal and community growth and development.
- **The Strength of the people:** Despite the history of destabilization and assimilation we have survived. By what genius have we managed to do this?

- **Survival and Perseverance:** despite the odds and it is also done despite the lack of services that are available in the tiny mainstream communities Aboriginal people have managed remarkably well.

## 2. How are the needs to be supported?

- Agency co-ordination
- Resources
- Support
- People need to be active participants but people are starting from a much lower starting base e.g. lack of education, training
- There needs to be a recognition by Governments and their agencies that we have citizenship entitlement and responsibilities as every other Australian does.

## 3. Acknowledge the problems.

- Disconnectedness of Government and its agencies.
- Poverty is all-pervasive.
- Need to deal with the causes not just with the symptoms
- Government attacking identity, rights, personal details of people and responsibilities on the one hand in native title proceedings while on the other offering to deal with family violence.
- No other sector of the Australian Society has to deal with the issues that Aboriginal communities have to deal with. For example, the issue of responsibility for the provision and delivery of essential, municipal and community services. In non-Aboriginal communities (both mainstream and wholly non-Aboriginal), these services are a given, that is they are provided as right.

## 4. Communication

- No evidence that communication is well founded.
- Language
- Interpreters
- Protocols
- Understanding. How are you to know what people want?

5. **Search for the cultural match.**

- Acknowledgment, adoption and support for the underlying cultural values and the adoption of protocols and ways in order to sustain Aboriginality rather than continuously demanding conformity and compliance to the mainstream imperatives.
- Never been a case where individualism has not been encouraged, but the ultimate effectiveness of the individual will be determined by the strength of the community in which they live and operated, as for example the experience of 'Artists'.

6. **A fair and just approach** to Aboriginal peoples would be to identify those problems that we have in common with the mainstream and to adjust the mainstream approaches so that the values, protocol and ways of the Aboriginal peoples might formally be acknowledged and adopted across the whole domain of governance and community government.