

Adelaide Healing Energy Centre

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The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

REF : Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing in Remote Aboriginal communities

I have seen the notice of the above enquiry and wish to make some comments in regard to it.

I set up the Adelaide Healing Energy Centre in Adelaide in 1999 and since that time, the Centre has grown and achieved wonderful results in our goals of healing people in need. The following comments are provided in regard to our operations and what we could offer in the way of assistance for people afflicted with the problems of petrol sniffing.

1. Vision of the Centre

The Centre will be the leader in it's field and staff will train teams of people in Spiritual Healing to allow them to deliver programs on emotional wellbeing, health, family violence and substance abuse through resource centres to be set up at each community in crisis throughout South Australia and franchise Centres in other States and Territories.

2. Mission Statement for the Centre

The Centre will be one that provides alternative and proven methods of healing to all sectors of society and gain support and further recognition from Government and other agencies in being able to offer programs that deal with addictions, anger management, domestic violence and other negative influences.

Its goal will be to set up Healing Energy Centres in every State and Territory and expand programs at the local level which will be delivered by people appropriately trained at the Adelaide Healing Energy Centre and supported in the person's own community.

Staff at the Centre will be committed to the healing of all those who seek their knowledge and guidance and they will do so with unconditional love for their fellow human beings and without judgement.

3. Goals of the Business

To continue operating a healing and energy centre of excellence in the State and develop links to set up similar Centres in other States and Territories throughout Australia.

Staff will be trained to deliver programs that will have a focused step toward wellbeing in health for all sectors of the community and in particular, Aboriginal families, individuals and communities in crisis. It will also concentrate on youth issues by developing family healing plans and personal development courses.

The Centre will set up an emotional wellbeing strategy with particular emphasis on Aboriginal men and women's emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing which will include healing programs and workshops to address past issues.

In addition, it is a major plan to first train ten Aboriginal people in the method of healing. These ten people will experience their own healing in the first instance prior to venturing to the next stage, as their own issues will need to be addressed first.

Currently five counsellors and workers from the NASAS Drug and Alcohol Centre in Perth are completing their training in our techniques in healing. They would like to set up a healing Centre connected to their organization next year. These people see the value in offering healing along with conventional methods for their clients/

Currently the Centre has people showing interest in the opportunities that the program offers so that they can be more effective in their own communities. It is the intention of the Centre to offer the program and healing to Aboriginal people who are committed and willing to be trained in the services the Centre offers.

4. Background of the Centre and personal life skills

The Centre employs a receptionist and consists of a shop selling various types of healing products. The premises have one large room that can cater for groups of up to fifty people. There is a smaller workshop area that can cater for up to ten people. There are eleven other rooms that are used by therapists. Each therapist that works from the Centre rents their room on a weekly basis with the Centre offering receptionist support in return for the efforts of the therapists.

The Centre has been in existence for over five years and I have over eight years experience of being self-employed in natural healing and program development. I am an Indigenous person and have a business background in management for a large fund raising organisation before beginning her own personal journey of healing. I am passionate about ensuring that her healing and knowledge is passed onto others. I bring to this unique business first hand experience of dealing with past traumas of abuse.

I am qualified in:

- Cert. IV in Workplace Assessment and Training
- Reiki (Master)
- Spiritual Healing
- Panic Healing
- Seichim

During the past eight years I have developed and facilitated:

- Spiritual retreats
- Self esteem workshops
- Inner child, original pain workshops
- Spiritual healer's courses
- How to heal and create a positive future
- "Abundance" courses
- "Forgiveness" courses

I practice as a Spiritual Healer and has consulted with hundreds of clients including men and women from varies backgrounds. In most of these cases the current life issues invariably relates back to childhood.

During visitation change was apparent with individuals feeling stronger, leaving empowered in a position of taking control of their lives and recognising that they can make changes in their life.

The group work has always been encouraging and powerful for participants as they realise that they are not alone in their journey through their pain. Most of my clients testify to the instance changes that have occurred through the training and healing methods that is provided.

The Inner Child workshop is conducted over two days and has been operational for the past three years. In that time numerous clients both men and women have used the tools from those workshops to change their lives.

Currently, we have twelve trained facilitators in the 'Inner Child' workshop that facilitate monthly training sessions, taking people through their past traumas and giving them 'tools for change'.

5. Identified gaps

In working with Aboriginal peoples and communities, what has emerged in the discussions is the gap in the availability of alternative health and wellbeing programs. These are programs that focus on emotional and spiritual healing which often gets to the core of the issue that people are dealing with.

In terms of improving health much is on offer from an acute and psychological aspect through hospitals, health and counselling service.

However, in terms of the deeper therapy that is often needed to shift the shame, grief and loss, there are very few that are culturally appropriate and sensitive. The other option, which is on offer and is often sought when people need comfort, is that of pastoral care, which is accessed through the Church or form the religious denomination, people are associated with.

With the increase of mental illness and terminal sicknesses such as cancer in the community, Aboriginal people are looking for alternative methods to either cure these illnesses or to give them peace of mind and/or a quality of life in their last days.

Seeking out these alternative options often occur at the last stages of ones life particularly when the family realises that they could be preparing a loved one to enter the spiritual world. The effect of this

experience is often wearisome and does impact on the whole family and sometimes community if the person is well known.

Apart from consoling and supporting each other through various stages of someone's sickness there are only a few places that can be accessed to assist in working through grief issues afterwards. In most cases, the family often carries the grief for many years which is then passed onto the younger members of the family. This leaves the children and young people carrying the grief and loss of their elders, mothers and fathers without even understanding the impact of loss and grief and how it might release itself through violence etc.

There is also a cultural implication at play here as it is also disrespectful to speak of the deceased after they depart. As a result of this the issue of grief continues to remain unresolved for many years. The impact of this often portrays itself in other behavioural issues such as violence, frustration, isolation and exclusion etc.

The inability to speak of the grief and loss can often present itself in the shape and form of a mental illness. This experience possibly gives rise to the reasons why many Aboriginal people (including the young ones) are resorting to the use of alcohol and drugs as a means of blocking out the pain and reality of their own grief.

Counselling is acknowledged as a means of assisting individuals to confront and deal with the deeper inner issues they might be encountering however, what is known from these experiences is that Aboriginal people are seeking an alternative deeper cultural and spiritual response. This is also about reviving the cultural aspect of spiritual healing.

6. Products

Product programs deal with addictions, anger management, domestic violence and other negative influences. Through dealing with a client's grief and pain from the past, particularly from childhood, we can help them to create change within their life. These programs are the way of the future! Only by addressing an individual's upbringing, family structure and family rules can we create change in the present. Once the past has been properly addressed, acknowledged, and clients are then able to move on more positively and holistically in their lives.

The Centre is helping families and individuals to deal with major life crisis or change including grief and loss, giving them the tools to heal, and then offering assistance for as long as the individual or family may feel the need.

By working with the local community centres and liaising with trained care workers, the counsellors etc, it is planned that ongoing assistance can be provided.

7. Aboriginal cultural and spiritual healing

Cultural and spiritual healing has been central to Aboriginal life since time immemorial. The ceremonies that were conducted had a significant place in ensuring a balance was maintained throughout the existence of the individual, families and community. The structures and ceremonies that were conducted always ensured the importance of connection to the 'Dreaming' and daily activity. These ceremonies were critical in establishing identity and purpose, responsibility and wellbeing.

Much of this aspect of Aboriginal life remains within the South Australian community today and it is obvious as people constantly talk about the importance of the relationship to their Ancestors, connection to country and stories which is embedded in the relationship with the land and the spiritual world. This aspect of wellbeing and connection is and will be central to the future survival of Aboriginal peoples and communities. One aspect of healing that is utilised by Aboriginal communities is that of the Ngankari (traditional healer) who are often known and sought out for their practices and ability to heal physical, emotional and spiritual sickness.

There is an increase in the use of Ngankari's healing by individuals, communities and some Hospitals within South Australia.

What has to be understood within the context of this proposal is the need to create greater space to allow for the development of some practical tools and knowledge for Aboriginal peoples and communities to embrace and incorporate into their life. The learning's and teachings of these tools will become central and integral to the wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples and will be necessary for their physical wellbeing, identity and survival in a contemporary society. These will be tools, strategies and knowledge that can be transferred to the younger generation for future use and will be adopted to suit the cultural context.

8. Kinship and petrol sniffing programs

I have conducted very successful workshops in Northfield Women's Prison and Yatala Men's prison, over a two year period which involved sixty three people (mix of men and women) through a grant from the State's Human Services Department.

Through changes in that Department, the funding ceased and it left people who were receiving assistance in the Men's and Women's prisons here in Adelaide to become very frustrated. I have since received letters of support from many of these people who still need help but there is very little I can do from limited resources available to me from outside agencies.

About three years ago, I was invited, and prepared a submission to the Family and Community Services Department for funding to assist people having substance abuse problems under their Stronger Families and Communities program. I had huge support and involvement from a range of Indigenous people and communities at the time, but because of their beauracratc conditions the Department advised that they could only fund Organisations and not individuals or a business such as mine.

This was very frustrating because the Centre had been set up to manage programs in healing and positive change, creating better parenting, which is needed for people to receive assistance and treatment. This is another reason why Government's should open up initiatives and change the "Rules" for qualified business groups and not be restrained by the paperwork that is placed upon Organisations.

The real outcome here is the loss of three years opportunities in the health and wellbeing of petrol sniffers that could have benefited from our programs and commitment.

I must also point out that funding to some Organisations has been a waste of resources because they, generally, do not have the skilled staff to be able to deliver programs on an ongoing basis. If they do receive funding, they outsource it through internal consultancy contracts and this in itself leads to delays and delivery of programs from people who are not always aware of the needs of the community, and individuals, as a whole.

Conclusion

I ask respectfully that you take these comments to be constructive to your Inquiry and hope that I may be able to contribute further, if necessary.

I am willing at any time to discuss any of the above-mentioned points important to your Inquiry and can be contacted by mail at the above address or telephone 08 8342 4109.

I have been working with my mentor, Mr Peter Rawson, also located here in Adelaide, and agree that many changes need to occur in handling the issues of petrol sniffing. New approaches need to be taken and I hope the Adelaide Healing Energy my Centre can be funded and become a leader in the healing processes that must, in my opinion, commence before anything else.

The subject of your enquiry has many people seeking results and positive outcomes. It may be a chance, in the for of a Judicial Commission report to maximise resources and have meaningful outcomes on petrol and substance abuse, impacts and healing processes essential to recovery of lives.

The whole matter, as you know is sensitive but I hope I can be of assistance to the process of needs of indigenous people in all States and Territories. I welcome the opportunity to make these comments and would be available to give evidence at a public hearing of how healing is a critical part of recovery of peoples lives that have been affected with petrol sniffing and other substance abuses.

Yours sincerely

(Lorraine Webb)
Manager Adelaide Healing Energy Centre
20 October 2005