

Issues of Priority for Macarthur

(information obtained from consultation undertaken by the Place Based Community Strategy under the Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC), SWOT analysis by MacUnity and other background papers)

PRIORITY ISSUES	
<p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low home ownership ◆ Overcrowding common ◆ Homelessness 3 times that of mainstream ◆ Limited availability and access 	<p>Employment & Economic Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 2006 census showed unemployment rate for Aboriginals at 16% vs. 5% for mainstream – has improved slightly since the 2001 census. ◆ 1% of the Aboriginal community work in the private sector. Most work in the public sector due to policy development to support Aboriginals into the sector. ◆ Urgent need for pre employment skill development e.g. life skills
<p>Law & Order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 13 times more Aboriginal people in prison compared to mainstream ◆ Lack of consistency in judicial system ◆ Discrimination and stereotyping of Aboriginals still occurs ◆ Lack of transitional programs for Aboriginals leaving prison ◆ Isolation of families with a family member in prison. 	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Aboriginal community have a high representation of people aged 0-24 (62.3%) ◆ Low retention rates at school and a need to improve support to the students transitioning from primary to high school. ◆ Need alternative educational options when students are suspended or expelled e.g. earlier entry to trade schools / TVET, life skill development ◆ Lack of cultural awareness and education in schools ◆ Need for increased in school support for literacy and numeracy, supported by homework centres ◆ Limited post school support and opportunities to encourage children into further education (6% Aboriginal children pursue post school education compared to 25% mainstream)
<p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aboriginal community over represented at the crisis end of health but very under represented at the preventative end ◆ Life expectancy is 17 years lower for Aboriginals compared to mainstream and infant mortality still remains twice as high. ◆ Main causes of death are heart disease, diabetes, cancer and external issues e.g. accidents, assault and self harm. ◆ Mental health and drug and alcohol issues are over represented in the Aboriginal community. ◆ Teenage pregnancies remain high, with a strong demand for education that includes alternative life choices. ◆ Lack of health transport, especially for communities in semi rural areas. 	<p>Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Need for a holistic approach to families' complex needs. ◆ Need to build on the strength of the family unit that is often dislocated by housing, prison, parenting issues or broken homes. ◆ High incidents of domestic violence exasperated by high levels of stress within the family unit. ◆ High evidence that older siblings often support their younger siblings. Increased support, services and respite is needed.

<p>Youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Urgent need for Aboriginal mentors and role models to develop new leaders for the community. ◆ Limited use of current youth services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited understanding of the role of youth services and so it becomes an issue of pride not to attend. - Lack of culturally appropriate youth services with identified youth workers to act as role models ◆ Aboriginal young people are 21 times more likely to end up in prison than mainstream. 	<p>Early Childhood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aboriginal children are 4 times more likely to experience child abuse than mainstream due to the extreme social and economic strain families are under. ◆ Limited Aboriginal specific childcare centres or centres that are culturally appropriate with identified positions. ◆ Lack of accessible, affordable childcare options. ◆ Lack of safe and accessible after school activities.
<p>Community Coordination & Service Provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of community coordination especially around funding, transparency and program development and implementation. ◆ Lack of outreach services to support the community that are not close to main towns / centres. ◆ Lack of culturally appropriate protocols within mainstream services. Urgent need to make mainstream services more culturally appropriate and connected to the Aboriginal community. This includes reviewing the use of language within the sector. ◆ Lack of access to suitable, recurrent or long term project funding to support small Aboriginal organisations. New money tends to go to the large organisations and there are limited if no large Aboriginal organisations. ◆ Limited identified positions ◆ Lack of support in working within business enterprise. 	<p>Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of adequate transport system across the region which affects opportunities for employment, education, access to health and other relevant services as required. ◆ Higher than average number of Aboriginals rely on public transport compared to the mainstream community.