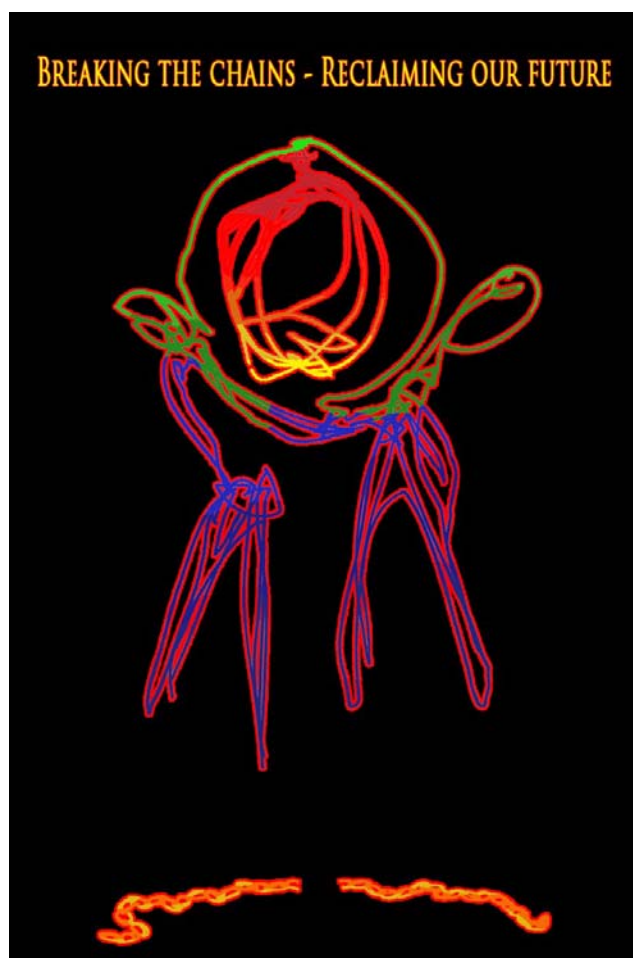




2007

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum



Report



Breaking the Chains – Reclaiming our future

2nd – 3rd May 2007

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVR) I wish to express our sincere gratitude to each and every one who was involved in the success of CDFVR's 2007 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum. In particular, I would like to thank Pam Young, for her welcome to country on behalf of the Yuibera people; the keynote speakers; plenary panel presenters; and the yarning circle facilitators, without whom we could not have had a Forum at all, and whose excellent presentations made the Forum the success that it was. Having said that, the Forum's success was also dependent, of course, on the involvement of participants from many parts of our State, and some from interstate, who shared their stories and wisdom in a spirit of collaboration and learning to end family violence.

The Forum was made possible by the hard work and dedication of CDFVR's staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, particularly Dr Jackie Huggins AM, Shirley Slann and Harold Fatnowna. I wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank all of them for their commitment, passion and planning for the Forum, and for the work that continues beyond the Forum. In particular I want to acknowledge Annie Webster (as organised as the ACTU!), who carried the load of managing registrations, negotiating the venue, catering, sound and equipment, speakers' accommodation and all the other bits and pieces that go with organising such an event. Annie was ably and willingly assisted by Karen Woodley, Michelle Bradford, Kass Fenton, Luke Mallie and Clinton Rawsthorne in the planning and implementation of the Forum. Finally, I would also like to thank Dr Sanjay Sharma, for his contribution to documenting the Forum outcomes, and Karen Woodley for her work on the Forum evaluation and writing up the notes that have formed the basis of this report.



Heather Nancarrow

Director

Funded by



Queensland Government

Department of **Communities**

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INTRODUCTION

The Forum was attended by 120 people, including almost equal numbers of men and women from urban, rural and remote communities across Queensland, a small group from the Northern Territory and a key-note speaker, Dr Harry Blagg, from Western Australia. The majority of the participants were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with participants from Thursday Island and Bamaga on the tip of Cape York, down to Roma and Cunnamulla in the far South-West. We appreciate their participation, especially considering their long trips from various directions to meet in Mackay, the 'heart' of Queensland. It was especially good to have representation from the far South-West, which was a first for the Forum.

The Forum theme was most eloquently expressed by Dr Harry Blagg, who said that: *'the chains' we need collectively to break to end family violence were forged in the heat of colonial violence and locked in place by several centuries of oppression, neglect and indifference'*. This theme, and the commitment to unlock the chains, was carried through the range of key-note addresses, plenary panel discussions and yarning circles. Many of these presentations can be seen on CDFVR's website.

The yarning circles, an innovation of the 2006 Forum, featured more at this year's Forum, with a total of seven yarning circles to follow-up key-note addresses and plenary panel presentations. This year's Forum also included an interactive Open Forum, called 'Ten-Minute Bites'. This enabled 6 self-nominated participants an opportunity to hold the floor for ten minutes each to share information about a program, a new initiative, or an issue.

The wonderful Viv Edwards again provided entertainment at the Forum dinner, assisted by a range of participants who offered their vocal talents in the karaoke extravaganza. Although participants preferred not to make it a competition this year, Lillian Gray from Cherbourg gave outstanding performances again and Dorothy Deshong's rendition of 'These boots are made for walkin', with outfit to match, was worthy of a Grammy award!

At the closing of the Forum, participants were invited to complete a brief evaluation form, and 89 participants took up that invitation. The results of the evaluation, which will guide the development of the Forum program and structure for 2008, are included at the end of this report.

REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF 2005 AND 2006 FORUMS

Immediately following the welcome to country delivered by Pam Young, CDFVR's Director provided a summary of recommendations from 2005 (where relevant) and 2006 and the response from relevant agencies to those recommendations. A copy of the report on previous Forum outcomes is on the CDFVR website and can be viewed at:

<http://www.noviolence.com.au/2007forum.html>.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Keynote addresses were presented by Dr Jackie Huggins AM on behalf of Mr Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission; Debbie Kilroy OAM, representing Sisters Inside; and Dr Harry Blagg, Research Fellow, Crime Research Centre, University of Western Australia.

Mr Tom Calma (paper presented by Dr Jackie Huggins AM)

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's paper provided a human rights perspective on family violence and child sexual assault in Indigenous communities. He argued that the Australian Government is obliged to develop holistic and integrated responses to Indigenous family violence, in keeping with its obligations under the United Nations' *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, both of which Australia is a signatory to. The Commissioner also argued, as he has previously, that:

Aboriginal customary law must be applied consistently with other human rights standards. At no stage does customary law override the rights of women and children to be safe and to live free from violence.

The Commissioner also referred to his recently released report which details his ten point plan for ending family violence, and emphasised the need for '*Government agencies to foster and support grassroots initiatives that communities have instigated, rather than instructing communities what to do*'. He also emphasised the need for strong leadership from women and the support of Indigenous men '*who need to model appropriate behaviour, challenge violence and stand up against it*'.

Debbie Kilroy, OAM

Debbie delivered an impassioned speech on the day-to-day reality of prison-life for women, and argued vehemently that the women's human rights are breached on a daily basis in the prison system. She described the work of *Sisters Inside* and how it is increasingly compromised by governmental policies, which have 'locked her out' of the women's prison. She spoke passionately about the level of incarceration of Indigenous women and the systemic abuse, discrimination and indignity they experience due to governmental policies, particularly regarding strip-searches after visits. Debbie also presented the work that *Sisters Inside* have done, to date, on the production of resources called "How to Escape From Prison", referring to the information and support provided to women in preparation for life on the outside, and how to avoid ending up in prison again. This resource is being developed in recognition of the high percentage of women who, once imprisoned, struggle to escape ongoing disadvantage and structural discrimination and, as a result, end up back in prison. The set of resources also included a very poignant and practical resource for workers with children and young people whose mothers are in prison.

Dr Harry Blagg

Harry Blagg is one of Australia's most eminent researchers on family violence in Aboriginal communities, with numerous publications in this area based on his research conducted in partnership with Aboriginal communities, particularly those in Western Australia and Queensland. His paper, titled *Zero Tolerance or Community Justice?*, drew from his work on several projects on family violence, crisis intervention and healing, and a major project on Aboriginal Customary Law, conducted for the Western Australian Law Reform Commission. It also drew on his knowledge of community initiatives such as Night/Community Patrols and justice mechanisms and planning.

Harry's paper outlined the ongoing problem of policing being concerned with '*fixing the Aboriginal problem*' rather than dealing with Aboriginal people's problems, and how this relates to '*classic victim-blaming*'. He argued that in the minds of mostly white commentators, Aboriginal law and family violence are synonymous and, thus, it is Aboriginal culture that is responsible for high levels of violence in their communities. In Harry's analysis, Aboriginal women are further disadvantaged because they don't meet the criteria for '*socially sanctioned victim*' status because of racist stereotypes and western (male) notions of femininity, '*deserving of sympathy and chivalry*'. Aboriginal women are, in fact, routinely viewed as offenders. However, he argued, some Aboriginal women are now being accorded

victim status, where they meet the criteria of *'helpless, hopeless victims of traditional Aboriginal male violence, sanctioned – even encouraged – by Aboriginal law'*.

Drawing on his work for the Western Australian Law Reform Commission, Harry highlighted the way in which non-Aboriginal people misunderstand Aboriginal Customary Law, simply believing it to be a traditional alternative to mainstream law. Instead, Aboriginal Law:

represents a grammar for living and an intricate set of religious principles which make the world meaningful and intelligible. Aboriginal customary law cuts across the divisions we impose in western thinking between law, culture and religion.

Further, Harry emphasised the role of community in Aboriginal Law and the need for community-owned programs to deal with family violence, as well as the development of 'hybrid' initiatives that allow *'Aboriginal values, beliefs and forms of cultural authority to intervene constructively in the shared space between (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) domains'*. He concluded his excellent presentation by illustrating, with a flow chart in regard to community justice mechanisms, how this can be achieved.

PLENARY PANELS

The Forum included two plenary panels, one on 'Working with Indigenous men to end family violence'; and one on 'Working with Women and Children'. Each of these is addressed, below.

1. Working with Indigenous men to end family violence

Harold Fatnowna chaired the panel with presentations from Mick Adams – Chairperson of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Male Reference Group; John Whop – Torres Strait Islander Healing Centre; Dr. Brian Sullivan – Lecturer, School of Social Work and Welfare Policy, University of Queensland and Alfred Lacey – Chairman of Palm Island Men's Group.

Mick Adams presented statistics on Indigenous health, concentrating on Indigenous men, with an analysis of the relationship between poor health standards and intergenerational trauma, loss of culture and roles, and lack of health education. His commitment and passion about health and wellbeing encompasses his concerns about the impacts of family violence and child abuse on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals, and

Indigenous men's experiences (including childhood experiences) of sexual abuse, which he has researched.

John Whop discussed the issues affecting Torres Strait Islander people, particularly the changes in society that have seen his people go from self sufficiency and cultural identity to economic dependency and loss of tradition. John spoke about the Torres Strait Islands Healing Centre's 'Village Model', which aims to revive tradition and customs; revive traditional practices of resolving conflicts' and revive traditional decision making processes. He said the Village Model:

...brings back together organisations, (Government and Non-Government) to work collectively to develop and implement a holistic approach to the physical and spiritual healing of individuals, families and community as a whole.

The Village Model utilises the skills of the local community people and education as a tool to empower them so that they can take their place in the communities and participate in a more pro-active manner towards individual, family and community healing.

Alf Lacey is the Chairman of the Palm Island Men's Group and talked about his passion to see more men on Palm Island involved in community issues and their cooperation in reducing family violence. He also proudly spoke of the progress that is being made on Palm Island towards this vision, with programs such as the Palm Island Youth Night Patrol Program for Kids; the Cellwatch Program; and the Demand Reduction Program, which are all examples of initiatives that run out of the Palm Island Men's Group office.

Dr. Brian Sullivan presented a 'big-picture' analysis of work with and by men to stop violence against women, which must meet two criteria: 1) safety for women and children; and 2) accountability of male perpetrators, and justice officials and service providers for their interventions. Drawing on Gondolf's research, Brian argued that effective interventions with men must include mandatory programs for men who use violence and these must be part of co-ordinated community responses that involve:

Government agencies and services, non-government agencies, community leaders, and key community groups working in an integrated way to increase safety for women and children, and to hold men accountable (not working against each other).

2. Working with women and children

Karen Woodley (CDFVR Research Worker) chaired the panel on working with women and children. Panelists were Moogie Patu - Coordinator of the Strong Families Unit, Department of Health and Community Services in the Northern Territory; Clara Day - President of Remote Area Aboriginal Torres Strait Island Child Care (RAATSICC) Advisory Association and Women's Issues Officer, Nai-Beguta Agame Corporation at Bamaga; and Jennifer Salam - Coordinator, Cape York Family Violence Prevention Legal Unit, Aboriginal Corporation.

Moogie Patu provided an overview of the Strong Families Unit's *Strong Family, Strong Community, Strong Future* project, which promotes the Indigenous Family Violence strategy – Say 'No More'. The project, which is focussed on new solutions in preventing family violence within Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, is Indigenous designed, led and staffed with, and by, Indigenous families and communities. The Indigenous Implementation Team utilises community engagement, family engagement, the creation of employment and training opportunities, and community education as strategies to develop solutions that come from within the community to provide help and support for families and communities.

Clara Day discussed RAATSICC's role in assisting remote Indigenous communities to promote the well-being of children within their extended family and community, and respond to their needs through a whole-child perspective. This encompasses emotional, physical, economic, spiritual, psychological and cultural elements in a culturally appropriate and locality-specific manner. RAATSICC also provides training and education opportunities to domestic and family violence workers. This includes access for community based workers to the Therapeutic Register, which is a database containing two types of services, 1) specialist therapists; and 2) cross community debriefing services. RAATSICC also provides professional supervision and development for all participants in the process.

Jennifer Salam, talked about the role her agency has in providing legal advice and legal representation in family violence and juvenile justice situations, to women in Cape York Aboriginal communities. Her work involves education about responsibilities, rights and relationships; building positive, healthy relationships; and healing feuds. This is achieved most effectively through women's yarning camps in the bush, where the women can take time out to relax, and learn from each other. Topics discussed include the links between child sexual abuse and relationship violence, and how loss of identity, self esteem and confidence, enable women to be trapped in violent relationships.

YARNING CIRCLES

The Forum provided an opportunity for yarning circles around specific issues, which enabled participants to discuss these issues in a more informal environment. Yarning circles were convened around the following topics for discussion.

1. Working with men: facilitated by Shaun Henaway.

This was a very popular yarning circle that focused on young men using violence against their girlfriends, ranging in ages from 15 to 18. Shaun generated yarning by posing a number of questions on how to be involved in working with young men, and challenging participants to come up with answers. Suggested strategies included cultural activities; camps; activity-based education; survival activities for young males and men with sons; and changing the education system to include Indigenous history, and using organisations such as BlackBase, which teaches traditional cultural games and mentors 16 and 17 year old youth. Discussion included changes to legislation, where and how to connect with young people, and how to engage men in violence prevention programs.

2. Department of Communities' resources: facilitated by Lisa Sarago

Lisa advised that the Department of Communities:

- has commissioned research into the Indigenous communities' access and use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVO), which is to be conducted by Professor Chris Cunneen, Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales;
- has recently released a DVD called 'Kick Start' which is a coaching package using AFL footballers. It covers domestic and family violence issues; and
- is involved with the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations project which is looking at staff retention and building resilience for staff in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support services.

There was general discussion around the resources produced by the Department's Violence Prevention Team. These resources are available from the Department's web-site (www.communities.qld.gov.au). Representatives from the Innisfail region discussed the lack of relevant resources and recurrent funding for existing projects.

3. Working with violence in communities: facilitated by Moogie Patu

Moogie advised that her team is working on a ‘*Stop it Before it Starts*’ program – working with children who have experienced child sexual abuse. They are developing an interactive working kit, which they hope will be in use by the end of 2007. The team is also preparing a report for the Minister on ‘*What’s there for the kids*’ in communities. They want to look at refugees taking all children when mothers are forced to seek shelter as, currently, some do not take children over a certain age.

Moogie’s team is also trying to break down the intergenerational violence in communities, where children see violence in their daily lives and consider it to be normal. She also talked about ‘lateral violence’ – people tearing each other down instead of providing support and encouragement for one another.

Lynette and Colleen talked about their involvement in a street-based outreach team in Cairns. It is a pilot program with agencies working together with homeless Indigenous people to enable them to return to their communities and providing ‘fly now, pay later’ transport options. The outreach team is also working with Centrelink and the Police Liaison Officers to facilitate the payment of fines incurred by homeless people to prevent police constantly chasing them.

4. ‘Role of Aboriginal law and culture in prevention, intervention and treatment of family violence: facilitated by Dr Harry Blagg

Harry provided more details about the research he did in partnership with Aboriginal people, including Mick Dodson, on the Aboriginal Customary Law for the Western Australian Law Reform Commission. Discussion on the way Aboriginal law is fundamental to the daily life of individuals, families and communities, and oversees mutual obligations and the implementation of other cultural values, led to discussions about various initiatives aimed at increasing Indigenous involvement in the justice process. These included Community Justice Groups and Murri Courts. Concerns expressed by participants included the potential for ‘conflicts of interest’ and for Indigenous people to be co-opted by the mainstream system; one participant said ‘*we are doing their job*’. Issues about people volunteering their time in the Murri Courts process and juggling other community commitments were also discussed.

A representative from BlackBase, which uses traditional cultural games to connect with young Indigenous people, reported that they were having problems with the programs having to fit into government policies and frameworks.

5. The importance of having 'well' women with 'strong spirit' working in this field: facilitated by Jennifer Salam and Isobel Jones

This yarning circle focussed on having strong women working in this field to overcome violence and its precursors. Jennifer talked about the acknowledgement of expertise in communities and sharing it with others. She also expressed the difficulty for a fly-in / fly-out service in building relationships with women in communities and the fact that it took at least 3 years to gain the trust of the women in some communities. This highlighted that effective work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requires patience and flexibility of time, but that this is rarely available because of mainstream service delivery structures and funding constraints; a point also made in the panel discussion on working with women. Again, Jennifer talked about the benefits of organising 'woman camps' where women and their children go away for a period of time to talk, socialise, cry, laugh, build relationships, learn parenting skills, build self esteem and do women's business.

10 MINUTE BITES

1. **Violet Spicer** and **Deb Currey** shared information about their work at Ada's Haven, an Indigenous Women's Shelter in Toowoomba.
2. **Alicia Eugene** from the Department of Corrective Services responded to the report back on recommendations from 2006. She provided information about programs she thought relevant to the 2006 recommendations for Corrective Services that had not been addressed in the response from the Minister.
3. **Moogie Patu** and her colleagues demonstrated the application of an innovative resource that the Strong Family Team has developed for education and problem-solving around alcohol, gambling, violence and other social problems in communities.
4. **Bruce Hansen** from dvconnect Mensline spoke about the nature and availability of the Mensline services, including the provision of support to men at court regarding domestic violence protection order applications.
5. **Luke Mallie** and **Karen Woodley** gave an overview of the Forum logo, created by Luke, and its representation.
6. **Wally Saunders** from Woorabinda spoke about the 'Footprints' program which encompasses spiritual healing and compares the feelings, religion, culture and lifestyle experienced by Indigenous people in 1769 with what is currently experienced in 2007.

FORUM EVALUATION / FEEDBACK

Process

As with the 2005 and 2006 Forums, an evaluation / feedback survey was distributed at the closing of the Forum and participants were invited to complete it. The survey (see Appendix 1) was loosely divided into three sections. The first section collected quantitative data that focussed on whether the Forum had achieved its objectives. The objectives of the Forum were to provide an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are working in Indigenous family violence prevention policy or practice across the state, to:

- highlight and celebrate the good work that is being done to end family violence;
- share information and knowledge about strategies and programs that could be used effectively by others;
- promote opportunities for networking between workers in the field of Indigenous family violence prevention; and
- identify issues to be addressed and workshop/recommend strategies to do so.

The second section sought qualitative data to gain insights that would help to plan the next Forum; and the third section sought feedback from participants, for CDFVR's consideration, on potential research topics and other projects, that would assist participants' work in the prevention of Indigenous family violence.

The results of the survey are summarised below.

Results

Section 1

A total of 89 participants responded to the invitation to complete the survey. Of these 89 respondents, 60 (67.4%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and the remaining 29 (32.6%) identified as non-Indigenous.

Of the 87 respondents (97.8%) who agreed with the statement '*I like the Forum theme 'Breaking the Chains – Reclaiming our Future'*', 58 (62.5%) indicated they strongly agreed; 25 (28.1%) said they agreed; and 4 (4.5%) indicated they mostly agreed.

The vast majority of respondents (95.4%) agreed that the theme was well covered in the content of the program, with 39 (43.8%) saying that they strongly agreed.

Similarly, 85 respondents (95.5%) agreed that they both learnt new things at the Forum and can use what they have learnt in their own work or life.

Section 2

The survey also posed 5 open-ended questions, specifically about the Forum, to which participants could give multiple responses. For the purposes of analysis, responses for each question were grouped into themes.

“What did you like most about the Forum?”

The following themes were evident in the responses to this question: *‘information sharing’*, which encompassed networking, communication and yarning circles; *‘learning’* which included references to particular presentations/key note addresses, and encountering new information and programs and opportunities to apply this information; *‘empowerment’*, which reflected statements of inspiration, motivation and renewed commitment to improving family violence prevention efforts; *‘men’s participation’*, which included references to the value men sharing their wisdom and actively demonstrating their commitment to ending family violence; and *‘other’*, which captured comments regarding venue, food, program structure and experiences of CDFVR staff.

The three most frequently recurring themes in the participants’ comments about what they liked most about the Forum were: information sharing (n=48); learning (n=29); and ‘empowerment’ (n=11). One respondent described her/his experience of empowerment as: *‘motivational speakers who give us strength spiritually and physically to keep helping our people’*; and another respondent commented: *‘The atmosphere of the Forum was very empowering. I’ve been to lots of DV Forums/conferences, but nothing like this.’*

“What did you like least?”

Fourteen respondents said there was nothing they didn’t like about the Forum. The remaining comments about what people liked least about the Forum fell into themes of ‘venue’ (n=27); ‘program structure’ (n=18); and ‘other’ (n=7).

Comments about the Forum’s venue could be further divided into themes of ‘venue management’ (e.g. attitudes and behaviour of personnel) and ‘venue other’ (e.g. value, quality and quantity of food; and room set-up). Sixteen participants indicated dissatisfaction with venue in terms of the food and organisation of the room; and 11 comments expressed concern about the lack of cross-cultural competence of the venue’s management personnel.

The 18 comments regarding Forum program structure referred to impressions of a full and tight program and insufficient time for adequate interaction and processing of information. Seven remaining comments fell into the theme of *'other'*, and related to a variety of issues including the lack of attendance of local community and government representatives, difficulty with networking; negative perceptions of information in some presentations and discussion.

“Would you come back next year? Why?”

Eighty-one (91%) of respondents either directly stated “yes” to this question, or provided affirmative comments. The reasons given for returning to next year’s Forum fell into themes of: *'information sharing'* (n=34); *'learning'* (n=24); *'monitoring progress'*, for example on outcomes of previous Forums and family violence prevention responses, (n=7); and *'relevance to work'* (n=5).

Five of the 8 negative responses to this question, were motivated by unsatisfactory experiences of the venue and its management personnel. Two responses referred to reasons related to funding or processes within their organisation; and the remaining negative reply offered no further explanatory comment.

“What themes or topics would you like covered in next year’s Forum?”

This question elicited a broad range of responses, which cannot be easily collated into discrete themes. However, three recurring themes appear evident in the responses: *'children and youth'* (child protection, effects of family violence, programs for young people, involvement of young people); *'holistic approaches'* that embrace customary law practices, spirituality and healing; and *'help for those who use family violence'* (behaviour change programs, existing and alternative correctional system and justice responses). Less frequently mentioned themes included: men’s work in communities; drugs and alcohol as contributors to family violence, and elder abuse.

A total of 20 responses (13 Indigenous and 7 non-Indigenous) reflected interest in a ‘children and youth’ connected theme for the 2008 Forum; 10 responses (9 Indigenous and 1 non-Indigenous) indicated interest in a ‘holistic practices’ theme; and 5 responses (4 Indigenous and 1 non-Indigenous) referred to interest in a future theme of ‘help for those who use family violence’.

The wide range of responses to this question also illustrated, for some participants, a preference to shift from an interactive Forum style to a workshop style that focuses on

practice, application of knowledge, skill development and program development. This outcome highlights a level of need amongst many to access relevant and culturally appropriate training opportunities that aim to develop or consolidate specific skill-sets.

‘Please provide name and contact details for any particular speaker you would like see at the next Forum’.

The purpose of this question was to elicit recommendations about future Forum presenters, but it seems that the question may have been misinterpreted because the majority of responses involved a recommendation about a speaker at this Forum. Specifically, 12 respondents requested Debbie Kilroy; seven requested Harry Blagg; six requested Moogie Patu and two requested John Whop, all of whom had presented at this year’s Forum. Other suggestions included Greg Telford from Rekindling the Family; Mick Dodson, Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University; Ted Wilkes, of Aboriginal Health with the School of Developmental Health, Curtin University; Dr Caroline Taylor, researcher/expert on sexual abuse of children ; Sue Gordon, Perth Magistrate and Chairperson of National Indigenous Council; Debra Rose, Co-ordinator of National Network of Indigenous Women’s Legal Services; and Craig Shaw, of BlackBase, a youth development organisation specialising in the use of games as a means of education and Reconciliation.

Section 3

The survey also presented a good opportunity for CDFVR to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the State about their needs for information and support for their work on ending family violence. Therefore, two specific questions about this were included in the survey.

“What research could be undertaken by CDFVR to assist you in your work and/or prevent domestic and family violence?”

As expected, there was a wide range of responses to this question but themes consistently appearing in the 42 responses included research on: effective programs for men and women who use violence; violence in urban communities (not only rural and remote Indigenous communities); the relationship between suicide and family violence; good practice models/what works; the interaction of domestic violence and child protection laws and policies; and research on existing funding programs’ criteria and their ‘fit’ with the needs expressed by Indigenous people.

“What other projects could be undertaken by CDFVR to further assist your work and/or for the prevention of domestic and family violence?”

Some of the themes, above, including the interactions of child protection and domestic violence legislation and policies; the relationship between youth suicide and family violence; and research around funding programs and the expressed needs of Indigenous communities were repeated. The need for relevant training for Indigenous people, and non-Indigenous people to work effectively in Indigenous family violence prevention was also a common theme in several responses. Finally, the need for readily available and relevant resources was also identified in several responses.

CONCLUSION

This year’s Forum featured yarning and information sharing rather than workshops and, therefore did not result in specific recommendations for a range of agencies, as in previous years. However, the evaluation / feedback process has identified areas for CDFVR to focus on in its research and education project work, generally, and in relation to future Forums, specifically. While CDFVR will not be able to commit to addressing all of the suggested research ideas and other projects, the CDFVR Director will report back at the next Forum on how CDFVR has responded to the suggestions.

The evaluation results identify the high level of participants’ satisfaction with the Forum theme, program and outcomes, particularly in terms of opportunities to: celebrate work being done by Indigenous people and organisations; share information; learn from others; and feel empowered to continue the vital work of family violence prevention. As in previous years, Forum participants have been generous in sharing their insights and ideas for the direction of future Forums. CDFVR will meet with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group to discuss the Forum outcomes and develop strategies to respond effectively.

Again it has been a privilege to be involved in bringing the Forum to fruition and to sharing time and knowledge with Forum participants in our mutual goal to stop family violence. We look forward to the next one.

2007 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum Evaluation

1. **Are you Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Please circle answer)**

Yes / No
2. **How much do you agree with the following statements? (Circle your response):**
 - a) **I liked the Forum theme ‘Breaking the Chains – Reclaiming our Future’**

Don’t agree at all don’t agree mostly agree agree strongly agree
 much
 - b) **The theme was covered well in the Forum program:**

Don’t agree at all don’t agree mostly agree agree strongly agree
 much
 - c) **I learnt new things at the Forum:**

Don’t agree at all don’t agree mostly agree agree strongly agree
 much
 - d) **I can use what I learnt in my own work and/or life:**

Don’t agree at all don’t agree mostly agree agree strongly agree
 much
3. **What did you like most at the Forum?**
4. **What did you like least?**
5. **Would you come back next year? Why?**
6. **What themes or topics, would you like covered in next year’s Forum?**
7. **Please provide name and contact details for any particular speaker you would like to see at the next Forum?**
8. **What research could be undertaken by CDFVR to assist you in your work and/or prevent domestic and family violence?**
9. **What other projects could be undertaken by CDFVR to further assist your work and/or for the prevention of domestic and family violence?**