



2008

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum



REPORT

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

When CDFVR and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group convened the first Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum in 2004, it did so for a number of reasons which remain relevant in 2008. Specifically, the annual Forum aims to highlight and celebrate the good work that is being done by Indigenous people to end family violence; to share information and knowledge to assist the work of others; to facilitate networking between Indigenous family violence prevention workers; and to identify issues to be addressed and workshop/recommend strategies to do so. Indeed, the 12 months leading up to the 2008 Forum brought a new sense of urgency to achieving these aims. Nation-wide, prolonged media attention to Indigenous family violence resulted from the Federal Government's emergency intervention in the Northern Territory, followed by the development and introduction in Queensland of the Families Responsibilities Commission, adding to existing government strategies, such as Alcohol Management Plans, to address abuse and neglect in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To uninformed observers these developments might suggest that nothing was being done previously within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address Indigenous family violence. As the following report illustrates, such a perception is far from reality, with an outstanding level of activity and innovation by Indigenous people themselves to address family violence. A distinguishing feature of this work is the prevalence of men, and young people working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to deal with the violence. They have creative solutions but are seeking support to implement solutions through networking and building knowledge and skills. In fact, the 2008 Forum has highlighted a keen interest in expanding the focus on skills development as a component of the annual Forum.

Each year as the attendance at the Forum grows, so does its capacity and potential to deliver on its current and possible future objectives. As well as increased participation from across Queensland, each Forum has brought an increase in interstate participants and increased interest in the Forum becoming a national event. The possibility of a national Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum was also raised in the course of CDFVR's external review conducted in late 2007. The proposal is being considered by CDFVR in consultation with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group.



Heather Nancarrow

Director

INTRODUCTION

Over 140 people attended the Forum from urban, rural and remote areas of Queensland with representation from South Australia, the Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales and one of our keynote speakers, Pat Anderson, from ACT. The majority of participants were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with participants from Bamaga, Thursday Island and Mt. Isa to Cunnamulla, Roma, Murgon and Cherbourg. People such as Patti Nona, one of the speakers in our yarning circles, spent four days travelling to and from the Forum. Similarly participants from the Northern Territory and Thursday Island arrived travel-weary but enthusiastic about their contribution to the 5th Annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum.

Keynote speakers, plenary panels and yarning circles all addressed the Forum theme *"Addressing Problems – Sharing Solutions"*. The evaluation of the Forum showed that 98.2% of participants agreed that the forum theme was covered well in the program. We thank all of our speakers for the time and effort they put into their presentations and their valuable contribution to the Forum's success.

In response to our 2007 participant survey the number of yarning circles was increased this year in an effort to slow the program down, enable networking, and provide opportunities to discuss community programs. Four yarning circles were held this year, the last of which was used to develop strategies to move forward. CDFVR, together with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, will draw on this shared information to make recommendations to relevant Government departments.

This year's brilliantly decorated room for the Forum dinner was outdone only by Lillian Gray's signature "knee wobble" during the karaoke. Once again there was no shortage of willing entertainers – in fact the list of possible singers was so long that the night ended before we had a chance to hear everyone's dulcet tones!

At the end of the Forum participants were invited to complete a brief evaluation form and 111 participants took up that invitation. The results of this year's evaluation, which will inform the development of next year's Forum, are included at the end of this report.

Keynote addresses

Keynote addresses were presented by Pat Anderson, Co-chair of the Board of Inquiry into Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse and co-author of the Little Children are Sacred Report; Professor Chris Cunneen, NewSouth Global Chair in Criminology, University of New South Wales; and Randal Ross, Rowan Nicks & Russell Drysdale Research Fellow, Indigenous Men's Health Research, James Cook University.

Pat Anderson

Pat Anderson has a national and international reputation as a powerful advocate for the disadvantaged, with a particular focus on Indigenous health. In the spirit of the Forum theme, Pat looked at problems and provided her audience with some possible solutions. Pat discussed the lack of sex offender programs anywhere in the Northern Territory and suggested two pathways forward. By adopting a human rights approach there will be an "open, fair and just" approach based on respect for Indigenous people. Pat told her audience that the Federal Government must reconsider and overturn the former Government's opposition to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to ensure that Indigenous people can participate in decision making that relates to their needs and interests. Pat spoke passionately about taking long-term prevention of family violence and sexual abuse seriously and called for early intervention, increased parenting skills and parental social networks in a bid to end family violence.

Chris Cunneen

Professor Cunneen is regarded internationally and nationally as a leading criminologist specialising in Indigenous People and the Law, Juvenile Justice, Restorative Justice, Policing, Prison Issues, Hate Crime, and Human Rights. His presentation at the Forum discussed his recent research on the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO) by Indigenous women in Queensland. Chris challenged the audience to question whether Domestic Violence Protection Orders were an adequate and effective legal mechanism to respond to violence against Indigenous women, particularly in rural and remote areas and what changes might lead to interventions that are more effective. His presentation included a number of case studies, which highlighted the problems in accessing legal support and protection, an examination of recently analysed family violence data from CDFVR's Domestic and Family Violence Database, and commentary on

the challenges and consequences of inconsistent quality in government data for the development of evidence-based policy and service provision. He concluded with a range of discussion points that aimed to explore possibilities for more effective interventions into family violence in Indigenous communities in Queensland.

Randal Ross

Randal Ross' passionate presentation of the Red Dust Healing project was warmly received by the mainly Indigenous audience.

"Red Dust Healing is based on a cultural belief that we are one people, one mob who do not own but belong to this land. When the dust is settled on our lives, we only get to keep our dignity, our integrity and the love & respect we shared with people"

Randal discussed the Red Dust Healing program, a program for men that looks at a model of oppression and how it has affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's lives. Central to their oppression is men's loss of identity, responsibility and relationship because of colonisation. Red Dust Healing is written from an Indigenous perspective for Indigenous men and their families and facilitates the understanding of rejection being the foundation of all hurt. Participants in the Red Dust Healing program are asked to examine the hurt they feel as both victim and perpetrator and to examine feelings they experience. They then analyse the similarities and effects this may have on their lives and question whether they are repeating the same tactics. Within the program participants examine their own personal hurt which allows them to heal, while addressing family and personal relationships and what may have been lifelong patterns of abuse. Red Dust Healing covers a range of areas significant to healing, such as identity, family roles and structures, relationships, elders and men's business. Randal contributes the program's success to the fact that it targets the *"heart"* not *"head"* of participants.

PLENARY PANELS

There were two plenary panels at the Forum. The first panel *Addressing Problems* enabled a focus on two programs that are currently addressing problems in their communities. The second panel, *Deadly programs – Learning Through Practice*, was designed to showcase some of the successful programs currently being run.

1. Speaker **Trevor Binjuda** from Relationships Australia in Cairns discussed the “Alternatives to Aggression” program and the difficulties faced in enabling men to talk about their use of domestic and family violence. The program covers the Cairns, Yarrabah, Mossman and Tully area to as far as Cape York. In Trevor’s experience, the impetus for men to become involved in self-help is the negative effect that domestic violence is having on their children and families’ lives. The Alternatives to Aggression program includes a 5-week preparatory course to ensure that men attending (both voluntary and mandated) are ready to commence the 12-session course. Trevor discussed the need within the course to work together and “say it straight” - domestic and family violence is a crime; it’s global, not just in Indigenous communities; it’s about power and control; and you can change – it’s learned behavior. Trevor discussed the importance of progressing slowly and within cultural protocols.

The Alternatives to Aggression program offers a range of strategies to assist men to recognise their individual triggers to violence; identify the emotions beneath the violence; and learn to take responsibility for their actions. The program assists participants to heal and remain important and useful members of their community.

2. The second *Addressing Problems* panel speaker was **Lisa Kambouris** from the Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth Team in South Australia who presented the “Panyappi Project” (Younger Brother or Sister), the first Aboriginal mentoring project to be evaluated both nationally and internationally. Panyappi, which Lisa co-ordinates, is an intensive, culturally appropriate voluntary mentoring program for Indigenous young people (aged 10-18). It was developed in response to the recurring problem of Aboriginal young people frequenting the Inner City area of Adelaide and their involvement in ‘high risk’ behaviours and offences.

The purpose of the Panyappi Project was to develop an intense, long-term mentoring service that would work closely with the target group of Aboriginal youths and their families to intervene in pathways of offending behaviour and provide young people with experiences and opportunities to develop a sense of competence, self esteem, identity and direction. Young people are referred to the program through a range of youth justice system services and then ‘matched’ with an appropriate mentor.

Lisa explained that typical characteristics of young people engaged in Panyappi include: a history of offending and victimisation, low socio-economic background, poor school attendance and/or performance, literacy and/or learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties including violence, a history of substance misuse, histories of sexual, physical and emotional abuse, family breakdowns and homelessness. Important features of the program include its use of culturally appropriate practices such as its family-inclusive practice. It also helps develop respect lines back to elders, which these young people may have misplaced.

Lisa spoke about the positive changes that the Panyappi Project has made since it began in 2001 with over 480 families taking part, the majority of which have made positive changes in their lives after project completion.

3. **Coleen Jensen** from the Street Based Outreach Service (SBOS) together with her colleague Lynette Dewis spend their days walking around the streets of Cairns making connection with homeless people. The service holistically approaches the diverse range of issues associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness and is an effective means of referral to relevant services. The Street Based Outreach Service enables about 30% of its clients to be repatriated to their communities and another 15-20% have been placed in rehabilitation programs or permanent housing. Coleen advised that since the inception of SBOS in 2003 antisocial behavior has decreased significantly.

4. **Chelsea Malinas-Barbara** manages the Healthy Happy Families Program at Wuchopperen in Cairns. Chelsea and her team of six workers provide a range of services to the Cairns community including court support; healing groups for men, women and young people; healthy relationships workshops and youth programs. They work with a range of government and non-government agencies to decrease the level of domestic and family violence within their community; enable the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community to have a culturally appropriate service to address the serious issues in their communities; promote healthy happy family relationships; and support people in crisis to work toward healing.

5. **Moogie Patu** is part of the Strong Families Team, Family and Children's Services in the Northern Territory. Moogie's presentation discussed the *Strong Family, Strong Community, Strong Future* project

which is a key part of the Government's Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy. It combines a family strengthening and community development approach and is Indigenous designed, led and staffed. The program is built on the belief that solutions to family violence must come from within each family. Program team members work with an individual family group within communities to develop an action plan for use with other community members. Family support workers monitor and support progress in this "ground-up" program.

YARNING CIRCLE 1

The first yarning circle of the forum, *What's Happening on the Ground*, gave participants at the Forum an opportunity to see what programs are being successfully delivered outside of their community and to share experiences of their own.

1. **Melissa Bryan** is Co-ordinator of the Far West Multi-Purposes Healing Service in Cunnamulla.

Melissa and her colleagues service the Cunnamulla, Charleville and St. George region and work with victims and witnesses of domestic violence. Their programs include a Girls Friendship group in Cunnamulla for young women between the age of 11-17 years, a "Girls Nite Inn Program" in Charleville which focuses on sexual health, pregnancy, drugs and alcohol and a "Young Mums and Bubs" program in St. George. Additionally, Cunnamulla runs a 6 week drug and alcohol program which targets the whole community. Melissa's yarning circle discussed some of the legal and bureaucratic constraints of assisting women to leave a remote community quickly and the need for services to be more flexible and able to respond out of business hours when faced with crises.

2. Wuchopperen's Youth Program Co-ordinator **Bernard Sabadi** discussed their Working with Youth Program. This program for Indigenous youth features a Young Men's Program as well as individual counselling for women. The program teaches Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance in local schools; collecting and gathering traditional bush foods; and storytelling. Many young people who are out of the community or not living with their family look to the program as a safe place where they belong. The Yarning circle discussion explored the types of behavior that brought youth to the program, which included self-referral, juvenile justice orders or the Child Safety to Youth Program. The Working with Youth Program

addresses strengthening pride in culture, respect and bullying issues and works within schools in Cairns to develop healthy relationships.

3. **Nyssa Weribone and Janet Miller's** yarning circle "Deadly Chicks" had participants enthralled. Health worker, Nyssa shared stories about her youth and pathway to working with the Carbal Medical Centre in Toowoomba. The Deadly Chicks Program aims to provide young Indigenous women with options in their life and empowers them to break the intergenerational cycle of welfare and abuse. Nyssa explained that each program runs for six months and takes up to 10 young women between the ages of 15-18 years. The young women receive a personal hygiene pack donated by local businesses on their first visit and learn how to look after themselves and improve their self-esteem. Additionally Nyssa and Janet facilitate sexual health education and advice on pregnancy and birth control. The program also works with the "Get Set for Work" and 'Youth and Community Learning Centre' to encourage young women to consider their career options. Yarning circle members agreed that this style of mentoring would have beneficial effects on young women and there was discussion about a similar program currently running in Townsville.

4. **Lyndon Reilly** facilitated the yarning circle *Empowered Adults – Empowered Youth* about the Family Wellbeing Program which was established in 1993 and being used by his team at Queensland Health in Cairns. Lyndon discussed the seven stages of knowledge and development required for participants in the program to achieve their goal. The program is based on the metaphor of a tree, growing from a sapling to a tall thick kauri tree. Participants in the yarning circle felt that the tree was an appropriate cultural symbol, which showed increasing strength with time and knowledge.

YARNING CIRCLE 2

The second yarning circle of the first day *Empowerment and Justice* covered topics ranging from the Queensland domestic violence legislation to what is currently happening in the courts.

1. Centre Director, Heather Nancarrow delivered the yarning circle *Mainstream Legislation and Indigenous Women*, to follow on some of the discussion raised by Professor Chris Cunneen in his keynote address. Participants discussed some of the challenges for Indigenous women seeking an end to family violence, but concerned about the impacts of the mainstream criminal justice system on their families and

communities, and the way in which the criminal justice system fails to offer real protection. Further, participants were concerned about the way in which the mainstream domestic and family violence law seems irrelevant to many Indigenous people and that there is need for legislation to focus more on the contexts of Indigenous family violence, in order to respond more effectively. A particular concern was the way in which the domestic and family violence law is used against women who are not the “ideal victim”, and as a strategy to deal with child protection issues.

2. Field Officer, **Harold Fatnowna** from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service in Brisbane convened the yarning circle *Experiencing the Justice System*. Harold spoke about his daily experience within a variety of courts, from the Supreme Court to the Murri Court. He advised the yarning circle of police responsibility to contact a field officer if an Indigenous juvenile does not have a support person after arrest. Within the yarning circle, participants discussed their personal experiences and anecdotal evidence of discrimination within the justice system and discussed alternative justice mechanisms such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission and the Anti-discrimination Commission. There was a collective voice recommending more funding to toward training and education for Indigenous police officers as well as more community education on rights and responsibilities within the justice system.

3. **Shirley Slann**, Rural and Remote Worker from the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service in Mt. Isa facilitated the yarning circle *What's Happening in the Courts?* Shirley shared her impressions of emerging themes in her region related to statutory responses to family violence, including police laying large numbers of charges against a perpetrator for a single incident, as a means of increasing the likelihood of incarceration. Many of these offenders are incarcerated for periods of less than 12 months, which precludes them from having access to rehabilitation programs; consequently these offenders are released from the system in worse condition and even less resourced to address their violence. Further discussion from participants in the yarning circle highlighted impressions of themes related to statutory responses to family violence from the Department of Child Safety. Participants shared experiences of inconsistent departmental practices, and impressions of the Department regularly “moving the goalposts” when dealing with families affected by family violence. Other discussion focused on the controversy of policy related to dry communities, and the perceived benefits in terms of decreasing rates of

violence, and creating opportunity for men and women to re-establish respect for one another in order to heal relationships. Various voices concluded the yarning circle by saying that leadership out of family violence does not come from government and money; it comes from individuals stepping up and showing the way through their own behavior.

YARNING CIRCLE 3

The third yarning circle of the Forum was *Safe and Strong – Caring for Our Children*. The Circles discussed a range of programs in Bamaga, Mackay and Toowoomba.

1. Area Co-ordinator for the Bamaga Hospital and primary health carer for five communities, **Patti Nona**, spoke about her experiences working with her community since her arrival in Bamaga as a 16-year-old. Patti recalled how domestic violence was ignored and considered acceptable behavior until a group of local women, together with a community development worker, collectively addressed two major issues - domestic violence; and community childcare. Together they established shelters and daycare centres and encouraged women to press charges against perpetrators of violence as a means of holding them accountable. By working with government departments Bamaga now delivers a mental health program and is negotiating for a drug and alcohol hub. They have a budget of \$5 million and a staff of 100. Patti reports a reduction in domestic violence in Bamaga and their shelter model includes relationship building and working with parents and children to talk about the impact of domestic violence. The yarning circle discussed the importance of appreciating the skill mix and encouraging input from community members and the need to review homicides within communities at a primary level.

2. **Leda Barnett**, a psychologist employed with Queensland Health's Child and Youth Mental Health Service in Mackay, facilitated the yarning circle *Youth Mental Health*. Leda shared her impressions and observations of her work. Participants in the yarning circle spoke about the alienation of youth and their lack of connection to their culture. There was general discussion about shortage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers of mental health services in Mackay. Participants felt that psychology was perceived as being very "white" and drawing from Western cultural influences which may contribute to discomfort felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when considering contact. Other constraints to making contact included cultural perspectives to mental illness; the need for cultural awareness training

for non-Indigenous counsellors; and the power and stigma of language around the words “mental health”. Suggestion of a more accurate, holistic and acceptable term “social, spiritual and emotional well-being” was put forward by the yarning circle.

3. **Lillian Gray** and **Esme Fewquandie** led the discussion in the yarning circle *Safe and Strong – Caring for our Children*. The group discussed personal experiences with domestic violence, some which involved domestic homicide, physical abuse and being removed from their families. Other discussion examined the ability to make changes and the need for personal responsibility. Some participants felt that the road forward requires the blame to stop and changes that will affect lives to start. The Circle discussed the positive message of seeing men walk in this year’s Domestic Violence Prevention Month march.

The Forum’s final yarning circle: *“Sharing Solutions – Which Way Now?”* was designed to discuss and recommend strategies for a way forward in response to the Forum theme *Addressing Problems – Sharing Solutions*. CDFVR will meet with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group to discuss yarning circle advice and make recommendations to relevant agencies.

TEN MINUTE BITES

The ten-minute bite section gave participants who were not invited speakers 10 minutes to discuss programs and services available in their community or organisation.

- Ludo McFerran shared information about the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.
- Gwen Currie spoke about their work at Ada’s Haven, an Indigenous Women’s Shelter in Toowoomba; and
- Greg Pascoe from Wuchopperen in Cairns spoke about their men’s program.

FORUM EVALUATION/FEEDBACK

Process

As with past Forums, an evaluation/feedback survey was distributed at the end of the Forum and participants were invited to complete it. The survey (see appendix 1) was divided into two sections. The first section collected quantitative data that focused on whether the Forum achieved its objectives. The

Forum objectives were to provide an opportunity for 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 and quantitative data to determine why participants would return to the Forum; whether service providers/practitioner participants would like to add workshop opportunities to the Forum design; and collected information from participants about workshop themes and their availability to present a workshop or speak at the 2009 Forum.

A total of 111 participants responded to the invitation to complete the survey. Of these 111 respondents, 84 (75.7%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; 26 identified as non-Indigenous and the remaining 1 did not respond to the question on cultural identity.

Results

Section 1

In the first section of the evaluation, participants were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements in order to assess how well the Forum met its objectives. The statements and results for section 1 are presented below, followed by results for a series of questions to elicit the benefit derived from attendance, and what participants would like to see included in the Forum theme in future.

The Theme 'Addressing Problems – Sharing Solutions' was covered well in the Forum program

Of the 111 respondents 64% strongly agreed that the theme "Addressing Problems – Sharing Solutions" was covered well in the Forum Program; 38 (34.2%) agreed and 2 (1.8%) did not respond to this statement.

I learnt new things at the Forum/Can use what I learnt in my work

A vast majority of respondents (98.2%) agreed that they learnt new things at the Forum with 65 (58.6%) saying that they strongly agreed. Similarly 108 (97.3%) respondents said they could use what they learnt in their own work (paid or voluntary).

Would you come back next year? Why?

The survey then asked respondents if they *would come back again next year* and *why they responded the way they did*. One hundred and three (92.8%) of respondents said they would come back next year with 3 (2.7%) indicating that they might. There were a multitude of reasons given for these responses, which for the purpose of analysis have been grouped into the following themes:

"Networking" which encompassed learning and information sharing;

"Information sharing", which included networking, yarning circles, linking research and practice;

"Learning" which included translation into practice, networking, "recharge", yarning circles, insights, information sharing.

The three most frequently recurring themes in the participants' comments about why they would come back to the Forum were: networking (n=32); learning (n=36) and information sharing (n=8). Some of the comments received were:

- *It is a great opportunity to find out what is happening in other communities and meet other people working in the same field;*
- *It is not only a good learning opportunity, but also supports Indigenous workers in networking and learning new skills and ideas;*
- *This is my first attendance at this Forum. Would like to come again, maybe with others from my community.*

Indicate two themes you would most like to see covered in next year's Forum

In preparing the Forum survey CDFVR gave participants a range of themes to choose from for the 2009 Forum. Respondents were invited to choose two themes with the option of also stating their own choice. Results are as follows:

- Perpetrator programs and men's group/Drugs and alcohol as contributing factors to domestic and family violence = 21 (18.9%);
- Showcasing community based projects/perpetrator programs and men's groups = 20 (18%);
- Showcasing community based projects/drugs and alcohol as contributing factors to domestic and family violence = 15 (13.5%);
- Drugs and alcohol as contributing factors to domestic and family violence/elder abuse = 15 (13.5%);
- Perpetrator programs and men's groups/elder abuse = 10 (9%);
- Showcasing community based project/elder abuse = 8 (7.2%);
- Showcasing community based projects/other/personal preference = 7 (6.3%);
- Personal preferences (see below) = 7 (6.3%);
- Perpetrator programs and men's groups/personal preference = 4 (3.6%);
- Drugs and alcohol as contributing factors to domestic and family violence/personal preference 2 (1.8%); and
- Two respondents (1.8%) did not give a preference for next year's theme.

Personal preferences included homelessness, justice systems, working on the ground, working together, children affected by domestic violence, mentoring and empowerment.

Section 2 - Are you a service provider/practitioner?

This question was asked to ascertain how many participants at the Forum were service providers and also to find out how many service providers in the Indigenous family violence sector felt they needed the Forum to provide specific skills development in addition to the learning experience within the current Forum structure. Of the 111 respondents 95 (85.6%) identified as practitioners. When these 95 practitioners were then asked "*Would you like the Forum to expand to include skills development workshops on family violence prevention in 2009?*" 80 respondents (84.2%) said "yes".

The survey then asked what workshop topics participants would like to see at next year's Forum. Fifty four of the 111 respondents included their workshop preferences for 2009. For the purposes of analysis these are grouped into the following themes:

- *"Perpetrator programs"* including men's groups, alternatives to aggression programs and Red Dust Healing;
- *"Working with children"* including working with family, coping strategies for families, women and children, parenting and family support;
- *"Elder Abuse"* including cultural awareness, respect for elders, loss of culture;
- *"Drugs and alcohol"* including how to heal, contribution to domestic violence
- *"Homelessness"* including shelters and safe houses; and
- *"Skill development and program development"* encompassing what is working and what isn't, comparison of programs from different states, outreach skills, early intervention and prevention, what's happening at a community level, leadership, mentoring, grief and loss, program development, intergenerational change and legislation.

Twenty-four (44%) of the 54 respondents indicated that they would like to see workshops within the *skill/program development* category (see above); 11 (20%) indicated workshops within the *perpetrator program* grouping; 9 (17%) chose within the *working with children/families* category; 6 (11%) selected within the *elder abuse* category; 2 participants (4%) indicated workshops on *homelessness, shelters or safe houses* and the remaining 2 (4%) indicated topics within the *drugs and alcohol* category.

Section 3 - Would you be willing and able to speak at next year's Forum?

Participants were asked to provide their contact details if they wished to present at the 2009 Forum. This question elicited 16 (14.4%) positive responses that included contact details and 24 (21.6%) responses of "maybe".

Would you be willing and able to present a skills development workshop at next year's Forum?

Ten (9%) of the 111 survey respondents indicated that they would like to present a skills development workshop next year with 20 people (18%) indicating they "may be" interested.

Further comments on the survey were mainly congratulatory with some good suggestions to consider for next year. These included the following.

- Add to the program a short bio about each speaker.

- Instead of one hour yarning circles consider one and a half hour workshops.
- Maybe one more day for the Forum so that participants can network and get to know about each other's programs.
- Send invitations to communities who have a high risk of offending.
- Make available a list of people attending the Forum with their contact details.

CONCLUSION

This year's Forum indicated a high level of satisfaction from participants with comments such as:

"The Forum was great. It was the first one I have attended and I hope I will be able to attend next year"; and

'I've never been so proud in my life to see all these young Indigenous women – you are leading the field".

Participants responded favourably to a slower program with more yarning circles and networking opportunities. This year the survey asked participants if they would like to see the Forum expand to include skills development workshops. The overwhelming affirmative response by 84.2% of the 95 participants identifying as a practitioner or service provider may result in an additional day being added to the 2009 program to enable workshop opportunities.

The question "Would you be willing and able to present at next year's Forum" has provided us with a pool of speakers for plenary panels and yarning circles as well as workshop presenters for next year. CDFVR will meet with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group to discuss Forum outcomes and develop strategies for next year. They will also discuss and hone recommendations from the Forum's last yarning circle "*Sharing Solutions – Which Way Now*" to be sent to relevant agencies.

It was a great privilege to be involved in this year's Forum, to hear about the good work achieved within communities, share information and knowledge and work together to stop family violence. In the words of one of this year's Forum participants..... *"I have enjoyed the Forum and will be looking forward to next year and more to come. God bless everyone in their work in their community".* We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

2008 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) The theme '*Addressing Problems – Sharing Solutions*' was covered well in the Forum program:

strongly agree agree don't agree at all

b) I learnt new things at the Forum:

strongly agree agree don't agree at all

c) I can use what I learnt in my own work (paid or voluntary)

strongly agree agree don't agree at all

3. Would you come back next year? Why?

4. Please circle two themes you would most like to see covered in next year's forum.

- a) Showcasing community based projects
- b) Perpetrator programs and men's groups
- c) Drugs and alcohol as contributing factors to domestic and family violence.
- d) Elder abuse.
- e) Other – please state.....

5. Are you a service provider/practitioner?

Yes No

6. If YES, would you like the Forum to expand to include skills development workshops on family violence prevention in 2009?

Yes No

7. If YES, which workshop topics would you like to see at next year's Forum?

*8. Would you be willing and able to speak at next year's Forum?

Yes No Maybe

*9. Would you be willing and able to present a skills development workshop at next year's Forum?

Yes No Maybe

**If you answered YES or MAYBE to Question 7 and/or 8 please complete the attached form and leave it on your table for collection by CDFVR staff.*

Any further comments?
