

Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Advocacy

Broken Hill

A Capacity Building Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

November 4-8, 2013

Program Report – Executive Summary

“This program gave me the knowledge a million Google services couldn’t give me.”

The Program ‘*Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Advocacy Training*’, was held in Broken Hill, November 4-8, 2013. This program was developed in partnership with The Fred Hollows Foundation. The program was the third to be held in Broken Hill and completed a five year partnership between the Diplomacy Training Program and The Fred Hollows Foundation in delivering human rights and advocacy programs specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Both organisations are proud to have enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote regions to access to the training. The programs have built knowledge of human rights, Indigenous rights and government obligations under international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and practical advocacy skills.

This program had initially been planned as second stage training for participants from previous programs. Invitations were extended to alumni from the previous (2009 – 2013) Alice Springs, Katherine, Lake Bennett and Broken Hill programs to revise and deepen knowledge and skills relating to human rights and advocacy. However, a large number of new participants contacted both organisations to request inclusion in the training. This program was then tailored to provide both introductory and review content and to include alumni in the facilitation of sessions. This mode of delivery proved successful, all participants assessing that their objectives in applying for the program were met and, in most cases, exceeded.

The program brought together representatives from a number of Aboriginal communities and organisations in the Northern Territory, the ACT and NSW. Participants noted the value of coming together and sharing with Aboriginal people from diverse situations. The participants were all actively involved in working to protect the rights of Aboriginal Peoples, particularly in the area of health and well being.

In the course of the training, the participants engaged in discussions about their issues of concern and worked with these topics in a number of practical advocacy and campaigning exercises. In this way the training afforded the group an opportunity to raise their concerns, to identify the possibilities of utilising human rights standards and mechanisms to seek just outcomes and to develop action plans for concerted lobbying and campaigning on their concerns.

The Diplomacy Training Program and The Fred Hollows Foundation would like to express their gratitude to all the trainers and resource people involved in this program. A Welcome to Country was provided by Mrs Maureen O’Donnell, a Baarkintji elder and the current Chairperson of Maari Ma Aboriginal Health Corporation. Dr Sarah Pritchard (SC) delivered the training on human rights, the United Nations and international law and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Bill Barker, a former Australia diplomat specialising in human rights and Indigenous affairs shared his knowledge and experience of lobbying and advocacy. Brian Wyatt Chairperson of the National Native Title Council provided an Indigenous perspective on the United Nations and the advocacy work being done by the National Native Title Council. Andy Nilsen, the

international communications specialist with The Fred Hollows Foundation provided training on using the media and implementing social media in an advocacy case study centred on the conditions in the Broken Hill prison.

This program was made possible through the support of The Fred Hollows Foundation, and on behalf of the participants DTP would like to express gratitude for the financial support and for the invaluable assistance of Hollows staff member Tania McLeod.

Participant's Evaluation

The Broken Hill program was evaluated very favourably by the participants. The feedback was that the training was quite transformative and that the information and skills were very relevant to their work and their lives. Participants noted that the greater understanding of their rights had increased their confidence in their ability to be better advocates for their clients and to '*...navigate the best approach for change*'.

When asked what were **the best parts or sessions of the program**, the majority of participants told us that they found all sessions valuable and noted that the lobbying and the media sessions were particularly appreciated.

I loved the lot. Each session topped the previous one.

Every session was very informative for me as I have never looked into or really thought about human rights in such depth.

Advocating and lobbying gave me a whole great knowledge of how I can approach an issue in my community.

A number of participants also noted the value of the group participation and the opportunity to share insights and perspectives in group discussion.

Thank you guys for connecting us with other countrymen from all walks of life and share our culture, language and issues within our indigenous communities.

Given the opportunity to provide feed back on **the least useful sessions** participants consistently reported that none of the sessions could be nominated.

I don't think there was anything that wasn't useful as the knowledge could prove to be useful in a situation later in life.

NONE. I enjoyed every aspect of the course.

Many participants expressed enthusiasm to share the content of the training with family, colleagues and community. Many highlighted the usefulness of the training and that they already had plans for practical implementation of the training .

With my knowledge of human rights I can now pursue my dreams, I have a clear idea pathway of how I can do everything I wish to achieve for human rights.

Advocating for community members giving information on to clients when they walk into the clinic.

The **length** of the program, **degree of difficulty** and usefulness of the **training materials** were all positively evaluated by the majority of participants.

A number of participants reported that they would be using the materials to pass on the knowledge.

I believe they were helpful and relevant, they will be highly useful as I am entering the field of human rights law and advocacy.

I loved the material that was given to us. I have not finished reading it, but will continue.

The DTP's objectives for the Indigenous Peoples Human Rights and Advocacy Training program were also evaluated to have been achieved by the participants with most indicating that the DTP was 'very good' at being able to disseminate and build knowledge and understanding on the topics, develop practical skills and facilitate participation.

We received some advice that the sessions could have been more visually stimulating with the use of more videos, pictures etc.

Overall the participants evaluated the program favourably and thanked and congratulated the trainers for their time.

Thank-you for everything. I enjoyed the workshop and it empowered me with lots of useful knowledge. Very friendly environment