Close the Gap Ten Years Anniversary: Aboriginal traditional medicine and Ngangkaři healers

The Gap that’s missing?
Welcome to Country
Overview of Forum

• Briefing Paper
• “Q & A” meets “Insight”
• Everyone Participates
• Speakers
Overview of Forum

Speakers

• Dr. Francesca Panzironi - CEO of the Aṉangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC)
• Debbie Watson – Ngangkari (Aboriginal Traditional Healer) & Director of the Aṉangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC)
• Margaret Richards – Ngakari (Aboriginal Traditional Healer)
• Professor Elizabeth Elliot
• Dr Victoria Grieves, ARC Indigenous Research Fellow
• Professor Ngiare Brown, Professorial Fellow, University of Wollongong
Dr. Francesca Panzironi

CEO of the Aṉangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC)
‘Indigenous peoples have the right to their medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals’

(UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, art. 24.1)
Debbie Watson
Ngangkari (Aboriginal Traditional Healer)

Director of the Anangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC)
Margaret Richards
Ngangkaṟi (Aboriginal Traditional Healer)

Aṉangu Ngangkaṟi Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC)
Poche Key Thinkers Forum: Traditional Medicine

Do we need Aboriginal traditional medicine working with western medicine to close the gap?

Professor Elizabeth Elliott, Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney
Poche Key Thinkers Forum: Traditional Medicine

Witchetty (Witjuti) grub (*Endoxyla leucomochla*)

Witchetty (Witjuti) grubs can be crushed and placed on burns to soothe the skin.

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID DARE PARKER/AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC
Poche Key Thinkers Forum: Traditional Medicine

Bush Medicines, Fitzroy Crossing: Elliott
Poche Key Thinkers Forum: Traditional Medicine

Healthy Kids, Fitzroy River: Elliott
Cultural ways of living well
(to be able to close gaps): the importance of Aboriginal philosophy

Dr Victoria Grieves – Warraimaay NSW
Supporting

Services needed for the production of all other ecosystem services (e.g. nutrient cycling)

Provisioning

Products obtained from ecosystems (e.g. food and water)

Regulating

Benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystems (e.g. climate regulation and water purification)

Material minimum

Non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems (e.g. cultural heritage)

Social relations

Cultural

Freedom and choice

Cultural services

Security

Food - Freshwater - Wood, woodfuel, fibre

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Waste management, processing and detoxification

Human well-being
David Mowaljarli

We are really sorry for you people. We cry for you because you haven’t got meaning of culture in this country. We have a gift we want to give you. We keep getting blocked from giving you that gift. We get blocked by politics and politicians. We get blocked by media, by process of law. All we want to do is come out from under all of this and give you this gift. And it’s the gift of pattern thinking. It’s the culture which is the blood of this country, of Aboriginal groups, of the ecology, of the land itself

- senior Lawman of the Ngarinyin people of the west Kimberley, addressing a gathering of white people in his country (ABC Radio 1995)
Yindyamarra Winhanganha

a Wiradyuri phrase

‘the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in’
Many Australians understand that Aboriginal people have a special respect for nature... That they have a strong sense of community... That we are people who celebrate together. There is another special quality of my people that I believe is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language, this quality is called *Dadirri*. This is the gift that Australians are thirsting for.

- Baumann (Farrelly 2003)
Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu

*Milpirri* is a Warlpiri way to get country to express itself. Country is expressing itself all the time. All around Australia, Indigenous people, culture and art express (in various forms) what animals, plants and the elements, including weather and the seasons themselves—look like and speak like. How they tell history stories and knowledge that becomes history. This is how culture teaches us and cultivates us, as the soil is cultivated, and as if we are its cultivators. Who is the gardener ultimately and who is the garden?
Professor Ngiare Brown
Professorial Fellow, University of Wollongong
• Predetermined assimilationist agenda
• Mainstreaming of services, resourcing
• Erosion of hard fought gain in medical education, research, community control and self determination
Applying a cultural lens to core business
- Cultural determinants of health and wellbeing
- Health, education, development, research

Child and adolescent wellbeing
- Building evidence base connecting culture, resilience, wellbeing
- Novel vehicles for cultural revitalisation
- TARROT; trauma course UoW, Harvard, MGH

Aboriginal child protection
- Public health, responsive regulation, capacity development approach
- Social campaign – zero tolerance for violence against children
...in its widest sense, **culture** said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.
The cultural determinants of health originate from and promote a strength based perspective, acknowledging that stronger connections to culture and country build stronger individual and collective identities, a sense of self-esteem, resilience, and improved outcomes across the other determinants of health including education, economic stability and community safety.
Discussion Questions
Discussion Questions

1. What are the underlying concepts of mainstream health services?

2. Can traditional healing work effectively alongside mainstream health services?

3. Will incorporating indigenous Knowledges into health care help to close the gap?

4. What conditions are required to enable effective healing that meets the holistic needs of Aboriginal people?
Resources
Poche Opinion
Thank you

Prof Tom Calma

Thank you
Next Steps
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