



Date: 16/04/07

Ref : Submission: Inquiry into successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities.

Dear: Sir / Madam.

For aboriginal communities to move forward and advance, within western culture terms, then from a western society perspective, an indigenous aboriginal culture has to at some stage, integrate some western concepts of philosophy, social structure and materialism, within their own indigenous aboriginal culture. (Of course some would suggest that this is a sad and bad outcome for an indigenous aboriginal culture, and in principle, to some extent, I would tend to agree here).

But as an indigenous aboriginal culture has to move forward in its present time frame. (Just as history does not wait for no, one so to speak). It also has to be seen. (From a western cultures perspective of course, as many would suggest) to be advancing as an intelligent civilization. As such, it would then be prudent and logical for an indigenous aboriginal culture to assimilate, to a certain degree, within a western culture. (But only to a certain degree of course, and not at the expense of an indigenous aboriginal culture being neglected in anyway shape or form). Hence, to gain successful initiatives within remote aboriginal communities, there has to be dialogue, debate and communication, on all levels, within and between, both a western culture and an indigenous aboriginal culture. For any such, Inquiry into successful initiatives within remote aboriginal communities, to achieve any sort of a measurable, successful outcome, that would truly appease, both a western and indigenous aboriginal cultural concept.

Consequently, the application to ask for public submissions in this regard, is an essential element in this process, and I congratulate our agency on taking this first initial step, well done, and hope fully more initiatives, such as this can be implemented within society in general?

Meanwhile, in regards to, implementing successful initiatives within remote aboriginal communities, I would have to suggest one option could be for aboriginal communities to be able to have more of a say / input into how their own communities are to be developed. For example, government and private representatives could do this, by having continues liaisons and dialogues, with indigenous aboriginal elders, that come from all, or specific remote aboriginal communities. (A communal sense of self determination in a sense) (1). This would have to include aspects of how an indigenous aboriginal community could participate and access economical, educational, health and housing issues, that would best suit their own cultural identity and focus. While at the same time incorporating many aspects of a western culture to gain a truly successful and sustainable outcome for a remote aboriginal community, well into the next millennium. The development of a state or national task force, so to speak, to address these issues, in a sense.

In regards to, Health and successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities, it has to be noted that a large range of aboriginal health issues, at present, are predominately due to social disconnection and poverty issues, etc. And an assumed acceptance, of a lot of aboriginal culture concepts, to integrate many bad aspects, of western cultural habits, within their own indigenous culture. Such as, alcohol consumption, drug taking, and the consumption of many sweet foods. (Witch in turn, enhance diabetes, etc) (2). I would suggest, as an alternative for many remote aboriginal cultures, hole-heartily embracing such bad western cultural concepts. Maybe their needs to be more focus on indigenous, aboriginal health concepts, incorporated into a present aboriginal culture. For example, the nutritional and medicinal values of aboriginal bush food are quite evident (3). (As many cures, for western ailments, are predominately from an original, bush food source themselves, such as, lavender helps relax muscles and certain plants can help to fight pain, e.g. the opium poppy, etc.) (4). Therefore, to some extent, their needs to be a focused effort to incorporate aboriginal bush foods back into an indigenous aboriginal culture. While also, at the same time, through educational process, enhancing a western cultural, concept perspective, of a remote aboriginal community, health concerns. In essence there needs to be recognition from a western cultural concept, of all aspects of aboriginal health, and of how in an aboriginal culture concept, health, is eternally,

interconnected to the environment, in all its contexts. (There could be a lesson to be learned here for a western culture concept, yes?). Of course, if this was the case, then a relevant and acceptable, monetary fee process, should be imparted back to a remote aboriginal culture for their local, endemic and intrinsic medical / health knowledge. This is where dialogue, debate and participation, with and of, remote aboriginal communities are essential, etc. Rather than as sometimes happens at present, when a pharmaceutical company, etc, denies any form of dignity-dialogue with an indigenous culture, and both culturally, environmentally and economically, exploits a specific indigenous culture, for certain medical / health advantages, yes?

In regards to, Housing and successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities. The concept of land tenure is an important issue, but this does not necessary mean outright home ownership. As many remote aboriginal communities, do not have a steady, regular income into their communities, therefore they could not afford to buy a home outright. (There are not many, so called paying jobs, available to a remote aboriginal community, at present.) (5). Hence the idea of an aboriginal home ownership program running in a remote aboriginal community is ok, only as long as there is some money there to pay for the homes. Otherwise it would just cause a prisoner like dilemma, where there is no positive outcome at all, but rather a continual cycle of social dislocation and poverty, due to the constant effort of a remote aboriginal community trying to pay back homeownership fees, etc, that can not afford. On the other hand the concept of, a 99-year lease, at nominal rates, within a remote aboriginal community, could be one option to be coincided, as long as the maintenance of the homes, etc is done by, and within, a remote aboriginal community, as well. Indeed, such a, lease idea is possibly acceptable within a remote aboriginal cultural, ideological concept. As a home ownership concept, is assumed as too not to be of paramount importance, within an aboriginal cultural concept, at present. (Specifically due to the reasons as mentioned, early in this paragraph).

In regards to, Economical, successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities, the major concern here, at present, must be to stop the never-ending cycle, within remote aboriginal communities of a welfare dependency dilemma. There needs to be a concerted effort to help aboriginal people look after themselves economically, either by integrating many aboriginal people within the western culture workforce, or by an aboriginal community itself becoming self sustainable within its self, by either initiating tourist ventures, or by focusing on endemic aboriginal cultural practices within an remote aboriginal community to enhance a sustainability initiatives. For example, mabey a remote aboriginal community has certain social and capital knowledge, of specific plants and animals, which are endemic to that region, which then can be packaged and sold, within a sustainable agenda, to a western culture (6). Its possible, as long as it is within a sustainable agenda, as mentioned, and is not detrimental, in anyway shape or form, to a remote aboriginal communities, cultural concept.

In regards to, Education and successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities, there has to dialogue and debate with remote aboriginal community, elders, so that a remote aboriginal community culture, gains its own unique indigenous education, while at the same time incorporates the education values, that are relevant and necessary for a aboriginal culture to move forwards, within the overall present social, society context (7). (Sadly, some may say, at present, there has to be a means to an end, in regards to education, for aboriginal culture to move forward, at present. For example, there has to be some concept of gaining a job / money, at the end of an education, etc.). It is possible to engage such, flexible, educational outcomes, as long as there is constant dialogue and participation within and between, a western culture and a remote aboriginal culture (8). For example, is it not possible that a western culture could learn more about an aboriginal culture, by understanding, its languages, its spirituality concepts, its environmental concepts, its law concepts and its sustainability concepts, etc. Could not this be done, by western culture engaging and participating in an aboriginal culture, much the same way as a present aboriginal culture, is engaged and attempting to participate, *when it can, when its allowed to*, within a western culture, yes? Grants scholarships available remote aboriginal communities are a must, as well as the continual running of the Clontarf, educational program. Moreover the idea of the present Australian government forcing young aboriginal kids to go to western schools, other wise there welfare payments are cut, is a sound concept, to some degree. But, as long as there is aboriginal participation and deliberation along all the educational developmental process, in this regard. For example, aboriginal elders input must be taken on board, in all the developmental process, within a western culture concept. Otherwise, it will become just another short

term, Band-Aid solution once again, form a remote aboriginal cultural perspective, with no long-term successful, positive, outcome for a remote aboriginal community.

In conclusion as I mentioned at the out set of this submission, for aboriginal communities to move forward and advance, within western culture terms, then from a western society perspective, an indigenous aboriginal culture has to at some stage, integrate some western concepts of philosophy, social structure and materialism, within their own indigenous aboriginal culture. Therefore for remote aboriginal community to gain any sort of a successful and sustainable initiative within their community, there has to be dialogue, debate and communication, on all levels, within and between, both a western culture and an indigenous aboriginal culture. For any such, Inquiry into successful initiatives within remote aboriginal communities, to achieve any sort of a measurable, sustainable and successful outcome, that would truly appease, both a western and indigenous aboriginal cultural concept. The development of a state or national task force, so to speak, to address this issue, within both, a remote aboriginal community and western community cultural concept. While also at the same time addressing a remote aboriginal community issues of, education, housing, economical and sustainability issues, as well, in a sense (9). America. But it is of essential and extremely important, that for any successful initiatives in remote aboriginal communities to achieve a truly sustainable and successful outcome, it must be remembered, that in this development process, as in the words of an aboriginal elder mentioned, on an ABC TV show. "Indigenous, aboriginal people need to be the **subject** of their own development, not the **object** of their own development"(10). (ABC- TV program, 16/04/07). yes?

#### End Notes

(1) Jull, P, 1995, "New Directions in Northern Australia", pp. 308-314 (2). Haralambos, M, Holborn, M, 1991, *Sociology Themes and Perspectives*, p1-504 (3). Jull, P, 1995, pp. 308-314 (4) Gunnar, S, Nils, G, A *History of Western Thought*, 1987, pp. 1-409 (5) Becker, E, Jahn, T, Stiess, I, 1999, "Exploring Uncommon Ground: sustainability and social sciences", pp.184-196. (6). Jull, P, 1995, pp. 308-314. (7). Haebich, A, 1998, "New Policies and Laws", pp.205-224. (8) Jacobs, M, 1995, "Sustainability and Community", pp. 67-74 (9) Miller, E, Weitz, C, 1979, *Introduction to Anthropology*, pp.1-859 (10). Muc'mullin, D, 2007, "Difference of Opinion", Aboriginal issues-how to move forward, into the next millennium", *ABC TV-broadcast*, 16/04/07.

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