



**Research Dancing: Reflections on the Relationships
between University-based Researchers and
Community-based Researchers at Gurriny
Yealamucka Health Services Aboriginal
Corporation, Yarrabah**

Kevin Mayo • Komla Tsey • Empowerment Research Team

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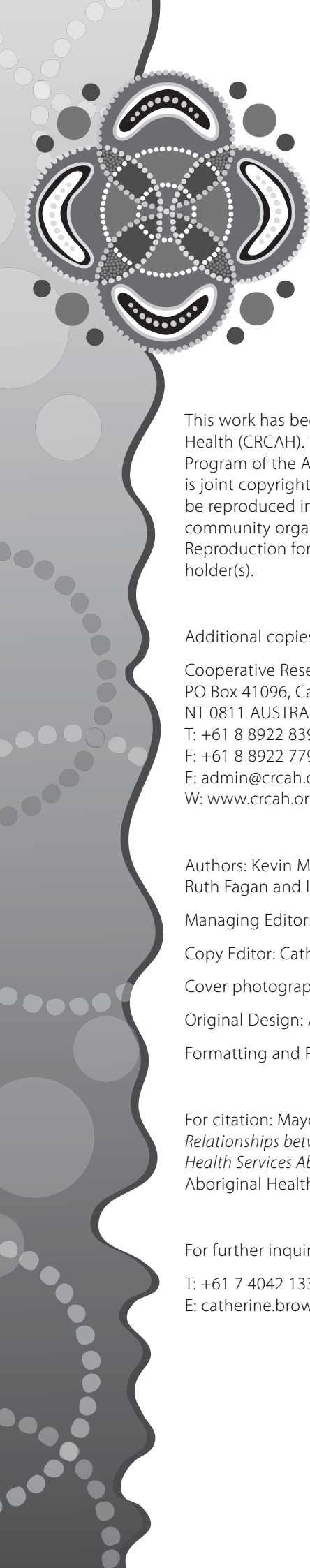
Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Aboriginal Corporation

School of Indigenous Australian Studies and School of Public Health
and Tropical Medicine, James Cook University, Cairns

North Queensland Health Equalities Promotion Unit, School of Medicine, University of Queensland

Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health





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Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health
PO Box 41096, Casuarina
NT 0811 AUSTRALIA
T: +61 8 8922 8396
F: +61 8 8922 7797
E: admin@crcah.org.au
W: www.crcah.org.au

Authors: Kevin Mayo, Komla Tsey and the Empowerment Research Team (Janya McCalman, Mary Whiteside, Ruth Fagan and Leslie Baird)

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For further inquiries about the Family Wellbeing Program at Yarrabah:

T: +61 7 4042 1333
E: catherine.brown1@jcu.edu.au

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Glossary

CRCAH	Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health
FWB	Family Wellbeing Program
JCU	James Cook University
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PAR	participatory action research
TAFE	Tertiary and Further Education
UQ	The University of Queensland

Introduction

This paper examines and reflects upon the research relationships between university-based researchers and community-based researchers working in social health and empowerment programs with the Indigenous community of Yarrabah in northern Queensland. Such relationships have undergone significant reappraisal and change in the past decade, and, in the case of Yarrabah, are undergoing significant expansion. At Yarrabah, this has been a process whereby the community has set the research agenda and university researchers have facilitated the development of appropriate programs and the capacity of the community to administer and run these programs.

An expression of this relationship was enacted in September 2006 on the first day of an international psychiatry conference held at Yarrabah. This involved a performance by the local men's cultural dance group, Yaba Bimbie. Part of the performance included the James Cook University (JCU) research team and staff members of Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Aboriginal Corporation (hereafter Gurriny Yealamucka). It represented the relationship that had developed between the external research team, staff of the local health organisation and community members. A lead dancer enacted the experience of being 'down and out' on the streets, plagued by drug, alcohol and mental health problems, and crying out for help and healing of his body, soul and spirit. The JCU team and Gurriny Yealamucka staff members stood within the circle of dancers and reached out their hands and arms to assist this man in need. Their support enabled him to lift himself out of despair. As he moved towards them, the supporters stepped aside to give him space. The other dancers then followed. They were all passing through *Yealamucka*. Together they reached a place where they were able to work as a group to take control and responsibility and to realise the vision they have for themselves as men, for their families, and for the Yarrabah men's group. No longer did they need alcohol or drugs to live life. In doing so, they became role models.

The lead dancer explained that the name *Gurriny Yealamucka* has important historical significance. Traditionally, people had gone to the healing waters in the community—*Yealamucka*—if they were sick or if they wanted to maintain good health. At this healing pool, people would sing traditional songs and dance and then bathe in the water to be healed by the spirit of the land. The involvement of Gurriny Yealamucka staff symbolised the responsibility the health service has assumed for community healing through the Men's Group, Women's Group and youth programs. JCU and the University of Queensland (UQ) researchers have facilitated and supported this transition. This performance reflects a transformation in the emphasis and methodology of applied research within Indigenous communities in the past decade. For one university researcher, this combination of the traditional way and the European way was the essence of reconciliation.

This paper focuses on successes and challenges faced by research partners at Yarrabah in the Family Wellbeing Program and the Indigenous Men's Support Group. These programs are collaborations between Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, JCU (Cairns) and UQ. The paper refers to proceedings from evaluation workshops conducted among community and university researchers, and to semi-structured in-depth interviews with key researchers. As a guideline, it uses a set of core values of community-based research and a set of benefits and challenges for community and university researchers, summarised by Beacham *et al.* 2004. Through the workshop and interview process, it examines how the experiences of researchers compare with these guidelines.

The paper emphasises that the implementation of community research partnerships is a process requiring time, trust and commitment from all involved. The employment of community researchers is not simply about producing a research product, but also about capacity building within the community. As such, it is a developmental process with potential to build awareness, confidence, skills, employment and role models within the community, in line with a holistic view of community health and wellbeing. Ongoing evaluation of this research is important to maintain guidance and momentum for such programs and to inform communities and researchers about what works and how to improve things for the future. The increasing deployment of community researchers also means that published reflection on such experiences now has much wider, practical relevance.



Background

Community research collaborations

A major criticism of social research has been the lack of consultation with communities regarding their needs and priorities. In some instances this has resulted in mistrust and an antipathy to research within communities. This criticism has been particularly strong with regards to Indigenous communities (Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Voyle & Simmons 1999; Holmes *et al.* 2002; Jones, Crengle & McCreanor 2006).

In response to this criticism, the past decade has seen an increased interest in the social determinants of health (Hunter & Tsey 2003; Tsey *et al.* 2003), and a shift from communities being the subject of outside research to communities deciding on the type of research that is relevant to their needs and actively participating in its implementation (NHMRC 2003). Collaborative research partnerships have been increasingly recommended as a means of alleviating inequalities in research and of achieving more appropriate outcomes (Rappaport 1987; Wandersman 2003), including training of community researchers and empowerment through participatory action research (PAR) (Voyle & Simmons 1999; Dickson 2000; Pyett 2002; Rowe 2006).

In 2002, as part of this shift in emphasis, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) identified three research directions for Indigenous communities. These were the need to improve how researchers work with Indigenous people, the need to develop the research capabilities of Indigenous people and communities, and the need to be aware of the rights of participants in research. In health and wellbeing delivery, this has represented a shift in power relationships—from a view that best practice health interventions in communities are dependent upon the expertise of outsiders, to one that seeks to recognise and build strength, resilience, resources and creativity within communities. Today, research partnerships in Australia are framed by research and ethics guidelines such as those provided by the NHMRC (NHMRC 2003). Cooperative Research Centres have also been established nationally to support community research, to focus research on specific issues, and to develop appropriate and effective research partnerships between communities and researchers (CRAH 2006).

At present, while there are clear guidelines and institutional support for cooperative research, there is limited literature on effective strategies or types of difficulties that may be encountered when implementing research partnerships (Beacham *et al.* 2004; Rowe 2006). Such accounts and analysis of research practice are potentially important models for future research collaborations. In papers that do address the experience of community-based research, there is a tendency to emphasise the experience of community-based researchers. The experiences of their partners remain largely untapped and undocumented (Matheson, Howden-Chapman & Dew 2005). This paper responds to this perceived gap by seeking to share a particular experience of a research partnership between community-based researchers and university-based researchers. It is not an evaluation of program outcomes, but part of an ongoing, reflective evaluation of a collaborative process (Beacham *et al.* 2004). The evaluation of Yarrabah program outcomes has been conducted elsewhere (Daly *et al.* 2005; JCU & UQ 2006).

The philosophical base of community research partnerships is the building of stronger and more self-reliant communities by conducting research relevant to community needs and aspirations. Such partnerships recognise that communities rarely have the experience or resources to conduct their own research and are in need of the technical support of professional researchers (Holmes *et al.* 2002; Pyett 2002:333). Such community research partnerships require development of relationships and cooperative processes, inclusion of partners at multiple levels, production of relevant research, and capacity building both within the community and the partnership. This is apparent in frameworks for practice recommended in academic literature (Beacham *et al.* 2004), in ethical guidelines developed for conducting research (NHMRC 2003) and by the intention and form of projects undertaken in communities.

Beacham *et al.* 2004 have identified core values behind community research collaborations and the benefits and challenges of such research (see Table 1).

Table 1: Core values of collaborative research

- **Appropriate research subjects**
Thoughtfulness and reflection on appropriate research subjects, and the capacity to achieve mutually desired outcomes and appropriate approaches to be used.
- **Commitment to the partnership**
Mutual trust and respect, recognition of mutual responsibilities and benefits, the willingness to support and nurture each other and the partnership.
- **Commitment to an ongoing process**
The patience and willingness to develop the partnership over time and through recognition of diverse expectations, experiences and perspectives.
- **Reflection and evaluation**
Willingness to reflect honestly upon and evaluate the partnership in terms of the ongoing relationship and the mutual goals of the partnership.

In the undertaking of collaborative research partnerships, Beacham *et al.* (2004) elaborate benefits and challenges faced by researchers and the community (see Tables 2 to 5).

Table 2: Benefits for researchers

- Working cooperatively, with access to the experiences and input of community members.
- Developing projects that are ethical and relevant to the needs of the community.
- Learning flexibility in research and involvement in projects that have potential to continually evolve.
- Increased institutional engagement, increased funding opportunities and greater continuity of projects.

Table 3: Benefits for communities


- Having a working relationship with researchers that provides a greater understanding and familiarity with researcher and funding body perspectives.
- Allows input into determining projects relevant to community needs and aspirations, including direct involvement in identifying problems and finding solutions.
- Provides an opportunity for community capacity building through evolving projects that have the potential to pass researcher roles to members of the community.
- Provides a framework and opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and ongoing relevance of projects.

Table 4: Challenges for researchers

- It can be inconsistent, time consuming and require flexible working hours.
- There may be increased potential for involvement in community politics, conflicts of interest and research bias.
- The quality or consistency of research or data collection by community members may not be of an academic standard.
- It may not be as academically recognised and rewarded as other types of research.

Table 5: Challenges for communities

- Outside researchers must be trusted and relationships developed.
- Projects can be time consuming, requiring flexible working hours and ongoing motivation of self and others.
- Projects may not be embraced by all members of the community and participants may be judged in particular ways.
- The privacy of participants and the community may be invaded.



This summation of benefits and challenges indicates issues that are likely to arise within the course of a project. For these issues to be acted upon or overcome commitment is required from researchers, the community and from institutions supporting projects. As Beacham *et al.* (2004:8) write:

Good intentions are not sufficient to ensure a successful collaborative effort. Reciprocity and mutual benefit, deliberate and considered action to support collaborative effectiveness, and early detection and response to potential obstacles are also significant factors associated with success and effectiveness.

Family Wellbeing Program and Indigenous Men's Support Group

The philosophy of community research partnerships informs two health intervention programs conducted at Yarrabah. These are the Family Wellbeing Program (FWB) and the Indigenous Men's Support Group. FWB was developed in 1993 by the Aboriginal Education, Employment and Development Branch of TAFE Adelaide, as part of a holistic approach to Indigenous health (Commonwealth of Australia 2002). FWB engages with material, emotional, mental and spiritual experiences. It seeks to develop communication, conflict resolution and reflexivity skills of participants so that they might take greater control and responsibility in their personal, family, work and community lives. The program first uses personal development workshops to provide opportunities to build trust, to reflect on individual needs and aspirations, to develop life skills and strategies, and to find ways to support others in attaining these needs (Daly *et al.* 2005). The program then supports participating groups to address collectively priority community needs identified in the personal development training. A key principle of FWB is the training of local facilitators to deliver the program on a sustainable basis.

Tsey and Every (2000) argue that FWB programs in Indigenous communities can significantly enhance program participants' sense of control and responsibility towards conditions affecting their health and wellbeing. They found that:

the course enhanced participants' sense of self-worth, resilience, and ability to reflect on root causes of problems, problem-solving ability, as well as belief in the mutability of the social environment. As a result, they were able to bring about modest but significant improvements in their general sense of wellbeing and those of the people around them in ways that were previously impossible (Tsey & Every 2000:513).

Indigenous Men's Support Groups exist in many communities throughout Australia. They aim to empower men, provide role models and support for younger men, and identify contributing factors to destructive behaviour, social dissatisfaction, and poor health and wellbeing in Indigenous communities (Reilly 2006). The groups provide a culturally safe place for men to heal, reflect and re-establish their roles in the community. Such groups may have a broad and holistic scope, but often have limited resources in terms of funding and training (Franks 2000).

The implementation of the Family Wellbeing Program at Yarrabah

Yarrabah is a rural Aboriginal community of approximately 3000 residents located in the Wet Tropics area of northern Queensland, fifty-three kilometres south-east of Cairns. It is an ex-mission site on the traditional land of the Kunkangi people, although approximately 80 per cent of residents were forcibly moved there from other areas. The population is drawn from about forty different tribal groups (Baird, Mick-Ramsamy & Percy 1998).

During the 1980s and 1990s, suicide trends, a high crime rate and the breakdown of family relationships were the catalyst for the formation of locally driven responses to improve health services through both primary and preventative programs (Baird, Mick-Ramsamy & Percy 1998; Tsey *et al.* 2002; Tsey *et al.* 2004). In undertaking preventative programs, there is a holistic awareness that social determinants such as education, training, employment and housing are relevant to community health.

In 1998 Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services was formed, with social health programs identified as priority areas to complement primary health. At the beginning of the partnership, Gurriny Yealamucka had only two positions—a manager and a part-time administrative assistant. The organisation had no resources to provide services and programs to the community. A major challenge at the time was how to build the credibility of the organisation with the community and with the funding bodies. The main service provider, Queensland Health, already provided clinical services, so Gurriny Yealamucka took a strategic decision to start with a ‘social health program’ in order to complement, rather than compete with, existing Queensland Health clinical services (Daly *et al.* 2005).

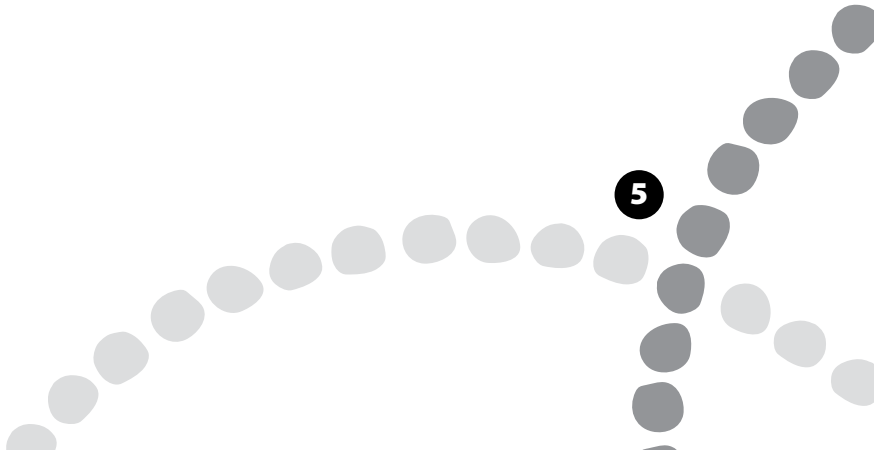
In 2000 Dr Komla Tsey from UQ was invited by Yarrabah Men’s Group to discuss how men can achieve better social and emotional health. He introduced the Men’s Group to FWB empowerment topics, including beliefs and attitudes about life and how these can affect our choices. The men found the interactive process engaging and expressed interest in participating fully in FWB. Gurriny Yealamucka approached Dr Tsey to pilot the program with the Men’s Group to determine its appropriateness as Gurriny Yealamucka’s main social and emotional health intervention tool and to attract resources to implement FWB for men. Since then, social health programs aimed at support and prevention, community and personal engagement, and reflexivity and empowerment have been successfully developed in partnership by Gurriny Yealamucka, JCU (Cairns) and UQ (Brisbane). The institutional benefits of the collaboration are described in Table 6.


Table 6: Institutional benefits of research collaboration between universities and Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services

Gurriny provides university partners with:	University partners provide Gurriny with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborative submissions for grants • identification of issues of concern to Indigenous health • data for research papers for peer-reviewed journals • collaborative presentations at conferences • students in higher degrees • small funding grants for evaluations of social health programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct funding of community-based positions through NHMRC grants • assistance in funding submissions for priority programs • PAR reflections, debriefings, strategic planning and support • credibility through conference presentations • encouragement and support with university degrees • credibility of programs demonstrated by published evaluations of programs.

The social health programs have steadily expanded to include a Women’s Group, to employ local facilitators and to use PAR (Tsey *et al.* 2004; Daly *et al.* 2005). Through PAR, participants—supported by peers and facilitators—research their daily priorities, recognise their own resources, produce knowledge and act to improve their situations (Dickson 2000). A narrative approach is used to frame the discussion of personal experiences. In their reflections, Men’s Group participants felt that problems in Yarrabah have a root cause in a loss of cultural identity, spirituality and values, and that it is necessary to address underlying social factors rather than offer ‘band-aid solutions’ (McCalman *et al.* 2005). In attempting to do this, the Men’s Group undertook initiatives related to personal development, leadership and parenting (McCalman *et al.* 2005). These were centred upon the weekly meetings of an average of ten men and the implementation of FWB to meet the needs of men. FWB was extended to partner organisations such as Gindaja Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre, Yarrabah Justice Group and Yarrabah State High School, and as a diversionary program for court-referred men. To initiate employment opportunities, the Men’s Group developed feasibility studies into small business ventures. Of these, the cultural dancing group, with six regular members, has performed commercially and aspires to professional status.

For those who become community facilitators, it is a strong learning curve about themselves and their community. As facilitators, they assume positions of community engagement and even leadership, and must seriously reflect on personal experiences and community problems, and attempt to identify solutions to those problems. There is often a realisation of shared experience between themselves and participants. They are also required to interact with organisations outside their previous experiences, such as universities and funding bodies. This can be empowering, but also overwhelming.





University-based researchers conduct regular debriefings with Men's and Women's Group facilitators. This maintains contact between university and community researchers and provides a mechanism by which effective strategies or problems can be recognised and addressed as they arise. In such evaluations, FWB participants have reported an increase in self-esteem, resilience, reflexivity and problem-solving abilities. As the FWB is a reflective, long-term and ongoing process, it has been difficult for researchers to obtain quantitative data that correlates to social changes. It is, however, felt by facilitators and participants that the process of recognition, engagement and reflection within the community through FWB and Men's Groups may contribute to the harmony and capacity necessary to deal with broader community issues such as suicide, poor school attendance, critical housing shortages and the creation of work opportunities (Tsey *et al.* 2002; Tsey *et al.* 2004).

Significant change has occurred in Yarrabah over the past decade in relation to the suicide crisis, which was the catalyst for developing social health programs. From the peak of an average of three to four suicides per year between 1991 and 1996, Yarrabah has experienced a major reduction in the incidences of suicide in the past nine years. FWB has also contributed to the institutional credibility and strength of Gurriny Yealamucka. By April 2007, staffing levels at Gurriny Yealamucka had exceeded twenty locally filled positions, of which eleven were directly involved in social health.

Methodology

Evaluation is a particular challenge in collaborative research (Ansari, Phillips & Hammick 2001; Miller & Shinn 2005). Its difficulties include the fact that collaborative research often emphasises process rather than outcomes, that different participants may value quite different aspects of the collaboration, that significant levels of reporting are anecdotal, and that positive, long-term outcomes may develop after the life of a project (Voyle & Simmons 1999; Ansari, Phillips & Hammick 2001; Holmes *et al.* 2002; Jones, Crengle & McCreanor 2006; Rowe 2006). Despite this difficulty, the importance of process for participants and the long-term benefits of programs have been identified as core strengths of collaborative research (Tuhivai Smith 1999; Voyle & Simmons 1999; Pyett 2002; Rowe 2006).

At Yarrabah, ongoing qualitative evaluations of the FWB and Men's Group have been an important reflective aspect of the work. University researchers have conducted ongoing PAR debriefings so that change is apparent as it is happening and can be responded to, so that reports do not become unwieldy, and so university and community partners can regularly debrief and reflect on their positions. Evaluation is also necessary to develop credibility for funding support, to formulate the effectiveness of the programs, and to enable transmission of the research experience to other communities and researchers. The evaluations conducted as part of the PAR process have not reflected upon the research relationship with universities and were, therefore, unsuitable for this paper.

Evaluation of the research relationship in this paper has been based upon two sets of reflective data:

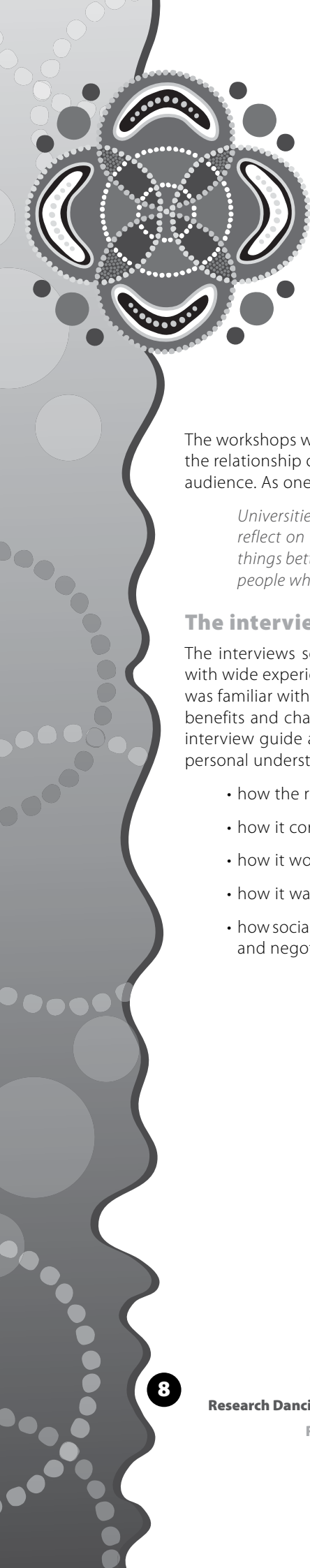
- transcripts of two half-day intensive workshops aimed at summarising and discussing the experiences of both university researchers and Gurriny Yealamucka staff. These workshops brought all the researchers together as a group to review their experiences; and
- semi-structured, in-depth interviews with five key university and community-based researchers by a university researcher who had not participated in the programs.

The workshops and interviews were complementary sources of reflective data that generated an overview of the research relationship, the research process and the capacity-building process within the community. From these two sources of data, several themes have emerged:

- initial reticence followed by positive experiences;
- the value of empowerment frameworks in research;
- building trust between community and university researchers;
- capacity building, management and workloads; and
- challenges such as community politics, cultural misunderstandings and wealth disparity.

The workshops

The two half-day workshops were intended as an intensive group reflection on the research relationship at a time when one period of funding was ending and a new stage beginning. The workshops provided a supportive environment that encouraged reflexivity. Community researchers who were relatively new to research and program facilitation were particularly able to voice their experiences of how they joined Gurriny Yealamucka, what this meant to direction in their lives, and the successes and challenges they were experiencing. These accounts offer clear examples of the importance and process of community capacity building. Community-based researchers also discussed the shift in their perceptions of university researchers. University staff spoke of their initial attraction to empowerment programs and their satisfaction with the process, and broached some of the challenges they faced.



The workshops used small group discussions, followed by feedback from these discussions into the whole group, and orientated these discussions using a 'Four Rs' guideline, similar to the reflective questions used in PAR programs. The 'Four Rs' asked participants to:

- **recall** the details of the experience;
- **relive** the highlights and challenges of the programs and how the challenges were overcome;
- **re-interpret** the experience by considering what was learned about self and others in the process; and
- **respond** to these lessons and formulate how the programs can be taken forward into the future.

The workshops were a timely reflection on what the partners had accomplished and experienced so as to open the relationship onto a new horizon. It was also an important reflection not just for themselves, but for a wider audience. As one university researcher said:

Universities and community organisations are always working together, but nobody takes the time to actually reflect on what it actually means. I think it is important that you reflect, for our own benefit, so we can do things better, but then also we can share if we have something important to share with other people, so other people who want to do similar things do not have to re-invent the wheel.

The interviews

The interviews sought to elaborate directly upon the research relationship. Invited participants were those with wide experience in the programs at both facilitator and administrative levels. The interviewing researcher was familiar with PAR debriefing notes and the transcripts of the intensive workshops. The interviews used the benefits and challenges for researchers, cited earlier in this paper, as a framework for questions. This general interview guide approach (Patton 1990) created a space for participants to focus upon their professional and personal understandings and experiences, rather than a group dynamic and context. Particular foci were:

- how the research relationship was perceived by both partners;
- how it corresponded to the professional goals and interests of researchers;
- how it worked within an empowerment framework;
- how it was managed when resources were limited; and
- how social challenges such as cultural difference, community politics and income disparity were recognised and negotiated.

Thematic Results

Initial reticence followed by positive experiences

A narrative of the collaboration experience, which reflected the FWB process, emerged from the data. This narrative told of an initial wariness and reticence to participate, the importance of 'bottom-up' approaches, a growth of confidence and trust over time, and reflection as a tool for collaboration and consultation.

Many Gurriny Yealamucka staff members spoke of their initial reticence towards the programs and then of their positive experiences of programs and the challenges faced in maintaining momentum in programs. One staff member recalled that prior to joining the team, he was going through things in his personal life and had no interest in 'men's health and stuff like that'. Once working for Gurriny Yealamucka, however, he thought more about what had been happening with men in the community over the years and felt that 'people had lost their spirit'. He reflected on his relationship with his father and the need for strong fatherly role models, particularly an understanding of the traditional role of the father. He observed that:

it is just identifying what the father was before. What did he do, how did he look after his family, what responsibility he had within not only his own community, but also in his country.

He considered Gurriny Yealamucka to be 'like a healing, spiritual rain'. One woman agreed with him and described it as being like 'medicine water'.

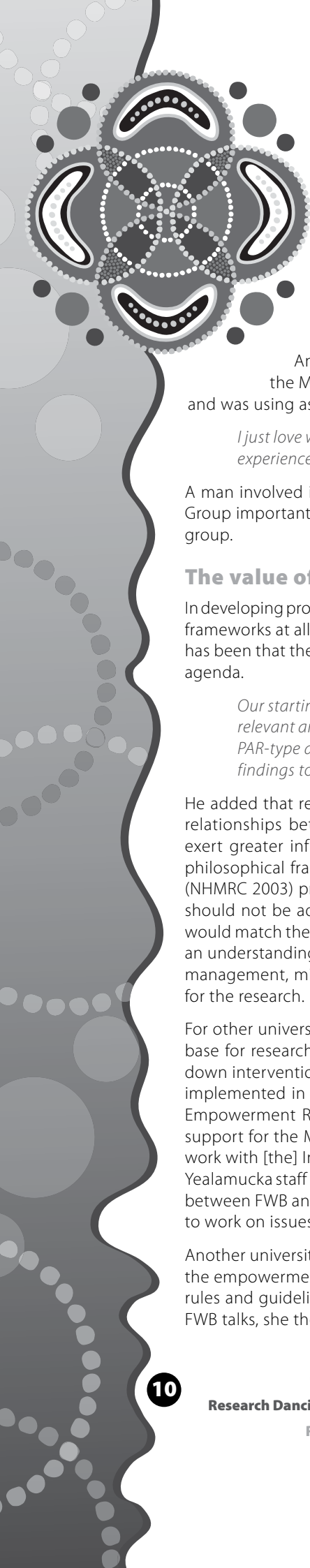
Another staff member recalled how she had long held aspirations to work as a facilitator, but that it required courage to apply. She found that FWB provided her with guidelines that made her reflect on her own behaviour and that of others, and to see community needs. There was a process of self-healing, as well as helping others through FWB. Her work in housing strengthened this experience. What she found difficult was recruiting people for the program and motivating them to participate and remain with the program.

Another woman had been working with university health programs and was drawn back to Yarrabah, where she had grown up, to work in FWB. Although reluctant at first, she undertook the program, after which she thought, 'Why didn't I do this sooner'. She had previously held a clinical view of health but FWB turned her thinking towards social impacts of health and wellbeing. In facilitating FWB, she found that the principles of the program were relevant to her own life. She said that:

We actually find ourselves beginning to live the FWB. It is something that you are doing, you are teaching that to people but you are actually living it... this whole process and my continuing working relationship with Gurriny has been that the Men's Group and the Women's Group and the FWB are very humbling because you talk about the realities of life, and sometimes in our work environment we tend to get boxed into a certain way that we go about our business as an organisation and I think that the FWB is actually grounding the organisation.

She added that she believed FWB would continue to grow and have a huge impact in the years to come through 'a major, generational effect upon the community'.

Another woman was at first reluctant to try FWB because she felt that she didn't think her 'brain could handle it, being out of school'. When she did it, she found that she enjoyed the experience. She began working as a volunteer and this led to a job with Gurriny Yealamucka through the Community Development Employment Program. She worked in the office and helped run programs for women and parenting, and at the alcohol rehabilitation centre in Yarrabah. During these programs, she encouraged participation among several women who later became FWB facilitators. It was observed in the '4Rs' workshop that 'this was an important example of how FWB could sustain itself and expand through the community'. Another woman observed how this woman was an important role model for women in the community because her background and experiences prior to involvement in the program were similar to those of many women.



Another woman applied for a job as a crime prevention worker. At the time her teenage son was 'getting into trouble all the time and he was only fifteen, sixteen, at the time and my heart was crying out for him'. She felt the need to work with youths and began a girls' group, which she takes camping and with whom she is encouraging an interest in cultural dancing:

I've got a lot of young girls who are really enthusiastic about getting in there and they want to do cultural dancing and I've got one lady, elderly lady, she is an Elder, she is very interested in coming to teach my girls how to dance.

Another man working with boys as a crime prevention officer had experience of FWB through the Men's Group when he was eighteen, but had not understood it. Now he could see its relevance and was using aspects of it with the boys. He said:

I just love working with kids and just seeing them—I want them to change, as well, because probably from my experience as a young person, as well. Where I come from to where I am now.

A man involved in the formation of the Men's Group in 1998, and later its coordinator, considered the Men's Group important as a place to support men. Programs such as FWB were a means of expanding input into the group.

The value of empowerment frameworks in research

In developing programs, both university and community researchers emphasised the importance of empowerment frameworks at all levels. A senior university researcher emphasised that one of the strengths of the partnership has been that the research is not a stand-alone initiative and forms part of the Gurriny Yealamucka social health agenda.

Our starting point is always: what is the community trying to do and how can our research expertise be made relevant and value add to what the community is already trying to do? We have always seen our roles as using PAR-type approaches to support and evaluate the pilot Gurriny social health programs, as well as using such findings to support Gurriny in attracting further resources.

He added that research collaborations with the community 'require sensitivity to the historically problematic relationships between health researchers and Aboriginal Australians', and efforts by Aboriginal people to exert greater influence about research involving Aboriginal people. The development of practical ethical/philosophical frameworks is needed to guide such relationships. Specifically, the NHMRC research guidelines (NHMRC 2003) provide an overall framework for the approach at Yarrabah. He added that, 'One's pet research should not be advanced because it may not meet community needs and it is unlikely that community skills would match the research.' He felt that for collaborations to be successful, a clear framework for the research and an understanding of the core business of the program are required. If these are developed, issues of direction, management, misunderstandings and funding can be resolved by returning to a strong and clear framework for the research.

For other university staff, the programs represented a positive shift from an institutional base to a community base for research. One woman described how she had previously worked in health programs that 'were top down interventions that were things that had been decided by people in the hierarchies and they were being implemented in Indigenous communities but they weren't actually grass roots up'. She was attracted to the Empowerment Research Project because it had a productive community focus. From 2004 she worked as a support for the Men's Group and this was 'an interesting challenge as to how [she], as a white woman, would work with [the] Indigenous Men's Group'. Her role was diverse, but mainly as a background support for Gurriny Yealamucka staff in debriefing, report writing and funding submissions. She thought that an important difference between FWB and other community-based programs was that community members were given opportunities to work on issues that were priorities in their own lives. This provided a reflective focus for work and training.

Another university staff member with long-term involvement in various local health programs was attracted to the empowerment program because it was not 'top down' in its approach and, significantly, because it offered rules and guidelines for communication, conflict resolution, relationships and daily life. After hearing the first FWB talks, she thought:

This is where I fit and it was about FWB and it was about this very issue of people learning—getting together in groups, sharing stories, empowerment, and basic sorts of guidelines for relationships and things.

She perceived her role as implementing programs on the ground through the training of other facilitators, research support within programs and collection of data on the process. As the university had explicit goals derived from a consultative process with the community, she considered the community to have a similar perception of her role. The consultative process was essential for the community to prioritise issues, decide on the relevance of research and to tailor research to their needs. Through this process, issues around housing became a major focus of her work.

In terms of research, she thought that it was important to form good research habits from the beginning. These included a need to get more feedback and to develop better reporting systems. Informal conversations are also important but often unrecorded and lost. Documentation systems should also be sensitive to the ways in which the research relationship inevitably changes.

A community researcher considered the relationship with university researchers to be layered. Due to association with university researchers, community staff began to reflect on activities automatically, particularly as a result of FWB. The community researcher said that this reflexivity did not just 'develop their awareness as researchers, but influenced operational structures within the organisation'. At the level of funding, the relationship provided greater understanding of research and funding strategies and allowed the organisation space to think and develop outside the immediate limitations created by funding bodies. Although health delivery, not research, is the core business of Gurriny Yealamucka, she saw the importance of research and need for compromise. She observed that while 'the university may be dependent on Gurriny Yealamucka to do research, Gurriny Yealamucka is also dependent upon the university and needs to recognise this'.

She considered that the university and community research relationship would be ongoing because of the importance of research and evaluation in justifying funding, the skills development and capacity building associated with the work, and the reflective culture it created within the organisation.

Another community-based researcher recognised that the community was at first reluctant to work with the university research team because of previous experiences with researchers. In those prior instances, researchers had come into the community, taken away knowledge for themselves and given back only academic theses that had limited relevance to the community. This had left 'a bad taste in the mouth'. It was also thought that the university would have a systematic way of working and expect particular results. This was at odds with the more 'laid back' attitude of the community. The experience of working with the university team was, however, quite different. The university researchers spent time building trust and a 'working relationship', and they were able to pass on skills that allowed the community staff to feel empowered and choose their own directions.

He outlined that his development of a working relationship had three stages. In the first stage, the university researchers did not impose their ideas about projects, but listened to community discussion and began suggesting frameworks for implementing those ideas. In the second stage, the university researchers fed the ideas raised in the initial meetings back to the community to reflect upon. In the third stage, there was discussion about how to implement the ideas developed in the earlier stages and how to give time to monitor and evaluate the programs.

He added that the community came to understand the importance of evaluation and its links to funding. With university guidance, the community organisation was able to work through successful funding plans supported by program evaluations. These evaluations also enabled Gurriny Yealamucka to give national and international presentations. Through evaluations and high-profile presentations, politicians and health policy makers have been able to see advances made by Gurriny Yealamucka. This 'creates faith in the organisation and government becomes willing to take further risks'. This has been proven with the recurrent funding of four positions in social and emotional wellbeing. The community-based researcher recommended to

... every Aboriginal community to latch onto a university and have a working relationship which benefits both. Aboriginal communities need to be educated like everyone else to come out of the mud that we are in.



Building trust between community and university researchers

As is apparent in the second community researcher's comments, the community had deep suspicions of university researchers that only altered over time. In discussion about the research relationship with universities, women working as community-based researchers described how, at first, there was 'an element of fear' in their relationship to academics, which was derived from the wider relationship of the community with white people. It took a number of years to overcome this and these women 'were surprised that people with those knowledge and experience could be so kind and helpful'. They described themselves as 'babies' whom the UQ/JCU team 'nurtured' until they could be let go. In this process of empowerment, they 'really liked the one-on-one support throughout the process', which was provided by the university team without Gurriny Yealamucka staff losing control of programs. They said that 'it was important they were allowed to run the programs on their own—there was a real sense of allowing people to take control, to drive FWB, and have the opportunities to put the theory, what they had learned, into practice'. There was a sense that the university team was genuine and valued the input of community researchers. They felt they needed more program facilitation training and that the women who undertook FWB needed more support, including further counselling as support for women with complex issues.

One community researcher thought that the relationship with the university had not always been easy because there were different priorities for the university and the community. At the beginning of the programs there had been a feeling that academics were on a different level:

because they were people full of knowledge and you can't reach them, but through the years it has helped us to realise they are normal. They have been able to connect and transfer knowledge to the community.

University-based researchers agreed that the research relationship had 'gotten better over time and the trust has grown between the community-based researchers and university researchers'. They were pleased for the program to be based on community aspirations and to be driven by the community. They also felt it was inspirational to see personal and professional growth in those participating and working in the program. Witnessing these changes and experiencing personal relationships with people in Yarrabah informed and developed their experiences and capacities as researchers. The success and growth of the programs were particularly noteworthy and encouraging, given the lack of practical guidance in the literature and the potentially national importance of the work.

One university researcher felt that her work had a positive, personal significance and that through her engagement with the community she had built strong personal relationships. She said that it 'feels like there is a connection at a spiritual level with people, even though we have quite different perceptions of spirituality. There is a trust on that level.'

She illustrated how trust and respect were engaged by providing an example of a senior university researcher who was invited to present at a youth mental health summit. He was unavailable and asked community-based researchers from Gurriny Yealamucka if they would like to present instead. One community researcher agreed and then asked the university researcher if she would co-present with him, which she agreed to do. They then met to work out how to co-present. The community-based researcher wanted to dance the 'spiritual journey' of Yarrabah men and asked if the university researcher would narrate the story while he danced. They discussed this in depth and also agreed to develop a PowerPoint presentation that reflected his story, as well as some of the research findings. This presentation was adapted from a presentation given by the community-based researcher to his Graduate Diploma of Health Promotion class and from a Gurriny Yealamucka presentation. However, the university researcher felt uncomfortable narrating the Yarrabah men's story, particularly the spiritual journey, and discussed this with the senior university researcher. The senior researcher agreed that it would be better for her to tell the story of her role as a non-Indigenous woman in the research team, and that the community-based researcher's story would be more powerful if he told it himself. She conveyed this to the community-based researcher, who agreed, and they developed a presentation that gave both their stories in their own fashion. She felt that the success of this approach demonstrated a high level of mutual trust and a negotiated process that attempted to understand and define appropriate mutual roles.

Capacity building, management and workloads

Negotiation of roles has been a significant aspect of the collaboration. Many community researchers acknowledged that they struggled with report writing at high levels and evaluation. The men agreed that there was more need for training and professional development. There was also stress on the level of work required for FWB and social health programs, which included delivery of night-time and out-of-hours sessions. Part of this was the continual need for self-motivation and motivation of group participants. Being a part of the community also made it difficult to draw a line between work and personal time. This was a flipside to being regarded as role models in the community, since they were open to judgment and criticism by some people if they made mistakes.

A difficulty arising for the university staff was that the project support roles, the data collection and the planning for the future were so time-consuming. To have the time to do them all effectively was a problem. Since the programs were an ongoing reflective process, it was difficult to fully develop an evidence base to support future development and funding of the program. They agreed that there was a need for further training and professional development of the Gurriny Yealamucka staff, and continued to encourage staff if they had aspirations for higher degrees.

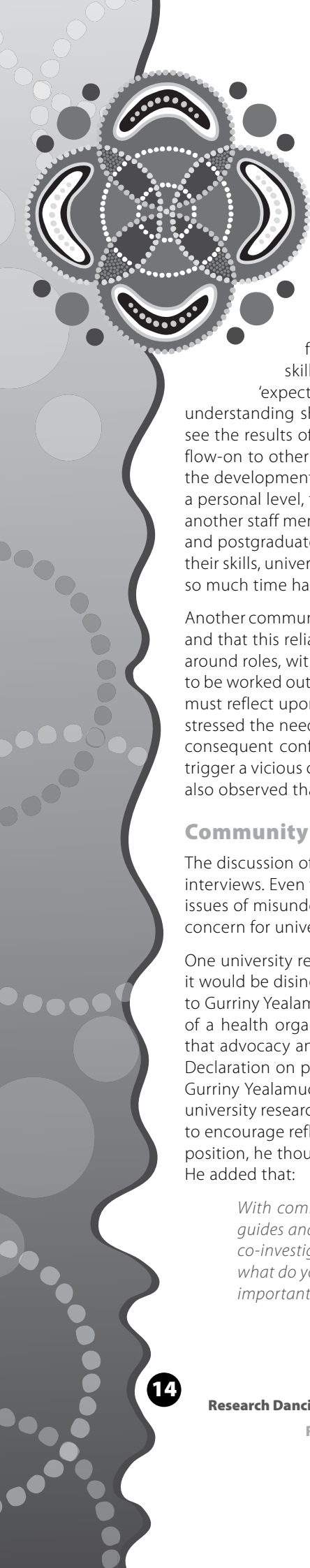
For one university researcher, a key challenge for this type of work is that much time is spent sitting down and talking to people, building relationships, developing trust, and strategising around a range of funding, personal, professional and organisational issues. This takes time and energy, which impinges upon the time available for collecting and analysing data for publication. It makes it difficult to demonstrate academic productivity in the form of relevant peer-review publications. The issue of where to put one's energy is, therefore, a constant dilemma as the university researcher explained:

Over the years, we have learned to allocate roughly 60 per cent of the research funding to the 'running round and doing' of the research at the community level and about 40 per cent to data analysis, writing and publication. Having this type of formula has been useful to help structure not only how we spend our time but also how resources are allocated across the program.

The researcher noted that in such collaborative research, particularly in the early stages when community-based researchers were inexperienced, there is an issue of the university researchers becoming *de facto* managers. The university researchers needed to be supportive in this and to give advice, but also to understand that in building capacity in the community, management was not their role. Rather, their core role was to facilitate research and reflective processes. If community researchers needed training in areas outside of this, such as in literacy or information technology, then this should be encouraged but addressed through a skills audit and a strategy to deliver training through specialised training organisations. It was important to recognise that management of the organisation was the community's business and not the university's responsibility.

While the university framework was directed towards research and evaluation processes, one university researcher found it difficult to be detached because she also wanted to achieve outcomes on the ground. Her role within the PAR process demanded discipline from both herself and the community, without which the evaluation process became difficult. She thought community researchers perceived that part of her role was to assist them to generate funding and that success in this 'gave her credibility' with them. While she would have liked to follow her own research preferences and offer a unique perspective, she realised that through the programs she made a small contribution to a larger program, which had more impact.

During her earlier work in the programs, she worked with Gurriny Yealamucka in a range of research roles and also had the challenge of supporting the Men's Group as a non-Indigenous woman. She was also heavily involved in administrative and managerial capacities. This resulted from a lack of community management staff early in the programs, and some community-based researchers not having the requisite experiences and skills for some aspects of the program. She understood her work at this stage as part of the capacity-building process within the community organisation. The opportunity has now come for her to step back, reflect on the process, and begin a doctorate related to FWB interventions.



Another university researcher found that, at the beginning, her role necessarily had elements of *de facto* management, which was challenging in terms of making time available for this role. She considered it important that the university and Gurriny Yealamucka moved beyond this situation over time. An issue affecting this was that of attaining recurring funding for positions in the organisation. She felt that it was important for the organisation to develop more than one plan for funding, as without a 'Plan B' an important position within a program could be lost and the effectiveness of the program reduced.

A community researcher considered that in the initial stages of the programs it is important for the university researchers to spend time within the organisation developing community skills in research, documentation, planning and implementation. In these stages the community 'expects university researchers to do more than they do and thinks of them as superhuman'. This understanding shifts as staff come to understand the empowerment and capacity-building process. As staff see the results of this process, they develop hope in the system and a commitment to it. From this, there is a flow-on to other programs. In the example of the Men's Group, its development created employment, led to the development of the Women's Group and became a role model for Men's Groups in other communities. At a personal level, the experience of working with university researchers had led the community researcher and another staff member (neither of whom had studied higher than Year 10 in high school) to undertake graduate and postgraduate studies with the University of Sydney. As programs develop, and staff acquire confidence in their skills, universities need to step back. This means a change rather than an end to the relationship into which so much time had been invested both by the university and the community.

Another community researcher recognised that some community staff viewed university researchers as support, and that this reliance can develop into a situation of *de facto* management. Therefore, there is need for clarity around roles, with the understanding that capacity building is a large part of the program and situations need to be worked out according to individual abilities and needs, project by project. This is something the university must reflect upon, as it is the university that should drive the standard of research. The community researcher stressed the need to keep track of training levels and suggested annual research skills training. Skill levels and consequent confidence levels within programs also affected the motivation of staff. Lack of motivation can trigger a vicious circle, as motivation is needed for success, which in turn motivates people to strive further. She also observed that 'sometimes staff attain a comfort zone in their work and need to be taken further'.

Community politics, cultural misunderstandings and wealth disparity

The discussion of community politics, cultural misunderstandings and wealth disparity occurred mostly in the interviews. Even then, there was reluctance from community researchers to speak about local politics, and the issues of misunderstandings and wealth disparity were not emphasised by them. These issues were more of a concern for university researchers.

One university researcher recognised that he and his colleagues could not avoid community politics and that it would be disingenuous to think it possible. He provided an example in which the Yarrabah Council objected to Gurriny Yealamucka being involved in developing employment for men, which it saw as exceeding the role of a health organisation. Gurriny Yealamucka sought the advice of the university researcher, who outlined that advocacy and intersectoral partnerships were a critical part of the World Health Organization's Alma Ata Declaration on primary health care and that Gurriny Yealamucka needed to engage with this framework. The Gurriny Yealamucka manager then began presenting Gurriny Yealamucka in the primary health context. The university researcher thought that in dealing with community politics, university researchers 'need to listen and to encourage reflection on what is the business of the program, but not to buy into politics.' In advocating this position, he thought that 'maybe we have been lucky because FWB is already reflective and conflict resolving'. He added that:

With community politics and other intercultural issues, having formal or informal Aboriginal mentors or guides and colleagues has been critical. So for me, at the more academic level, having Indigenous people as co-investigators who I can just phone anytime and say 'look, this has come up, what are your thoughts and what do you think I should do'. Or, at the community level, having people whose opinions can be sought is so important!

Misunderstandings between university and community researchers were best addressed by trying to create a space for openness and understanding. This was important in settings where there are cultural differences or disparities in wealth and status between the researchers. The university researcher provided a simple example of how easily misunderstandings can occur. He described how, at a busy day-long meeting, he suggested that they not break for lunch, but quickly buy some food from the shop and continue. One of the community researchers disappeared and did not return for more than an hour. This absence stalled the meeting and created tension. The university researcher discovered later that the community researcher had returned home for food as he simply did not have the \$5 or \$10 that lunch would have cost. This misunderstanding could have been easily avoided if an assumption had not been made and a space created for alternative arrangements. Creation of such space was a skill in itself and, in employing university researchers, it was important to be careful to recruit people who could listen and reflect upon their roles.

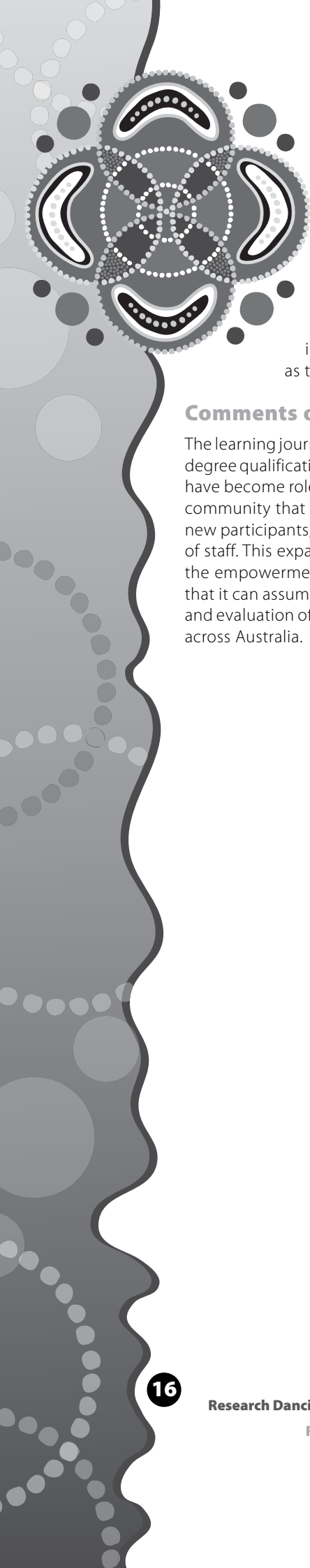
The university researcher thought that the issue of income disparities can be responded to at multiple levels. At policy level, the research aims to raise awareness about socio-economic determinants of health and the critical roles empowerment programs can play in reducing inequalities. At the level of the research program, it is critical that capacity-building opportunities are provided at all levels of the research process (for example, from employment as community-based researchers through to participation in the research as associate investigators and chief investigators). At the broader community level, the aim of empowerment research programs is to build the capability of participants to take greater charge of factors related to health and wellbeing, including education and skills development, employment, violence and substance misuse.

This researcher recognised that negotiating and attaining funding was a significant part of the university role. He considered that the program framework should direct a significant percentage of that funding towards funding community positions. It should not be tokenistic. Such community positions should, in turn, support wider employment advocacy through their programs. Whether it is in funding allocation or routine practice, he insisted that 'If you are claiming you are using a framework, the consistency with which you use it is going to be important'.

Another university researcher felt that programs were affected by community politics, particularly through who supported or participated in the programs. These politics were derived from the mission history of relocating disparate tribal groups to Yarrabah and were unavoidable. She did not think it useful to become directly involved in them. The distance created from being an outsider was potentially an advantage in maintaining objectivity regarding politics and cultural issues. She found that in facilitating research, cultural misunderstandings were infrequent because the program content was not directly related to a specific culture. When cultural misunderstandings happened, those involved accepted them as accidental. The main difficulty actually arose from not being able to understand strong accents or local language usage. The university researcher found wealth disparity to be more of a personal issue. Although rationally she realised that she was 'attempting to effect social justice', emotionally she felt uncomfortable and had feelings of guilt about being more affluent.

Another university researcher agreed that the effects of community politics were unavoidable, but that they were encountered more by community-based staff than university researchers. University researchers were able to remove themselves from direct involvement. She had a feeling that this distancing could be a cause for criticism from other service providers, but no one had directly said this to her. She observed that politics was not restricted to the community, but could also occur between non-Indigenous people competing over levels of involvement and could apply to relations between support organisations. It was, therefore, important to enhance links with all those involved in the issues.

At a more personal level, she was sometimes uncertain how to interpret interactions with community staff and members. Many people in the community had family pressures and could be indirect in expressing their situations, feelings or intentions. She found that to try and force issues was counterproductive. She gave the example of a well-intentioned student social worker placed at Yarrabah. The student attempted to speed-up some projects and encountered hostility and resistance because some staff saw the student as pressuring them and being critical of them through her actions. The university researcher added that it was also important not to get caught in ongoing counselling roles, something of which the community staff themselves needed to be careful. She was also aware of wealth disparity between herself and the community, but it did not seem to



be a negative issue for the community. Being involved in the housing issue at Yarrabah, she was embarrassed about inviting community workers to her home. However, following an invitation to her home, the community researchers again visited her with their children and told them that this was what they could aspire to through education and work.

A community researcher considered that community politics such as land issues would always be present and would impact on programs, particularly in terms of who participates. The university had stepped back from these politics and always encouraged wider community engagement. This wider engagement sometimes worked and sometimes did not, but, importantly, the space was made for it to be possible. Issues of wealth disparity were not dramatic, as the attitude and behaviour of university researchers did not give it significance.

Comments on future directions

The learning journey for Gurriny Yealamucka staff has been profound; staff members have achieved postgraduate degree qualifications, their knowledge and skills have increased the capacity of the Yarrabah community, and they have become role models in the community. In discussing the way forward, it was considered important for the community that FWB should be sustained and expanded by being carried into new areas, by introducing it to new participants, by creating jobs with ongoing funding, and by further professional development and training of staff. This expansion would be towards community control of the preventative health programs. Success of the empowerment programs was considered important for establishing credibility for Gurriny Yealamucka so that it can assume greater responsibility for community health. This is part of the importance of strong research and evaluation of programs. In time it was felt that Yarrabah could become a model for Indigenous communities across Australia.

Discussion

The Yarrabah collaboration is directly aligned with literature advocating research that is appropriate to community priorities (Rappaport 1987; NHMRC 2003; Wandersman 2003; Beacham *et al.* 2004; CRCAN 2006). As stated by one senior university researcher, the intention that 'research expertise be made relevant and value add to what the community is already trying to do' was explicit in the universities' research framework. Community consultation, reflection and expression remained at the heart of the program strategy and are in line with the core values, benefits and challenges, as summarised by Beacham *et al.* (2004). It is worth noting that in workshops and interviews, the difficulties discussed were not concerned with research intention, but with implementation and future direction.

It is apparent from the interviews that both university and community-based researchers recognised the importance of research being appropriate to the needs, priorities and aspirations of the community. This is a realisation of the first core value of 'appropriate research subjects' of Beacham *et al.* (2004). In the process of identifying this first core value, the need for the second core value, 'commitment to the partnership', is apparent in the initial community response. This seems to have been reserved, the expectations being that the community could not 'reach' the university researchers. It was only by patience, commitment of time, and the building of trust and a working relationship that this challenge was overcome. This has been expressed through participation of community members in programs and by inclusion of university researchers in community activities such as dance. This process is a mutual commitment and should have mutual benefits.

The third core value of 'commitment to an ongoing process' is an extension of the second. At Yarrabah, the long-term commitment to the collaboration is evidenced by its enduring presence throughout this decade. Patience and commitment were important, particularly early in programs when gains may have been quite humble. These gains were, however, essential to the building of momentum within programs so that qualitative outcomes for the community become significant over time. This requires recognition that employment of community researchers is not simply about producing a research product, but also about capacity and experience building within communities.

The fourth core value of 'reflection and evaluation' has consistently been given space within the relationship through the structure of the FWB, the PAR process, facilitator debriefings, workshops, conference attendance, and the writing of reports and articles such as this paper. It is important at multiple levels:

- as a means of debriefing and voicing experiences, understandings and aspirations;
- for developing community understanding of, and engagement with, external organisations;
- for developing credibility for the programs and organisations with government and funding bodies; and
- for recording experiences and a practical framework to guide future programs both at Yarrabah and in other communities.

The importance of process is emphasised in these core values, which recognise that community empowerment is both a means and an end. It is not simply about a research product, but also about capacity and trust strengthening within communities (Voyle & Simmons 1999; Pyett 2002; Rowe 2006).

The collaboration between Gurriny Yealamucka and its university partners has faced challenges. A major challenge of the collaboration has been the workload added to researchers by the need to build community capacity. This has included university researchers assuming *de facto* managerial roles in the early stages of the program, which may impact upon their role as researchers. For community staff, workload, training and motivation have also been issues. Similar issues are identified in the literature (Pyett 2002; Beacham *et al.* 2004; Rowe 2006).



The strengths and challenges of the research collaboration are expressed through the positive strategies and challenges for successful partnerships listed in Tables 7 and 8. The ability to overcome challenges has been based upon commitment to core values and practical frameworks. These tables summarise strategies and issues raised by Gurriny Yealamucka and university staff, and have strong similarity to the benefits and challenges summarised by Beacham *et al.* (2004).

Table 7: Positive strategies for successful partnerships

- Consult and re-consult with the community to ascertain community priorities.

- Develop a framework for programs reflecting these priorities.

- Create time and spaces for ongoing discussion within this framework.

- Assess skills and resources within the community in relation to programs.

- Facilitate training to allow community member involvement at multiple levels.

- Employ program workers from the community.

- Employ staff members who respect the framework of the programs.

- Be aware of political implications of actions.

Table 8: Challenges in implementing programs

- Overcoming community and individual reticence to participate.

- Time management of the breadth of tasks when under-resourced.

- Maintaining funding, especially early in programs.

- Developing appropriate skills and resources at the community level.

- Maintaining motivation and participation of staff and community.

- Providing quantitative evidence of the efficacy of reflective programs.

Conclusion

Like Beacham *et al.* (2004), this paper emphasises that implementation of community research partnerships is a process requiring time, trust and commitment from all involved. An important aspect of the programs that has facilitated these experiences is the inclusion of supportive and reflexive processes within the research framework for both ongoing orientation and evaluation. It is a process that can be personally rewarding for professional researchers and that allows community members wider social engagement. Participants in both workshops and interviews spoke of positive experiences and increased understanding of their partners and the importance of research.

Finally, it is worth commenting that a subtle indicator of the success of the Yarrabah collaboration is the interpretation of the research endeavour through dance. The creation of an inclusive 'research dance' within Yaba Bimbie's repertoire shows the efficacy and profound effect of the empowerment and PAR framework. This has previously been unknown in relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities in Australia. It reveals the extent to which the research process has been internalised and it is significant as a local, creative means of disseminating community-relevant research and health messages.



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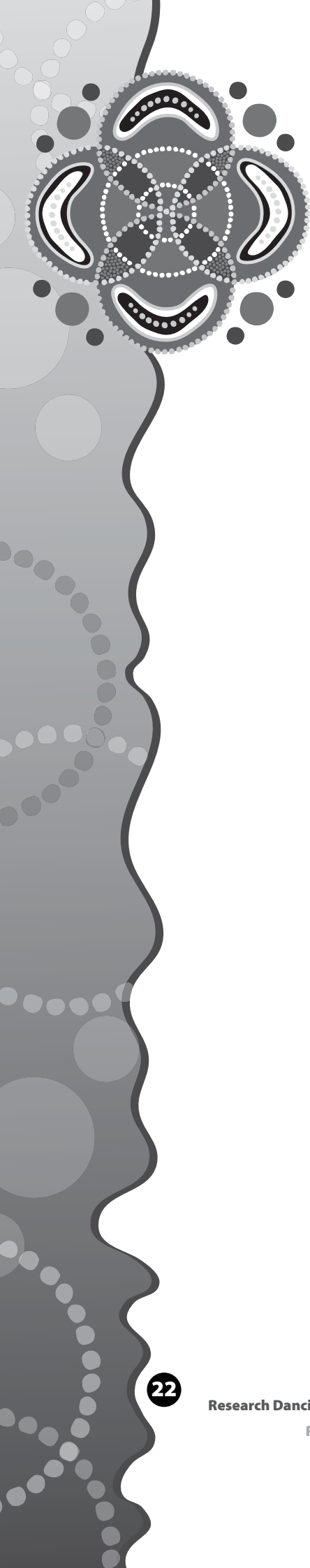
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Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health: Discussion Paper Series

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (CRAH) has instituted this Discussion Paper Series (DPS) as a forum for its researchers, students and associates. The purpose of the DPS is:

- To make informed and evidence-based contributions to critical policy debates affecting the health of Aboriginal people.
- To disseminate the research findings of CRAH researchers, students and associates quickly, without the delays associated with publication in academic journals, in order to generate comment and suggestions for revision or improvement.
- To provide CRAH researchers, students and associates with an avenue to present preliminary documents, circulated in a limited number of copies and posted on the CRAH website, intended to stimulate discussion and critical comment on the broad range of issues associated with the CRAH research agenda.
- To allow CRAH researchers, students and associates to draw out the key issues in Aboriginal health research through literature reviews and critical analyses of the implications for policy and practice.

Submission criteria

Submission to the Discussion Paper Series is open to all CRAH researchers, students and associates working on either funded or in-kind CRAH projects. The research findings in discussion papers may already have been presented at conferences or workshops, but generally will not yet have been published in journals. Authors should try to ensure that the discussion paper will be sufficiently different from any future journal article that they plan to write so as not to create a redundant publication.

Review process

All discussion papers will be reviewed either by internal CRAH reviewers or, where appropriate, external referees. The CRAH's editorial committee will assess the suitability for publication of all submissions and select reviewers for successful papers. Reviewers will include relevant scientific expertise, and representatives of governments and the Aboriginal health sector.

Feedback

The Discussion Paper Series is intended to promote the rapid dissemination of research results prior to publication; comments submitted directly to the authors are therefore welcomed. However, as results are often provisional any citation should take account of this.

Publication details

Discussion papers are published on an *ad hoc* basis throughout the year (3–4 p.a.). They are available both in printed and electronic formats (as pdfs that can be downloaded from the CRAH website: <www.craah.org.au>). The views and opinions expressed in the Series do not necessarily reflect those of the CRAH.

Submission details

All submissions to the CRAH Discussion Paper Series should be directed to the CRAH Publications Manager, Jane Yule (janesy@unimelb.edu.au) with the relevant Program Manager copied into the email.



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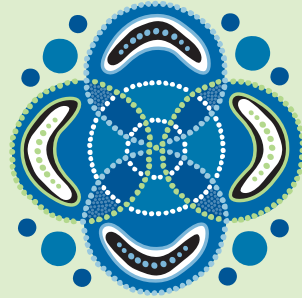
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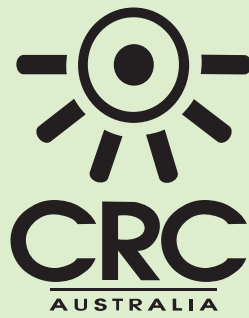
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Alexandra McEwen, Komla Tsey & Empowerment Research Team 2009, *The Role of Spirituality in Social and Emotional Wellbeing Initiatives: The Family Wellbeing Program at Yarrabah*, Discussion Paper No. 7.



Cooperative Research Centre for
Aboriginal Health



Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health

PO Box 41096

Casuarina, NT 0811

AUSTRALIA

T: +61 8 8922 8396

F: +61 8 8922 7797

E: admin@crcah.org.au

W: www.crcah.org.au

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