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Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: *State of knowledge paper*

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Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: State of knowledge paper

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Contents

Violence against Indigenous women: Establishing a context

This state of knowledge paper draws on both national and international literature and policy and program evaluations, to establish what is currently known about innovative responses to violence against Indigenous women in Australia (see Appendix B for research method). "Knowledge", however, is rarely uncontested. It reflects, to some degree, the priorities and perspectives of researchers and policy makers at any one time, and in any one place, as well as priorities of particular social and cultural groupings. It is only in recent years that the hitherto denied and marginalised knowledge of domestic violence victims has been granted the status of knowledge within mainstream society, and within the criminal justice system. In relation to Indigenous women and violence, a range of cultural, geographical and social factors has impeded the development of a body of knowledge. A key issue for researchers and practitioners lies in whether it is sufficient to apply the same perspectives that inform research on non-Indigenous women to the position of Indigenous women. There is now an increasing awareness that the issue requires its own range of tailored responses. Emerging practice in rural and remote Indigenous communities tends to be based on an appreciation of Indigenous law, culture and knowledge as providing a basis for work with victims. This approach may ensure that ensuing practices differ in a number of crucial respects from orthodox domestic violence projects run by mainstream organisations in urban settings.

A recent inquiry in Queensland maintains that a "one-size-fits-all approach to designing and delivering integrated service responses across Queensland will not work" (Queensland Government, 2015, p. 12), and that the barriers facing women in different regions (urban, rural and remote) and from different cultural backgrounds offer contrasting challenges (Queensland Government, 2015, p. 12). While this inquiry was not restricted to Indigenous women, it builds on the findings of previous reports on Indigenous women and aspects of family violence. There have been a number of intensive inquiries into the question (see for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence, 2000; Wild & Anderson, 2007; Mullighan, 2008; Gordon, Hallahan & Henry, 2002). Space precludes a full examination of these reports and their significance so we must restrict ourselves to a brief summary. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence, conducted in Queensland in 1999, was of particular significance because it brought to public and official attention the scale and destructiveness of family violence in some Queensland Indigenous communities; furthermore, it directly reflected the views and experiences of Indigenous women, who were central to the report's methodology. The report, drawing on the innovative work of Judy Atkinson (see, for example, Atkinson, 2002), identified the role of intergenerational trauma in perpetuating violence in Indigenous communities, with much of the violence directed at women. This theme of inherited trauma is also prominent in the New South Wales Attorney General's Department inquiry into the sexual abuse of Indigenous children, which also focuses on dispossession, the normalisation of abuse and social breakdown (Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, 2006). Gordon, Hallahan and Henry's (2002) report (usually referred to as the "The Gordon Inquiry") was mainly concerned with the lack of coordinated action in rural and remote Western Australian communities and the lack of a consistent police presence (Gordon, Hallahan & Henry, 2002). While the Wild and Anderson (2007) report in the Northern Territory, though expressing reservations about some claims in the media and government circles about the scale and intensity of family violence on remote communities, was concerned with ensuring that communities themselves led the struggle against violence. Mulligan's inquiry into the *Anangu, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara lands of South Australia* (Mullighan, 2007), reiterates some of the key concerns of these previous reports in relation to

the destruction of Indigenous cultural authority and the need for adequate prevention measures, as well as a justice response appropriate to the needs of *Anangu* people.

It needs to be stressed from the outset, however, that while there is robust debate in the literature around the causes of family violence and the longer-term solutions, there is broad acknowledgement that the safety of women and children escaping family violence remains the paramount priority in intervention. One of the outcomes of the greater awareness of the safety deficit on rural and remote communities for Indigenous women, was the creation of Commonwealth funded Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS), offering legal assistance, casework, counselling and court support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who are victims-survivors of family violence, and now located in 31 rural and remote locations around Australia (see http://www.nationalfvpls.org/Where-We-Are.php). The creation of these services follows on from criticism of the lack of adequate facilities in rural and remote locations to keep women safe from violence, such as the Gordon Inquiry (Gordon et al., 2002) and empirical research suggesting that services were particularly needed in remote communities (Clare, Morgan, Ferrante & Blagg, 2006). In some instances, such as Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia (WA), the FVPLS service is co-located with a women's refuge, offering a holistic, wrap-around service. Both are nested within the Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre that acts as a hub for a diversity of women's issues:

> Marninwarntikura is an agency integral to the maintenance and development of the **rich cultural, social and political fabric** of the Fitzroy Valley. Today it is an environment which is actively responsive to women's concerns. The organisation functions on multiple levels. It provides services and facilities for listening to fears and worries of women, while offering support through counselling and legal advice, to engage women in a **process of healing,** and protect them from harm. On another level, Marninwarntikura is committed to developing programs that **empower women**, economically, culturally and politically. (Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource & Legal Centre. Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation & Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, 2009).

We commence by describing the various factors particular to Indigenous women's experience, and demonstrating the implications of these for defining the issues of family violence within Indigenous communities. We further discuss the structural barriers to safety experienced by those living in rural and remote communities. The purpose of this discussion is to provide a context for an assessment of current mainstream and Indigenous-specific responses. There has been significant attention paid to the issue of violence in Indigenous communities in recent years, particularly in the Northern Territory (NT) following claims of endemic family violence in 2006 that culminated in the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response ("the Intervention") and saw a significant increase in police numbers on remote Indigenous communities. Despite this attention, there are few robust research reports establishing a reliable evidence base from which to draw firm conclusions about incidence and prevalence. The Wild and Anderson (2007) Report provided the pretext for the Intervention but contained no firm evidence regarding the scale of violence in Indigenous communities and, following previous reports in the NT (Northern Territory Law Reform Committee, 2004), called for better data collection and collaboration with communities to construct community-led safety plans. The Intervention, however, was very much a "top down" process that imposed solutions from above (Altman & Hinkson, 2007). These tended to be focused upon the enhanced policing of remote communities. While empirical research found that the increased police presence was welcomed by some people on remote communities (Pilkington, 2009), there were also concerns that the police were not willing to work in partnership with communities, tended to ignore community elders and were not focused on issues of concern to the communities (Allen Consulting Group, 2010; Pilkington, 2009). Indeed, statistical research in the NT in the wake of the Intervention found no discernable increase in the rate of prosecution for family and domestic violence, but a massive 250 percent increase in charges for vehicle related offending (Anthony & Blagg, 2012). The most notable and significant change in penal practice since 2006-07 in the NT lies in the dramatic increase in the imprisonment of Indigenous women. While this is a national trend, the picture is bleakest in the NT where the rate of imprisonment of Indigenous women more than doubled, from just over 50 per 100,000 to 110 per 100,000 between 2006 and 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b).

In the following section we map the national response climate, outlining a number of mainstream responses, including early intervention strategies, the operations of mainstream services and justice system responses, to further identify the unique barriers faced by Indigenous women experiencing

violence, and advocate for context-specific responses. Our discussion then turns to emerging holistic, innovative and hybrid responses currently operating in specific Indigenous communities. Here, we identify several Indigenous-led programs found in the geographical areas of importance to our project including Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. We describe the development and operations of these programs as they demonstrate community-led initiatives. A prime focus is the degree of integration between community-led and mainstream agencies, and an identification of whether new "hybrid" practices can be adapted for use in other jurisdictions. As such, we utilise this discussion to identify what can be learned from current holistic, innovative and hybrid approaches.

An important aspect of assessing the applicability of these programs is the ability to define and measure program success. In the third section of the state of knowledge paper we discuss evaluative approaches to Indigenous-specific programs. This includes a comparative table of programs across Australia that have undergone recent evaluation. We highlight standard definitions of strengths and limitations, drawing on the influence of the contextualisation of violence against Indigenous women discussed previously. Finally, we utilise the above analysis to argue for what is called a critical realist approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) to program evaluation. Given that Indigenous communities are not homogenous entities (Putt, 2013) and vary considerably in size, history, culture and demography, we propose an assessment of programs that is localised, grounded and specific. Indeed, contemporary "realist" approaches to research assume that nothing works everywhere for everyone; context makes a big difference to program outcomes. A realist evaluation does not ask simply "what works?" but "how or why does this work, for whom, in what circumstances?" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 17). Realist approaches are particularly useful in Indigenous communities where initiatives may be generated by a host of factors often "invisible" to mainstream methodologies, such as the input of elders, culture and spirituality. Further, this approach validates a "yarning" style and "strengths based" approach to research, in which participants are viewed as motivated by a desire to improve conditions.

Family, sexual and lateral violence within Indigenous Australian communities

Indigenous women in Australia are at a greater risk of violence than non-Indigenous women (Lawrence, 2006; Lucashenko, 1996; Bryant, 2009; Day, Jones, Nakata & McDermott, 2012; Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis, 2006; McCalman, Bridge, Whiteside, Bainbridge, Tsey & Jongen, 2014; Taylor & Putt, 2007). Research by Keel (2004) found Indigenous women to be 12 times more likely to be the victim/survivor of assault than non-Indigenous women, (and more than 31 times more likely to be hospitalised for injuries caused by assault than other Australian women (Tayton, Kaspiew, Moore & Campo, 2004). Although the health issues listed above are general across all women who experience violence, the consequences for Indigenous women are compounded in light of the political, social and cultural histories of Indigenous Australians. Further, the differential rate of violence experienced by Indigenous women suggests some unique features related to causal and risk factors. In the section that follows we identify forms of violence experienced at higher rates by Indigenous women. These are family and sexual violence, and lateral violence. The purpose of the following discussion is to highlight the specificity of these forms of violence as they occur in Indigenous communities, according to the available research literature. Further, we discuss the compounding effects of ruralness and remoteness on many Indigenous women's experiences of violence.

Nancarrow (2003, 2010) contended that violence against women within the Indigenous Australian communities needed to be understood within the specific historical and cultural context of colonisation and systemic disadvantage. Any discussion of violence in contemporary Indigenous communities must be located within this historical context. Similarly, any discussion of "causes" of violence within the community must recognise and reflect the impact of colonialism and the indelible impact of violence perpetrated by white colonialists against Indigenous peoples (Watson, 2009). A meta-evaluation of literature by Blagg (1999) identified many "causes" of family violence in Indigenous Australian communities, including historical factors such as: collective dispossession; the loss of land and traditional culture; the fragmentation of kinship systems and Aboriginal law; poverty and unemployment; structural racism; drug and alcohol misuse; institutionalisation; and the decline of traditional Aboriginal men's role and status - while "powerless" in relation to mainstream society, Indigenous men may seek compensation by exerting power over women and children (Blagg, 1999). By highlighting this patina of layered systemic factors we create a more

complex and nuanced portrait than when we employ mono-causal explanations for family violence such as the male power model (Keel, 2004). Further, no singular factor can be neatly ascribed "causal" status for violence in Indigenous Australian communities. Each of these issues forms a backdrop to our discussion of the specificity of family, sexual and lateral violence as experienced by Indigenous women.

The role of alcohol abuse in precipitating violence has been identified in empirical research. Research by Mouzos (2001) found that in four out of five "domestic" homicides involving Indigenous people, alcohol was a contributing factor. The 2011 *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* observed that in 71.4 percent of Indigenous homicides over the period from 1999-2000 to 2008-2009, both the victim and offender had consumed alcohol at the time of the offence, compared with 24.7 percent of non-Indigenous homicides (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2001). It also observed that Indigenous people were hospitalised for alcohol related conditions at rates between two and eight times those of other people in 2008-09 (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2001). Taylor and Putt (2007) reported that Indigenous participants in their research identified sexual violence and domestic violence as linked to drug and alcohol misuse. A number of Indigenous-led initiatives in Australia have attempted to reduce the consumption of alcohol as a prerequisite for reducing family violence. In Fitzroy Crossing in 2007, discussed in detail later, an Indigenous women's bush meeting auspiced by Marninwarntikura Women's Refuge decided to press for a ban on strong take-away alcohol. The ensuing restrictions were viewed as a "circuit breaker" rather than a cure; none-the-less, research found a reduction in the severity of family violence, and fewer alcohol related visits to the Accident and Emergency Department of the hospital (Kinnane, Farringdon, Henderson-Yates & Parker, 2009).

Family violence in Indigenous Australian communities

The most notable and perhaps most researched form of violence against women is that of domestic or family violence. The terms domestic violence, family violence and intimate partner violence are often used to describe violence against women perpetrated by a current or previous male partner. Although these terms are used interchangeably, research has found that Indigenous communities tend to prefer the term

"family violence" as it encapsulates "both the extended nature of Indigenous families and the kinship relationships within which a range of forms of Indigenous violence frequently occur" (Day, Jones, Nakata & McDermott, 2012, p. 105).

The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce states that the term family violence encompasses a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological, and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks, and communities (Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce, 2003). Blagg (2000a) suggests that the preference for the term "family violence" allows for a retelling of the story of settlement in ways which foreground its devastating impact on Aboriginal culture, rather than a simple term that defines a social problem within a domestic relationship. Additionally, the historical context, inclusive of the prevalence of intergenerational and lateral violence in Indigenous communities, means that family violence is not best understood as limited to a gendered phenomenon (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2011). Based on research in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, Blagg (2008a) suggests that we need to be alert to local nuances in the use of the term "family violence", particularly when framing prevention strategies that engage the community.

For example, intervention may stress a number of locally voiced concerns by women regarding exacerbating factors such as alcohol availability (as noted earlier), the pressure on family incomes due to gambling, the lack of support services for young people with mental health problems (some definitions of family violence include youth suicide) (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2011), and/or the cultural inappropriateness of many mainstream programs, as well as overcrowded homes. A locally nuanced Indigenous definition of family violence might also include "couple violence", "jealous fighting" or "family fighting" where both parties engage in aggressive behaviour, rather than gendered violence (Blagg, 2008a). Developing a one-size fits all definitive definition of family violence, therefore, can be problematic because it is often used to describe a range of negative behaviours directed at family members, such as aggressive "demand sharing", "humbugging" old people (demanding money, or food), and "jealousing-up" behaviours (deliberately evoking a violent response from a partner) (Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, 2006).

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission (NSWLRC) argued for a legally consistent definition of family violence,

offering the following definition: "violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful" (ALRC & NSWLRC, 2010, p. 178). This provides a distinct, succinct and clear definition of family violence that can be employed on a generic basis. Any over-arching definition, however, is unable to encompass the nuances and variations of meaning that become attached to a term on a local level. Involving Indigenous women in any locality in the design of family violence prevention, intervention and treatment programs may have to set out by identifying relationships between language groups; what (if any) kinds of "avoidance" practices exist in the community; and, through discussion with senior women, in particular, on t issues that should be prioritised. Priorities may include building better relationships with the police, running some "on-country" camps with young women and men to build self-esteem through respect for culture, building a refuge at the women's centre or setting up a women's patrol to stop grog coming onto the community.

However, a focus on family violence as a community problem should not obscure the extent to which women are the main victims of many forms of abuse, exploitation and oppression, or that gender does not play a dominant role in violence against Indigenous women. A recent report in Queensland found that domestic and family violence disproportionately affects women, rather than men. It guarded against viewing the phenomenon in absolutist terms, however, noting that violence is sometimes used by "both genders within a range of intimate and non-intimate relationships" (Special Taskforce into Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015, p. 8). Feminist theory has demonstrated that gendered violence often occurs at the intersection of a range of oppressive relationships (Crenshaw, 1989). This approach, initiated in the work of black feminists in the USA, views women as constrained by multiple, not singular, intersecting forms of oppression. Indigenous women's experience of patriarchal male violence is compounded by histories of racism and colonialism (Norrington & Easteal, 2007). A fully rounded understanding of violence against Indigenous women in Australia must factor in the extent to which they have been the victims of state violence since colonisation. Indigenous women were particularly affected by policies designed to destroy Indigenous family life; Patrick Dodson describing them as "the consciously nominated targets of government in its pursuit to destabilise and dismantle Aboriginal society" (Dodson, 1991, p. 236).

Research evidence shows that Indigenous women are more likely to be victims of family violence than non-Indigenous women (Bagshaw et al., 2009). Indigenous women living in rural and remote areas are reported to be up to 45 times more likely to experience family violence than other women living in rural and remote areas (VicHealth, 2011; McCalman et al., 2014). Further, Indigenous Australian women are reported to be 35 times more likely to be hospitalised for family violence assaults than other Australian women (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis, 2006). Oberin (2001, p. 26) argues that, "the high rates of domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities must be seen in the context of colonisation, disadvantage, oppression and marginalisation." Without acknowledging and understanding how this historical context has shaped the lives of Indigenous Australians, responses to addressing family violence within Indigenous communities will be limited in their success. This understanding and appreciation for their history is required for all genuine attempts at improving the quality of life for all Indigenous Australians. It also needs to be stressed, however, that most of the data noted above is old data. The finding that women living in remote communities are 45 times more likely to be victims of violence is drawn from a 1996 study by Ferrante, Morgan, Indermaur, & Harding (1996) (at the Crime Research Centre in Western Australia), one of the first to link criminal justice and health related data. While there is no reliable empirical evidence, researchers claim that the under-reporting of family violence is higher amongst Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women. Cripps (2008) argues that studies focused on Indigenous reporting rates would find significantly lower rates of reporting. Similarly, Cunneen (2009) suggests that given the lack of services on remote communities, it would be reasonable to expect a significant level of under-reporting of abuse cases.

The impact of family violence on children

A growing body of research is documenting the impact on children of witnessing family violence. "Witnessing" includes seeing and hearing violence and its aftermath, but may also include being used as a hostage or weapon, being asked to spy on a parent and report to the other parent, being blamed for the violence and/or attempting to intervene and stop the violence, and dealing emotionally with a parent who alternates between loving and violent behaviour (Richards, 2011). There is some evidence that childhood exposure to family violence can lead to intergenerational violence perpetration and/or violence-tolerant behaviour in victims (Kovacs &

Tomison, 2003) but the evidence is mixed and researchers emphasise that exposure to violence as a child does not necessarily lead to involvement in violent relationships in adulthood (Richards, 2011).

Mothers experiencing repeated violence from their partners in the presence of their children may also face an increased risk of having their children removed and placed in care, as child protection authorities may view ongoing exposure to the violence as a form of child abuse. Cripps (2012) notes that family violence is the "single biggest risk factor for child abuse notifications to be substantiated in Victoria" (p. 30), while Nixon and Cripps (2013) note that mothers may avoid seeking help and reporting violence, for fear that children may be removed by child protection workers, who hold mothers accountable for stopping the violence.

Sexual violence in Indigenous Australian communities

While there are limited data on the prevalence of sexual violence against Indigenous Australian women (Taylor & Putt, 2007; Keel, 2004), the available data suggests that Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience sexual violence than non-Indigenous women (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). In a study of 50 Indigenous female prison inmates in New South Wales, it was found that "over three quarters were victims of child sexual abuse, just under half had been sexually assaulted as adults, and almost four in five were victims of family violence" (Taylor & Putt, 2007, p.2). For many victims living in rural and remote communities, the risk of sexual victimisation is greater (Wendt & Baker, 2013). As with family violence, Indigenous women's sexual victimisation experience is distinct from other women's experiences. Underlying the issue of sexual violence in Indigenous communities is the suggestion that "adult sexual assault is still not seen as an issue…[it] is frequently a part of violent relationships" (Adams & Hunter, 2007, p. 26). Further, available literature suggests that Indigenous victims may experience shame and fear that is associated with cultural and community ties that could result in payback or intimidation from the perpetrator's family (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Queensland, 1996, pp. 36-37). As with physical violence, many Indigenous victims do not report incidents of sexual violence to police or support services. Research by Cook, David & Grant (2001) suggests that refusal to contact the police is entrenched in a distrust of police, the criminal justice system and mainstream services. Indigenous victims of sexual assault have encountered racist attitudes from police and justice system actors (Cook et al.,

2001; McCalman et al., 2014; Thomas, 1992). As such, many Indigenous victims of sexual violence do not seek support from legal or social actors. Furthermore, a recent study of responses to Indigenous sexual assault notes that, "there is a complete lack of evidence…on what works in responding to Indigenous sexual assault" (McCalman, et al., 2014, p. 10). Given the scarcity of best-practice evidence in responding to and addressing Indigenous sexual assault, it is difficult to ascertain what strategies are likely to be effective.

Lateral violence in Indigenous Australian communities

The term lateral violence has only recently been added to the debate about violence in Indigenous communities and there is little in the way of rigorously grounded research. It is used within Indigenous Australian communities, where it describes "a product of a complex mix of historical, cultural and social dynamics that results in a spectrum of behaviours" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2001, p. 54). These behaviours include:

- gossiping;
- jealousy;
- bullying;
- shaming;
- social exclusion;
- family feuding;
- organisational conflict; and
- physical violence. (Blagg, 2008b; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011)

The broad definition of family violence in the Indigenous Australian context, as noted earlier, is capacious enough to include incidents of lateral violence. As such, family violence with the inclusion of lateral violence extends beyond the "traditional" victim/perpetrator relationships to include family members, kinship networks and community members, in general. Lateral violence describes how anger is, literally, directed sideways rather than targeted at the deeper causes of oppression. The term is believed to have originated among First Nation people in Canada, where it has been employed to explain how communities turn on each other, rather than direct anger at larger structures of oppression (Native Woman's Association of Canada, 2015).

Lateral violence, in the form of threats and intimidation by the offender's kin, may be one reason why Indigenous women on remote communities are less likely to report violence (Wild & Anderson, 2007; Cripps, 2008). Lateral

violence remains an under-researched area. Existing anecdotal commentary on the issue suggests that lateral violence occurs within Indigenous organisations as well as in the community, with people "gossiping" and "back-stabbing", and undermines social solidarity (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p.84). It is said to have become particularly acute in instances where communities became polarised during Native Title adjudications, and people's identities as Indigenous people were called into question (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2000).

According to the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, "lateral violence feeds off environments where there is little or no understanding of the historical linkages, and intergenerational impacts between oppression, racism and lateral violence in colonised nations" (National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, 2012, p. 2). The Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) Social Justice Report also comments, "what makes lateral violence different for us is that it stems from the sense of powerlessness that comes from oppression" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 56). With this in mind, it is important to distinguish that while non-Indigenous people may encounter any one of the behaviours listed above, the experience and impact of these behaviours on Indigenous Australians can be more destructive. In Indigenous communities, although an individual act of lateral violence can target one individual, the "traumatic impact can reverberate across the community because of the close community and kinship ties" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 71). As such, the consequences of lateral violence are far more widespread and far-reaching for Indigenous Australians.

In an attempt to explain and expose lateral violence within Australian Indigenous communities, Wingard (2010, pp. 13-17) uses the narrative concept of externalising conversations to suggest that the effectiveness of lateral violence in holding Indigenous peoples back is based on the fact that many people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are not adequately equipped with the knowledge, understanding or tools in order to combat this type of violence. As such, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("the Declaration") provides a set of key principles in responding to lateral violence in Indigenous communities (United Nations, 2008). These key principles are:

- empowering Indigenous Peoples to take control of their communities and aspirations;
- promoting and developing community decision-making and dispute resolution protocols;
- addressing discrimination and negative stereotypes by promoting equality that recognises difference; and
- building and strengthening culture as a form of resilience and strength that promotes healthy cultural norms and recognises difference and diversity.

The United Nations also acknowledges that achieving these aims requires a particular focus on the position of Indigenous women. An international expert group meeting hosted by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2012 observed that:

> Combating violence against women and girls in the indigenous context must be achieved holistically and not addressed in isolation from the range of rights recognized for indigenous peoples in general. In that regard, violence cannot be seen as separate from the history of discrimination and marginalization experienced by indigenous peoples as a whole. (United Nations Economic and Social Council, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2012, p.6)

The meeting notes the importance of ensuring that the multiple forms of exploitation and abuse imposed on Indigenous women, ranging, internationally, from sexual victimisation by military and paramilitary forces through to the failure of member states to prosecute acts of domestic violence perpetrated against Indigenous women, should become priorities for intervention. While not mentioning lateral violence specifically, the meeting and background papers identify the need to empower Indigenous women, increase their access to education and work, and ensure they are included in decision-making processes. The Declaration principle most associated with the rights of Indigenous people to be recognised as partners, rather than subordinates, in matters affecting them is that of Article 10 of the Declaration which demands that Indigenous people be granted "free, prior and informed consent" (or FPIC) on questions affecting them. It is acknowledged, however, that women are not always "free" to be involved in these decision-making processes and require additional supports to ensure they are able to fully participate. Further, discussions about the implementation of the FPIC principle has given weight to the agency of Indigenous women across a diversity of issues (United Nations Secretariat, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2005).

FPIC principles may increasingly influence the design of programs aimed at responding to and addressing family violence within Indigenous communities by stressing the degree to which the informed consent and participation of Indigenous women must underpin any intervention impacting on them. Further research on the topic of lateral violence and its links with violence against women and children is needed before we can assert with confidence how the phenomena are connected. The problem from a feminist perspective is that adding another category to the causes of family violence makes the construct increasingly more diffuse. As the focus drifts steadily further away from concrete gendered power relationships towards a mix of systemic and historical factors, the danger is that gender eventually drops out of the equation altogether. On the other hand, a greater understanding of lateral violence may provide a more nuanced portrait of the kinds of pressures exerted on some Indigenous women to tolerate abuse, and the ways they in turn might internalise oppression.

Compounding effects: Violence against Indigenous women in rural and remote communities

A final dimension to the specificity of Indigenous women's experiences of violence, and a further key barrier of importance to our project, is geographical remoteness. As was noted earlier, Indigenous women living in rural and remote areas are up to 45 times more likely to experience family violence than other Australian women living in rural and remote areas (VicHealth, 2011; McCalman et al., 2014). The available literature identifies a number of issues that are specific to the experience of violence for women living in rural and remote communities. These issues have been identified as:

- Geographical isolation of rural living.
- Communication difficulties, including telephone access as well as access to transport.
- A complete lack of Indigenous specific shelters coupled with reluctance of hotel/motel staff to assist Indigenous Australian women (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. 16).
- Heightened concerns relating to privacy and confidentiality as a result of living in a small community with a limited range of service providers.
- Lack of services, or a lack of appropriate services.
- The dominance of patriarchal ideologies and colonial mentalities amongst police in rural and remote locations (Cunneen, 2001).
- Delayed response times due to a lack of service and distance.
- Distance to services and difficulty accessing transport, and greater risk of fatalities and serious injuries because of slow transportation in and out of communities.
- Traditional norms, particularly those related to family and gender roles.
- Isolation as a compounding aspect of family violence that may be exploited by perpetrators.
- Easier access to firearms than in urban areas.
- Higher rates of alcohol consumption.
- Amplification of risk due to the impact of natural disasters, economic downturn and high rates of unemployment (Tayton et al., 2014, pp. 32-33).
- The comparatively lower wages of women working in rural areas.

The tight-knit nature of small communities can compound impacts for women in rural and regional areas. Many victims feel deterred from seeking help by a lack of anonymity (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015; Alston, 1997; Memmott et al., 2001). In addition, Owen & Carrington (2014), found that rurality and community sanctions in rural communities often encourage victims of family violence to remain silent on the issue, thus accentuating rural victim's social and economic dependency on men. Researchers have noted the relative conservatism of rural towns, where family violence may be viewed as a "private matter" not to be publically revealed (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg, 1997; Blagg, 1999). Rural towns also suffer from poor communications and lack of adequate policing and support services. Indigenous women in rural towns, unlike remote communities, may experience racism from non-Indigenous people in mainstream services and there may be few culturally secure and appropriate services (George & Harris, 2014; Coverdale, 2011), further compounding the experience of Indigenous victims. Despite this knowledge base, there exists comparatively limited published research on how rural and remote communities respond to and address the issue of violence against Indigenous women (Bagshaw et al., 2009). This is consistent with international research that indicates that rural and remote areas have been relatively neglected in this field of research (Jamieson & Wendt, 2008).

The need for a culturally contextualised response

The previous discussion of family, sexual and lateral violence suggests that the experiences of Indigenous women have a *radical specificity* given their political, social and cultural histories and cannot be deduced from the mainstream literature on violence against women. One issue that has marred the debate about family violence is whether violence is culturally sanctioned. Indigenous elders, including senior women, who talked to the Western Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into Aboriginal law and culture, maintained a distinction between the culturally sanctioned and tightly managed practices of traditional punishment, and the kinds of drunken violence against women sometimes seen in Aboriginal towns and in remote communities (Wohlan, 2005). This kind of violence, researchers suggest, is resolutely post-colonial, in the sense that it was set in train by the "founding violence" of colonialism, and has reverberated through Indigenous families and communities since (Atkinson, 2001, 2002; Blagg, 2008b). This Indigenous knowledge challenges the view, widely circulated in the mainstream media and highlighted in some official narratives during the Northern Territory intervention, that traditional cultural beliefs and practices were largely responsible for violence against women and children in remote communities, and that Indigenous women were the victims of culturally sanctioned violence (Watson, 2009). This view led to the removal of references to "cultural background" from the list of mandatory considerations under s16A of the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth), and attempts by the Commonwealth to make other states follow suit during the Intervention (Anthony, 2013).

These factors have implications for the effectiveness of mainstream responses to Indigenous family violence. The specificity of violence within Indigenous Australian communities often escapes the reach of mainstream discourse, systems and organisations (Bluett-Boyd, 2005). In addition to, and often intersecting with, these historical factors are the unique barriers faced by Indigenous Australian women in particular when attempting to access mainstream forms of redress. "Many Indigenous women face discrimination when attempting to access [mainstream] services; they can be deterred from seeking help where the response is not 'culturally safe' or appropriate; or are reluctant to involve the law because their community is already overrepresented in the criminal justice system" (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p.16-17). Further, mainstream child-protection responses contribute to the "ongoing process of removal" (Bamblett et al., 2010, p. 12) of children in many Indigenous communities and can simply entrench the grief and loss that contributes that contributes to the cycle of violence in the first place (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 27). Moreover, national research reflects a number of systemic issues specific to the Indigenous Australian community that potentially render contemporary mainstream responses inappropriate. Bluett-Boyd (2005) usefully summarises these systemic causes; they include:

- the uniqueness of Indigenous family relationships and the dangerous, if unintended, consequences of superimposing mainstream notions of autonomy individuality and choice onto Indigenous women (Blagg, 2002; 2008);
- the fact that Anglospheric feminism approaches essentialise women's identities and fail to recognise difference (Lucashenko, 1997);
- the aspiration of Indigenous Australian communities to resolve issues at a local level and for the validation of individual experiences through participation (Blagg, 2000b);
- the need for individuals to be granted "ownership" of responses to offending "stolen" by the state (Strang & Braithwaite, 2002); and
- the unresolved conflict between Indigenous Australia and the criminal justice system: particularly in relation to the historical role of the police in colonial dispossession, deaths in custody and mass incarceration (Kelly, 2002). (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. 4)

Indeed, it remains clear that there are considerable differences of emphasis in the ways many Indigenous women and non-Indigenous feminists identify the causes of violence against women and seek solutions. As will be discussed in the following section, this conceptual gap has consequences for Indigenous women's access to mainstream services and systems. In this next section we identify and compare both mainstream and Indigenous-specific community-led response programs in the context of the specific needs of Indigenous Australian communities.

Responding to violence against Indigenous women

The identification of both causal and risk factors in violence against women has clear implications for the development of responses. As noted earlier, there may be a disconnect, even a degree of incommensurability, between mainstream and Indigenous notions of causality, as well as differences in the way the notion of "risk" is deployed. We noted earlier, for example, the ways that suspected family violence triggers "risk assessments" that often lead to the removal of children; further distancing Indigenous women from support services because they become reluctant to report further abuse. In this section we discuss the national response climate, outlining a number of mainstream responses including early intervention strategies, to identify the unique barriers faced by Indigenous women experiencing violence. Our discussion then turns to emerging holistic, innovative and hybrid responses currently operating in specific Indigenous communities. Here, we highlight several programs found in the geographical areas of importance to our project including Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. We describe the development and operations of these programs as they demonstrate community-led initiatives. Our prime focus in this research is the degree of integration between community-led and mainstream agencies, and an identification of whether new "hybrid" practices can be adapted for other jurisdictions. As such we utilise this discussion to identify what can be learned from current holistic, innovative and hybrid approaches.

The national response climate

Indigenous-specific policy responses to family violence

In recent years there has been a concerted effort by governments to address violence against women. The introduction of a National Plan, and subsequent Action Plans, has been complemented at the state and territory level by the development of state-specific strategies. This has been further enhanced by local community activity on the issue (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 9), reinforcing the belief that the issue requires a whole of government/whole of community response.

Further, in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, a number of Australian states and territories have introduced state-based Indigenous Justice Agreements (IJAs). These IJAs vary across jurisdictions, however all seek to improve Indigenous justice outcomes, and are negotiated between respective state and territory governments and Indigenous peak bodies (Alison & Cunneen, 2013). Coupled with IJAs, state and territory governments have also established related strategic policy frameworks. Conversely, as noted by Alison and Cunneen (2013, p. 4), "all jurisdictions which have *not* introduced an IJA have also *not* developed overarching Indigenous strategic policy". By way of contract, those jurisdictions that have established an IJA are more likely to have also established criminal justice related Indigenous-specific strategic plans. However, despite the link between the over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system and family violence, those jurisdictions that have established IJAs have done little to specifically address Indigenous victimisation (Alison & Cunneen, 2013).

To date, no Australian state or territory has created an Indigenous specific, stand-alone family violence policy. Rather, each jurisdiction's family violence policy and/or policy framework is inclusive of Indigenous family violence, and makes varied reference to the nuanced and specific needs of Indigenous family violence victims. The following section provides a brief overview of strategic policy and/or frameworks that guide violence against women initiatives. The following provides an overview of key policy frameworks across Australia.

Commonwealth

In 2008 the Federal Government established the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) to provide national advice on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and children. In 2009, the National Council presented *Time for action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009–2021* (NCRVAWC, 2009), a draft for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan), endorsed by the Australian, and all state and territory, governments through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011. This National Plan focuses on strategies and actions covering prevention, early intervention, improved service delivery and justice responses, with the ultimate view that no Australian woman should be made a victim of domestic, family or sexual violence.

While not specific to Indigenous family violence, the National Plan "builds on COAG's commitments under the Closing the Gap framework, which is working to help close the gap in life expectancy and life opportunities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians" (Council of Australian Governments, 2011, p. 9). One of the six national outcome measures is focused on strengthening Indigenous communities, particularly Indigenous communities' capacity to develop local solutions to preventing violence (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). Each state and territory government's domestic and family violence policy is built within the framework of the National Plan, and thus includes specific measures that focus on strengthening the capacity of Indigenous communities to develop local responses and solutions to domestic and family violence. The following section provides a brief description of each state and territory's family violence policy landscape.

Victoria

In 2008 the Victorian *Indigenous family violence 10 year plan, strong culture, strong peoples and strong families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities* was launched (Department of Planning and Community Development, 2008.) This 10-year plan articulates the Government's vision, objectives and actions, which guide, inform and direct the Aboriginal community and the Victorian Government to reduce Aboriginal family violence. The establishment of the Victorian Indigenous family violence primary prevention framework meets one of the commitments made in the 10 Year Plan. The framework is designed to support: Aboriginal family violence primary prevention capacity building; effective, sustainable activities; and ownership and leadership within Aboriginal communities. Most recently, *Victoria's action plan to address violence against women and children 2012-2015* was released in 2012 by the Victorian government (Victorian Government, 2012). This document identifies Indigenous Australians as a vulnerable group.

New South Wales

In 2010 the New South Wales government launched its *Stop the violence, end the silence* (Office of Women's Policy, 2010) action plan, containing 91 actions across prevention, safety and justice, building capacity, protection, provision of services and support, and data collection and research. With the aim of reducing the prevalence of domestic and family violence and increasing community awareness, the Plan identifies short and long-term activities. Subsequently, in 2011, the NSW Department of Health released its *NSW Health Aboriginal Family Health Strategy – Responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities 2011-2016* (NSW Department of Health, 2011), to guide all activities that are aimed at responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities, with the ultimate goal of strengthening Aboriginal families and communities (NSW Department of Health, 2011).

Queensland

In 2009 the Queensland Government released *For our sons and daughters – a Queensland Government strategy to reduce domestic and family violence 2009-2014* (Queensland Government Special Taskforce into Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015). In 2010 the Government also introduced a new partial defence of "killing in an abusive domestic relationship". Most recently, in 2014 the Queensland Government established the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. The Taskforce's *Not now, not ever – putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* report was submitted to the Premier of Queensland in February 2015, and makes 140 recommendations to reduce the prevalence of domestic and family violence (Special Taskforce into Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015).

Western Australia

The *Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Strategic Plan 2009-2013* (Department for Child Protection, 2009) saw systemic reform of the state's response to domestic and family violence. Building on this, in 2013 the Department for Child Protection and Family Support released the *Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 – creating safer communities* (Department for Child Protection and Family Support, 2013) focusing on long-

term early intervention efforts, enhancing victim safety and perpetrator accountability.

Tasmania

In 2004, the Tasmanian Government introduced its *Safe at Home: A criminal justice framework for responding to family violence in Tasmania* that saw major changes to family violence related legislation (Department of Justice and Industrial Relations, 2003). This included the recognition and introduction of economic and emotional abuse and intimidation as criminal offences and thus grounds for obtaining Family Violence Orders. Additionally, amendments were made to the *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997* so as to recognise children's exposure to family violence as a form of child abuse. In accordance with The National Plan, in 2013 the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet released its *Taking action: Tasmania's primary prevention strategy to reduce violence against women and children 2012-2022* (Department of Premiere and Cabinet, 2013).

Northern Territory

Guided by the *Building on our strengths: A framework for action for women in the Northern Territory 2008-2012*, the Northern Territory Government recognised and included economic abuse and intimidation as forms of family violence (Department of Children and Families, 2008). The NT Government also introduced a mandatory reporting scheme in March 2009, making the NT the only Australian jurisdiction with mandatory reporting for domestic and family violence. The Northern Territory government has since released its *Domestic and family violence reduction strategy 2014-2017: Safety is everyone's right* (Northern Territory Government, 2014) as part of the territory's commitment to The National Plan.

South Australia

The South Australian government's *Women's Safety Strategy 2005-2010* provides a broad framework for family and domestic violence prevention and early intervention (Office for Women, 2005). State wide reform efforts have resulted in rape and sexual assault law reform and expanding police powers in issuing Intervention Orders. Reforms have also resulted in the broadening of the definition of "abuse" to include emotional and psychological harm, and the denial of financial, social or personal autonomy. Further, in 2011, the SA government launched its *Right to Safety – South Australia's Women's Safety Strategy 2011-2022* (Office for Women, 2011).

Australian Capital Territory

Led by the ACT Office for Women, domestic and family violence initiatives are guided by the *ACT Women's Plan 2010 – 2015* (Office for Women, 2010). This has seen the enactment of the *Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2008* as well as a raft of technology upgrades in courts, specialist training of police, prosecutors and the victim support sector. In the state government's commitment to The National Plan, the ACT Government launched its *ACT Prevention of violence against women and children strategy 2011 – 2017* (ACT Government, 2011).

It must be noted that, in the context of these frameworks "the outcomes of policy amendments are often difficult to distinguish and monitor. This is true also of the distribution of funding to address the issue (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. iii). Indeed, funding of one-off, largely experimental programs continues. Policy-makers continue to place enormous faith in "one-off" programs delivered on the whole by agencies that have no roots in the communities they service (Blagg, 2008b). Despite this, there exist common trends in services across many states and the territories, including trends in early intervention programs, health and legal services and justice responses. Each of these tiers of intervention present unique challenges for many members of Indigenous Australian communities.

Under-reporting of violence against women in Indigenous communities

An adequate response to violence in Indigenous communities has been hamstrung by a lack of precise data on prevalence. Research points to a significant degree of under-reporting by Indigenous victims (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis, 2006; Bryant & Willis, 2008; Mullighan, 2008; Wild & Anderson, 2007; Willis, 2011; Blagg, 2008b). Indigenous women continuously balance off the desire to stop the violence by reporting to the police with the potential consequences for themselves and other family members that may result from approaching the police; often concluding that the negatives outweigh the positives. Synthesizing the literature on the topic reveals a number of consistent themes, including: a reluctance to report because of fear of the police, the perpetrator and perpetrator's kin; fear of "payback" by the offender's family if he is jailed; concerns the offender might become "a death in custody"; a cultural reluctance to become involved with non-Indigenous justice systems, particularly a system viewed as an instrument of dispossession by many people in the Indigenous community; a degree of normalisation of violence in some families and a degree of fatalism about change; the impact of "lateral violence" (discussed above) which makes victims subject to intimidation and community denunciation for reporting offenders, in Indigenous communities; negative experiences of contact with the police when previously attempting to report violence (such as being arrested on outstanding warrants); fears that their children will be removed if they are seen as being part of an abusive house-hold; lack of transport on rural and remote communities; and a general lack of culturally secure services.

Intervention approaches

There is growing literature and evidence that violence against women is preventable. Many current violence against women prevention strategies have adopted a public health model. This approach offers acknowledgment that violence against women has severe health implications, including disability and death. The adoption of the public health model seeks to identify the causes and effects of violence against women in order to prevent it, intervene at an early stage, and limit the impacts of the violence after it has occurred. These three levels of activity are known as primary prevention, early intervention or secondary prevention and tertiary prevention or intervention (VicHealth, 2007).

Early intervention is targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of violent behaviour or being subject to violence. The aim of early intervention responses is to change behaviours and attitudes of those who exhibit early signs of violence and to intervene and support women and children who are at risk of violence (VicHealth, 2007). Violence against women takes many forms. It often begins with subtle controlling behaviours and can escalate into coercion and physical and sexual violence. "At the individual level, early intervention responses seek to address controlling behaviours before they become established patterns. Early intervention responses can also [be used to target] environments [where there are] strong signs that violence may occur" (Vic Health, 2007, p.8), for instance in a setting where there is a strong culture of disrespect for women.

There is overwhelming support for primary prevention, and secondary and tertiary intervention responses as a means to address and reduce violence against women. What perhaps is still debatable is whether these responses are designed to adequately address the specific needs of Indigenous communities.

> A number of working models, based on differential explanations of family violence, emerged and varied in popularity over time [...] Both national and international research into the effectiveness of these programs indicate that effectiveness is often reliant upon socio-economic and employment status. (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p.3)

For instance, perpetrators of family violence are often referred to men's behaviour change programs as a way to challenge men and their choice to use violence. Men who attend these programs may be mandated by the criminal justice system or may elect to participate voluntarily.

Whether court-mandated or self-referred, this assumes that Indigenous men can easily access such programs. It further assumes access to transportation and assumes that each specific behaviour change program is culturally sensitive and specific to address the needs of Indigenous men. The limited access to transportation is particularly pertinent for those men living in rural and remote communities. As such, the effectiveness of men's behaviour change programs in engaging with Indigenous men is questionable, even purely from an administrative and logistical perspective.

Mainstream service responses

In order to adequately describe current mainstream modes of redress, we must briefly consider what have traditionally been "crisis" responses. It is important to note that this approach is fraught from the outset within many Indigenous Australian communities, given the Western conceptualisation of "crisis", which views a crisis as a distinct event to be set against a background of relative stability and normality. However, "Indigenous Australian families frequently exist in conditions of ongoing crisis; crisis events multiply and compact over time until it becomes impossible to disentangle one from another" (Blagg, 2008b, p. 147). This fundamental conceptual schism is evident in the following discussion of a number of key mainstream services and programs. Many Indigenous people present with complex needs and are subjected to a range of ongoing crises requiring resolution (Price-Robertson & McDonald, 2012).

Mainstream violence against women support services have been providing support for victims/survivors for decades. Many of these services are now government-funded and therefore required to deliver services that adhere to funding-body regulations and standards. Mainstream services are also bound by their internal, organisational philosophy, primarily based on Western feminist principles. Thus when applied to the design and delivery of services, this framework often yields unworkable solutions and options for non-Western women. In relation to sexual assault service providers, these services often also incorporate the use of clinical-based interventions such as structured counselling sessions in an office environment – again, this structure is often foreign to many non-Western women.

Mainstream services are predominately funded to provide support and assistance to all victims of violence, namely family violence and sexual assault. Mainstream services' approach to violence against women, is centred on men's abuse of power and exertion of control over their intimate partner and children. As this perspective is the basis for many mainstream organisations, the services they deliver do not always suit the needs of many women, particularly Indigenous women. Arney and Westby argue that the "dynamic roles of family and community in violence perpetration are often ignored in mainstream approaches to family violence" (Arney & Westby, 2012, p. 14). Given that family violence for Indigenous communities is inextricably linked to, and characterised as, a whole-of-community problem, programs and services that focus purely on the individual victim/survivor rather than communities, makes it difficult to address violence against Indigenous women (Taylor, Cheers, Weetra & Gentle, 2004).

A further example of this conceptual gap between mainstream service provision and the needs and realities of Indigenous women is found in the operation of family violence refuges or shelters. For many, if not all, high-security refuges, security and safety of the premises, clients and staff is of paramount importance. This emphasis on safety is understandable. In ensuring safety however, high-security refuges often do not accept women and children who live in the region where the refuge is located. As such, women who wish to access refuge are required to effectively relocate to a completely new and foreign region, where they have no contacts and relationships. There is no doubt that Indigenous women desire safety from violence. However, given the connectedness to families and communities, it is more than likely that they also desire support from family and their community. Therefore, Indigenous women can feel powerless given the options available to them. As the recent Queensland Special Task Force observed:

> Many of the assumptions on which services developed in urban settings are predicated do not apply in…remote settings…models usually employed to deliver refuges… frequently do not meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of domestic violence. (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, 2015, p. 122)

In addition, sexual assault organisations provide a range of services to victims/survivors of sexual violence, including counselling. The counselling environment however is one that is foreign to Indigenous women – counselling takes place in an office with just the victim/survivor and the professional in

the room. Cox contends that "most non-Indigenous people are identified by Indigenous people as power figures thus setting up an unequal power balance from the outset for Indigenous victims/survivors (2008, p. 4). In an attempt to improve and increase engagement with Indigenous women, service providers have employed Indigenous staff members, particularly those operating in regions with a larger Indigenous population. Although this is beneficial in terms of diversifying organisational culture, it may prove to be problematic for Indigenous service users. For example, in relation to sexual assault services, many Indigenous sexual assault victims/survivors would prefer not to see another Indigenous person as this could compromise their confidentiality (Cox, 2008). This alerts us to the need to create multi-agency programs that allow Indigenous women to tap into mainstream services (when, for example, disclosing sexual assault) but ensuring these services are nested with community-led organisations that provide the underpinning cultural safety and security. The need for culturally appropriate services is of upmost importance when attempting to build the capacity of Indigenous communities to challenge violent behaviour. Mainstream services have a valuable role to play in providing expertise, confidentiality and resources. The challenge in the coming years may lie in finding ways to build strong links between two.

Civil, criminal and alternative justice responses

The detached nature of the law, and the way in which it deals with the parties who come before it, can contribute to, or exacerbate, the dynamic of the violence (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 19). The adversarial approach underpinning Anglo-Saxon law can, inadvertently, re-victimise victims and empower offenders. This essentially "gladiatorial" approach is increasingly being viewed as outdated, and critics are calling for a more solution-focused kind of court process that offers a more "therapeutic" form of jurisprudence, particularly for victims (King, Freiberg, Batagol & Hyams, 2009). In the necessary historical context specific to Indigenous Australian communities, the requirement of voluntary engagement with civil, criminal and even alternative justice systems is already fraught. The systemic barriers faced by Indigenous Australians in having equitable access to mainstream justice responses has been made clear in literature over the past two decades. A review of contemporary literature suggests a continued inequality of access, guided by disconnect between the underpinning tenets of mainstream law reform, and the lived experience of Indigenous Australians.

In civil jurisdiction(s), Australia has seen an increase in the use of "family violence" or "protection" orders at a national

level. In 2012-2013, 33,879 orders had been issued in Victoria; 23,794 in Queensland; 22,363 in NSW; and 5,191 in Western Australia (The Conversation, 2014). There is also an increasing reliance on police-issued safety orders and intervention order applications, particularly in Victoria and Western Australia (Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, 2014, p. 83). The effectiveness of these orders however remains questionable, with frequent breaches and the onus of follow-up falling on victims (Curtin University, Communicare and Department for Child Protection and Family Support, 2014). Further, as with other modes of redress, both the accessibility and effectiveness of these orders are limited in Indigenous Australian communities. Indeed, Indigenous women are far less likely than non-Indigenous women to have easy access to or actively seek police intervention (Cunneen, 2009). The reasons for this are paralleled in the criminal jurisdiction.

Contemporarily, the increased criminalisation of violence against women, and family violence in particular, has led to policies that are encouraging of mandatory arrest, charge and prosecution (Bluett-Boyd, 2005). At a conceptual level, these policies aim to send a strong, punitive-based message to both the perpetrator and the community. Given the unique nature of violence against women in Indigenous Australian communities, this approach, built upon feminist understandings of the nature of violence against women, can serve to limit effective responses. As Blagg (2008b, p. 136) contends:

> The current dominance of the zero tolerance model, the focus on criminalisation, the refusal to look for causes outside the gendered victim/perpetrator dyad, the dominance of the male power model, a failure to accept causes outside of power relationships (alcohol, for example), refusal to work with men and suspicion about alternative models of policing and justice, severely inhibit a dialogue between feminism and those Aboriginal organisations involved in the fight against family violence.

At a practical level, research has indicated that these policies may have the unintended consequence of decreasing reporting for those victims who simply seek respite from the present violence rather than punishment for their partners (Tutty, Wyllie, Abbott, Mackenzie, Ursel & Koshan, 2008). Indeed, within Indigenous Australian communities, these policies can act as a deterrent to reporting, with many women wanting to avoid exposing their partners to a criminal justice system that has historically been responsible for the separation of families and fracturing of communities. Further, national and

international research into the effectiveness of "pro-arrest" policies is conflicting and often contradictory, with much evaluation suggesting that reduced recidivism is often short term and dependent on offender characteristics including race, employment status and socio-economic status (Coker, 2001, p. 801).

In light of consistent research highlighting these systemic disadvantages, a number of jurisdictions have turned to a consideration of alternative justice responses. Perhaps the most comprehensive understanding of an alternative justice response to violence against Indigenous women has been in the context of restorative justice mechanisms. In this context, the criminal justice system has acknowledged that a criminal act causes harm to people, to relationships and to the community, rather than simply being a crime against the State. As such, the adoption of restorative justice principles within the traditional criminal justice system is demonstrative of the shift towards healing and restoration of relationships, and away from punishment as the sole purpose for justice. It has been suggested that a restorative model of justice also increases Indigenous Australian's access to the law and the justice system, because it:

- provides greater ground for self-determination practices;
- demonstrates a greater capacity to deal with the effects of colonisation;
- better reflects an Indigenous view of justice; and
- incorporates cultural elements not usually found in a gender-based analysis of family violence. (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. 4)

However, the practice of restorative justice in the context of Indigenous Australian communities is not inherently unproblematic. Daly (2002) argues that restorative justice is not an intrinsically Indigenous practice; while others maintain that restorative justice programs run by mainstream agencies offer up fictionalised versions of Indigenous dispute resolution methods with little genuine ownership by Indigenous people (Cunneen, 1997; Blagg, 2002; Kelly, 2002). Bluett-Boyd (2005, p.32) maintains that "unless the program is based in self-determination it will remain merely an extension of a dominant legal system, which is based on an inherent bias and discrimination." A number of community members have expressed concern about restorative justice principles being extend to this issue. For instance, the Victorian Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) cautions the State Government against any move to extend restorative justice principles to crimes of family violence and sexual assault

without in-depth consultation with Indigenous victims/survivors (Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria, 2010). Researchers in this field consistently find that restorative justice responses must be developed by Indigenous Australians, with flexibility to accommodate local community contexts (Behrendt, 2002; Blagg, 2000; Kelly, 2002).

Circle Sentencing

An example of a restorative justice response to violence against Indigenous women is found in Circle Sentencing. Currently operating in New South Wales, Circle Sentencing removes the sentencing process from the traditional courtroom and into the community. Together, community members and the Magistrate sit in a circle to discuss the offender and the offence and jointly develop a sentence that is tailored for that offender (Aboriginal Programs Unit, 2009, p. 1). The benefits of this approach include: increasing Indigenous involvement at the community level with the operations of the criminal justice process, improved Indigenous satisfaction with the criminal justice system and reducing recidivism in Indigenous communities (Aboriginal Programs Unit, 2009; see also, McGlade, 2010). The adoption of restorative justice principles in this example demonstrates the acknowledgement and value placed on healing and a holistic approach to justice by Indigenous Australians.

Formulating Indigenous Australian-specific responses to violence against women

Indigenous communities emphasise the need for community-based responses, which can acknowledge the systemic barriers of mainstream approaches identified above, and distinguish between the factors that contribute to the risk of perpetrating violence and the risk of experiencing it (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 17). Many recent responses have attempted to give consideration to a range of these factors (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. 4). In the section that follows, we provide a description of the conceptual tenets of a range of increasingly common programs and strategies that tend to the specificity of violence against women in Indigenous Australian communities. It is important to identify the tenets of these programs as they relate to the specific causal nexus of violence, and map onto the prevention and intervention continuum discussed above. These programs are conceptualised within a holistic response approach.

The trend towards holistic responses

The development of a holistic and tailored approach within current violence against women frameworks that addresses issues specific to the Indigenous Australian community requires:

- An acknowledgement that community-led approaches have the potential to work in a complimentary capacity with non-Indigenous frameworks and service.
- The development of community education campaigns beginning in schools, but also wider campaigns aimed at the whole community in order to address intergenerational cycles of violence.
- The inclusion of more Indigenous men in the process of addressing family violence, especially the appointment of men to steering committees and action groups.
- The increased provision of behavioural change programs, including anger management programs and drug and alcohol programs, and the introduction of skills-oriented employment programs that are accessible and culturally appropriate.
- The implementation of support and confidence building programs for victims as a compliment to offender programs.
- The development of 'Healing Centres', 'Time-Out' houses and Safe Houses with particular attention to establishing properties in rural communities.
- The education of police in terms consistency of response and cultural sensitivity.
- Adequate funding and solid protocols for appropriate intervention in family violence by agencies external to the criminal justice process. (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p. 38)

In addition to seeking holistic approaches with respect to the individual, recent years have seen the development of holistic and increasingly integrated service responses. There is now a mix of community-led Indigenous and mainstream agencies working in the violence against women space including women's shelters, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, police, healing projects and community and night patrols, with various referral and partnering pathways, which vary between localities. There exists an agreement that multi-dimensional and multi-agency responses range from "collaboration at the local,

service delivery level; to coordination between agencies in at least some of their processes; to integration, which usually involves a strategic, jurisdiction-wide approach within multiple tiers of management" (Tayton, Kaspiew, Moore & Campo, 2014, p. 21).

Indigenous-specific prevention initiatives

Prevention measures which "target specific groups or leverage the value of particular settings are growing in number, with health contexts widely acknowledged as useful opportunities" (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 26).

> [Many of the] best examples of community based prevention initiatives … are those developed by Indigenous Australian communities. While the high prevalence of family violence in many communities means that these programs straddle the primary and secondary intervention spheres, their effectiveness stems from community ownership and from the fact that they are designed to respond and appeal to a specific context. (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 26; Slater & Presterudstuen, 2015)

Although there are very few examples of primary prevention interventions targeted at Indigenous communities, and even fewer that have been evaluated, there are some initiatives that incorporate some elements of primary prevention. Some of these initiatives include community development approaches, including men's and women's camps, Indigenous-men's behaviour change programs, mentoring programs, men's meeting places and healing camps, and community violence education strategies that seek to educate and raise awareness of violence against Indigenous women.

The Aboriginal Women against Violence Program

An example of an Indigenous-specific primary prevention program is the Aboriginal Women against Violence Program (AWAVP). Established in 2008 in south-western Sydney in the suburbs of Liverpool and Campbelltown, the AWAVP aimed to increase Indigenous women's knowledge of services and providers, increase their confidence in accessing these services, increase their ability to identify situations of violence or abuse, increase their ability to reject violence-supporting myths, and enhance their knowledge of the law and the psychological aspects of violence (Rawsthorne, 2014). Funded under the National Community Crime Prevention Programme as a short-term project, the AWAVP ultimately sought to address family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Liverpool and Campbelltown. By focusing on training local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to become mentors and

advocates in their own communities, the continued impact of the AWAVP potentially extends beyond the funded period. Although participation in the program did not require prior interpersonal victimisation, there was an acute awareness that many participants had been affected by violence, in one form or another.

Family Wellbeing Program

Another example of an Indigenous specific primary prevention initiative is the Family Wellbeing Program. Developed initially by Adelaide-based Indigenous Australians in 1993, the program consists of four stages, with each stage conducted over nine weeks. Since its creation, the Family Wellbeing Program has to date been adapted and adopted in the Northern Territory, North Queensland and New South Wales, and has been delivered in a variety of ways and settings ranging from educational settings to community lunches. Indeed, the flexibility of the Family Wellbeing Program to be adapted to meet the specific needs of local contexts contributes to its continued success (Monson-Wilbraham, 2015). Specifically designed by Indigenous Australians, this long-term program initiative offers a holistic approach with the ultimate objective of supporting Indigenous people "in achieving economic independence and self-empowerment" (Bagshaw et al., 2009, p. 133). The Family Wellbeing Program covers issues including family violence. Given that the program relates to personal wellbeing and taking responsibility for one's own wellbeing and the interconnectedness that individual wellbeing has with community wellbeing, this Program can "provide narratives for male perpetrators that they may be more inclined to engage" (Bagshaw et al., 2009, p. 133).

This holistic approach to individual wellbeing is culturally relevant to Indigenous Australians and thus, the likelihood of engagement by Indigenous people is maximised. These two examples highlight how Indigenous-specific services have been delivering primary prevention intervention initiatives for many years. Although they do not specify that they are "primary prevention" projects, their focus on Indigenous culture and adopting a holistic approach maximises their success within the communities in which they operate, and thus is in keeping with the philosophy of primary prevention which upholds the importance of community integration and engagement (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015).

Healing-based responses

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) suggests that all attempts to address violence against Indigenous women must adopt

a "holistic response with a health focus on healing and empowerment" (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, 2009, p. 16) rather than the mainstream approach that is fundamentally focused on punitive responses. Further, much of the recent literature highlights the need to adopt this approach as it contextualises the issues currently facing Indigenous Australians; specifically, the link between "poor social and emotional wellbeing…as a result of intergenerational, compounded trauma" (Steels & Goulding, 2009, p. 16). As such, Lawrence (2006, p. 32) argues that a "failure to accurately analyse the causes and contributing factors of violence (in Indigenous communities) will mean that the solutions proffered will be, at best, partial."

At the practice level, this approach supports family healing initiatives, rather than simply relying on the mainstream criminal justice system. In this crucial respect it challenges accepted orthodoxy around violence intervention (Blagg, 2008b, p. 141). These approaches are aimed at healing from a whole-of-family perspective. "Practitioners in [many Indigenous Australian communities contend that,] far from isolating a perpetrator of family violence, perpetrators need family and community connections to help them to address their behaviour" (Centre for Innovative Justice, 2015, p. 81). Indeed:

> a review of the literature [on Aboriginal family violence interventions] reveals a greater emphasis on working with violent men and on strategies for intervention that maintain family relationships and focus on "healing" the offender. Such a perspective views violence in terms of men's compensation for lack of status, esteem and value, and stresses the impact of violence on the whole family or community, rather than solely on women and children (Blagg, 2000a). (Bluett-Boyd, 2005, p.4)

An example of a healing-based response is the use of "healing circles", which aim to acknowledge the impacts of the violence on all in the community, as well as the effects of other factors – such as intergenerational grief and loss – on the perpetrator (Blagg, 2000b). This form of approach harnesses the power and strength within Indigenous Australian communities to address harm (McGlade, 2010).

Innovative and hybrid models: Integrating Indigenous community-led and mainstream responses

Innovative responses targeting Indigenous family violence comprise a variety of fresh ideas, practices and programs that specifically seek to address victim, perpetrator and community needs. These emerging responses consist of prevention, early, secondary and tertiary intervention and post-crisis programs and projects. Organisations and/or partnerships that design and implement innovative responses have a solid understanding of what programs and/or responses have not worked in the past, a grasp of why they haven't been successful, and a willingness to attempt a different mode of address. Further, they have a good understanding of the community nuances and local context in which the program is to be delivered.

This innovative approach to healing was adopted by the Sunshine Coast Cooloola Outreach Prevention Education (SCOPE) service, which was funded in April 2002 as the regional domestic and family violence service. Established to reduce the occurrence and impact of family violence from Caloundra to Gympie and the Hinterland, SCOPE offers a range of services and programs such as Support Link, court support, community education and safety upgrades for women and children to remain safely in their home. In order to ensure it was able to provide specialist counselling, support and education across the region, SCOPE relied heavily on strong partnerships with existing services. As such, SCOPE employed Aunty Carole Hocking, a respected Indigenous community member and a member of Nungeena Aboriginal Corporation for Women's Business Inc. (Nungeena). Aunty Carole Hocking was employed as the domestic violence outreach worker for the Hinterland region. Both organisations strongly believed that for "true healing to begin, [poverty and violence in Indigenous communities] needed to be addressed in a way that encompassed social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing" (Nickson et al., 2011, p. 86).

Yarnabout Conversation and Reflection Cards

As a way to raise community awareness around family violence and to strengthen the response from an Indigenous perspective, SCOPE and Nungeena collaborated to produce Indigenous strength cards – *Yarnabout Conversation and Reflection Cards*. The development of the "Yarnabout Cards" essentially came about after a series of focus groups with Indigenous women in the region to better understand their reluctance to access mainstream support services (Queensland Government, 2013). Committed to adopting a community development model in the production phase of the strength cards, it was theorised that this approach would be more culturally appropriate and relevant than other mainstream therapeutic resource tools. Furthermore, there was agreement that a community development process would:

> enable community stakeholders within and outside of the Indigenous community to work together on a common goal and promote, through artistic expression, a greater understanding of the history and impact of dispossession of Australia's Indigenous people in order to foster greater understanding, respect, harmony, and inclusion. (Nickson et al., 2011, p. 87)

With community support and input into the finalisation of the *Yarnabout Cards*, Nungeena entirely self-funded the project (Nickson et al., 2011, pp. 84-95). This ensured that it retained ownership of the *Yarnabout Cards* and the integrity of their development. Initiated as a short-term project, the *Yarnabout Cards* have become a resource for the local Indigenous community, while also potentially being an income-generating and capacity building resource for the organisation. More broadly, it is hoped that the use of the *Yarnabout Cards* by mainstream services will encourage Indigenous women to seek support and assistance.

Night Patrols

Night Patrols are another example of an innovative response to Indigenous family violence. Night patrols are a uniquely Australian innovation, established (often by women) on remote Indigenous communities to prevent alcohol related violence. One long-running example of an effective patrol is the Remote Area Night Patrol [(RANP) in Tangentyere, Northern Territory. Operating since 1990 in Alice Springs, and awarded three Australian Institute of Criminology Violence Prevention Awards (Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, 2013, p. 10), the RANP's use of pictorial systems of reporting played to the cultural strengths of Indigenous patrollers. The utilisation of a pictorial manner of reporting allows patrollers, for whom English is often their third or fourth language, the opportunity to fulfil reporting requirements as set out by the funding bodies and/or police (Memmott, Chambers, Go-Sam & Thomson, 2006). Patrollers are considered to be "cultural insiders" (Memmott et al., 2006, p. 15) who hold a deep understanding of language and the long-standing relationships within the community. Operating without police powers, patrols employ traditional dispute resolution methods to cool out potentially incendiary situations and employ local cultural knowledge to anticipate and head off problems in advance. Women's patrols, such as Yuendumu Women's Night Patrol, have been in operation in the NT since the 1980s, and demonstrate a leading role often taken by women on remote communities in preventing alcohol related violence (Blagg & Anthony, 2014, p. 103). This innovative example of community-led good practice demonstrates the importance of working "two ways": meaning, employing both mainstream and Indigenous forms of knowledge. Night Patrols are not operated by police; however, their work complements mainstream models of policing by providing forms of violence prevention grounded in community relationships rather than "white-fella" law (Turner-Walker, 2010).

Night Patrols are a successful hybrid model in practice. Hybrid approaches, as suggested at the beginning of this review, often involve a partnership between a mainstream and Indigenous service, or services, partnering to offer a coordinated response to address the issue of violence. Empirical research (Pilkington, 2009; Blagg & Anthony, 2014) demonstrates that Night Patrols are a flexible model that can build hybrid arrangements with a mix of mainstream agencies (family violence, refuges and safe houses, sober up shelters, homelessness and mental health services, youth services, police). In addition, such efforts can bridge gaps between mainstream services and Indigenous communities. The partnership between Indigenous specific and mainstream services in itself is of immense value to both participating organisations. The possibility of sharing knowledge, information, resources, skills and expertise between partnering agencies benefits clients as well as direct service practitioners.

Mawul Rom

Although mediation is often strongly discouraged by mainstream services in relation to family violence, Kelly (2002) argues that it is possible to mediate issues within a relationship context where violence is, or has been, a feature in a manner that does not condone the violence. Developed in collaboration between the Yolngu people and non-Indigenous alternative dispute resolution practitioners, the *Mawul Rom* project is an example of a hybrid model; it seeks to bridge the cross-cultural mediation gap. Established in 2004 in East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, the Mawul Rom project utilises ceremony, discussion, education and performance to share information and knowledge with Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants about dispute resolution, cross-cultural decision-making, mediation and leadership skills (Cripps & Davis, 2012, p. 4). Since its establishment, the *Mawul Rom* project has been accredited as a Masters program at Charles Darwin University, although a formal evaluation of the project has not been undertaken to date.

Mildura Family Violence and Sexual Assault Campaign

A further example of a multi-sectoral, hybrid project is the Mildura Family Violence and Sexual Assault Campaign in the regional city of Mildura, in north-western Victoria. Funded by Victoria Police, this one-off, short-term initiative was developed by the Mildura Aboriginal Corporation, Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative, and a number of Indigenous justice and family violence organisations, in

consultation with Victoria Police. Designed to educate and raise awareness of family violence and sexual assault within Indigenous communities, the campaign developed posters and three television commercials, each discussing the impacts of violence on women, children and men. The three television commercials ran on Mildura television between October 2006 and December 2007 (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007). Although no formal evaluation has been conducted into this initiative, according to Victoria Police, the campaign development and its implementation has improved the relationship between the police and the Indigenous community of the region (Cripps & Davis, 2012).

In order to properly assess the benefit of innovative and hybrid models of addressing violence against Indigenous women, we will now provide a contextual description to the evolution, implementation and success of a number of key programs in geographical areas of concern to our research. Each of these descriptions is designed to highlight the benefits of a community-led innovative approach, as it operates at the grass roots level.

Addressing alcohol abuse in Fitzroy Valley (Western Australia)

Although rural residents of Western Australia make up only 24 percent of the State's population, 71 percent of victims who required hospitalisation as a result of violence are from rural and remote areas (Leggett, 2007, p. 9). Prevalence studies suggest that Indigenous peoples living in rural areas of Western Australia are 33 times more to be victims of family violence than non-Indigenous people (Leggett, 2007, p. 38).

> The geographical isolation of rural and remote communities […] in Western Australia gives rise to a number of specific barriers [unique to non-urban areas in general,] such as lack of access to support services, lack of transport and lack of alternative accommodation options (Law Reform Commission Western Australia, 2014, p. 14).

In 2001, the Western Australian Government established the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (the Gordon Inquiry) (Gordon, 2003, p. 10). The Gordon Inquiry made:

> 197 recommendations [including] the expansion of sexual assault services in metropolitan, rural and remote areas; better data collection; and mandatory reporting of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in children under 13 years. (Gordon, 2006, p. 30)

The Department of Child Protection received an injection of $6.8 million by FACHSIA to implement the East Kimberley Family Violence Hub and Outreach Service. The Hub commenced operations in 2010 and served the communities of Kununurra, Warmun, Wyndham and Kalumburu until June 2012 (Government of WA, Department for Child Protection, 2012).

The Fitzroy Valley sits within the Kimberley region of Western Australia. The majority of residents in the Fitzroy Valley are of Aboriginal heritage, split into four language groups – Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Walmajarri and Wangkatjunga, spanning across approximately forty communities and outstations (Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource & Legal Centre; Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation & Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, 2009). The town of Fitzroy Crossing is situated near the centre of Fitzroy Valley and it is considered to be the regional hub of the Valley. The area became the focus of national attention following reports that "the communities of the Fitzroy Valley were in crisis", (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2010, p. 69), with health professionals commenting on the devastating impacts of alcohol abuse within the community. As a result of community calls for action, the State Coroner of Western Australian investigated the high rate of suicide in the area. The Coroner found that there had been a 100 percent increase in the number of self-harm deaths between 2005 and 2006 and that the rate of self-harm deaths in the Fitzroy Valley were exceptionally high (Hope, 2008).

According to the Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre, the situation in the Fitzroy Valley is "disastrous … and it is a state of dysfunction that Indigenous people struggle with throughout Australia at one level or another" (Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource & Legal Centre; Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation & Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, 2009, p. 4). As concerns grew for the social and emotional wellbeing of Fitzroy Valley residents, community leaders took initiative in addressing the increase in violence and dysfunction in their communities. In 2007, Indigenous community members of Fitzroy Valley undertook an initiative to curb alcohol abuse in their community. The initiative was conceptualised during the Women's Bush Meeting [Marninwarntikura] in Gooniyandi Country and they argued that restricting alcohol was necessary for a number of reasons including: the high number of alcohol and drug related suicides in the Fitzroy Valley; there was extensive family violence and the women's refuges were unable to meet demand; and the increase in child protection issues associated with Foetal

Alcohol Syndrome (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 72). As a result of the communities' lobbying, the Director of Liquor imposed an initial six-month restriction on the sale of packaged liquor in the area. This restriction was then extended indefinitely (Kinnane et al., 2010). One of the main reasons for this community-led action was the impact that alcohol was having on unborn children.

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy may result in Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) (McLean & McDougall, 2014). Indigenous Australians have been identified as a distinct group that is particularly affected by FASD. The reasons for high-risk alcohol consumption during pregnancy are complex and are essentially rooted in Indigenous Australian's social, political and cultural history. As stated by McLean and MacDougall, "education strategies should be culturally sensitive and consider the experience/needs of Aboriginal women, but not directly target them" (McLean & McDougall, 2014, p. 9), thus dispelling the perception amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that FASD is exclusive to Indigenous Australians. Nindilingarri Cultural Health Service and Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Crossing formed a partnership with The George Institute for Global Health and The University of Sydney Medical School to conduct the first Australian study of FASD prevalence. Known as *The Lililwan Project*, it also sought to develop individual treatment plans for children, educate the community on the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and, provide support for parents, carers and teachers. Overall, this community initiative led to alcohol restrictions in the region, which has been recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission as leading a "transformative change in their region and lifted their communities out of chaos and despair" (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2010, p. 67).

Working with Government in Alice Springs (Northern Territory)

In 2009 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported that the Northern Territory had a total population of 227,900 (ABS, 2011a). Indigenous Australians make up 28.8 percent of the Northern Territory population (ABS, 2006, as cited in Gordon, 2006). In 2011, the ABS Census reported a total of 28,080 residents in Alice Springs, with Indigenous Australians making up a significant proportion of Alice Springs residents. It has been reported that family violence was associated with 57.8 per cent of assault offences in Alice Springs. The highest rate of family violence in the Northern Territory was recorded

in Tennant Creek at 74 percent (Central Australian Women's Legal Service, 2014). Disproportionately, Indigenous people make up a large proportion of crime victims and perpetrators.

In a strategy to combat family violence, the Northern Territory Government implemented the Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy in 2003. This whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach was primarily focused on:

> Interventions for [victims]/survivors; the protection of children; working with young people affected or at risk of being affected by domestic violence; and bringing about a change in the violence and abusive behaviours of offenders. (DCM2002, as cited in Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis, 2006, p. 12)

Within the Strategy, the Government also launched the Strong Family, Strong Community, Strong Future initiative. This initiative's objective is "to create a new process that allows Aboriginal community knowledge and capacity to be mobilised to address endemic social and family violence issues, and to deal with particular community crises (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis, 2006, p. 12). This empowerment-based initiative recognises the importance of including and involving the Indigenous community in order to address the issues faced within.

Community justice groups in Central Queensland [Queensland]

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence reported that the "high incidence of violent crime in some Indigenous communities, particularly in remote and rural regions, is exacerbated by factors not present in the broader Australian community" (Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence Report, as cited in Schmider & Nancarrow, 2007, p. 3).

As with other Indigenous communities, the factors that exacerbate social problems like family violence and sexual abuse include dispossession, "cultural fragmentation" and marginalisation, all of which "have contributed to…high unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and poverty [that] have become endemic in Indigenous lives" (Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence Report, as cited in Schmider & Nancarrow, 2007, p. 3). Although it is widely accepted that Indigenous people experience violence at a higher rate than non-Indigenous people, there is little publicly available data (Schmider & Nancarrow, 2007; Cunneen, 2009). The limited data available suggested that the Indigenous rate of

victimisation in the northwest region of Queensland was 2.6 times higher than the Indigenous rate for Queensland as a whole (86.6 compared to 33.5 per 1000). In relation to the victimisation of women, more than one in ten Indigenous women living in the north west region of the State were victimised and the communities with the highest reported rates of violent offences against Indigenous women included Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Aurukun, Yarrabah and Mornington (Cunneen, 2009).

In response to the increasing demand for a more effective and appropriate response to victims of family violence, the Cape York, Queensland, Coen Local Justice Group (CLJG) was established in 2000. The CLJG comprises of elders and members of the clan groups in the Central Cape region, representatives from Queensland Police, Education Queensland, Queensland Health and the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation (Kristiansen & Irving, 2001, p. 12). In approaching the issue of family violence in the Cape York community, the CLJG provides community advice at the point of sentencing; establishes diversionary programs; focuses and provides support on rehabilitation and prevention and takes community ownership of the problem-solving process (Kristiansen & Irving, 2001, pp. 12-13). As such, Kirstiansen and Irving found that the framework within which the CLJG worked "is an example of a community structure wholly developed and sustained by community membership and participation, specifically focused on restoring cultural strength to the criminal justice processes taking place in the community" (Kristiansen & Irving, 2001, p. 15).

As a means to improve service delivery to Indigenous women living in Central Queensland, the *Sustainable Service Responses to Family Violence in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in North Queensland* project aimed to identify and document unique models of service delivery in remote communities, explore the strengths and limitations of these services and make recommendations regarding sustainability of service responses for the future. Through the research, the project identified six priority areas that are critical in ensuring sustainability of existing services. Rosser identifies these priority areas as:

- influencing policy;
- service system responses;
- resource development;
- training;
- industrial relations; and
- organisations/service management. (Rosser, 2004, pp. 26-27)

The authors argued that given the challenges already faced by victims living in rural and remote communities, addressing these six priority areas is critical in order to ensure victims continue to receive support. While there is no doubt that the identification of these priorities for successful service delivery in rural areas, resourcing of existing services remains an issue for all rural areas.

What can we learn?

Indigenous programs have been said to face very "significant and real barriers to effective program execution" for a range of reasons. These vary from a lack of suitable sectoral partnerships for program delivery, lack of funding or insufficient funding to lack of coordination or fragmentation between State and Commonwealth goals and programs (Memmott et al., 2006, p. 16). The success of any program attempting to address the issue of family violence in Indigenous communities relies heavily on the inclusion and involvement of community members and/or leaders at all stages of program design and implementation. Certainly, it is crucial that Indigenous communities be consulted at the very first instance on what they deem the issue(s) in their community to be.

Given the complexity of family violence, particularly in Indigenous communities, addressing the issue "can only be resolved by bringing together the resources of a range of different providers and interest groups" (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, as cited in Healy & Humphreys, 2013, p. 2). This involves a more considered and concerted effort by government departments, non-government and community organisations and the community. More importantly however, it involves a commitment to critically analyse past and present practices in order to identify "what works" and "what hasn't worked" in order to design more relevant and appropriate responses to address the needs of Indigenous victims of violence. This process, by default, allows for the opportunity to explore and identify evidence of good practice. Indeed, the needs of every Indigenous victim of violence will invariably differ. While it may be nearly impossible to meet every need of every victim, any successful response, integrated, coordinated, collaborative or otherwise, ought to be defined and assessed by the woman, rather than against service or program standards and expectations.

Given the unique context of violence provided above, it is clear that intervention strategies need to set out from a position of respect for Indigenous women's cultural and family obligations, rather than viewing them as a barrier (Blagg, 2008b, p. 147). In adopting a woman-centred approach to program design and delivery, Cripps and Davis argue that the first task is to involve the local Indigenous community in defining the problem, from their perspective and, defining the boundaries with respect to how to engage the issue(s) (Cripps & Davis, 2012, pp. 1-8). Thus, in order to most adequately meet the needs of Indigenous victims of violence, programs and responses need to be responsive to the local context in which they are delivered and the establishment of such programs must be developed in partnership with the local communities (Day et al., 2013). Hence, the tailoring of responses to suit specific Indigenous communities and its members requires an understanding of particular communities' cultural, social and emotional needs, while holding victim and community safety at the core of the response.

Effective approaches to addressing Indigenous family violence must include the involvement of a range of professionals. This includes community leaders, the police, social and community services, health services, correctional services and services specific to victim and perpetrators. In addition, the establishment of positive and respectful partnerships

with local communities and their involvement in any local initiatives are critical. Without these elements, any attempt at delivering an effective response will result in models that are lacking in coordination and thus, the continuation of fragmented service delivery, failing to meet the needs of the victim. Furthermore, responses that have been successful in Indigenous communities have been those that are flexible and holistic in their approach. Again, understanding and appreciating the needs of Indigenous Australians is critical in responding to issues like Indigenous family violence.

To proceed without taking this step and failing to then use this as the basis of program design may very well limit any success programs or responses have in addressing Indigenous women's experiences of violence. As such, it is argued that designing Indigenous-specific programs requires the consideration of such barriers in order to effectively overcome these factors to ensure a more successful project/program implementation. Blagg asserts that strategies and initiatives that are more likely to succeed "are those that genuinely engage with Aboriginal law and culture and views these as the vehicle for change" (Blagg, 2008b, p. 151). Lawrence (2006, pp. 29-33) also argues that high levels of coordination between agencies and programs is essential given the severity and pervasiveness of violence in Indigenous communities. Underpinning all the recommendations in relation to improving service design and implementation of Indigenous-specific services is the fundamental need to involve Indigenous people in decision-making at all levels (Lawrence, 2006, pp. 29-33).

This case is strongly argued by Hanna McGlade (in ALRC & NSWLRC, 2010), who asserts the need for an Indigenous justice model, based on key principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and encompassing restorative justice processes, rather than the adversarial criminal trial which she, along with other Indigenous critics, maintains re-victimises Indigenous victims. Similarly, Indigenous scholar, Kylie Cripps suggests that:

> Indigenous women and children receive a very clear message that the legal system is not a place where equality between the sexes or races exists; nor can the kind of justice Indigenous people are seeking be served. To the contrary, it condones the violence and relegates Indigenous women and children to the periphery of society. It is therefore not surprising that women are not choosing to use the system in their battle against family violence. (Cripps, 2005, p.15)

Hannah McGlade also makes an explicit demand for greater reliance on Aboriginal rather than western law in adjudicating in family violence situations. In a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into family violence and the law she asserts that:

> Aboriginal customary law has not ceased to exist, although subjected to abuse from colonisation onwards. Violence offences against women and children are a grave breach of Aboriginal customary law, which includes women's customary law, however, the non-Aboriginal criminal justice system continues to diminish Aboriginal women by supporting violence, often as a matter of "culture". Aboriginal justice models will encourage the revival of our culture and lawful ways that prohibit violence and abuse of women and children. (McGlade, quoted in ALRC & NSWLRC, 2010, p.1093)

McGlade (2010) argues that because Indigenous women do not receive fair treatment in the mainstream justice system we need to map out an alternative system founded on restorative justice (RJ) principles; and argues for forms of resolution through which offenders acknowledge their guilt, demonstrate remorse before the community and the victim, and commit to performing appropriate forms of reparative action. She advocates the Community Holistic Circle Healing model of Hollow Water Canada that aims to empower the community to engage with offenders and victims through Circle Sentencing courts, and Healing Lodges as an alternative to incarceration.

The focus on "healing" as an integral element of justice sets the approach of many Indigenous observers apart from orthodox feminism that tends to privilege criminal sanctions as a means of deterring offenders and giving justice to victims. In her work in Queensland, Nancarrow (2006) found that Indigenous women she interviewed were more open than non-Indigenous interviewees to alternative forms of justice based on RJ principles. Similarly Cox, Young & Bairnsfather-Scott (2009) maintain that there cannot be justice for Indigenous women without community "healing". This means constructing safe places where Indigenous people can deal with the pain and trauma left in the wake of colonisation. The "healing" solution also encourages the involvement of Indigenous law and culture in the process. In its intensive inquiry into Aboriginal law in Western Australia, the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia concluded that: "there is a place for Aboriginal customary law and cultural responses to work in tandem with treatment, prevention and protection strategies provided for

under Australian law" (*Law Reform Commission* of *Western Australia, 2006, p. 289). Further, to Commission found* that "where there was a choice, Aboriginal family violence programs, shelters and refuges were more patronised than non-Aboriginal initiatives" (*Law Reform Commission* of *Western Australia, 2006, p. 290)*. The Commission proposed that:

> [G]overnment actively encourage and resource the development of community-based and community-owned Aboriginal family violence intervention and treatment programs that are designed to respond to the particular conditions and cultural dynamics of the host community. (*Law Reform Commission* of *Western Australia, 2006, p. 289)*

The concerns of some prominent Indigenous women stems from a lack of faith in the capacity of "settler law" to heal the trauma created by settler society (McGlade quoted in ARLC & NSWLRC, 2010). There is now an evolving body of work maintaining that Indigenous women are "positioned" differently from white women in relation to the question of family violence because of their own experiences of racist violence and oppression by settler women (Moreton-Robinson, 2000, 2002). Furthermore, white feminist accounts fail to acknowledge Indigenous women's struggles to reclaim sovereignty, and the extent to which many problems in Indigenous communities are linked to acts of dispossession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

A number of feminist researchers, however, urge caution when advocating alternatives such as RJ. Julie Stubbs (2004), for example, warns of the dangers associated with some RJ practices, particularly in relation to the lack of safeguards for victims and a possibility of repeated victimisation. However she argues against creating an unnecessary binary opposition between mainstream justice and restorative justice, while there is potential for creating "hybrid" models that place victims' safety at the centre of practice while supporting alternative solutions.

A promising international example

International experience may offer suggestions regarding the prevention of family violence, particularly through early intervention with vulnerable young mothers. One risk factor in Indigenous communities may be the age young women become mothers. A 2013 study found that, "Indigenous women had more babies and had them at younger ages than non-Indigenous women; teenagers had one-fifth (18%) of the babies born to Indigenous women, compared with only 3.4% of those born to all mothers" (ABS, 2014). Young women may lack knowledge, self-esteem and experience and be susceptible to domination by male partners. They may also have to endure low socio-economic status, unstable housing and an environment of stress, alcohol abuse and mental illness. A promising initiative developed initially in the USA, *The Nurse Family Partnership,* focuses on high-risk pregnant women and their children. The main goal of this program is primary prevention of child abuse but it has applicability to family violence prevention (Mejdoubi et al., 2011). One of the outcomes of the program was a reduction in the incidence of intimate partner violence experienced by women who participated. The program rests on regular visits by nurses focussed on:

> [S]tructured behavioural changes, health education, discussing questions of the expectant mother, setting and maintaining realistic and achievable goals, increasing the mother's self-efficacy and involving the social network of the mother into the program. (Mejdoubi et al., 2001, p. 3)

A variant of the program, The *Australian nurse-family partnership program* (ANFPP) is currently being piloted in four sites: Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (Melbourne); Wuchopperen Health Service (Cairns); Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Alice Springs); and Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (Wellington). The program is provided through pregnancy and up to the childe being two years of age. Nurse Home Visitors work in a therapeutic manner, assisted by an Aboriginal Community Worker in the Alice Springs scheme (for a review please see http://www.anfpp.com.au/). There are plans to roll out the scheme in ten other communities. This initiative demonstrates the efficacy of programs focused on early intervention and support for vulnerable women. In one of our research sites, Marninwarntikura *Women's* Resource Centre, *Fitzroy*

Crossing WA, there is a similar interest in working holistically with vulnerable young women and their social networks. Marninwarntikura works closely with Nindilingarri Cultural Health, using an outreach model involving clinicians, nurses and cultural therapists to engage vulnerable young women. This is against a background of concerns that family violence and child neglect issues are frequently linked to complex needs, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, acquired brain injuries and other forms of cognitive impairment.

Empowerment

There are also processes in train designed to empower Indigenous communities. Under the Empowered Communities initiative eight regions across Australia are working with government to reconfigure how policies and programs are designed and delivered. Although in its infancy, the initiative enjoys support from across government and the Indigenous communities involved. The process involves engaging Indigenous people, including community elders, in imagining the direction of change on their communities and working with agencies to achieve change. It is premised on the belief that Indigenous-led empowerment strategies constitute the best way forward, with Indigenous people taking on a greater role in running their affairs and Commonwealth, state and territory governments sharing, and in some cases relinquishing, certain powers and responsibilities, and supporting Indigenous people with resources and capability building (Wunan Foundation, 2015; Empowered Communities, n.d.).

Approaches to evaluating Indigenous-specific programs

An important aspect of assessing the applicability of any program is the ability to define and measure program success. Evaluating the success of a program needs to be premised on the needs of the intended program users, in this case, victims of family violence. Without this consideration at the evaluation stage, organisations and their programs run the risk of not accurately measuring their success and thus, continuing to deliver a service that is not specific and tailored to the needs of Indigenous women and their community. In this section, we discuss evaluative approaches to Indigenous-specific programs. This includes reference to a comparative table of programs across Australia that have undergone recent evaluation (Appendix A). We highlight standard definitions of strengths and limitations, drawing on the influence of the contextualisation of violence against Indigenous women discussed previously.

Evaluations play an important function of effective and sustainable program delivery. As is the case with program design, the evaluation of programs must be sensitive to the values and culture of the people concerned (Loxton, Hosking, Williams, Brookes & Byles, 2008). In attempts to measure the effectiveness and success of specifically designed programs for Indigenous communities, a number of program evaluations have been conducted across Australia. It is important to note however, that there are few existing evaluations (Day, Francsico & Jones, 2013; Memmott et al., 2006). While many Indigenous-specific programs have been developed and implemented "as a consequence of the inadequacy of mainstream responses … [there is] minimal investment in evaluation processes" (Cripps & McGlade, 2008, p. 241). Generally, it is noted that factors contributing to the lack of published evaluation studies in the Indigenous family violence sector are: the loose application of the term "evaluation"; services, funding bodies or evaluators being reluctant to report on program limitations; and the lack of financial resources to conduct thorough evaluations (Memmott, et al., 2006, p. 14). Further, Memmott et al. (2001) found that much of the published research on violence within Indigenous communities is based on theory and description, rather than supported by empirical research evaluations. As such, it is difficult to measure how effective these programs are at achieving their stated objectives and therefore, it is difficult to assess whether or not the program is indeed meeting the needs of program participants.

Although there is very little by way of available program evaluations, there is some literature that suggests how best to approach Indigenous-specific program evaluations. Given the specificity in which Indigenous women experience violence, the manner in which Indigenous-specific programs are evaluated is of great importance. Carey suggests that "many of the ways of evaluating services that might be adopted in urban centres would not be appropriate in the context of a remote Indigenous community. For example, because of the heterogeneous nature of remote communities comparative research is problematic" (Carey, 2013, p. 7). Further, given the often small sample sizes in remote communities, designs such as randomised controlled trials are generally impractical (Carey, 2013; Day et al., 2013). It is argued that evaluation of Indigenous-specific programs be based on community needs rather than funding priorities or other standards as set by funding bodies (Carey, 2013). As such it has been recommended that more work is needed to "develop evaluation methods that assess the impact of program activities

on medium and longer term outcomes" for Indigenous-specific programs (Day et al., 2013, p. 1).

As a first step in this task, we have compiled a table of recently evaluated programs to compare and contrast evaluation methods and definitions of success (Appendix A). To this end, organisations that have aimed to address the issue of evaluation in program design and development are detailed. This table highlights evaluations that have been conducted on Indigenous-specific programs in each Australian State and Territory. Program evaluations have been grouped by the State in which the program or project was delivered and where there are multiple evaluation examples, these are listed in descending chronological order. A description of each program/project is provided in addition to the noted strengths and limitations of the program/project as determined by the evaluators. Any recommendations provided as part of the evaluation report are also noted. It is important to note that the evaluations selected are those that have been published and are electronically available; all but one have been peer-reviewed. The cases include alcohol restrictions in Fitzroy Crossing, a dispersed refuge model in Victoria, and a South Australian program operating from primary health care sites. The examples provided in the appended table are by no means an exhaustive list.

Identifying strengths and limitations within Indigenous-specific programs

Common across all of the programs listed in the table at Appendix A is the fact that they were community-led programs, delivered by Indigenous organisations. The evaluations indicate that this is a crucial factor in their success within their respective communities. Given the levels of mistrust by Indigenous people of "mainstream" services, the provision of services or programs to address family violence within Indigenous communities by Indigenous organisations is important. In the case of the Fitzroy Valley alcohol restrictions, although supported by Government, the initiative rested on the commitment and energies of community leaders who raised their concerns with the Director of Liquor Licensing, resulting in the restriction of alcohol sales in the area. The learnings from the Fitzroy experience point towards the role of community members (particularly women) in owning and leading initiatives and allowing community members themselves to define the issue and to set the parameters within which intervention should take place. All of the programs identified in Appendix A also adopted this approach. The initiatives, therefore, can be said to be community owned, "bottom up" initiatives, in stark contrast to the "top down" approach deployed in the Northern Territory Intervention, noted in our introductory section.

The success of a number of these programs is also attributed to the program's ability to be flexible according to the needs of its intended participants or program users. It is acknowledged that by design, not all of the identified programs can do this. For example, the RANP operating in the Northern Territory is run out of the Tangentyere Council and thus is guided by a set of standards and reporting requirements defined by that Council. Other programs however, particularly those attempting to increase levels of social and emotional wellbeing, could be flexible in their approach in order to meet the needs of program users. The programs which have attempted to address the issue of family violence from a social and emotional wellbeing standpoint are the:

- Social and Emotional Wellbeing Service (Northern Territory) (Carey, 2014).
- Aboriginal Women Against Violence Project (New South Wales) (Rawsthorne, 2014)
- Healthy Family Circle Program (New South Wales) (Tayton, Kaspiew, Moore & Campo, 2014).
- Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Early Intervention and Prevention Program (Victoria) (Karahasan, 2014).
- Aboriginal Family and Community Healing program (South Australia) (Kowanko et al., 2009; Steward, Power, Love & Bromley, 2009).

Common to each of the above listed programs was a view that, given the devastating impacts of family violence on Indigenous women, program responses should be specifically tailored to empower female program participants. Programs based on empowerment principles are preventative by nature. Although program participants may have only participated in these programs after an incident of family violence, the focus on empowering women is in itself, a prevention strategy. The AWAVP for instance, specifically sets out to empower participants and support them in empowering other women in their community (Rawsthorne, 2014). This peer-mentoring allowed space for women to talk about their experiences of violence, while at the same time empowering them in a way that equipped them to empower other Indigenous women. Through this model, one of the identified strengths of the program was its ability to provide victims of family violence a forum where they could forge or reinforce connections and friendships. Similar results have been published in the evaluation of the FVPLS Early Intervention and Prevention Program (Karahasan, 2014). Both these programs were found to have contributed to the enhancement of women's confidence, self-esteem and resilience in their ability to address family violence within their community. These outcomes illustrate the importance of grounding victim-specific programs in empowerment theory. Although Indigenous people do not view family violence as purely a result of a gendered power and control dynamic within families, empowerment principles have the potential to increase levels of social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous victims of family violence.

A further commonly reported strength of the programs that sought to address social and emotional wellbeing was the strengthening of connection to Indigenous culture. This outcome is not surprising given that all the programs described in Appendix A were to some degree initiated by Indigenous community members themselves. The Gippsland CommUNITY Walk against Family Violence (the Walk) (Laming et al., 2011) is a good example of how awareness raising of family violence in Indigenous communities needs to incorporate the celebration of Indigenous cultures. Grounded and shaped by an Indigenous approach, the Walk drew on Indigenous culture to inform the design of the project. Additionally, the involvement of Indigenous leaders was essential. Thus, cultural relevance is of upmost importance when attempting to address family violence, or any other issue, within Indigenous communities. As noted previously, this approach requires a recognition and understanding of the historical, political, cultural and social context of the particular Indigenous community in which it will operate. In conjunction with this acknowledgement is the need to nurture feelings of pride. Without this, programs fail to adequately address the issues specific to the community, thus resulting in the delivery of a service that does not resonate with the community members.

The recent interest in coordinated, collaborative and integrated models is indicative of the recognition that no single organisation or department can adequately address the complex issues related to violence against Indigenous women. It is certainly clear from the literature and from the programs identified here, that in order to genuinely address the causes and to attend to the impacts of Indigenous family violence, government, non-government and community organisations, and the community in general need to work together. A joint effort from these three areas is essential to ensuring that the diverse and varying needs of the individual and the community are met. The Healthy Family Circle program is a prime example of how multi-agency approaches can be successful in addressing Indigenous family violence in a manner that is meaningful to that particular community (Tayton et al., 2014). The coming together of organisations to address Indigenous family violence has a number of advantages. Not only can this potentially result in the increased availability of financial resources, it also allows for the sharing of knowledge, expertise and general resources.

As noted earlier, there are a number of elements that will aid in the success of such models. These include the creation of a shared vision and set of principles, the identification of common goals, and development of formal agreements, particularly in relation to information sharing. With specific reference to rural and remote Indigenous communities, another key element is the need to ensure confidentiality. Although partnership agreements amongst service providers may stipulate privacy and confidentiality parameters, the limited availability of support services coupled with small town populations may influence willingness to participate or seek support. As such, it can be argued that one additional element required for successful program implementation in rural and remote areas is the need to ensure that the community understands the service's commitment to participant privacy and confidentiality. This task requires the building and establishment of trust between the community and the organisations involved.

Although collaborative efforts have the potential to increase a program's success, it can also prove to be a challenge. This was the case with the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Service (SEWS). Given the involvement of a number of different organisations, competing priorities, expectations, accountability and reporting requirements, organisational challenges emerged (Carey, 2013). This further demonstrates the critical need to

ensure that organisations and departments coming together to address family violence take the time to create a shared vision and common goals during the planning stages. Without doing so, programs run the risk of attempting to address these challenges once the program is implemented. This has the potential to curtail the efforts in addressing the issues pertinent to Indigenous family violence.

An additional commonly noted limitation of some of these programs was the inability to recruit and retain staff, particularly given the often limited, financial resources. Of those evaluation reports that provided recommendations, all identified that without sufficient financial resources, the sustainability of these programs jeopardised. While the need for adequate funding can be said for all programs, this is particularly relevant for programs being delivered in rural and remote areas. As mentioned earlier, there are often only a small number of services operating in rural and remote areas, and thus the opportunity for collaboration is severely limited. Given this restriction, the possibility of partnering with other organisations to provide a multi-agency response to Indigenous family violence is low. This is not to say that more cannot be done to widen the networks of service providers in rural and remote areas so as to increase such opportunities. In order to facilitate this, identifying and planning potential partnership prospects is required at both a strategic and community level.

The examples provided here are by no means indicative of the true number of Indigenous-specific programs currently operating throughout Australia. The purpose of the table in Appendix A is to highlight evidence of good practice and areas where something different could have been done. The inclusion, consultation and involvement of Indigenous community members in all aspects of program design and implementation is critical to any response that seeks to address Indigenous violence in any sort of committed and sustainable manner. It is also acknowledged that a high value is placed on culturally grounded approaches to family violence, particularly those that are created by and for Indigenous people. Indeed, those programs that experienced the higher levels of success were those that were initiated and led by the Indigenous community. Thus ownership of the social issue and how it should be addressed needs to sit with the Indigenous community.

Conclusions

This state of knowledge paper discusses what is currently known about innovative responses to violence against Indigenous women in Australia. From a program perspective, the literature suggests that successful initiatives need to be "hybrid" initiatives that combine the skills of community leaders, women elders, relevant agencies and NGOs working on a local level. These would construct new spaces where Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms of law combine to create places of safety for Indigenous women, new forms of healing for victims and families, and novel forms of redress that aim to reduce levels of repeat offending. Key Indigenous researchers cited in this review, such as Hannah McGlade, Kylie Cripps and Judy Atkinson, maintain that Indigenous knowledge needs to be taken seriously: this means privileging the views of Indigenous women as the principle bearers of knowledge on family violence, rather than being regarded simply as the helpless victims of Indigenous men.

These critics drew attention to the limitation of mainstream justice processes and agencies in bringing justice to Indigenous victims, and a marked tendency to re-victimize them. They draw attention to the fact that "settler law" has historically oppressed Indigenous women, and needs thorough reform before it can build trust. McGlade's work in particular challenges researchers and policy makers to consider radical change in the way they conceive of family violence intervention, towards a restorative justice approach that allows communities themselves greater latitude in the design and delivery of programs. McGlade's stance is also backed up by research based on a "postcolonial" framework, which suggests that Indigenous communities are capable of generating ideas, rather than simply being the passive recipients of ideas generated elsewhere. "Postcolonial" simply means that colonial relationships survive formal decolonization. In the Indigenous space this means, for example, that Indigenous law and culture are still denied status and subjugated by non-Indigenous law and culture (for a discussion of this kind of approach to knowledge see Comaroff & Comaroff, 2011). Indigenous researchers have criticized a tendency for non-Indigenous researchers to claim knowledge privilege on the basis of their mastery of western scientific methods. Linda Tuhiwai *Smith, for example,* challenges traditional Western ways of knowing and researching and calls for the "decolonization" of methodologies, and a greater respect for indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge (Smith, 2012). There are some tensions in the literature between Indigenous women's views on family violence and feminist researchers and scholars. Some of the differences relate to the weight given to collective and historical experiences, on the one hand, as opposed to gendered issues, on the other. It is likely that this debate will continue for some time. However, there is also acceptance that violence against Indigenous women takes place at the intersection of a range of different forms of oppression, of which gender remains one.

Indigenous-led family violence initiatives may share a number of common features: for example, a commitment to Indigenous women's leadership, willingness to work alongside men, and working from within Aboriginal terms of reference. They will attempt to build structures that are culturally, as well as physically, secure for women escaping violence and for those working within the organisation; and they may develop policies and protocols intended to prevent lateral violence in the workplace, given the publicity being given to the issue nationally. There will, however, be inevitable differences in

terms of local practice and in outcomes, shaped by a host of intervening variables, such as differential access to resources due to differences in government funding policies, capacity to work in with other agencies, and remoteness from mainstream structures. Many Indigenous-led initiatives struggle to maintain services due to funding shortfalls and find it difficult to offer sustainable services in an uncertain funding environment. They may struggle to gain traction because of the paucity of other services in the area in relation to mental health, children's services, accommodation, and so on; preventing them from being able to provide a holistic approach or shift some of the cost burden onto other services. Aside from offering short-term support through a refuge, some family violence services in remote areas have also acted as a catalyst for policy changes that directly impact on the safety of women and children in the medium and longer term. We offered the example of Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Crossing as a practice model that has achieved considerable success in terms of reducing access to alcohol in the town, and developing an inter-agency practice regime focused on screening children for FASD and supporting young mothers, as well as providing safety for victims at the point of crisis and offering legal support.

In terms of a definition of family violence we have urged caution about employing a one-size-fits-all approach that leaves out local nuances and cultural differences. We suggest that the definition developed by the Australian Law Reform Commission and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission: *"violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful"*, is a portable and useful construct (Australian Law Reform Commission and New South Wales Law Reform Commission, 2010). However, this should not inhibit researchers from teasing out the locally grounded and finely granulated experiences of Indigenous people, and how they employ the construct in their daily lives. Furthermore, understanding how innovation works, or fails to work, requires a variegated and nuanced understanding of the context in which innovation occurs and the ways in which government policy, policing, law, justice, and social policies cohere with local community structures, cultures and systems.

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Appendix A

Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology		Findings - limitations	Recommendations
NT	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Service (SEWBS) NB: Evaluation endorsed by the Mpwelarre Health Aboriginal Corporation. Employing a qualitative methodology, this study explored the impact of a social and emotional wellbeing service on a remote Indigenous Australian community and its outcomes in relation to access, effectiveness, and sustainability. (Carey, 2013).	SEWBS was developed in response to family violence, including suicide and, self-harm within the Indigenous community. It offers a range of activities, including: cultural and healing activities, and different modes of therapy. Four SEWBS co-work with other providers, particularly in local health and allied health services. Methodology based on 21 interviews ('purposive sample') with differing levels of involvement in the service, including: (e.g. service providers; service participants; and, referral sources). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), focused on the experiences of participants, employed.	• Representatives from local organisations met to start the initial negotiation. There was agreement that the initiative needed to be carefully crafted to meet local concerns. • Partnership with other agencies allowed SEWB to access alternative finding streams. • Collaboration between service providers ensured a coherent approach. • Reductions in a range of harmful behaviours (smoking, alcohol and self-harm) were also successfully targeted. • Increased community engagement led to increased community pride. • Mix of preventative work and crisis intervention identified as a key strength. • Service providers' willingness to respond to community needs and to modify practice as circumstances demanded.	• Multi-agency work meant duplication of priorities and interests. • Too much control by players not living in the community and not aware of community needs. • Funding insecurity and major issues. Instability created by having different agencies with conflicting expectations. • 'White fella' form of accountability disconnected from remote community realities. • Accessing services is an issue: including differential access along "skin" group/language group lines. • Recruitment issues. • Communication problems, e.g. Indigenous versus mainstream languages.	The report made the following recommendations. • Improved supervision, support and training for staff. • Better management of staff workloads to prevent burn-out. • Undertake comprehensive planning for health service • Health appropriate for remote communities. • Enhanced community involvement in decision-making. • A committee representative of the community and the funding agencies to be formed, to link community and the funders. The community to function as a co-ordinating body to ensure less duplication of services, ensure services meet community needs rather than simply the external priorities. • Ensure sustainability by undertaking a cost/benefit analysis and monitor staff/community ratios. • Relevant training models need to be developed that acknowledge cultural connectedness. • Explore different staffing models that increase flexibility of employment criteria to ensure local demand is met.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology	Findings - limitations	Recommendations
NT	Aboriginal Remote Area Night Patrols, Central Australia *Good practice in Indigenous family violence prevention – Designing and Evaluating Successful Programs* (Memmott et al., 2006)	Tangentyere Council services nineteen Aboriginal town camps around Alice Springs: in operation since late 1977. Night Patrols are a uniquely Indigenous Australian phenomenon, operating without policing powers they were established designed to intervene to prevent a host of community harms, often family-related. They walk a fine line between mainstream legal imperatives, on the one hand, and Indigenous cultural imperatives, on the other. Patrollers employ mediation techniques to intervene to prevent the escalation of behaviour that might otherwise require police intervention. Patrollers' authority to intervene is a "moral authority", embedded in their legitimacy within the community. Building on the success in the Alice Springs town camps, Tangentyere expanded patrol training to 20 remote communities in the NT Central Desert.	• Remote Area Night Patrols (RANP) were culturally embedded and community owned – in keeping with principles set out in the National Indigenous Family Violence Grants Program (NIFVGP). • Patrollers tend to be "cultural insiders" with an intimate knowledge of local communities. • Paper based reporting systems disadvantaged patrollers for whom English was a third or fourth language. • RANP's 'Patrol Story' website (www.patrolstory.org.au) - data-capture system, allowed patrollers to input patrol data online using pictographs. • Collected data informed community council decisions and government to evaluate the program. • A video newsletter, produced in a number of Indigenous languages helped to circulate ideas. • Patrol program was reported to be highly relevant in different communities. • Seen as having a vital impact on Indigenous family violence.	• Being "cultural insiders" may inhibit patrollers from intervening with people with whom they have a kinship relationship. • Need a balance between "cultural insiders" and sympathetic "cultural outsiders".	• The report made the following recommendation: • Enhance patrollers' options for long term employment by creating opportunities for, accreditation, including a family violence components. • A 2004 evaluation of the NIFVGP concluded programs work best when run by regional Indigenous organisations.

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It offers a range of activities, including: cultural and healing activities, and different modes of therapy.

Four SEWBS co-work with other providers, particularly in local health and allied health services.

Methodology based on 21 interviews ('purposive sample') with differing levels of involvement in the service, including: (e.g. service providers; service participants; and, referral sources). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), focused on the experiences of participants, employed. | • Representatives from local organisations met to start the initial negotiation. There was agreement that the initiative needed to be carefully crafted to meet local concerns.
• Partnership with other agencies allowed SEWB to access alternative finding streams.
• Collaboration between service providers ensured a coherent approach.
• Reductions in a range of harmful behaviours (smoking, alcohol and self-harm) were also successfully targeted.
• Increased community engagement led to increased community pride.
• Mix of preventative work and crisis intervention identified as a key strength.
• Service providers' willingness to respond to community needs and to modify practice as circumstances demanded. | • Multi-agency work meant duplication of priorities and interests.
• Too much control by players not living in the community and not aware of community needs.
• Funding insecurity and major issues. Instability created by having different agencies with conflicting expectations.
• 'White fella' form of accountability disconnected from remote community realities.
• Accessing services is an issue: including differential access along "skin" group/language group lines.
• Recruitment issues.
• Communication problems, e.g. Indigenous versus mainstream languages. | The report made the following recommendations.
• Improved supervision, support and training for staff.
• Better management of staff workloads to prevent burn-out.
• Undertake comprehensive planning for health service
• Health appropriate for remote communities.
• Enhanced community involvement in decision-making.
• A committee representative of the community and the funding agencies to be formed, to link community and the funders. The community to function as a co-ordinating body to ensure less duplication of services, ensure services meet community needs rather than simply the external priorities.
• Ensure sustainability by undertaking a cost/benefit analysis and monitor staff/community ratios.
• Relevant training models need to be developed that acknowledge cultural connectedness.
• Explore different staffing models that increase flexibility of employment criteria to ensure local demand is met. |

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology		Findings - limitations	Recommendations
NSW	Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation – Healthy Family Circle Program *Groups and communities at risk of DFV: a review and evaluation of domestic and family violence prevention and early intervention services focusing on at-risk groups and communities.* Canberra: Australian Institute of Family Studies. (Tayton, Kaspiew, Moore & Campo, 2014).	Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Corporation in inner Sydney is run by Aboriginal women, many of them volunteers. Services focus on family violence. The Black Out Violence campaign, is considered a best-practice model by the Human Rights Commission as for tackling FV in an urban Aboriginal context and won the Violence Against Women Prevention Award in 2004. The model was rolled out to some regional communities in NSW. The Healthy Family Circle Program, was developed with Relationships Australia, to offer capacity building seminars to: empower women and girls; build self-esteem, confidence and life skills. It also aims to prevent FV through early intervention. There are multiple entry points, including a drop-in centre, in-home family support, and a referral processes for accommodation, legal, medical and court support, as well as post-release support. A mixed methods evaluation was designed in partnership with Mudgin-Gal, involving both process and impact methods. The research employed semi-structured individual and group interviews. It drew on existing administrative data, besides collecting qualitative and quantitative information from interviews with staff and participants.	• Considered successful because service is delivered by an Aboriginal community organisation –in terms of building trust and cultural secure environment. • Program responds to the requirements of participations, in the immediate and longer term. • Had a positive impact in terms of strengthening community and culture. • Encouraging an empowered approach to accessing services. • Promoting self-esteem. • Capacity building in relation to dealing with domestic and family violence.		• Identified program gaps included parenting courses and budgeting/financial management courses as well as more outings to culturally significant sites. • Administrative and governance capacity of Mudgin-Gal hampered by training and resources deficits, and recruiting appropriate facilitators • At the time of the evaluation, changes in personnel severely disrupted program delivery.	• Support programs like Mudgin-Gal's Healthy Family Circle to strengthen partnerships between Aboriginal community organisations and government in OCHRE. • Provide levels of community investment sufficient to sustain staffing, funding and leadership development, and strengthen mechanisms supporting self-management.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology	Findings - limitations	Recommendations
NSW	Aboriginal Women Against Violence Project (AWAVP) 'Helping ourselves, helping each other': Lessons from the Aboriginal women against violence project (Rawsthorne, 2014, pp. 7-21).	The Aboriginal Women Against Violence Project (AWAVP) supports Aboriginal women to act as mentors, advocates, and supporters for women and children escaping violence. Rooted in Indigenous community development principles, AWAVP commenced in 2008 in Liverpool and Campbelltown. The vision was to create a secure space where Aboriginal women could share experiences of violence, shift the dominant paradigm (i.e. white professionals) and black clients, and achieve change in service provision for Aboriginal women. The evaluation focussed on four mentor programs running in the Liverpool and Campbelltown areas (2008 and 2010). **Methodology** A "triangulated mixed methods" approach was employed; data collection methods included focus groups, interviews and document reviews. Analysis was informed by Lori Heise's "ecological framework", aimed at understanding the 'multi-layered' forms of violence women participants faced, and identifying causal relationship between program elements and outcomes.	• Learning in an informal setting was seen as very "culturally appropriate". • Friendships were strengthened through the informal networking and sharing views, experiences, and food. • Program promoted pride and self-confidence within the local Aboriginal community; giving women the self-confidence to become active. • Mainstream services were invited into the group space as guest presenters which shifted embedded "client/service provider" power imbalances. • Generated a space where Aboriginal women could safely challenge mainstream service providers and be heard. • The program's success in training mentors challenges stereotypes of Indigenous women as hopeless and helpless victims	• No limitations of the AWAVP were identified in the report.	Recommendations emerging from Recommendations relate principally to mainstream services: • Build trusting relationships with Indigenous communities. • Work with Indigenous communities to build on and strengthen resilience. Reducing imposition of patronising white stereotypes of Aboriginal women. • Create culturally secure places to en-skill Aboriginal women; welcome feedback; be responsive to Indigenous points of view; work at an appropriate pace; open routes for further education and knowledge. • Remain aware of the history of colonisation and the impact of child removal policies, and their impact, as well as routinized forms of systemic and "day-to-day" racism experienced by every Aboriginal person.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology		Findings - limitations	Recommendations

VIC	Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria's Early Intervention and Prevention Program
	
	Evaluation report of the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria's early intervention and prevention program, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service: Victoria
	
	(Karahasan, 2014).
		The Early Intervention and Prevention activities evaluated here form steps in a process.
		
		Sisters Day Out brings Aboriginal women together to share a day of pampering and relaxation. The days is designed to promote a relaxed and safe environment where local legal and family violence support services can interface with women in a non-threatening, non-hierarchical way.
		
		There is no pressure on women to engage services, other than by choice.
		
		Dilly Bag is the next step in engagement.
		
		Small group contexts ensure women feel comfortable to vocalise. Craft activities provide a safe means of sharing stories and talking about deeply personal matters; they may also view a short film on family violence to encourage sharing stories.
		
		The next phase of Dilly Bag "The Journey" involves overnight accommodation in a culturally significant and secure location. Being in this environment shifts focus and allows more time to build relationships with other women in peaceful surroundings away from the pressures of daily life.
		
		Methodology
		
		Three evaluation questions were developed: on program outcomes, qualitative evidence for outcomes, and quantitative evidence for outcomes. The outcomes investigated were individual knowledge and understanding, and individual development and wellbeing.
			• Sisters Day Out: balances a casual atmosphere with a serious topic. The excellence of the program reflected in healthy rate of participation.
			• All three programs designed and managed by the community: created by, and for, Aboriginal women.
			• Cultural underpinning of programs makes them highly relevant and accessible for Indigenous women. ,
			• The programs:
			  - Improved self-esteem
			  - Strengthened community and friendship networks;
			  - Raised awareness of FV issues.
			• Programs nurtured self-esteem and self-acceptance, while acknowledging the obstacles and extreme hardships experienced by generations of Aboriginal families.
				• Provide child care facilities at Sisters Day Out
				• Improve data methods to ensure consistent referral data.
				• Mine data to garner information about referrals to services other than legal and family violence support post-program.
				• Lack of sustainable funding a key barrier.
					• The recommendations also noted:
					• Create a project to review mainstream service providers' awareness of barriers that prevent Aboriginal women from accessing services, with the aim of offering necessary cultural training for them.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology	Findings - limitations	Recommendations
VIC	The Gippsland CommUNITY Walk Against Family Violence (Laming, Crinall, Hurley, Pattern, Goodall, Yarram, Hamer & McDonald, 2011)	The East Gippsland CommUNITY Walk Against Family Violence, involved 26 FV and criminal justice related services sectors, as Aboriginal agencies, women, men and children. Designed to change community attitudes toward FV and celebrate culture The Walk took place over four days in November 2008. It projected a no-tolerance approach to FV. **Methodology** A "realist participatory evaluation methodology" was chosen. Realist evaluations analyse how and why complex social interventions work, or do not work in concrete situations. It was also influenced by a holistic Indigenous epistemology. A reference group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous services had carriage of evaluation questions and oversaw the process.	• Culture was central to the Walk's success in enhancing self-esteem for Indigenous men, women and children. • A shared sense of having common goals amongst participating partners crucial. • Indigenous leadership. • Success was depended on a core group of dedicated and influential "champions". • Walking together increased solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, people and services. • Visual materials, including photographs, brochures and posters, as well as activities, enabled and communicated the shared vision.	• More publicity prior to the walk to engage participation, and a longer time in each town. • Establishment of a designated area where services can set up stalls to increase information sharing and access to services.	Recommendations for transferable approaches and strategies: • Aboriginal leadership and involvement of Aboriginal men. • Shared vision enacted within the context of a positive, inclusive, culturally appropriate way forward. • Ongoing reflection and planning – including debriefing and 'yarning' at the end of each day. • Building trust between police and Aboriginal community members. • Embracing culture and diversity. • Visual and embodied communication. • "Harnessing the energy" to ensure further initiatives. • Resources for formative participatory evaluation for future events.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology		Findings - limitations	Recommendations
VIC	"Marg's Place" (shelter/refuge) McDonald & Green, 2001).	"Marg's Place" is a high security accommodation support service located in regional Victoria. Staff provide visiting support to women in three residences. Opened in 1997, it was the first purpose-built, dispersed rural model. Specific objectives: • Provide secure, emergency, crisis accommodation to women and children escaping DV. • Provide assessment, support and referral to appropriate services depending on need. • Staff to be sensitive to cultural, language or other difficulties that may exacerbate the problem of DV for some users, and make sure appropriate community linkages are on offer (McDonald and Green, p. 86). **Methodology** Evaluation focused on the first year of operation. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed.	• Caters for clients with multiple and complex needs unlikely to be successfully housed in a communal refuge. • Accommodates older male children • Rural location offers a chance to create a fresh identity.	• Rural location meant separation from social networks for some. • Conflict for some staff in encouraging local community supports while maintaining high levels of security. • The lack of transitional housing in the area was a problem. • Relatively high staff: client ratio.	No specific recommendations.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology		Findings - limitations	Recommendations
WA	East Kimberley Family Violence Hub and Outreach Service (Government of WA Department for Child Protection, 2012).	FACHSIA provided $6.8 million over three years to the Department for Child Protection to implement the East Kimberley Family Violence Hub and Outreach Service. The service commenced in mid-2010 and served Kununurra, Warmun, Wyndham and Kalumburu until June 2012. **Methodology** Employing an action research method, the evaluation investigated: the extent of any reduction in family violence, improved outcomes for victims and responses to perpetrators. Also, the degree to which the project developed the capacity of individual communities to have an impact on family violence family violence data gathered at six monthly intervals; surveys and interviews conducted twice yearly. Activities and the development of infrastructure were also documented.	• The Hub had a significant impact on family violence responses in the four communities, including: • Improving community facilities to provide safe spaces for victims and their children and spaces for men • Enhancing knowledge about family violence and their capacity of agencies to respond. • Increasing the quantum of resources within communities to offer safety based responses to victims and timely intervention for perpetrators • Significant improvement in community attitudes towards, and understanding of, family violence • Increased feelings of safety reported by community members. • Service providers commented on many instances of positive behaviour change in the community.	• Remoteness of the locations in relation to each other and Perth. • Some community members in Kalumburu and Warmun commented that they would have preferred a more consistent on-community presence by services/workers rather than an outreach approach. • Problem of short-term funding and intervention. • High staff turnover (unclear the degree to which this was linked to short term funding).	No recommendations were provided.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology	Findings - limitations	Recommendations
WA	(Kinnane et al., 2010). *Fitzroy Valley Alcohol Restriction Report: An evaluation of the effects of a restriction on take-away alcohol relating to measurable health and social outcomes, community perceptions and behaviours after a two year period,* The University of Notre Dame to the Government of Western Australia	On 2 October 2007; the following restriction was put into place in Fitzroy Crossing for six months: *'The sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol in liquor of 2.7 per cent at 20 degrees Celsius, is prohibited to any person, other than a lodger (as defined in Section 3 of the Act).* On 16 May 2008 the Director extended the restriction indefinitely, with an annual review to test its ongoing effectiveness **Methodology** Qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed. Quantitative data was collected from a number of agencies for the period from October 2006 to September 2009. Qualitative data was collected through interviewing service providers, and community members between October 2008 and June 2010.	• Reductions in the severity of domestic violence. • Reduced severity of wounding from public violence. • Less street drinking. • A quieter town. • Less littering. • Families purchasing more food and clothing. • Families being more aware of their health and being proactive in regard to their children's health. • Reduced 'humbugging' and anti-social behaviour. • Reduction in stress for service providers. • Greater effectiveness of services already active in the valley. • Generally, childcare improved, as well as increased recreational activities. • A reduction in the amount of alcohol being consumed by Fitzroy and Fitzroy Valley residents.	• A "displacement effect" including increased travel to Derby and Broome to buy full strength alcohol. • People leaving children in the care of grandparents to drink at the Inn or the Lodge or travel to other towns to obtain alcohol. • Increased pressure on dependent drinkers and their families who are paying extra for alcohol. • Increase in amounts of alcohol brought back to the community from other towns. • A general disappointment that the town has taken on the restriction, yet there has not been little additional services to take advantage of the ban. • Slump in some alcohol outlets as people choose to travel to other towns to obtain full-strength alcohol.	No recommendations were provided.

State	Program name	Description of service and evaluation methodology	Findings - limitations	Recommendations
SA	Aboriginal Family and Community Healing Program *An Aboriginal family and community healing (AFCH) program in metropolitan Adelaide* (Kowanko et al., 2009).	The Aboriginal Family and Community Healing (AFCH) program operated from three primary health care sites, working with women, young people, men and the broader community. The program involved a complex mix of activities and programs offered on the basis of available resources and demand. **Methodology** Evaluation focused on the process, impacts and outcomes of the AFCH using participatory action oriented methodology, mixed methods and multiple data sources.	The program cited by the Productivity Commission as an effective response to Aboriginal family violence as: • It had a sound evidence-based design. • Unanimous support for the program from staff and clients, and it enabled strategic partnerships between health and human sectors. • Peer support, mentoring and an Aboriginal cultural focus were also noted as strengths.	• Restrictions on location of funding. • Continuous restructuring of the regional health service impacted negatively on staff morale and program integrity.	The report made the following recommendations: • Continue, expand and sustain the AFCH program • Resource Indigenous health teams adequately to deal with complex health and social issues and, manage crises. • Introduce systemic data collection and information management protocols.

Appendix B

The state of knowledge literature review: Methodological approaches

This state of knowledge paper has been assembled from a mix of academic and grey literature. In this brief section we outline the search strategy and selection criteria utilised, ensuring that our approach is both reviewable and replicable. The topic under review, innovations in the area of reducing violence against Indigenous women in rural and remote communities, is not neatly bounded; rather, it cuts across a range of what are often considered to be discrete policy arenas - from Indigenous justice strategies on the one hand, through to policies designed to reduce violence against women, on the other; and it gathers together a host of diffuse policy arenas, from mental and physical health policy, policing strategies and practices, alcohol and drug reduction initiatives, civil and criminal forms of law. Not all innovative models of good practice in the field will be badged as "violence against Indigenous women" initiatives; however, violence reduction may be the outcome of interventions targeted elsewhere, for example: support for vulnerable young mothers; promoting physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing; improving local relationships between Indigenous people and the police; and, reducing the consumption of alcohol. This means that some forms of innovative practice will not be readily identified when scouring databases. Our review, therefore, attempts to be sensitive to both the specific literature on violence reduction and what we term "hybrid" initiatives. While the term "hybrid response" or "hybrid model" has been used in recent years within the violence against women field to describe a new model of service provision, there is no clear definition that aptly defines or describes the elements of a hybrid model or response. For the purpose of this literature analysis, a hybrid model or response is one where a mainstream and an Indigenous service, or services, partner to offer a coordinated response to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women. Examples of hybridity include Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Services where there is a blend of mainstream legal representation and coordinated grass roots prevention work in local communities, allowing for the creation of fresh practices that move policy implementation beyond existing "silos". Hybrid initiatives engage with difficult issues by creating "liminal" or "in-between" spaces where Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous government can negotiate innovative solutions.

Search strategy

The primary research material used in this review fit into two broad categories. These are academic sources and grey literature. The latter is inclusive of government reports and policies, program descriptions and evaluations, and organisational/community-based reports. Relevant academic research concerning responses to family violence in Indigenous communities was identified by searching a number of social science and legal databases. A total of nine databases were searched for publications. These databases were: LexisNexis, Criminal Justice Abstracts, EBSCOhost, Academic Search Complete, DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals, SocINDEX, JSTOR Journals, CINAHL, and Informit Humanities & Social Sciences Collection. These searches were limited to full text and academic journals for the years 1999-present (2015). The grey literature was garnered from a number of sources. Primarily these were: relevant government sites and clearinghouses (including Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse and Australian Indigenous HealthInfo Net); websites of Indigenous organisations and services in the relevant jurisdictions; and, more broadly, Google Scholar. Each search term and search term combination utilised in our search of academic databases was replicated in this final source. Again, the same timeframe limitation was applied.

The initial approach of our search involved a categorisation of search terms garnered from the research proposal and refined by investigators. Subsequent searches involved a combination of broad/general terminology (for example, Indigenous Australians, rural communities, family violence) and more specific terminology (for example, hybrid approaches, northern territory, FASD). Examples of searches conducted include: Australian Indigenous family domestic violence; Australian Indigenous sexual assault; Australian Indigenous violence against women; Australian Indigenous violence programs; Australian Indigenous community violence programs; hybrid family domestic violence models; collaboration family domestic violence models; coordinated family domestic violence models; mainstream and indigenous family domestic violence models; and FASD Indigenous Australians. It should be noted that, where relevant, alternative terminology was included in the search, for example "Indigenous Australian or Aboriginal", "family or domestic violence". The following matrix lists each search term, categorised by topic area, utilised in the literature search. Topic areas include tiers of increasing specificity (denoted by italics):

Client group	Geographical area	Criminological area	Form of response	Specific responses
Indigenous Australians	Rural communities	Violence against women	Innovative approaches	Family violence legal services
Women	Remote communities	*Family violence*	Collaboration	Shelters
Men	*Northern Western Australia*	*Sexual assault*	Integrative responses	Healing Projects
Children	*Fitzroy Crossing*	Lateral violence	Community-led responses	Community Patrol
	Northern Territory		Hybrid responses	Night Patrol
	Darwin	**Specific Factors**		Police based
	Central Queensland	FASD		Alcohol restriction
				LinkedUp
				SupportLink

Our literature review also contains a smaller database of relevant literature pertaining to the methodological approach of the project. The following table lists each search term used to gather an evidence base for the project:

Realist	Strengths-based	Jurisdictional comparison
Comparative	Evaluative	Within State
Evaluative		Across State

Further, a complementary method of snowball sampling was employed, whereby key references used in the literature were specifically sought in the event that they were not captured in the initial search. The resultant literature is comprised of a combination of broad topic areas and geographical/response-specific sources. The product of this search strategy was the creation of a searchable literature database categorised by topic area.

Selection criteria

After categorising the extracted literature, the next step involved a closer examination of the sources to determine relevance. In this initial examination, primacy was given to national literature, with international work examined for the purposes of comparison. This measure was taken to ensure the relevance of the history discussed. Further, we ensured that the work of Indigenous scholars and organisations remained at the forefront of the review wherever possible. Finally, as our research is primarily concerned with both response models, and evaluations thereof, initial examination was focussed on identifying broad approaches to family violence in Indigenous communities and extracting key practice and program examples that have been subject to evaluation. Given the paucity of systematic and long-term investment in this area, we did not have the luxury of excluding smaller-scale programs.