

## Policing Indigenous Communities Inquiry

Sir/Madam,

I write in response to the recent invitation for submissions to this Inquiry.

I don't want to make a lengthy submission but rather highlight what I consider to be a critical and pervasive factor that underpins much of the service delivery in remote indigenous communities.

You no doubt are aware of. the Cape York Justice Study released in November 2001 by (Retired) Justice Tony Fitzgerald. I was a member of the study team, responsible for studying transport-related breaches of law.

I was seconded to the team from a senior position with Queensland Transport. Just prior to that I had been working in the Department of Premier and Cabinet assisting in establishing the new Community Engagement Division. In my substantive position with Queensland Transport I was Manager of Community Programs in Road Safety and led the initial development of a Road Safety Strategy for Queensland's remote Indigenous Communities. In that capacity I prepared and delivered a paper in the Northern Territory presenting our initiative and at the invitation of the Government of Western Australia, presented to regional forums in Kununurra, Broome, Derby and Kalgoorlie.

While the Report articulates the range of issues the study identified and offers a raft of relevant recommendations, I wanted to stress what I consider to have been, and remains, a critical reality that impacts service delivery in remote communities. Clearly, it impacted on policing then and continues to do so.

This reality is that of inter-agency competitiveness. I believe government departments, due to both funding mechanisms and broader historico-cultural patterns, find difficulty in, and actually experience disincentives for, harmonising service delivery. The issues in remote indigenous communities span social, health, economic and environmental jurisdictions. There are significantly more than that number of distinct agencies and authorities attempting to address them and each seeks their own funding. Local authority and federal interests represent two more tiers of interest and activity.

Policing, by definition, spans all legislation and much of that impacting communities lies within the jurisdiction of other than the Police Service.

The Justice Study recommendations led to efforts by Government to establish inter-agency committees chaired by Directors-General in an effort to address some of this.....I believe they have substantially failed although there has been some success.

Accordingly, I submit to your inquiry that this inter-agency competitiveness will continue to impact service delivery, including policing, unless and until a community's needs can be acknowledged and addressed by one government-appointed entity with both the authority and accountability required for effective and efficient service delivery.

I believe that such a mechanism would allow any agency, including the Police Service, to address its issues with that authorised entity and obtain timely, clear and consistent advice or rulings. Conversely, an agency can influence policy and legislative development through informing that same entity which feeds back to the relevant jurisdiction.

This in no way suggests agencies cease direct contact with communities, but rather can approach one government-entity and seek the decisions it may require for seamless delivery.

The current government initiative being championed by the Department of Communities, reflecting the 'One Stop Shop' approach, mirrors something of the principle I am describing.

I wish you and the Commission every best wish in your Inquiry. So many are looking to you for clear analysis, practical solutions and just outcomes.

Yours Sincerely

Doug Brownlow

Doug Brownlow M.Ed.Admin.,B.A.(Hons),Dip.Ed.  
Director, Australian Native Food Industry Ltd  
Communication Officer  
'Eden'  
Registered Office for Eden Bush Foods & Eden Human Services  
ABN 17 669 982 616  
3 Lookout Court, Camp Mountain, Qld 4520  
Telephone +(0)61 07 3289 1245 Mobile 0439 716 365  
[edenbf@bigpond.com](mailto:edenbf@bigpond.com) Skype No kathndoug

Member of the Queensland Bushfood Association  
[www.qldbushfood.com](http://www.qldbushfood.com)