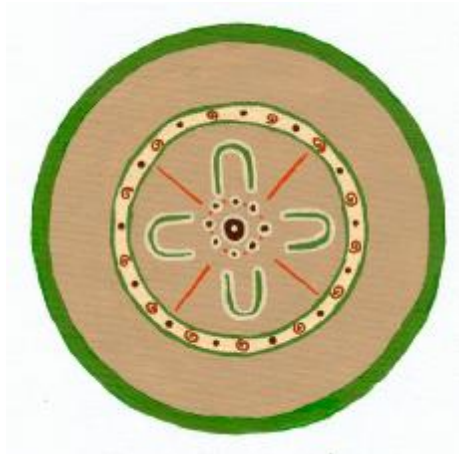


ILLAWARRA-SOUTH EAST REGIONAL MANAGERS NETWORK

Aboriginal Government Employees Network (AGEN)



Gathering Report 2009

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Overview and Background to AGEN	4
<i>Background to AGEN</i>	4
<i>The AGEN logo</i>	5
<i>Overview of AGEN 2009</i>	5
<i>Gathering Information Pack</i>	6
<i>Participation at AGEN 2009</i>	7
DAY ONE Proceedings of the Gathering	9
<i>Welcome to Country</i>	9
<i>Welcome from the Regional Managers Network</i>	9
<i>Overview of AGEN Gathering 2009</i>	11
<i>Housekeeping</i>	11
<i>Gathering Protocols</i>	12
<i>Networking Time</i>	12
<i>School-based Apprenticeships & Trainees in the NSW Police: Project Murra</i>	13
<i>Overview of Aboriginal training programs, apprenticeships and traineeships in the Illawarra and South East Regions</i>	14
<i>The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)</i>	17
<i>AGEN Workshop No. 1: Supporting and Mentoring Young People from School to Work</i>	18
<i>Findings from the AGEN Program Evaluation and Review</i>	21
<i>Entertainment – Fancy Dress Koorioke</i>	21
DAY TWO Proceedings of the Gathering	22
<i>Report from the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP)</i>	22
<i>Overview of Draft AGEN Culture & Heritage Framework</i>	24
<i>AGEN Workshop No 2 – Future Networking Options for AGEN</i>	26
<i>Overview of Two Ways Together</i>	29
Gathering Plenary Discussion	31
<i>General Business</i>	31
<i>Appointment of CAWP 2009-2010</i>	31
<i>Gathering Recommendations, 2009</i>	32
<i>Gathering Evaluation Forms</i>	33
<i>Consideration of AGEN Gathering Report 2009 by Regional Managers Network</i>	34
Appendices	36
<i>Appendix 1 - Notes from Workshop 1</i>	36
<i>Appendix 2 Collation of AGEN 2009 Evaluation Forms</i>	36

Acknowledgements

AGEN acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the Gathering was held, the Walbunga people, and pays respect to all Aboriginal elders and leaders, past and present.

AGEN especially acknowledges Aunty Meryl Crole who, on behalf of the Walbunga people, graciously provided a Welcome to Country for the AGEN Gathering 2009.

The success of the Gathering could not have been achieved without the dedication and support of many people. All members of the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP) are especially congratulated for their amazing efforts to organise AGEN:

- Jodi Edwards
- Tracey Gill- Dallinger
- Phillip Needham
- Mena Tracey
- Agnes Donovan

Special thanks go to Jodi Edwards as Chairperson of CAWP and Agnes Donovan who again successfully carried out the demanding role of Master of Ceremony for the Gathering.

The AGEN Gathering is supported by the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network. Anne Muir, A/Chairperson of the Network, is acknowledged for her attendance at AGEN and for officially welcoming delegates on behalf of the RMN.

The continued support for AGEN by the Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional Coordinators Ros Chivers (South East) and Mark Roberts (Illawarra), and other regional managers of NSW agencies is also gratefully acknowledged.

AGEN would like to thank everyone who made formal presentations as part of the Gathering Agenda: Chenine Edwards, Kathleen McGuire, Wayne Dedden, Darrell Brown, Violet Green, Doreen Walker, Nellie McMahon, Jake Trindorfer, David Crawford, Tracey Gill-Dallinger, Jodi Edwards, Phil Needham, Joanne Scott and Lana Callaghan.

We would also like to thank the efforts of those AGEN members who competently managed and facilitated two major workshops during the Gathering: Jodi Edwards, Errolyn Strang, Tracey Gill-Dallinger, Melanie Goldstein, Phillip Needham, Darrell Brown, Agnes Donovan, Veronica Graf, Mena Tracey and June Lowe.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is acknowledged for supporting the involvement of Mr Layne Brown, who represented the NSW Youth Roundtable at the Gathering.



Entertainment at AGEN was coordinated by Tracey Gill-Dallinger and thanks go to Dale Huddleston of Riverbank Entertainment.

The Coachhouse Marina Resort at Batemans Bay was the venue for the 2009 Gathering. Members of the Coachhouse staff demonstrated professional and courteous hospitality at all times, and special thanks go to Allison and Tess.

The AGEN Gathering and the Cross Agency Working Party in 2009 were resourced and supported by staff from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet based in Queanbeyan and Wollongong: Adam Selwyn, David Crawford, Denise McConnachie and Chris Lacey.

And finally, special thanks must go to all the AGEN 2009 delegates who through their goodwill, enthusiasm and active participation created a positive and enjoyable learning environment for everyone.



The Night Before AGEN: CAWP members pack the Gathering Bags

Overview and Background to AGEN

Welcome to the Illawarra-South East Aboriginal Government Employees Network (AGEN) Gathering Report for 2009.

The Gathering was held at the Coachhouse Marina Resort at Batemans Bay on the 23rd and 24th September 2009.

This report summarises the proceedings of the Gathering; documents the evaluation provided from AGEN members about the Gathering; and describes the outcomes that will be pursued in partnership with the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network during the coming year.



AGEN participants 2009

Background to AGEN

The Aboriginal Government Employees Network (AGEN) brings together Aboriginal employees of NSW Government agencies in the Illawarra and South East Regions.

Involvement in AGEN is open to all Aboriginal employees of NSW agencies in the Illawarra and South East regions, including staff employed in identified and mainstream positions.

AGEN aims to increase support, networking, career development, and opportunities for cooperation and partnerships between Aboriginal workers.

AGEN was initiated in 2004 by the Illawarra and South East Regional Co-ordination Management Group (now known as the Regional Managers Network) as part of its cross-agency commitment to enhance service delivery and community outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

The Annual Gathering is especially valued by AGEN members because, amongst other things, it:

- enables people to network and establish ways of building stronger cross-agency and integrated approaches to service delivery
- provides opportunities to discuss and workshop issues as well as learn and share information about other agencies' roles, projects and programs
- promotes greater confidence and ability to work in partnership with other workers and agencies, particularly for newer staff members

Significantly, AGEN is the only formal cross-agency mechanism for Aboriginal employees of all agencies in the region to network, share information, and learn about the work of other agencies.

It is indeed currently the only all agency network for Aboriginal workers in NSW.

AGEN is supported by a working group to operate in between the Annual Gatherings: members of this working group, known as the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP), are appointed each year by the AGEN Gathering delegates to work in partnership with the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network.

The AGEN logo

The AGEN logo was designed by Patricia Margaret Maurer.

Sadly Aunty Pat passed away on 15 December 2005, however her support for establishing AGEN and her gift of the logo will always be remembered.



Overview of AGEN 2009

This Gathering was the 6th AGEN Gathering held since 2004. It was held at Batemans Bay (Coachhouse Marina Resort) on 23-24 September 2009.

The overall theme for the Gathering in 2009 developed by the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP) was:

Supporting and Mentoring Young People from School to Work.

This theme evolved out of workshop discussions held at the 2008 Gathering where a range of cross-agency gaps in service delivery were raised by AGEN members.

Ensuring that young people are supported throughout school and are encouraged into employment pathways early-on was one of the common areas identified by AGEN members with implications for a range of agencies.

DAY ONE of the Gathering focussed on the main theme of supporting young people.

The format for Day 1 included presentations on the range of Commonwealth and State education and training programs for young people, as well as showcasing some examples of successful employment pathway and mentoring projects.

Facilitated small-group workshops were held to discuss matters relating to young people's education, training and employment issues.

Suggested recommendations were made arising from these workshops and are described in later sections of this report for consideration by the RMN.



AGEN 2009 Chairperson, Jodi Edwards

DAY TWO of the Gathering covered a range of general topics.

There were presentations given by AGEN members on the role of CAWP and its activities for 2008-09 as well as an overview of the *Two Ways Together* program implementation in the region by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The draft AGEN Culture and Heritage Framework which has been developed over 2 years by successive CAWPs was introduced to delegates for their information.

A major workshop on future networking options for AGEN was conducted to make further progress on the 2009 AGEN Evaluation project, and a range of recommended actions are described in later sections of this report.

And finally, at the conclusion of the Gathering, a plenary session discussed recommendations to go from AGEN to the RMN and there was an announcement of new CAWP members for 2009-10.

Gathering Information Pack

AGEN delegates received an Information Pack at the commencement of Gathering, which contained the following materials:

- Gathering Agenda
- Workshop Information
- List of Participants and Email Contacts
- Biographical Notes on Presenters
- Overview of the Regional Managers Network
- List of Regional Managers
- RMN Annual Report on agency implementation of AGEN Employment & Recruitment Plan and Cultural Respect Training Framework
- Executive Summary of the AGEN Program Evaluation 2009
- Information on the Cross Agency Working Party

Participation at AGEN 2009

The AGEN Gathering was attended by 64 people from a total of 24 organisations. The NSW agencies represented at the Gathering were:

RMN Agencies represented	RMN agencies not represented
Department of Aboriginal Affairs	Attorney Generals Department
Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care	Department of Lands
Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation	Department of Planning
Department of Community Services	Department of Local Government
Department of Corrective Services	Department of Commerce
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water	Greater Southern Area Health Service
Department of Education & Training (State Training Services)	Lauchlan, Murrumbidgee, Murray, Hawkesbury-Nepean CMAs
Department of Juvenile Justice	Maritime Authority
Department of Premier & Cabinet	Ministry of Transport
Industry & Investment NSW (Forests NSW)	NSW Tourism
Housing NSW	Office of Fair Trading
NSW Fire Brigades	RailCorp
NSW Police	State Emergency Service
Roads and Traffic Authority	Industry & Investment NSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State & Regional Development • Fisheries
South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health	
Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority CMA	
TAFE Illawarra	

About 50% of agencies that form the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network were represented at the Gathering. It is acknowledged that some agencies do not have Aboriginal staff located in the region.

Approximately 25% of AGEN delegates this year were from the South East Region, working mainly in Queanbeyan, Batemans Bay, and Narooma. A clear majority of AGEN participants (approximately 75%) were from the Illawarra Region, working mainly in Wollongong and Nowra.

It has become convention for the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) from the region's Local Councils to be invited to participate in AGEN in order to support them in their roles and to help build stronger partnerships with local government.

This year, ACLOs from the following Councils from the Illawarra and South East regions participated in AGEN:

- Bega Valley Shire Council



AGEN 2009 MC, Agnes Donovan

- Queanbeyan City Council
- Shellharbour City Council

Other organisations represented at the Gathering as guest presenters were:

- Warrigal Employment
- Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

DAY ONE Proceedings of the Gathering

Welcome to Country

Aunty Meryl Crole warmly welcomed all AGEN delegates on behalf of the traditional custodians, past and present, of the land on which the Gathering was held - the Walbunga people.

Aunty Meryl explained that the Walbunga traditional lands extend from Wandandian in the north to Narooma in the south.

In wishing AGEN delegates every success at the Gathering, Aunty Meryl said that

“my ancestors walked this land for over 40,000 years and do so today in the lives of those of us who remain close to the land that they travelled. We walk in their footprints, kept their respect, and honour the paths that they have left for us to follow.”

At the conclusion of her Welcome To Country on behalf of the Walbunga people, Aunty Meryl invited all delegates to stand and observe a minute silence as a mark of respect to Aunty Barbara Sims, Uncle Jeffo Tungai, and other recent passings in the community.

Welcome from the Regional Managers Network

Anne Muir, Regional Director, Industry & Investment NSW

Anne Muir introduced herself as the Acting Chairperson of the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network (RMN) and the Regional Director, Department of Industry and Investment, South East Region.

Anne acknowledged the traditional owners and thanked Aunty Meryl for her welcome to all AGEN participants.

Anne then welcomed all delegates to the 6th Annual Gathering of AGEN and described her own experiences growing up in western NSW.

Anne gave a brief overview of recent changes to the Regional Managers Network and the relationship of AGEN to the RMN was explained. The future RMN will focus its activities around two cluster groups of agencies: *Justice & Human Services Cluster* and *Economic Development & Environment Cluster*.

Information on the Clusters was contained in the Gathering Information Pack provided to all AGEN delegates.

The AGEN – RMN partnership goals include an ongoing commitment to supporting Aboriginal workers through AGEN and Two Ways Together implementation. Some of the major achievements between AGEN and the RMN to date, include:

- AGEN website, www.agen.org.au
- Cultural Respect Training Framework

- Regional Aboriginal Employment and Recruitment Plan
- Draft Regional Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework

An Annual Report on the implementation by agencies of the Cultural Respect Training Framework and the Employment & Recruitment Plan was included in the Gathering Information Pack received by all delegates.

A major initiative this year involved Independent consultant Victoria Smith, who with David Crawford at DPC, undertook a Program Evaluation and Review of AGEN after almost five years in operation.



Jodi Edwards, Anne Muir, Agnes Donovan

The evaluation included an online survey of AGEN members; an online survey of RMN members; focus group meeting of past and present CAWP members; and interviews with RMN managers and DPC staff.

The Evaluation Report Executive Summary was provided in the Gathering Information Pack. It concluded there was strong support for AGEN but some issues were noted with resourcing, especially within DPC, and future networking activities. The workshop on Day 2 was designed to further discuss future networking options.

Finally, Anne made a special thank you to CAWP members who have worked really hard to help make AGEN Gathering a success.

Overview of AGEN Gathering 2009

Presentation by Jodi Edwards, Chairperson of AGEN Gathering 2009

Jodi Edwards, the Chairperson of CAWP and AGEN 2009, gave a presentation on the aims and objectives of AGEN and an overview of the Gathering Agenda.

The aims of AGEN are to:

- increase support, networking and opportunities for collaboration for Aboriginal workers in NSW Government agencies, and
- improve service delivery to Aboriginal communities by encouraging and facilitating partnerships.

Jodi explained that AGEN is important because it is a formal mechanism for Aboriginal workers in all agencies to:

- come together to talk about common issues and concerns
- support each other, make connections, and network to understand each other's areas of responsibility, share information and develop cross-agency partnerships
- identify priorities across agencies and influence management through the links to the RMN
- develop and implement cross-agency projects to help Aboriginal workers in all agencies

Housekeeping

Presentation by Tracey Gill-Dallinger,
CAWP 2009

Tracey Gill-Dallinger informed all AGEN delegates of the housekeeping issues, accommodation, emergency evacuation procedures, and gave an overview of the small-group workshops format and locations.

Tracey gave an overview of the evening entertainment – fancy dress koorioke, with Dale Huddleston from Riverbank Entertainment.

It was also explained that CAWP members and DPC staff were available to sort out any problems that AGEN members may have during the Gathering.



Tracey Gill-Dallinger, CAWP 2009

Gathering Protocols

The AGEN Gathering adopted the following protocols to be followed by all delegates for the duration of the event:

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Respect for each other's opinions
- Professional behaviour expected at all times
- Be on time to sessions, including meals
- Smoking only in areas provided
- Mobile phones on silent mode
- Respect for other guests in the venue
- Enjoy each others company

Networking Time

A feature of all AGEN Gatherings is Networking Time.

At the commencement of the Gathering, all AGEN members are invited to introduce themselves to everyone in the group by telling the group who they are; what agency they work for and the nature of their work; and where they are located in the region.

Networking is an important aspect of AGEN to ensure that people know everyone participating in the Gathering.

It also provides the whole group with an idea of the range of agencies involved in AGEN, the diversity of roles & jobs that Aboriginal workers do, and the locations of individual AGEN members throughout the region so that people can connect up later in the Gathering.

It is an especially important session for new or younger AGEN members and those attending the AGEN Gathering for the first time.



Rebecca Dawson, SESIAHS



Greg Christian, TAFE



Veronica Graf, Shellharbour Council

School-based Apprenticeships & Trainees in the NSW Police: Project Murra

Presentation by Wayne Dedden (NSW Police), Chenine Edwards (Warrigal Employment) and Kathleen McGuire (Trainee, NSW Police)

Project Murra is a highly successful school-based traineeship program for Aboriginal school students, which commenced in 2007 and has grown to become a positive model for government agencies to help support high school completion, promote cultural respect, and provide employment pathways for young people.



Wayne Dedden, Kathleen McGuire, Chenine Edwards

The Project started as a partnership between the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation, Warrigal Employment, TAFE NSW and the NSW Police.

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations also provides funding support to the program.

In 2009 Project Murra expanded to also include trainees being hosted by the NSW Ambulance Service and State Emergency Service. In 2010, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Illawarra) and Communities Division of the Department of Community Services will also take trainees on board.

The NSW Police's objectives in establishing Project Murra were to increase the number of young Aboriginal people entering the Police Academy and, through this, to improve the relationship between the Police and Aboriginal communities, particularly young people.

Murra Trainees commence the program in Year 11 and undertake 100 days paid employment in a chosen host agency over 2 years. They complete a Certificate II in Government services at TAFE in addition to their HSC.

Under the project, Warrigal Employment is the 'employer' of the trainees and is responsible for recruitment (trainee interviews, advertisements, selection etc), providing work-readiness training and ongoing mentoring.



Wayne Dedden

The host agency assigns the trainees a range of work-place activities (eg. general administration, attending and observing meetings, site visits etc) to familiarise them with the agency's business and nature of work. Trainees are not placed in front-line roles and safety is a major priority.

A work place mentor is assigned to supervise the trainee's involvement in the workplace. Mentors will generally have undertaken cultural awareness and respect training.

Ms Kathleen McGuire spoke to AGEN members about her experiences as a trainee with the NSW Police, based in Nowra.

Kathleen has thoroughly enjoyed being a participant in Project Murra - it has given her greater confidence in public speaking and helped her set career goals.

Kathleen said that Project Murra trainees all support each other while they are involved in the program and that while it was hard work she really enjoys working with NSW Police. Her future career goals involve wanting to work in the Domestic Violence area with NSW Police.



NSW Police Trainee, Kathleen McGuire

Overview of Aboriginal training programs, apprenticeships and traineeships in the Illawarra and South East Regions

The NSW and Commonwealth Governments are both involved in the delivery of programs relating to employment, education and training for Aboriginal people.

The purpose of this session was to provide information to AGEN members about some of key programs available in general terms, as well as to provide contact details for the people involved in their delivery in the region.

A copy of the presentations made during this session are available at the AGEN website www.agen.org.au

State-based Vocational Education & Training Programs

Presentation by Darrell Brown, Aboriginal Training Coordinator, Department of Education and Training (State Training Services)



Darrell Brown

Darrell Brown gave a presentation which outlined a number of NSW State Government programs which assist Aboriginal people gain employment, undertake further vocational training & education, and help establish small businesses.

The programs covered were:

1. Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program
2. New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP)
3. Aboriginal Enterprise Development Office

Elsa Dixon Program

The objectives are to encourage permanent employment and professional mobility of Aboriginal people in the public sector and local government. It aims to encourage innovation and enhance the career prospects of Aboriginal people undertaking higher levels of education and training.

Funding is available to agencies/applicants under five separate elements to the program, aimed at: Permanent employment; Temporary Placements; Career Development; Partnership Projects; and Graduate Work Experience.

New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP)

This program funds community organisations to employ 'NCAP' officers who help place Aboriginal people into employment or into training courses that will enhance their job prospects.

The program is generally for Aboriginal people who are: long term unemployed; recent school leavers; ex-offenders; young people at risk or in Juvenile Justice centres; or who are in low paid or unskilled jobs and looking for improved career opportunities.

There are 12 NCAP projects in NSW. In the Illawarra – South East regions these are located at Bega, Moruya, Nowra and Wollongong.

Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officers

AEDO's are funded to assist in the development and retention of viable Aboriginal and Torres Islander businesses. It seeks to help support Aboriginal people who either want to be self-employed or are self-employed and need advice on small-business startups and/or management.

The NSW Department of Education & Training funds community organisations to employ AEDOs and there is one located in Wollongong (Mr Richard Davis).

State Training Services also administer programs for School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

Commonwealth Government Programs

Presentation by Violet Green, Nellie McMahon, Doreen Walker, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Violet Green, Nellie McMahon and Doreen Walker were representing the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and are all based in Batemans Bay.

The presentation outlined the six 'Closing the Gap' targets set by the Commonwealth Government, which are outlined below



Nellie McMahon, Violet Green, Doreen Walker

Closing the Gap Targets

1. Four year old access to early childhood education
2. Halve the gap in infant mortality
3. Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy for Indigenous children within a decade
4. Halve the gap in attainment of year 12 equivalent by 2020
5. Closing the gap in life expectancy within a generation
6. Halve gap in employment outcomes for Indigenous people within a decade.

The education outcomes for NSW indigenous students were summarised:

- Year 7/8 to Year 12 retention rate in NSW is 36% (2008 figures),
- this is the poorest state result, equal with Tasmania.
- QLD is highest at 60%, followed by ACT (53%), Northern Territory (49.2%), South Australia (48%), Victoria (46.4%), and Western Australia (40%)
- participation in vocational education is high among Aboriginal people but mostly is at Certificate I & II level.



Violet Green

The new arrangements for the Indigenous Employment Program were discussed as well as the main Indigenous Education Programs. In summary these are:

Employment

- Voluntary Mobile Assistance Program
- Aspiration Building Program
- Language, Literacy & Numeracy Program

Education

- Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA)
- Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (IYMP)
- Indigenous Parental and Community Engagement Program (PaCE)

In the Illawarra and South East Region, DEEWR has offices and staff located in Batemans Bay, Nowra, Queanbeyan and Canberra. Contact details for these offices are included in the presentation available at www.agen.org.au .

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

Presentation by Mr Jake Trindorfer, AIME Program Manager

Jake Trindorfer was introduced as the Wollongong Program Manager of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), based at the Woolyungarah Indigenous Centre at the University of Wollongong. Jake acknowledged the traditional owners at the commencement of his presentation.

AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) is an Indigenous not-for-profit organisation that links university students with high school Aboriginal students.

Its objectives are to increase Year 10 and Year 12 completion rates as well as university admission rates for all Indigenous Australian students who participate in the program.

The program involves a range of structured education activities and workshops between mentors and Indigenous students, and tries to provide positive role models for young people.



Agnes Donovan and Jake Trindorfer

Mentors receive training before they are matched with an Indigenous student.

Jake played a number of short-films which explained what AIME is and the activities they are involved in.

One recent project involved the production of hip-hop tracks by Indigenous students to develop writing, performance and music production skills.

These short films are available on-line at: <http://www.youtube.com/aimementoring>

The AIME National Launch was held in August 2009. Jake explained that AIME started up in the Illawarra in 2008 after a successful pilot program in Sydney for the past three years. AIME Wollongong is currently working with five local high schools and about 100 Aboriginal students.

There are big plans to try and grow the AIME program throughout the region. The main requirement is that there be a university presence and students willing to take on the mentoring roles.

The possible areas could include: Nowra, Batemans Bay, Bega, where the University of Wollongong has a presence.

Jake encouraged people to visit the AIME website (<http://www.aimementoring.com/>) and for people to think about trying to establish an AIME Program in their local areas.

AGEN Workshop No. 1: Supporting and Mentoring Young People from School to Work

Feedback from previous AGEN Gatherings has indicated that delegates value the opportunity to be given sufficient time to workshop key issues together in small groups.

The theme of the first major workshop at AGEN in 2009 was designed around the main Gathering theme of Supporting and Mentoring Young People from School to Work.

AGEN delegates convened into five pre-arranged groups of about 10-12 people and had 75 minutes to talk about the theme, following a list of suggested questions developed by CAWP prior to the Gathering. These questions were only suggestions and it was left to the facilitators to manage the ebb and flow of discussion content.

Each workshop was facilitated by two AGEN members. The discussions were recorded on butchers paper sheets and each group presented their main points back to the full group.

An unedited record of these sheets is contained in Appendix 1

Facilitators

The workshop facilitators were:

- Tracey Gill-Dallinger & Mel Goldstein
- Phil Needham & Darrell Brown
- Agnes Donovan & Veronica Graf
- Jodi Edwards & Errolyn Strang
- Mena Tracey & June Lowe

Workshop Questions

1. What is going on for our Aboriginal young people generally and what are their issues?
2. What are some of the reasons why our young people do well in school and why do some struggle or have problems?
3. Do you know of any successful projects or programs to support our young people to get jobs and why are they successful (eg mentoring; training and recruitment initiatives)?
4. What can be done to engage with Aboriginal young people to get them to apply for government jobs?
5. How can we (AGEN) support the career development of young Aboriginal workers when they *do* get a government job?

Summary of key themes and issues

Aboriginal young people do well at school and have successful employment outcomes when they are supported by healthy, well-functioning families and have schools that provide culturally respectful and supportive environments.

Young people are less likely to succeed if they experience negative relationships either at home (eg domestic violence, family breakdown) or at school (eg bullying, racism, teachers who lack cultural competence).

Early childhood learning is important and is not available to all young Kooris, due to isolation or lack of child care places. Transition to school and transition to high school are two critical times when young Kooris need extra support from both their families and their schools. Additional support is needed when there are family deaths or other disruptions to family life. Positive mentors play a very important role.

Other issues for young people include: peer pressure, tall poppy syndrome (this discourages high achievers), drugs, alcohol, undiagnosed and untreated medical conditions (eg. hearing, learning disorders), lack of transport, lack of access to education support services, lack of positive role models.

Successful programs for young people in the region include:

- NCAP
- Habitat
- AIME
- Mens' Groups
- Gudhuga
- Community Homework Centres
- Jobs Club (Warrigal Employment)
- Vocational Education Programs
- Oral health Programs
- In-school apprenticeships/traineeships
- Traineeships and Cadetships
- Graduate Programs
- Year 12 Graduation Ceremonies
- Project Murra
- Aboriginal Education Assistants - schools
- Elsa Dixon Program
- Work Experience
- ITIAS
- Kooris in Cars
- Dapto Koonawarra Youth Connect
- PCYC programs
- TAFE
- Scholarships



Ken Davies
Southern Rivers CMA



Nathaniel Morrison
Dept. of Community Services



Mark Huddleston
Dept. of Juvenile Justice

These programs are successful because they provide peer support, mentoring, meaningful employment, pathways to future careers, government and non-government support.

Ideas that could help young people get jobs include: having more career expos that are culturally appropriate, community information days involving young people, better support for young Kooris while they are in school, and mentoring/buddy systems for young people to provide positive role models.

There are barriers to employment for young people, for example the use of selection criteria by government application processes, and the low number of entry level positions. AGEN and the RMN could be mindful of these barriers and take action to reduce them – for example, by providing workshop/information sessions for young people, and/or one on one tutoring to help young people through the application process. RMN agencies could help by creating more entry level positions, traineeships, cadetships and scholarships, and by taking up school -based trainees through initiatives such as Project Murra.

Recommendations

1. AGEN and the RMN consider regional employment strategies for young people as part of the overall Illawarra-South East Aboriginal Recruitment and Employment Plan when it is reviewed in 2010-11. The review to consider how AGEN and RMN agencies can work together to:
 - support existing programs that seek to build positive pathways to employment for young people (AIME, Murra etc),
 - establish mechanisms to mentor and coach young public sector employees across agencies,
 - inform new Aboriginal employees about AGEN in their induction programs,
 - connect young Aboriginal employees with other workers in their areas.
2. Agencies are encouraged to support young and new Aboriginal employees to attend the annual AGEN Gathering to build their networks across government and as a career development opportunity.



Paul Carriage, State Forests



Zane Rice, SESIAHS



Jason Crowther, NSW Police

Findings from the AGEN Program Evaluation and Review

Presentation by Dr David Crawford, Project Officer, Department of Premier and Cabinet (Illawarra)

At the conclusion of Day 1, David Crawford provided an overview of the findings from the independent Evaluation of AGEN conducted by Victoria Smith in 2009 for the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This presentation was provided as background to the Day 2 session on *Future Networking Options for AGEN*.

A copy of the presentation is included at the AGEN website www.agen.org.au

David explained the Evaluation project methodology, which involved an online survey and workshop interviews with present and past CAWP members. The Evaluation identified the significant achievements of AGEN in terms of building support for Aboriginal workers and in influencing the behaviour of agencies, particularly with regard to employment and cultural respect training.

Key results were:

- 62.5% of AGEN members rated AGEN as being *very important* to their work
- 80% of AGEN members believed that AGEN played a role in helping Two Ways Together to improve services to Aboriginal communities
- 90% of regional managers rated AGEN as being *valuable to extremely valuable* to Indigenous staff, while 75% of regional managers rated AGEN as valuable-extremely valuable to their agency
- the main benefits of the Gathering were learning what other Aboriginal workers are in doing in other agencies (85%) and networking with other Aboriginal workers (67%)

The Evaluation also highlighted the significant resourcing commitments by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to achieve these results in supporting AGEN. The sustainability of these efforts was identified as a key issue for DPC for the short-intermediate term future.

David explained that DPC is developing an implementation plan for the future, and that the networking workshop on Day 2, along with the Evaluation Report and feedback from this year's Gathering, would be key inputs.

Entertainment – Fancy Dress Koorioke

After Dinner on DAY 1, there was a well attended Fancy Dress Koorioke Night with Dale Huddleston of Riverbank Entertainment. This provided an opportunity for AGEN members to socialise and enjoy each others' company after a productive day at the Gathering.

The evening entertainment was organised by CAWP member, Tracey Gill-Dallinger, and prizes organised by Agnes Donovan and Denise McConnachie. It was an enjoyable evening for everyone. Prizes were awarded to the following people:

- Best Dressed Male: Phil Needham
- Best Dressed Female: Daphne McDonald
- Best Dressed Table: Agnes, Veronica, Daphne, Mena, Lynda, Mark, Marion
- Best Male Singer: David Mills
- Best Female Singer: Veronica Graf

DAY TWO Proceedings of the Gathering

Report from the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP)

Presentation by Phil Needham, CAWP 2009

Phil Needham gave a background presentation on behalf of the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP), which is the organising committee of AGEN Members nominated at each year's Gathering.

The CAWP members for 2008-09 were:

- Mena Tracey
- Agnes Donovan
- Tracey Gill-Dallinger
- Phil Needham
- Jodi Edwards

Jodi was elected Chairperson of the CAWP by the CAWP members in 2009.

In his presentation to AGEN, Phil talked about the role of the CAWP working in partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Regional Managers Network (RMN).



CAWP Members 2009

In summary Phil explained that CAWP works on behalf of AGEN members and AGEN is linked through DPC to the Regional Managers.

A copy of the CAWP Terms of Reference is included at the AGEN website www.agen.org.au

Phil stressed that being on CAWP is an important way to get involved with supporting and working with other Aboriginal staff. He encouraged younger AGEN members to use it as a career development opportunity working with other agencies.

The current CAWP met roughly once a month between October 2008 and September 2009. Meetings were held in Wollongong because that was convenient to most CAWP members.

There were no meetings during July given everyone's community and work commitments for NAIDOC and as such additional meetings were held in August and September to finalise the AGEN Gathering details.

A CAWP meeting with the Coachhouse staff at Batemans Bay was held in early September to review the event running sheet and talk about the nature of the conference and its importance to Aboriginal employees.

Phil then provided an overview of the CAWP's main activities in 2008-09. It was a busy year for CAWP members, which included the following activities:

- Preparation of the Report from the Gathering in 2008
- Presentation to the Regional Managers Network in November 2008 (by Phil Needham and Tracey Gill-Dallinger) and endorsement of the CAWP 2009 Work Plan
- Development of the 2009 Gathering Agenda
- Input with DPC on the AGEN Evaluation Project, including a workshop with all past and present CAWP members
- Development of the draft Culture and Heritage Framework presented to AGEN for comments
- Presentation to stakeholders on possible set up of similar AGEN in the Wagga Wagga area (by Agnes Donovan)

It was explained that the 'Making Reconciliation Booklet' project, which was on the CAWP Work Plan, was not progressed by CAWP in 2009 due to the priorities above.

This project will be progressed by CAWP in 2009/10 using a draft booklet developed by Casey Neve from HousingNSW.

Casey was thanked for her great efforts on this and will be invited to a future CAWP meeting to talk about her draft, and work with CAWP to develop a final version.

Finally, Phil outlined the nomination process for CAWP 2009-10 and encouraged people to nominate to get involved.



Kate Smith, Ros Carriage, Paul Carriage, Patricia Tucker,
David Mills, Carey Brandy



Casey Neve

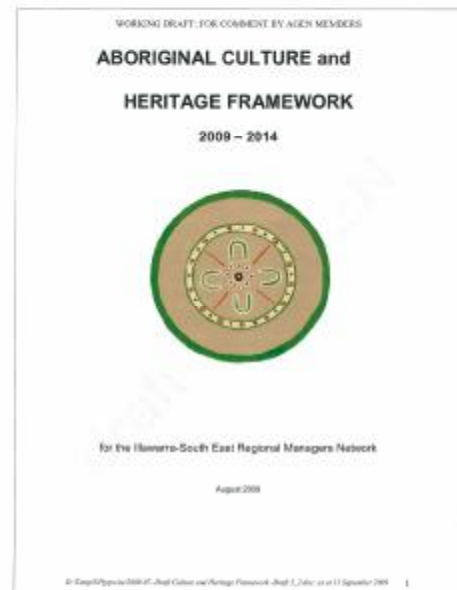
Overview of Draft AGEN Culture & Heritage Framework

Presentation by Jodi Edwards, CAWP & AGEN Chairperson 2009

Jodi Edwards introduced the draft AGEN Culture and Heritage Framework to all delegates – a copy of the document was provided to everyone in the Gathering bags.

At its Annual Gathering in Bateman's Bay in 2007, the Aboriginal Government Employees Network (AGEN) conducted a series of visits to important Aboriginal cultural sites.

The Gathering in 2007 recommended that AGEN and the then Illawarra South East Regional Coordination Management Group (I-SE RCMG), jointly develop a regional framework to promote greater understanding, coordination, support and involvement in actions that affect Aboriginal Culture and Heritage.



The recommendation from AGEN in 2007 was that:

- *In collaboration with the I-SE RCMG, AGEN to develop a Cross-Agency Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework for the Illawarra-South East Region*

The recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the I-SE RCMG at its meeting in November 2007.

To develop the project, the AGEN Gathering in 2008 (Queanbeyan) further considered the concept of a regional framework through a number of presentations, workshops with AGEN members, and story circles involving respected community elders, Aboriginal leaders and Traditional Owners.

Through this Gathering, it became evident that the Framework needed to address not only the protection and management of 'sites', 'places' and 'artefacts/objects' (that is, land management issues), but also address the implementation of government services generally to ensure that those services are culturally appropriate for, and respectful of, Aboriginal people.

Subsequently the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP) for AGEN developed the draft *Framework* for consultation with AGEN members and the I-SE RMN in 2009.

The draft Framework is intended to facilitate a whole of government approach to working with Aboriginal communities and its key features include:

- A Statement of Commitment from the Regional Managers Network 2009-14
- Recognition of the relationship between Aboriginal culture & heritage, self determination, and social and economic development
- Presentation of five successful case studies by agencies in the Illawarra-South East region with positive outcomes for Aboriginal culture and heritage

- Identification of future actions that agencies can take to promote Aboriginal culture and heritage in the region

Following the AGEN 2009 Gathering AGEN members were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback before the *Framework* was finalised by CAWP and presented to the I-SE RMN for consideration and endorsement.

AGEN delegates discussed a way forward to complete the draft Framework and resolved the following recommendations be pursued by the new CAWP for 2009-10.

AGEN recommendations in relation to Culture and Heritage Framework

1. The draft Culture & Heritage Framework should be electronically distributed immediately after the Gathering to all AGEN members for comment. A period of four (4) weeks should be available for people to comment.
2. A working group be convened to review any comments received and to finalise the Framework. The working group be comprised of the following AGEN members:
 - Veronica Graf
 - Paul Carriage
 - Daphne McDonald
 - Carey Brandy
 - Agnes Donovan
 - Jodi Edwards
 - Ken Davies
 - Steve Free
3. AGEN members individually to discuss the draft Framework with community, as they consider appropriate. DPC will coordinate members of the Working Group who can attend any organised meetings to explain and discuss the document.
4. The draft Framework to be distributed to the RMN as a draft at its next meeting (10-11th November).
5. A final document to be presented to the RMN meeting in March 2010.

AGEN Workshop No 2 – Future Networking Options for AGEN

The second major workshop conducted at the Gathering focussed on future networking options for AGEN.

The purpose of this workshop was to continue to discuss the most effective ways for AGEN to operate as a network. Participants were asked to think about what was working well now, what can be done better, and what are some practical suggestions for the future.

The outcomes of the workshop build on the AGEN Program Evaluation conducted in 2009 by DPC. This, along with Evaluation Forums/Feedback received from the Gathering will assist DPC, the RMN and CAWP to help shape the focus of future activities for AGEN.

As with the workshop on Day 1, small group discussions were held, however, because time was more limited each group was asked to focus on one key question and report this back to the full group.

The workshop results are presented in the following pages.



Dane Kennedy (Sport & Rec), Benjamin Russell (DOCs), Rodney Penrith (NPWS)



Layne Brown, NSW Youth Roundtable

Workshop Questions and Responses by AGEN Members

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the annual AGEN Gathering?

Strengths

- Networking with agencies that we wouldn't otherwise come into contact with
- Making concrete whole of government working together – “theory into practice”
- Gives members a better understanding of other government agencies, their roles and services
- Helps establish and maintain relationships with other agencies, services and each other
- Provides opportunity to identify issues relevant to Aboriginal people and explore solutions
- What AGEN members learn at the Gathering we take out into the community.

Weaknesses

- RMN endorses AGEN but that endorsement isn't flowing down to line managers, so many Aboriginal staff aren't supported to attend AGEN
- Budgets and funding constraints

2. How can we make the Gathering (AGEN) better?

- Improve communication to AGEN members – more frequent broadcast emails
- We want to hear more about the results or successes of Aboriginal projects or initiatives in the community (from guest speakers)
- Include in agenda item that celebrates success stories
- AGEN members should return to Gathering to report on how they utilised information from the previous AGEN

3. Are there other ways of networking for AGEN?

- Direction from RMN on resources they are prepared to release for managing coordination of the AGEN.
- AGEN Website with updated resources
 - Who's who – positions
 - Links to resources, cultural training
 - Links to community participation
 - Ways for consultation process eg. forms
- Regional AGEN meetings for communication strategy – 3 monthly local areas meetings to complement the regional meeting
- Employ Regional Aboriginal Project Officers within DPC
- Breaking down barriers

4. Do you use the AGEN website? (Show of hands)

- No. Only looked but never used.
- AGEN needs to raise awareness of website so agencies need to tap into it
- Send out reminders/new information etc
- Website should be included on the agenda at every AGEN Gathering
- Maintain the website (eg TAFE person)
- Needs one person responsible – 2 yrs

5. What can we do to:

a. better promote AGEN to Aboriginal workers in the region?

- Ability to network with many organisations
- Potential partnerships, development
- Promotion at other regional networks
- Internal promotion at staff meetings
- Regional AGEN meetings
- AGEN induction for new employees
- Participants discussions

b. explain the importance of AGEN to regional managers and agencies?

- Management is supporting AGEN
- AGEN members should send report to middle managers
- Invite management to regional AGEN meetings
- RMN to nominate a delegate to attend each AGEN
- Opportunities to network
- Development of frameworks, strategies, resources to aid agencies in addressing criteria in Two Ways Together
- CAWP/RMN representatives to meet with regional managers/regional directors

6. What practical suggestions or activities do you have for AGEN in the future?

(including suggestions that are generally cost neutral and suggestions that would require additional resources)

What are our values?

- Information sharing from AGEN
 - Finding out what other agencies do
 - Because workers cover big areas we are able to identify the gaps in services and overcome the gaps
 - Resources & tools – eg Cultural Respect Training and Employment Strategy
 - Networking, ideas and contacts
 - Unique to NSW – needs to be maintained
 - Keeping up with changes in government policies, ministers, CEOs etc
- AGEN is a mutual investment, develop an MOU with RMN – statement of commitment
 - RMN is accountable for Aboriginal service delivery to staff and communities, two way partnership.

Recommendations

1. RMN to commit to fund a Coordinator's position in DPC. Use Elsa Dixon funding + RMN agency contributions
2. RMN to formally commit to Annual Gathering through MOU

Ideas for future AGEN activities

- Guest speakers to attend AGEN and speak about local knowledge of area
- Members of the AGEN to share knowledge and experience from another country (eg. Mark – Northern Territory)
- Discussion around current issues that arise (eg economic stimulus)
- Fundraisers
- Team building activities to better network
- Bus tour of local area, depending on number of members registered (possibly every third year)
- Film night with Aboriginal films/actors
- A skills survey to be followed up at future AGEN to enhance our skills
- Superannuation workshop (with guest speakers)
- Presenters on best practice, models other than Illawarra-South East
- Have high executive achievers to (a) speak about their career development and how they got there (b) provide information on relevant courses/training to get management roles.
- Rotate responsibility (for AGEN) between government departments
- Retain an annual meeting
- We'd support an AGEN that didn't involve "project work" because the things we get out of the conference is so valuable
- We'd support cultural activities eg site visits
- No-one in our group uses website – don't know password, suggest password-free website or easy password

Overview of Two Ways Together

Presentation by Joanne Scott and Lana Callaghan, Aboriginal Affairs NSW

Lana Callaghan and Joanne Scott from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs gave AGEN members an overview of *Two Ways Together* in the Illawarra and South East Regions. *Two Ways Together* (TWT) establishes process for government agencies to work in a coordinated way with Aboriginal communities.

Broadly, TWT objectives are to develop sustainable partnerships between Aboriginal people and government; and improve the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW. The focus is to:

- enhance the skills and ability of government agencies to work with Aboriginal people;
- develop the skills and ability of Aboriginal people to work with governments; and
- support and affirm the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people.

TWT is the main mechanism by which State Plan Priority F1 (*Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people*) is being implemented. TWT also monitors 13 other State Plan priorities that are relevant to Aboriginal people.

Regional Level Implementation

Regional Engagement Groups (REG) are established as sub-groups of the Regional Managers Network (RMN), and provide a forum for NSW and Commonwealth Governments and the community to work together. The REG aims to improve government service provision in regions through the development of Regional Action Plans (RAP).

The Illawarra South East RAP (2007-2009) has four goals:

- Aboriginal children are better prepared for school (Lead agency: Communities Division, Communities NSW)
- Improved prevention and access to early treatment for high impact diseases (Lead agency: Greater Southern and South East Sydney Illawarra Health Service)
- Safer Communities (Lead agency: Attorney Generals)
- Culturally Appropriate service Delivery (Lead Agency: Department of Premier and Cabinet)

A range of actions are being implemented and reported-on every 6 months.

Local Implementation

TWT Partnership Community Program (PCP) is the main delivery mechanism, which aims for government agencies and Aboriginal communities to work together in partnership to improve service delivery and strengthen Aboriginal community wellbeing. It recognises that:

- Aboriginal people know best the needs of their communities
- Outcomes are better when Aboriginal people are involved in decision making that affects their lives
- Local community governance bodies should have the community's confidence
Government will work in partnership with community to agree concrete actions

The PCP has two components:

- draft Governance Framework, which guides the formation and/or recognition of community governance bodies (eg. Community Working Parties), and
- draft Program Guidelines, which outline the way agencies work together and with community.

Community governance bodies are proposed in each of the 40 partnerships communities in NSW, and consultation with those communities is an important part of their development. It was explained that no new governance groups will be established where an existing group has the confidence of the community, and that action planning will build on previous work in partnership with government. There is further information about available at www.daa.nsw.gov.au

Aboriginal Affairs NSW, regional staff

The Aboriginal Affairs NSW area in the region covers from Healthcote in the north to the Victorian border, and over the mountains from Bowral down the Hume to Queanbeyan, Cooma and Monaro. The staff members are:

- Adrian Meredith, Regional Manager
- Lana Callaghan, Regional Project Officer
- Joanne Scott, Partnership Community Project Officer
- Nicole Moore, Community Engagement Officer
- P/T RPO, P/T PCPO and F/T EDO - being recruited

General Business

There were no items of General Business raised by AGEN members.

Appointment of CAWP 2009-2010

The Gathering appointed the members of the Cross Agency Working Party (CAWP) for 2009-10. Appointment to CAWP is a minimum two year commitment; this system provides for mentoring and continuity.

The continuing members of CAWP in 2009-10 are:

- Jodi Edwards (TAFE Illawarra)
- Tracey Gill-Dallinger (HousingNSW)

The newly appointed CAWP members are:

- June Lowe (HousingNSW)
- Darrell Brown (State Training Services)
- Nathaniel Morrison (Community Services)
- Ted Braddick (Community Services)
- Carey Brandy (Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- Errolyn Strang (TAFE Illawarra)
- Greg Christian (TAFE Illawarra)

Gathering Recommendations, 2009

Session chaired by Jodi Edwards, CAWP & AGEN Chairperson 2009

The 2009 AGEN Gathering made the following recommendations to be considered by the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network (RMN):

1. A Memorandum of Understanding should be developed between AGEN and the RMN, which recognises the importance of AGEN as an effective cross-agency network that supports implementation of the NSW State Plan and Two Ways Together policies.
2. To ensure the sustainability of AGEN into the future, the RMN and DPC should aim to find the necessary resources to employ an Aboriginal identified project officer in DPC to support CAWP and AGEN. Consider using Elsa Dixon Program or other external funding sources to establish this position.
3. CAWP and DPC to continue to jointly advocate for the ongoing sustainability and support to AGEN through appropriate forums.
4. All agencies should take steps to more strongly recognise that Aboriginal staff are inherently members of their respective communities as well as being Government employees.

Continuing Projects from 2008-09

5. CAWP, the Working Party and the RMN to finalise the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework by March 2010 following the process outlined earlier in the Gathering Report (page 24).
6. CAWP to invite Casey Neve from Department of Housing to discuss finalising the draft Reconciliation in Our Workplace booklet for completion by NAIDOC 2010.

Additional Recommendations Arising from Workshop Analysis

The following additional recommendations were developed by the 2009-10 CAWP after review of the workshop material

7. AGEN and the RMN consider regional employment strategies for young people as part of the overall Illawarra-South East Aboriginal Recruitment and Employment Plan when it is reviewed in 2010-11. The review to consider how AGEN and RMN agencies can work together to:
 - support existing programs that seek to build positive pathways to employment for young people (AIME, Murra etc),
 - establish mechanisms to mentor and coach young public sector employees across agencies,
 - inform new Aboriginal employees about AGEN in their induction programs,
 - connect young Aboriginal employees with other workers in their areas.
8. Agencies to actively encourage young and new Aboriginal employees to attend the annual AGEN Gathering to build their networks across government and as a career development opportunity.

Gathering Evaluation Forms

Recommendation 10 of the AGEN Evaluation report (April 2009) proposed that a comprehensive evaluation of the views of attendees at the Annual Gathering be undertaken, to provide quality information about what the attendees get from the Gathering and its impact upon their work activities.

The AGEN 2009 Gathering Information Pack included an Evaluation schedule – and 37 completed responses were collected at the end of the Gathering.

The form comprised 8 questions seeking responses on a number of topics such as what are the work benefits of attending the Gathering, and what should be the main issues for AGEN in the next 2-3 years?

Feedback on the 2009 Gathering was unanimously positive, with 41% of people saying it met their expectation and 59% saying it exceeded their expectations. A collation of the responses provided and an analysis of the responses is contained in Appendix 2.

The main themes arising from the evaluation forms were:

- Strong support (90%) for the retention of an Annual Gathering as the primary focus for AGEN, which is stronger than the Program Evaluation Report (76%)
- Increasing recognition of the service-delivery benefits to agencies of Aboriginal workers meeting in a whole of region cross-agency format to network:
 - developing professional contacts,
 - sharing information,
 - learning about activities of other agencies,
 - talking through common issues & problems
 - developing solutions together in a supportive environment
- Greater recognition is required of the career and professional development aspects of AGEN as well as the benefits to communities from having well-informed and strongly networked Aboriginal workers.
- Sustainability of AGEN is acknowledged as an issue, however there is strong support for more regular information dissemination and locally-arranged cross-agency networking opportunities *in addition* to the annual Gathering.
- The solutions to AGEN's future sustainability are seen as the development of an MOU between AGEN and RMN and the appointment of AGEN Coordinator (identified position) within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to oversee the work program.

Consideration of AGEN Gathering Report 2009 by Regional Managers Network

On 10 November 2009, the Illawarra-South East Regional Managers Network considered a draft of this report and, in particular, the recommendations arising from the 2009 Gathering. The RMN's resolutions (below) were subsequently considered and endorsed by the CAWP on behalf of AGEN.

The RMN resolved to:

- (1) Note and endorse the AGEN 2009 Gathering Report and recommendations (at page 31), with 2 minor amendments:

Amendment no. 1

That recommendation 1 of the report be amended to delete reference to a separate 'MOU' being prepared and instead refer to AGEN and the RMN jointly undertaking a review of the AGEN Terms of Reference to strengthen the relationships between AGEN and the RMN.

The RMN suggests re-wording Recommendation 1 (at p31 above) as follows:

AGEN and the RMN to jointly review the AGEN Terms of Reference to strengthen their partnership objectives and recognise the importance of AGEN as an effective cross-agency network that supports implementation of the NSW State Plan and Two Ways Together policies

[Comment – The RMN did not disagree with the intent of an MOU; however the RMN's view was that an MOU is something that is done between two separate organisations, whereas AGEN and the RMN are essentially parts of the same organisation working together. To achieve a stronger working relationship between AGEN and the RMN, the RMN believes this is best done through AGEN's Terms of Reference with the RMN. The RMN considered a separate MOU would reinforce a feeling of 'separation' between AGEN and the RMN and that should be avoided because we are trying to work more closely together in partnership.]

Amendment no. 2

That a new heading be inserted after Recommendation 4 to indicate that Recommendations 5 & 6 relate to 'continuing projects' from the 2008-09 CAWP.

- (2) DPC to communicate these recommended changes back to the CAWP on behalf of the RMN, and if CAWP is comfortable with the changes distribute the report.
- (3) Note the Draft Culture & Heritage Framework (which was tabled at the meeting) and provide any feedback to CAWP by 24 January 2010.
- (4) The RMN noted AGEN's suggestion that the RMN could more actively utilise the network by directing or suggesting policy areas for AGEN to look into. The RMN accepted that there could be more 'active' two way communication between the RMN and AGEN and that this should be considered as part of a review of the Terms of Reference as suggested.



Marylyn Brown, June Lowe & Violet Green



Mark Bloxsome, Ted Braddick,
Marion Knight, Lynda Fletcher



Janice Dennis & Michelle Davison



Zane Rice, Rebecca Dawson,
Jason Crowther & Beverley Crowther



Errolyn Strang



Emma Benton, Michelle Davison & Kerrie Bloxsome



Emma Benton & Carey Brandy



Mena Tracey & Mary Mudford

AGEN Members at the Gathering 2009

Appendix 1 - Notes from Workshop 1.

Appendix 2 Collation of AGEN 2009 Evaluation Forms

APPENDIX 1

AGEN Gathering 2009 Day 1 - Members Workshop Supporting young AGEN members and encouraging young Aboriginal people into employment

Process: AGEN Participants were randomly distributed into five small groups. Facilitators from CAWP and the broad AGEN members worked with each of the five groups to discuss the following focus **questions**:

1. What is going on for our Aboriginal young people generally and what are their issues?
2. What are some of the reasons why our young people do well in school and why do some struggle or have problems?
3. Do you know of any successful projects or programs to support our young people to get jobs and why are they successful (eg mentoring; training and recruitment initiatives)?
4. What can be done to engage with Aboriginal young people to get them to apply for government jobs?
5. How can we (AGEN) support the career development of young Aboriginal workers when they *do* get a government job?

Facilitators: The facilitators for the five groups were:

Pink: Tracey Gill Dallinger and Mel Goldstein

Orange: Phil Needham and Darrell Brown

Green: Agnes Donovan and Veronica Graf

Red: Jodi Edwards and Errolyn Strang

Blue: Mena Tracey and June Lowe

Findings: The findings of each group are summarised in the table below:

Question 1: What is going on for our Aboriginal young people generally, and what are their issues?				
Pink	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
<p>Mentoring and lack of support for our young Koori kids</p> <p>Young people not always able to access services because they are not known in their local area</p> <p>Some schools do not have an AEO – parents move their kids to schools where there are AEO's</p> <p>Young people have a hard time getting employment</p> <p>Lack of entry level jobs that provide opportunity for Koori kids to be employed</p> <p>Peer pressure</p> <p>Tall poppy syndrome</p> <p>Drugs and alcohol</p>	<p>Numeracy and literacy issues</p> <p>Transition to high school</p> <p>Lack of parental support</p> <p>Some young people are encouraged not to attend (eg if they experience racism)</p> <p>Self 'mis-perceptions' of our own abilities</p> <p>Not enough support</p> <p>Education system is not interested in under achievers</p> <p>Gifted and talented students are also not supported</p> <p>Selective use of resources</p> <p>Class sizes</p> <p>Racism</p> <p>Not enough 'pastoral care'</p> <p>Teachers have misconceptions about student abilities</p> <p>Parents don't get involved in schools</p> <p>Incorrect cultural information</p> <p>Labelling students as 'good' or 'bad' or 'disabled'</p> <p>Lack of appropriate government funding and resources for schools</p> <p>Undiagnosed medical conditions</p> <p>Students not supported through environmental changes (eg social – when there is a death in the family)</p>	<p>Poor education; Lack of employment opportunities; lack of wholistic support for families and children; Social biases.</p> <p>Issues are: Not enough Aboriginal pre-schools; not enough placements in mainstream preschools; fines and justice issues; need for role models; racism and discrimination; lack of respect; poor self confidence; Being black – health, economics and social justice.</p>	<p>Unemployment – barriers due to selection criteria; lack of retention (eg of 'trainees'); criminal record</p> <p>Drugs and alcohol</p> <p>Boredom –negative effect on initiative</p> <p>Poor career guidance</p> <p>Poor school retention</p> <p>Bullying</p> <p>Teachers not culturally respectful</p> <p>Struggle for transport – leading to fines</p> <p>Difficulty in getting drivers license</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Lack of parental involvement, poor support for families, poor community support for kids, domestic violence, overcrowding, lack of access to technology, Peer pressure toward drinking and crime,</p> <p>Tall poppy syndrome for successful kids,</p> <p>Lack of facilities</p> <p>Low involvement of kids in positive community functions and events – due to costs, lack of transport, family issues.</p>	<p>Homelessness</p> <p>Relationship issues within families</p> <p>Self esteem issues</p> <p>Peer pressure and bad influences</p> <p>Lack of direction, lack of support and supervision</p> <p>Lack of positive role models</p> <p>Access to drugs and alcohol</p> <p>Lack of education around drug and alcohol issues</p> <p>Limited support people that are in the same age group as young person</p> <p>Lack of roles and responsibilities (family commitments)</p>
Question 2: What are some of the reasons why our young people do well in school and why do some struggle or have problems?				
Pink	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
<p>Depends on the lifestyle that young people have from their home environment</p>	<p>Good parental support leads to positive outcomes</p> <p>So does good support structures in</p>	<p>Good or poor environments at school, at home, and between peers.</p>	<p>Kids who are doing well have the support from their families and their teachers. They have role models,</p>	<p>The family situation is key influence – commitment of family to the young person,</p>

Deaths in the family impact on young people Need for more community leaders Lack of support for young people / OR young people do not know how to access support Success is due to support from strong families.	schools Young Kooris need more opportunities Early childhood learning is important Build self motivation and drive in young people Appropriate treatment of medical conditions Access to resources (eg computers) can be a determining factor A kid's first impressions of school (eg kinder) can be formative – these need to be positive to get good outcomes down the track Community support and encouragement can help young people Environmental changes – need to adapt to new schools, changed family arrangements etc	Parental influences Generational influences School attendance Role models Commitment	mentors, and have commitment. They are tech savvy, may have access to a homework centre, and/or well educated parents. They have good transition to school and high school. They have their health issues identified and treated eg otitis media, ADHD. They have good nutrition and good sleep patterns. They have recreational outlets, are good communicators, have literacy and numeracy skills, and positive relationships at home and at school. They have escaped being labelled.	support that can be given, responsibilities of parents and young person, geographic location (some areas have better access to services, others do not due to isolation), quality of relationships (positive or negative). Medical issues being identified and treated eg dyslexia, nutrition, allergies, hearing and seeing abilities Individuality set up by the education system – supports some young people but not others Level of self esteem in mainstream environments, and personality Financial situation
---	--	--	--	--

Question 3: Do you know of any successful projects or programs to support our young people to get jobs and why are they successful? (eg mentoring; training and recruitment initiatives)

Pink	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
NCAP programs Habitat AIME Men's Groups to support young men Gudhuga Community Homework Centres Resource centres to give access to technology and learning support Jobs Club – run by Warrigal employment – helps everyone	Vocational education programs Oral health programs In-school apprenticeships School based traineeships RSW – Residential support workers Community services – clerical traineeships Country energy employment program for Aboriginal people Snowy Hydro Banks Graduate programs DECC / PWD – Cadetships and	Year 12 Graduation Awards (Illawarra and Shoalhaven) Murra Program AIME School based apprenticeships AEA/O's Elsa Dixon More emphasis on higher education Bridging courses Mentoring Programs Careers Advisors Work Experience	Murra AIME ITIAS Kooris in Cars Dapto Koonawarra Youth Connect PCYC programs TAFE Strong partnerships Committed Koori staff Promotion of positive programs Community ownership of initiatives for young people Network partnerships	School based training eg AIME, Murra Project, ITEC, DECC rangers and cadetships Apprenticeships and trainees Government department scholarships and recruitment Vocational education programs Mens' Groups Improved Aboriginal employment strategy

to get a job.	<p>traineeships These programs are successful because they provide peer support, mentoring, meaningful employment, government and non government support. What is now required is more employment specialists, greater awareness of what work is involved, and real work experience for young people</p>		<p>Community consultation Changing perceptions of young Aboriginal people Funding</p>	
---------------	--	--	---	--

Question 4: What can be done to engage with Aboriginal young people to get them to apply for government jobs?

Pink	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
<p>Need more career expo's for Koori people Community information days Educate our Koori young people more Young people need support to get through school A course to help prepare young Kooris to be able to put together selection criteria Maybe develop and print a book that will help young Kooris to attempt to apply for Govt jobs Mentoring and nurturing our young ones Break down barriers to employment</p>	<p>Provide orientation for the application process – one on one Human resources – support dedicated to help young people Recognition of abilities (non-tertiary) and experience Fair Trading have an excellent model Develop good information exchange Cultural mentoring Young people need a clear understanding of the application process.</p>	<p>Career Days Information Days NAIDOC days Community engagement with families Work Experience Buddy system Job networks that are culturally trained AGEN to promote year 12 graduates to agencies</p>	<p>Having flexible entry level jobs Providing the support for skill development to go with these jobs Human resources to support/mentor young people Career expo's for years 8-12 that are young people friendly Job readiness Overcome view that Government jobs are boring.</p>	<p>Hold culturally appropriate information sessions Encourage work experience Target our Koori young people AIME Career Expo's – expand on existing career expo's – have workshops on writing applications addressing selection criteria Provide more assistance for young Kooris to get their driver license through partnerships</p>

Question 5: How can we (AGEN) support the career development of young Aboriginal workers when they do get a government job?

Pink	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
<p>Have mentoring programs to talk about issues young people are facing in their work place, and support them</p>	<p>Mentoring Coaching and mentoring in the workplace Interagency support for this esp for</p>	<p>Create permanent jobs Mentor and support young people Foster career development</p>	<p>AGEN support for young people Informal mentoring AGEN member mentoring See kids as future members of</p>	<p>Have a mentoring program and a 'Buddy system' for new workers – inform our departments about how this</p>

<p>Don't give young people false expectations and/ or set them up to fail Have a buddy system for peer support for young people</p>	<p>small agencies Have a directory for 'who' and 'what' is out there for support Professional supervision – provide this on an ongoing basis Have professional induction Careers workshop (RSW) ACAT – Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training Know and use Aboriginal Cultural Protocols</p>	<p>Internal policies eg employment strategy; rights and responsibilities Cultural awareness training for immediate supervisors and managers AGEN/CAWP dissemination of information for career development.</p>	<p>AGEN Demonstrate career pathways More Aboriginal middle managers Stronger role models from local communities Promote individual responsibility Young people to attend community events Promote government jobs as positive work</p>	<p>could work Have more members on CAWP Use the website to access support for young people Support through AGEN Networking Take information from AGEN back to our departments Keep in touch through our networks</p>
<p>Are there any other suggested questions or ideas?</p>				
<p>Pink</p>	<p>Orange</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Red</p>	<p>Blue</p>
		<p>Unions available / attend career expos Collective bargaining voice through AGEN, CAWP, CBWG, SSCAP, Koori Network Youth Forum for Aboriginals – AGEN MUST do this – local youth AGEN to promote young achievers (eg Kathleen and Jake) Prefer sustainable programs AGEN to produce a newsletter to improve the communication systems</p>		

APPENDIX 2

Illawarra South East Regional Managers Network

Aboriginal Government Employees Network (AGEN) Gathering 2009

Collated Evaluation Forms

1. What Did You Like Most About The AGEN 2009 Gathering?

- Network with other agencies
- Everything
- Meeting new people and catching up with the latest news and programmes
- Meeting more Aboriginal workers from my community
- Connection with others – Common goals – workforce and development – Culturally appropriate
- The workshops – the presentations by the Police and Ambulance
- Networking and discussing problematic areas in each others workplace
- Networking opportunities with people out of my area appreciate what other people do in their department – venues not much better
- Everything
- Opportunity to meet other workers in the region
- Meeting old and new faces – the food was great – Koorioke was excellent
- Networking – location and meals – easy to check into registration – listening to young people talking
- The workshops
- The presentations of different projects and programs
- The whole package
- Group activities
- Meeting and networking with others – finding out information that may work for clients
- The ability to meet with other Aboriginal workers – develop and strengthen networks – examples of best practice projects
- Brainstorming workshops
- The presenters and the opportunity to discuss topics and issues
- Meeting new people networking
- This was my first time. It was interesting to meet other people from other agencies and learn what services they provide
- Project Murra presentation
- Networking
- Seeing old familiar faces and new faces – party was great
- Being informed of projects and programs offered by other agencies – networking
- Informative workshops – Opportunities to meet other Aboriginal Government workers - Excellent networking opportunities – excellent venue – very well organised and managed
- The fact that all agencies are working together
- All the Aboriginal workers that turned up to support each other
- The networking and achievements to AGEN being recognised

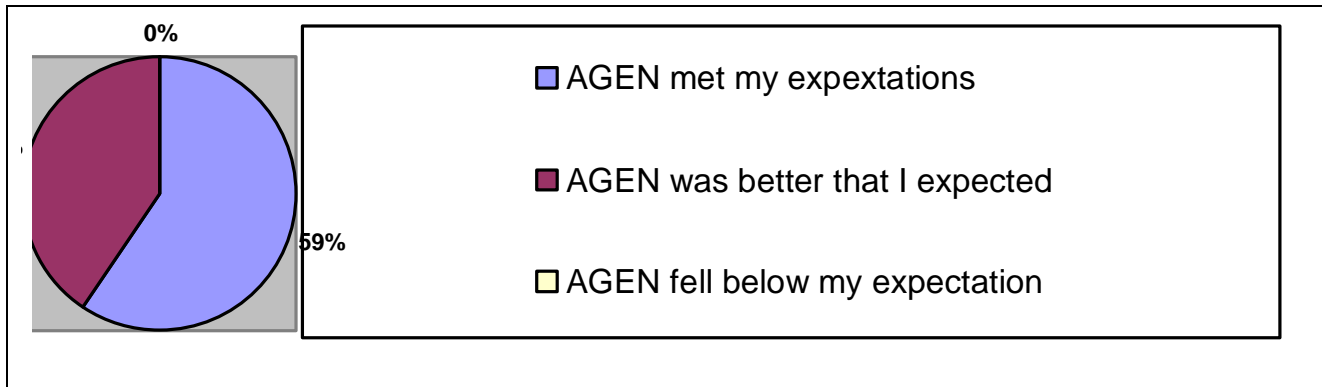
- The ability to be able to network. Also to hear what employment opportunities were available through other agencies
- Locating and venue – networking – information gathering – Koorioke
- Networking
- The topics
- Working on issues together and finding out what's happening
- Networking and getting contact info from new members – renewing friendships – being a member of CAWP
- The networking

2. What Could Have Been Done Better?

- Nothing. This venue is great – people where fantastic
- Nothing really, CAWP members did a great job on the gathering
- Not answered
- Some presenters seemed ill-prepared
- Not answered
- Not answered
- Not answered
- Long day of presentations the first day could have been broken up with something
- Nothing – well done CAWP members
- Newcomers to conference are assigned a AGEN member to make a few introductions on day one
- Very well done by CAWP people and DPC staff
- Loved it all
- Duration – could have been longer
- It would have been better if there was attendance by more Aboriginal staff from I-SE
- Not answered
- All good
- Workshops could have been that each has 2 or 3 questions the bring it back to the big group
- Day 1 – report back should be different format – start at 9 am – networking activity more structured
- Overview of Aboriginal training programs
- Not answered
- Tighter more energised first day
- Not much, I enjoyed the whole gathering
- More time for workshop feedback and questions
- Timekeeping
- Little more of the younger ones being involved
- Really can't think of anything that needs to be changed
- More workshops on different policies from Government regarding Aboriginal matters – health education housing employment – not just opportunities on funding
- Nothing, gathering covers all issues
- Not answered
- Nothing
- The reporting back of workshops on day 1 was a bit long – have motivated guest speakers who are able to provide real examples

- More opportunity for movement – became tiring sitting for so long
- Not answered
- Lunch (HOT)
- Invite community on agenda to ask “what are the issues” and how govt organisations can help
- Not answered
- All good

3. Overall, How Well Did The 2009 AGEN Gathering Meet Your Expectations?

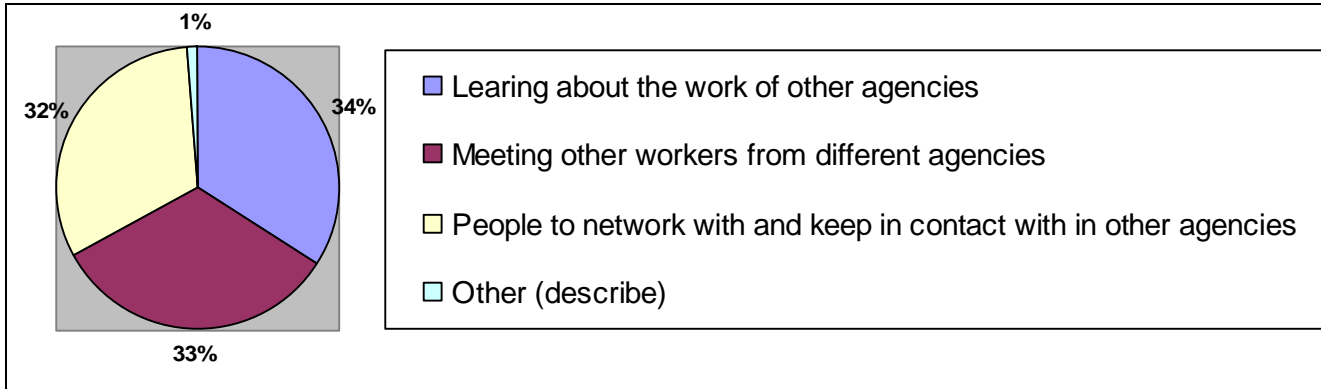


Comments to why:

- I've been to 2-3 AGENs so I know what you expect
- I was looking to catch up with other staff and their input as well as input myself
- I met a lot more people that I can network with for my work. Eg met the Nowra people DADHC which cover the South Coast and they will assess my clients to see if they are eligible for Home Care
- Informative presentations – Great people and great venue
- Always do good work
- People were welcoming and friendly to newcomers
- Continue my networking –focus and build partnerships with other agencies/workers
- Seems to get better each year – so well organised
- 2nd AGEN gathering so I understood it more
- It was very well run – little time wastage and dealt with important issues and provide excellent information
- Enjoyed seeing other Govt employees
- Well done to the team that put it together
- I had never been before and found it useful for networking – it provided me with motivation
- Wanted info on employment initiative
- Fulfilled it's purpose
- Listening to all the knowledge from other agencies
- Focus was on positive
- Well organised catering for diverse needs
- Opportunities to network
- AGEN project development
- Fantastic opportunity to meet people and network
- Good networking

- The new participants and old – the venue was excellent and the staff were helpful and polite

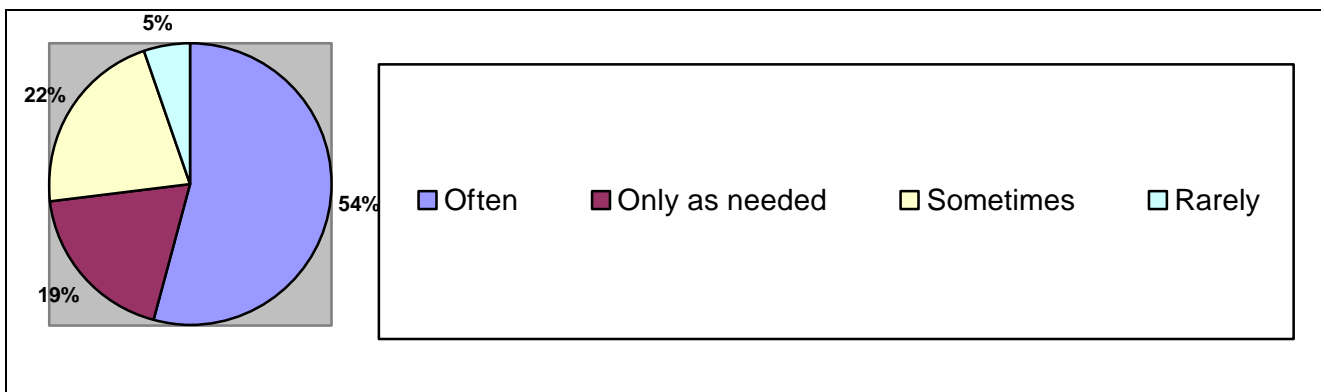
4. What Are Some Of The Benefits To Your Work From Coming To The Annual Gathering?



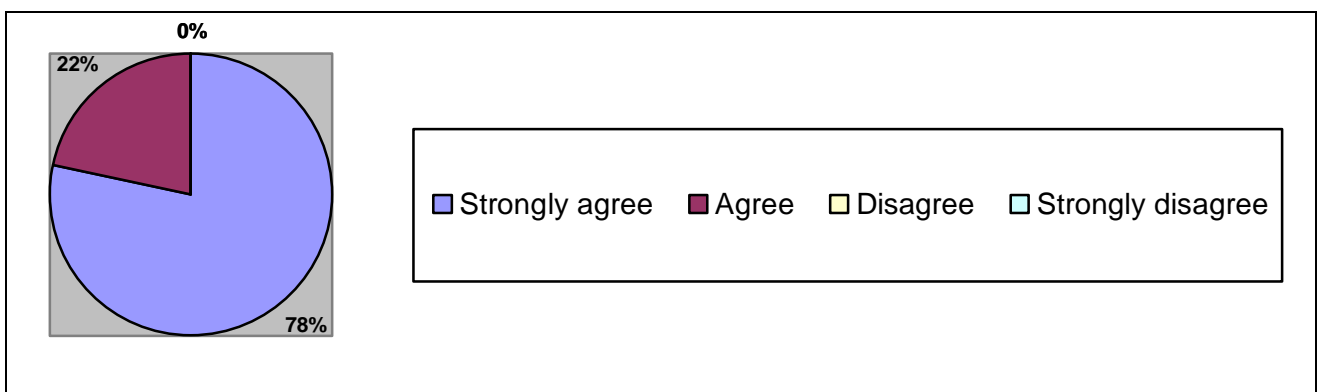
Other:

- The frameworks , resources
- Gives you the ability to know someone to ring when I need to deal with a particular issue/concern about a client

How often would you be in contact with people you meet at the Gathering



5. Do You Think AGEN Helps You To Deliver Better Services To The Community?

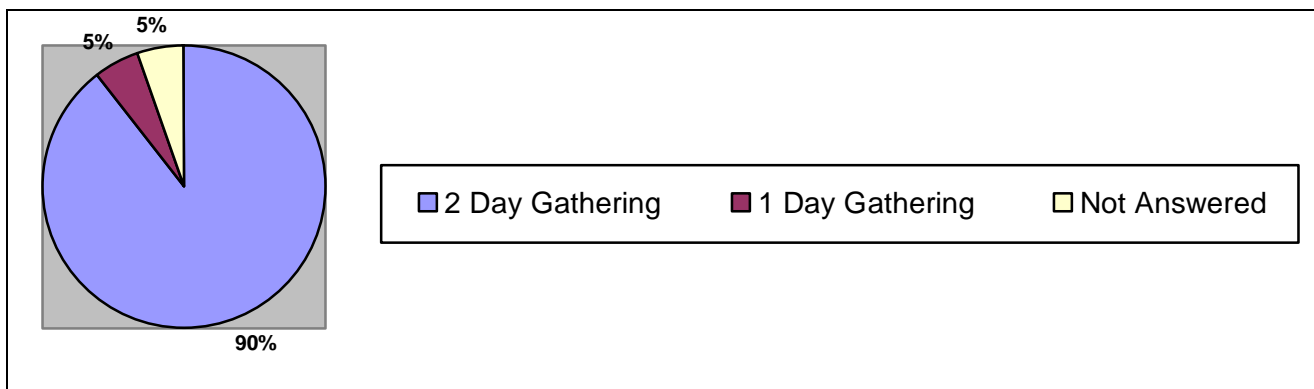


Tell us how AGEN helps you

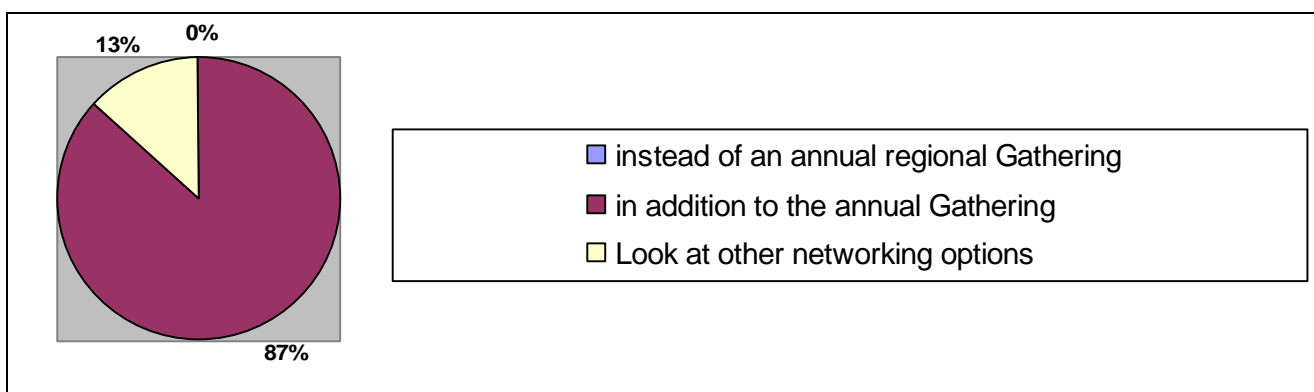
- It provides a forum to network with other Government Koori workers who may help my in my work with community and agencies
- Information shared has directed a change with my agency because I learnt more about working with other Departments.
- Networking
- Better understanding of different Departments and contact within
- Through learning about new initiatives/projects happening in other areas/communities
- I am able to provide student with employment opportunities – able to invite guests speakers – able to network to provide training that AGEN members may identify
- Identifies other services I wasn't aware of and will facilitate partnership opportunities in the Aboriginal community I service
- Being able to better inform clients/community of other services – information on program offering by other agencies that we may be able to access
- It's a learning process for us new ones
- Creates linkages with relevant services and helps to identify gaps in service and other workers
- Hear about services that provide opportunities to Aboriginal people and take that back and us myself for my clients
- Identifies best practises – what works and what doesn't' work
- Hear best practice – get new ideas – put a face to names that I deal with
- The new information I get will help me to take back to my community
- More knowledge of who's available
- Gives me information to provide to my community of what other Departments may be able to do for them ---- referrals
- Aware of other agencies that I can refer to and people in those agencies I can talk to
- Know the right person in the particular field to make enquires from – when I don't know that area
- Finding who are the Koori workers in each Department/agency to assist our respective clients in our own agencies
- Providing guidelines and best practice policies for use
- I use the frameworks that have been signed off by the RCMG
- Meeting people from different area to use as contact for issues in their area
- It's where a number of Koori workers get together then discuss a variety of issues that their community face each day and it is brought to the forefront
- Learning about the new service provision with other agencies especially the successful ones
- It helps my community amongst my fellow Aboriginal Government workers. I feel part of a bigger picture, I think about the big picture more
- I have whole network to call on
- Networking – getting to know you work mates away from work

6. What Should Be The Focus Of Future AGEN Network?

Continue to hold a Gathering once a year for all Illawarra-South East Aboriginal workers



Hold more locally-based networking activities/events for Aboriginal workers in all organisations (15)



Comments on other networking options (4)

- Regional meetings in April or March when AGEN members could attend. For example - 2 April, Moruya – 12 April, Nowra – 19 April, Illawarra – 25 April Goulburn / Queanbeyan
- AGEN to happen every 2 years – 2 or 3 days every 2 years
- In addition to the annual gathering - within each Dept after annual AGEN as communication mechanism
- I believe there should be a newsletter

Additional Comments

- 2 days give members the time to address those pressing concerns of the communities. Anything less would give the impression of “Tokenism” which the Government has been trying to eradicate for some time in their efforts to work with Aboriginal Communities in a meaningful and genuine manner
- Why change what is working? Need to have an MOU between both RMN and AGEN and give a commitment to offer support and utilize the AGEN to benefit policy for Aboriginal people
- One day would not be enough time
- Over a 2 day period, this gives the opportunity not only to network, but to form friendships which can help with your work
- 2 days are essential to cover the information and work done
- You don’t get the opportunity to hear or see other Koori workers in other areas due to the size of the South East region – hence you don’t see or hear what’s happening elsewhere, which can be useful especially if you find information that can be used back in our area
- AGEN gathering works
- People need to attend the second day. local meetings 1 day , no overnight , once a year

- 1 day is not good as there is a lot of information
- AGEN gathering to occur locally as well
- Smaller regional AGEN meetings and invite local regional managers to attend and potential AGEN members as well as existing members
- AGEN needs a co-ordinator
- I feel that 2 day workshop which is currently once a year is sufficient and I feel that if it was held more than once a year that people would lose interest whereas they look forward to the once a year gathering. I have been attending the AGEN for 4 years now and I think it's the best workshop I do all year
- Look outside this region for new initiative/services even interstate it is very good. It would have to be relevant to our services
- It's great to meet up with workers from other areas networking has helped me. Thanks

7. What should be the main issues for AGEN over the next 2-3 years?

- A better way to work with and provide services to our Aboriginal communities
- The 5 priority areas in the closing the gap
- Employment cross agency project delivers
- Continued networking opportunities – new opportunities – education – culture and heritages – youth and youth forums – increasing sustaining local elder involvement during gathering
- To lobby the DPC lobby or levy all state Govt depts. So that DPC could employ and Aboriginal Person at DPC to support AGEN/CAWP
- AGEN sustainability
- Recognition of AGEN from the RMN on annual basis
- Retention of Aboriginal students in the education system in particular Yr 11 12 & 10. Finalise Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework. Sustainability & how to continue to resource AGEN
- Changed in State and Commonwealth Government focus policies in Aboriginal Affairs and local responses
- Improvement on our Koori children and young adults in the work place
- Keeping identified positions within agencies – keep focus on traineeship for young people
- Career development
- MOU between RMN and AGEN needs to be signed to ensure the gathering continues. All managers to support staff to attend this gathering
- Establish a Koori coordinator so AGEN can improve flourish and better support Koori workers
- Maintain the focus/network and continue to grow. More info, more knowledge, the better for all the mob – Aboriginal work opportunities – employment
- Career Succession Planning – Employment – Recruitment – Retention – Koori service directories – develop community protocols – Koori local/regional Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Program
- Funding for a secretariat for AGEN – Ensuring that we have meaningful topics for AGEN to work on
- To learn how we can do it better for our services
- Strengthening families and communities
- I would be interesting in the RMN are able to table caps that they see at their level so the AGEN
- I would like AGEN to look at career development and how to get the management roles – career paths

- I liked this year youths! May expand more on youths – their our future maybe get ideas form the you on what to hold
- Encourage more young Public Servants to attend – Please do not stop AGEN. It needs to continue in some way shape or form. But AGEN does need some re-jigging
- Sustainability
- Better ways to service Aboriginal staff and their clients, like health, housing, education, careers, work paths and any other future issues
- New initiative, creativity , new ways to deliver services, new ways to challenge the status quo
- Closing the gap – (all 6 priorities) – Workforce development of staff – community participation – Equity within the workplace
- Solidifying methods for Aboriginal staff to network, mentor each other, share information with each other
- More focus on getting information out on a regular basis ie. monthly
- To build and strengthen AGEN
- Aboriginal issues and employment

8. Any other comments (on AGEN)?

- If it changes we will lose it
- The needs to continue an Aboriginal Project Officer in DPC
- AGEN is very important to Koori employees and a conversation with the RCM & DPC & CAWP should take place to keep this network going forward. It has also provided strategies and frameworks that agencies can work with
- AGEN is too important to be disabled
- Very well done – totally informative and enjoyable
- Thank you for a great time – well done
- Needs more resources
- Thank you to the working group (CAWP) and staff of Premiers for doing such a great job in putting the gathering together – well done
- Enjoyed the 2 days
- Dinner was cold – Few ring ins were present at Karioke and one still seen at breakfast
- Well done to the CAWP for their great work for a great AGEN
- Thanks to the CAWP and everyone participation – had a great time and looking forward to next year
- Thankyou again all CAWP members
- Had a good couple of days – Thank you!
- Congrats, CAWP members for a very successful AGEN, as well as the DPC staff
- RMN should only exist to support AGEN – AGEN representatives should be formalised with each Department eg. Workforce person etc as the key contact
- Good work CAWP & DPC. I really value the AGEN – I was prepared to take Rec leave and pay my own way. I just didn't want to miss the AGEN – Thankfully my employer is supportive of their Aboriginal employees
- Thanks for organising a great gathering

