



PILBARA SUBSTANCE USE REDUCTION

Project Overview

The Pilbara Substance Use Reduction project is sponsored by BHP Billiton Iron Ore. It specifically targets the areas of Hedland and Newman and is part of BHP Billiton Iron Ore's three year commitment to Health in the Pilbara region. The project aims to:

- o introduce specific BHP Billiton Iron Ore -sponsored health-related programs to reduce substance abuse among Aboriginal young people in Hedland and Newman;
- o enhance the capacity of Aboriginal young people in Hedland and Newman;
- o partner with relevant government agencies and non-government organisations to improve access for Aboriginal young people to an appropriate range of health and well being services to achieve improvements in population health among Indigenous youth.

Research Focus

This project is a practical application of the findings of the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS), most notably Volume 2 of the WAACHS findings, "*The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and Young People*".

Part of the WAACHS information was collected directly from young people aged 12-17 years.

The young people in the Pilbara reported that 22 per cent smoked regularly and that they were more likely to smoke if their parents also smoked. More Aboriginal young women smoke regularly than do Aboriginal young men. Smoking is related to being at high risk of mental health problems. In the Pilbara about 43 per cent of young people who smoked regularly were at high risk compared with those who did not smoke.

The WAACHS also found that for Aboriginal young people in the Pilbara, 24 per cent had drunk alcohol and 12 per cent had drunk to excess, with this being similar for Aboriginal young men and Aboriginal young women. 24 per cent of Aboriginal young people had used marijuana at some time, with 13 per cent using it at least weekly. About 11 per cent of Aboriginal young people reported the combined use of marijuana, tobacco and alcohol.

In mid-2006, BHP Billiton Iron Ore sought Kulunga engagement specifically to be involved in this project. BHP Billiton Iron Ore is keen to foster positive relations with the Pilbara community through its Health Partnership. The Health Partnership is a three-year commitment aimed at building healthier communities. It flows from an extensive feasibility study that identified Health as a critical social issue for the future success of the Pilbara.

The Pilbara Health Partnership sees a combined investment of more than \$5 million in the Pilbara region over three years. New initiatives will focus on complementing existing services to develop world-class health care across a range of areas.

The Health Partnership was developed in consultation with Pilbara communities, local governments and service providers and will target areas of identified need, reaching out to Indigenous communities in particular, and enhance the sustainability of the region.

Kulunga's work on this project has only recently commenced. To date activities undertaken include:

- o consultation with key stakeholders and potential partners
- o scoping and mapping of programs and services with which this project might be aligned.

Kulunga recognises the value of engaging a staff member to be located in the Pilbara, probably in Hedland and possibly operating out of one of the key Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

Liaison and negotiation is also underway with a view to linking the work of this project to other programs with similar aims. This will maximise the outcomes while enabling a greater investment in actual community and youth based activities.

Other activities planned over the next few months are:

- o ongoing consultation with key stakeholders and potential other partners
- o establishment of a Pilbara Reference Group, comprising representatives from Wirrika Maya Aboriginal Medical Service, Kulunga and Newman Frontline Agency and others
- o setting of Reference Group Terms of Reference and meeting schedule
- o site visits.

The Pilbara Substance Use Reduction project is Kulunga's first arrangement with BHP Billiton Iron Ore so it represents a solid start to an ongoing relationship.

Further Information

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