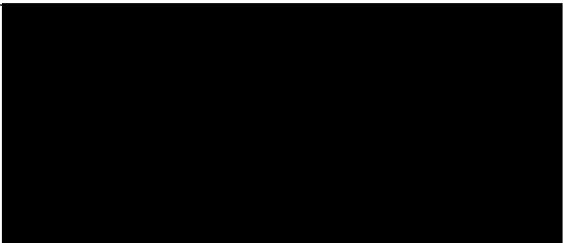


**IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

ATTACHMENT JT-8 TO STATEMENT OF JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY

Date of document: 16 July 2015
Filed on behalf of: State of Victoria
Prepared by:
Victorian Government Solicitor's Office
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This is the attachment marked '**JT-8**' produced and shown to **JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY** at the time of signing her Statement on 16 July 2015.

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Attachment JT-8

Dardi Munwurro

Most Significant Change Report

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for the Koori Justice Unit

2nd May 2012



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Disclaimer

This report has been produced solely upon information collected during interviews supplied to Clear Horizon by Dardi Munwurro Program staff. While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this report, any judgements as to the suitability of information for the client's purposes are the client's responsibility. Clear Horizon extends no warranties and assumes no responsibility as to the suitability of this information or for the consequences of its use.

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Section 1: Background and methodology

1.1 Program overview

The Dardi Munwurro "*Strong Spirit*" Building Strong Communities Program aims to engage Victorian Koori men to address personal, relationship and behavioural issues that directly impact on family violence. This is achieved by drawing on traditional values and understanding of men's issues, and by using models that enable men to respond to the challenges they face in current society.

The Program also aims to implement sustainable changes in men's understandings and behaviours and establish or reconnect them with stable and relevant support structures. The Program works closely with the Koori community and local services through the establishment of a local Steering Committee and engagement of key local community stakeholders.

In 2010 the Koori Justice Unit, at the Victorian Department of Justice, funded the implementation of three (3) program sessions run across Victoria over a period of 12 months. Each program session consisted of an initial one-day community introduction and engagement session, a three (3) day live-in workshop, four (4) half-day post workshops and four (4) half-day monthly follow up sessions.

Program goal and outcomes

The overarching goal of the Dardi Munwurro Program is 'reduced Koori family violence.' The Program aims to contribute to this goal through the achievement of a number of long term, medium term and short term outcomes. The long term outcomes of the Program include reduced violent behaviour demonstrated by participants, stronger and more resilient Koori men, improved Koori family relationships, and increased uptake of services and supports by participants. A summary of the expected short, medium and long term outcomes of the Program can be viewed in the Program Logic model presented in Appendix 1 of this report.

1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The Victorian Department of Justice engaged Clear Horizon to contribute to an outcome evaluation being undertaken by the Koori Justice Unit of the Dardi Munwurro Program. Clear Horizon's role in the evaluation was to provide mentoring support to the Dardi Munwurro program facilitators to conduct interviews and collect stories of change from past program participants. The aim of conducting interviews with past participants was to:

- provide program facilitators and the Department with a better understanding of what participants' believe are the most relevant and beneficial aspects of the program
- improve understanding of both the intended and unintended impacts of program participation
- assist the program facilitators to identify ways in which the program model could be improved.

The interviews held with past participants were based on the 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) technique. The MSC technique was used to better understand the various impacts the program has had on participants by capturing their personal stories of change. The findings presented in this report will be used by the Koori Justice Unit, together with program reports, survey results and interview data, in the development of a final evaluation report.

1.3 Methodology

Training and mentoring

Clear Horizon worked with the Dardi Munwurro program facilitators to develop their capacity to collect MSC stories. As part of this aspect of the evaluation, Clear Horizon reviewed and revised the interview guide developed by the Koori Justice Unit, and held mentoring sessions with the program facilitators as required. Clear Horizon also transcribed all interviews conducted and prepared the MSC stories in preparation for analysis and selection.

Data collection

Data was collected from previous Dardi Munwurro program participants through semi-structured interviews incorporating the MSC technique. MSC is a form of qualitative, participatory monitoring and evaluation. Using an action research process, MSC involves the collection and selection of stories which describe significant change that has occurred in the lives of individuals or communities. MSC is particularly useful in illuminating intended and unintended impacts of programs and interventions, and capturing what is valued by both participants and implementers.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by two (2) Dardi Munwurro program facilitators, with mentoring support provided by a Clear Horizon consultant. MSC stories were collected from five (5) previous program participants. Some of the participants' involvement in the Program dates back eighteen months, which facilitated an analysis of longer term outcomes experienced by participants as a result of the Program. With the interviewee's consent, these interviews were recorded and transcribed in full for data analysis. MSC stories were then extracted from interview transcripts in preparation for data analysis.

Data analysis

Clear Horizon facilitated a story selection process with staff from the Koori Justice Unit and Dardi Munwurro Program. During this participatory workshop, stakeholders were facilitated to draw out key themes and outcomes from the stories. The workshop also involved the selection of the most significant story of change, with stakeholders documenting their reasons for selection. The selected stories are presented in Section 2.2. The remaining stories not selected are attached in Appendix 2.

Section 2: MSC findings

This section of the report presents findings on the impact and achievement of outcomes for the Dardi Munwurro Program. The findings presented here have been informed by an analysis of MSC stories collected from five (5) previous participants of the Program. In Section 2.1, a discussion of cross-cutting themes identified across the five (5) MSC stories collected is presented. Excerpts from documented MSC stories are included throughout the discussion of findings in order to highlight and support key outcomes identified. In Section 2.2, stories selected by key stakeholders as representing the most significant change are presented along with their documented reasons for selection.

2.1 Key outcomes

This section presents an overview of key program outcomes identified amongst five (5) MSC stories collected and reviewed as part of the evaluation of the Dardi Munwurro Program. The outcomes identified in the analysis of the five (5) MSC stories include:

- Improved communication and problem solving skills
- Greater self-awareness and personal learning
- Improved confidence and leadership
- Men feel stronger and more resilient
- Awareness and recognition of issues and one's ability to change
- Ability to deal with conflict and heal
- Confiding in other men and reduced social isolation
- Recognition of roles and responsibilities as Koori men
- Improved capacity to recognise the impact of one's behaviour on others
- Better understanding of family violence and intergenerational trauma
- Increased awareness and use of support services.

These findings are discussed in more detail below. Excerpts from MSC stories are included to highlight and support these outcomes.

Improved communication and problem solving skills

Three (3) out of the five (5) stories demonstrated improved skills of participants since being involved in the Dardi Munwurro Program. The types of skills gained include problem solving, communication skills and skills to support others. Participants reported having gained tools and learnt strategies enabling them to deal better with issues and difficult emotions. Two (2) participants felt they were able to think things through better, to reflect on problems and strategise in dealing with them, as opposed to responding to issues in reactive and/or violent ways. In exercising such skills, this was reported to provide participants with a sense of strength and

"I actually sit and think, and I strategise, put it that way, about how I tackle things these days, which has been good, I never used to strategise before..." (Story 1)

"Until I did the course, my way of fixing that was violence and I didn't know how to control it. But after doing the sessions, I can now sit back and be diplomatic, and I can sit on my own emotions and turn it into a positive." (Story 5)

"I have been able to cope mentally a lot

enabled them to seek resolution to issues with a positive and non-judgemental outlook, proactively engaging in solving problems in a positive manner. One (1) participant reported an improvement in their communication skills, namely in being able to express themselves better, and highlighted the importance of listening to others when dealing with issues and/or conflict. Two (2) participants also reported having gained skills that have enabled them to provide support to others through offering advice and working through issues with people.

easier than I would have before. It has given me the skills to be able to know how to express myself about the situation in the family where it is really close. It has given me the opportunity to be able to not feel overwhelmed or intimidated by what is going on around me, and to be able to offer some real personal genuine top quality advice and initiative in the direction that we should take things." (Story 5)

"Through the Program, you have more of an understanding of... why sometimes [people] behave like they do. The Program gives you the skills to go through those problem solving issues with people." (Story 4)

Greater self-awareness and personal learning

Since being involved in the Program, most of the participants reported or demonstrated a deeper understanding of self and an increased awareness of personal issues affecting their lives. According to participants' accounts, self-awareness assisted them in their healing process, enabled them to make more informed choices when dealing with problems, assisted in understanding one's own roles and responsibilities more and enabled them to give advice to others based on their own experiences.

"The most significant change has been that awareness, knowing and making the right choices... [It is] a good Program to do, all about the awareness, because a lot of our mobs don't realise what issues they actually have, they just think they are living the normal way of life, but once they start seeing it, the way the workshops [are run], they sit back and they actually think about it." (Story 1)

"I believe that by understanding myself, is by someone coming in and helping me to have the key to start talking about the issues that I need to talk about, and I think this Program is starting to open up that area to enable me to start thinking about supporting myself, in the healing process". (Story 2)

Improved confidence and leadership

Increased confidence was reported in two (2) of five (5) stories. One (1) participant explained that their improved confidence has enabled them to become more resilient and able to take on challenges more easily. Another participant commented that the Program has made them strong to speak out, improving their self-confidence to demonstrate leadership. This participant also recognised increased confidence and a greater sense of pride in others since participating in the Program, commenting that it had: "strengthened some of our men. I see them walking a bit taller." He went on to explain that by seeing the men in his community "walking taller" his personal well-being is also positively impacted.

"[The Program] has actually made me a little bit more confident in my choices and in my roles, more resilient, just to take on challenges as well. (Story 1)

The Program seems to have strengthened some of our men; I see them walking a bit taller. (Story 4)

[The Program] has made me strong to speak out here. (Story 4)

Leadership is a huge thing in today's society with our Koori people. Leadership has taught me to be a little bit more confident as well. (Story 1)

Men feel stronger and more resilient (particularly in solidarity with other men)

Increased inner-strength and resilience to deal with difficult emotions and issues, and take action around them, was identified in most of the participants' stories of change, either through their personal accounts or by recognising this change in others. In two (2) out of the five (5) stories, participants explicitly noted that strength was drawn through connection with others, though sharing experiences with other men and by supporting one another. Another participant reported that sharing experiences with other men and receiving their support was the most significant aspect of being part of the Program. This sharing assisted him in his healing process and ability to take action in dealing with a long-term existing issue.

Stories conveyed change occurring not only at the individual, but also at the family and community level. Stories contained strong messages regarding the importance of solidarity amongst people in building more resilient and strengthened individuals, family and community.

One participant articulated his understanding of 'strength' and identified the detrimental impact of a conditioned notion of masculinity. He expressed that to be strong is not a matter of being tough and separating from emotion, but instead for him to be able to clearly express himself and not feel overwhelmed and intimidated by issues occurring around him. To be able to offer advice to others and to be able to show initiative and make choices around actions. He emphasises through his story the importance of breaking down stereotypes of masculinity for healthier families and communities, along with his ability to assist others in this process.

"With the strategies that I learnt (during the Program), at Emerald and also at Yarram, it has given me strength to just put shoulder to the wheel and keep moving, and being at peace whilst it is happening." (Story 5)

"Being part of the Program, and being involved with it, yeah no I reckon it has changed my life a fair bit... [The Program] has taught me to be more resilient I suppose." (Story 1)

"...We were talking about a number of issues that were coming up from other men, I was able to relate experiences from my own life, that might help them resolve some of the problems that they were going through." (Story 3)

"To write that letter of apology was probably the best thing that I could have done about that. Just to share with other men and to receive their support and to write that letter, it brought a lot of healing for me." (Story 3)

"One of the most poignant things you guys have taught me is, the strength in family and community, the solidarity and that is why I want to work with men to get them away from the pick yourself up, brush yourself down, boys don't cry attitude." (Story 5)

Awareness and recognition of issues and one's ability to change

The stories highlighted that the Program helped at least two (2) participants to become aware of issues affecting their lives. Through such awareness, they were able to realise their own ability to make changes in their thought processes, behaviour and in life in general. One (1) story also described change that occurred at the community level. According to one man, men in the community "actually cut back on their drinking, and their domestic violence issues pretty much stopped" after having participated in a Men's Group as part of the Program.

"Since I have known [about] the Program, it has enlightened the wise man inside me to start thinking that maybe we have got stuff that we never deal with in our lives. I think this Program has actually opened up the door to start thinking about it." (Story 2)

"A lot of our mobs don't realise what issues they actually have, they just think they are living the normal way of life, but once they start seeing it... they sit back and they

Participants alluded to the tendency to carry on in life unaware of how issues may be affect oneself, and that realisation and awareness of the impact of these issues can help pave the way towards positive change.

actually think about it.” (Story 1)

“What I noticed about the Robinvale mob, those guys we put through [the Program] down there, they actually cut back on their drinking, their domestic violence issues pretty much stopped. It was a bit of a shock to myself actually.” (Story 1)

Ability to deal with conflict and heal

Since participating in the Program, two (2) out of five (5) participants reported having been able to deal with and resolve conflict from the past and in the present. According to one (1) participant, as a result of sharing his story with other men through the Program he was then able to find the courage to deal with an issue he had been carrying for thirty years. The participant did so by writing a letter of apology to his ex-partner. Through this deliberative action, he was then able to heal.

Another participant describes how his approach to solving his family members’ issues has changed from using a ‘bandaid’ approach and ‘just fix it’, to facilitating them in a diplomatic manner to take responsibility for their own issues and supporting them in the process by offering ‘sound advice’ and referring them to professional help and support services.

“I wanted to write a letter of apology to that woman. Another man who attended that camp [and] some training prior to that camp gave me a couple of hints about how to write that letter... I found a lot of the burden was really released. To write that letter of apology was probably the best thing that I could have done about that. Just to share with other men and to receive their support and to write that letter, it brought a lot of healing for me.” (Story 3)

“Prior to sharing the journey, family was family and you just used to fix it more or less, and you don’t really listen to what is going on, and think oh yeah that needs to be fixed I will do my best and fix it. And in fact that is just a bandaid and it doesn’t always work because the issue comes up again and again, more or less...I was able to offer up good quality sound advice, and turn it [from]: “I can’t fix this,” [to,] “but I can sure open some doors for you to go somewhere else and get it fixed, so that it is workable”. Prior to our journey that we had as a group and going to the camp, I would have been in a totally different process.” (Story 5)

Confiding in other men and reduced social isolation

Trust and bonding with other men was highlighted as an important aspect of having participated in the Program. Three (3) out of five (5) participants commented on how they felt more comfortable speaking to other men and sharing experiences with each other to help them work through their problems together. Based on participants’ accounts in these stories, there is indication of greater cohesion amongst men following their participation in the Men’s Groups. For example, one (1) participant reported that as a consequence of the bonding that has occurred through the Program participants feel more comfortable about talking about their issues. Also, he explained that this has broken down barriers making it

“I think about myself and I think about others too, knowing that I can actually talk to men, you know... I think within Men’s Area, it has helped me to know that [other men] have problems, and I can share my problems with them, and maybe we can help ourselves with what we deal with every day.” (Story 2)

“There are no barriers up between the men now, if you have a problem you can go face to face and yarn about it now, and it is because of that bonding that we have done through the Program, that they feel

easier for men to seek out others, to share and connect with and to collectively help one another.

There is some indication that this connection and sharing within trusted relationships has also led to reduced social isolation. For example, one (1) participant commented that in sharing with other men and councillors in the Men's Group, he feels better than if he were to stay at home "dwelling on things" by himself.

comfortable talking about it now." (Story 3)

"I have lived by myself for 30 years or something now, and when I go home at night, I just sit home by myself at night, I don't really mix with anybody in particular, as a matter of fact... nobody, and when you are just dwelling on things by yourself, whether it is through the day or late at night when you can't sleep, it really makes you restless and yeah, you find yourself putting yourself down and you know you get anxious about a lot of things and frustrated... I find that when I share anything with counsellors or within [the] Men's Group, once I have shared that openly and unloaded, I feel a lot better." (Story 3)

Recognition of roles and responsibilities as Koori men

There is also some indication of increased awareness of roles and responsibilities resonating from three (3) out of five (5) participant stories. The different roles and responsibilities identified in the stories include those of a man, a father, a husband, a family member, a Koori man and a member of the community. According to participants, having a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities enabled them to identify root causes of problems, contributed to a better understanding of self and their own identity, led to an appreciation of family and community, and helped to change their own behaviours.

One (1) participant reported being more aware of his roles and responsibilities as a father, husband, uncle as well as a member of the community. He states that this has taught him to act with less urgency and greater reflection and regard for his family and community. Another participant demonstrated taking ownership over his perceived failure in his roles as an individual involved in a loving/domestic relationship, by taking action to resolve past mistakes. In another story, a participant explains the importance of understanding identity, which inherently brings with it particular roles and responsibilities. He describes how masculine stereotypes are negatively impacting upon individuals, families and community. He goes on to assert that men are being dislocated from family and emotions due to misunderstandings of what it means to be a man, and the importance of breaking down such stereotypes and understanding one's identity by connecting to culture, community, family and men's place within these.

"Being part of the Program, has brought out a little bit more awareness in my own job roles, but being a parent as well, so it has been really good for me on a personal level, being a family man... And not only that, it teaches me to slow down a bit in particular jobs and roles that I play in the community." (Story 1)

"I believe that Dardi Munwurro gives a man the understanding to what a man is... it has helped me understand how a family is a part of a man's role to keep it together. So it has actually given me an insight to actually look in and say, "well, what is a man? What is his role?" (Story 2)

"...It was a failure on my part to know how to live with a woman. I lacked a lot of understanding; yeah I just didn't have hardly any understanding of what it means to be in a relationship." (Story 3)

"We have developed a place and space where our men dislocate from family and kids and feelings... [in our past] we had that connection to family and we had a broader connection as well, which we still hold today, but it doesn't always get recognised. So there is our cultural connection at the same time... The reality is that we are in need of each other, and men are not separated from women and vice versa... I would like to see us, the Aboriginal people, give this back to the broader community and let them understand the truth of it." (Story 5)

Improved capacity to recognise impacts of one's behaviour on others

Two (2) out of five (5) participants demonstrated through the stories their improved capacity to recognise the impact of their actions upon others. One (1) participant described change since participating in the Program in the way they make choices, by previously acting autonomously, to considering and consulting their family when making decisions. Another participant highlighted the significance of dealing with personal issues and healing, and the impact this had not only for himself but also for the people in his life (in particular his children and partner).

"I used to just rush off and do things, by myself for myself, but now I tend to ask the question, through my own kids and my partner, I involve them a lot more in decisions that I actually make." (Story 1)

"For me, to understand my hurt and my pain [is important] so that I can understand and talk to my children about what I have gone through, so that I can make them understand, that is my stuff and I understand it now, but I am moving on from it, and not to carry the hurt because then my children feel the hurt." (Story 2)

Better understanding of family violence and intergenerational trauma

In four (4) of the five (5) stories there is evidence that participants have gained a better understanding of domestic violence and acquired skills in dealing with issues without resorting to violence since participating in the Program. Amongst these stories, some participants developed an understanding of intergenerational trauma and the impact it has on their life.

One (1) participant made reference to the different forms of domestic violence such as physical, spiritual and monetary, demonstrating an understanding that violence does not have to be physical to be detrimental. This participant also noted an obvious reduction in drinking and domestic violence within their community after participating in the Program. Other stories highlighted participants' increased ability to deal with issues without resorting to violence. One (1) man described his previous approach to solving issues tended to be through violence or other abrupt ways. Since the Program, he is able to deal with conflict using a "diplomatic" and "positive" approach.

There were also references in two (2) of the stories to an increased awareness of intergenerational trauma. One (1) participant noted his exposure to domestic violence during his upbringing and his own "staunch" behaviours similar to his father. The participant commented on his awareness of this and his ability to change his behaviour to avoid the transfer of his negative experiences as a young man onto his own family. Furthermore, the most significant change for another participant was to heal from his pain so as not to pass his hurt onto his children.

"A lot of men spoke about substance abuse, domestic violence, it made them aware that domestic violence just isn't physical, it can be spiritual, it can be monetary. Yeah, it doesn't have to be physical to be violent." (Story 4)

"I was a bit hot-headed at times and I would be very confronting if I had to be, whereas now I think about things a bit more... In the past I mean conflict came to me, I was pretty abrupt... I stood my ground. Prior to our journey beginning, I would be happy to be a bit volatile ... I suppose. Until I did the course my way of fixing [things] was with violence and I didn't know how to control it. But after doing the sessions, I can now sit back and be diplomatic... I can sit on my own emotions and turn it into a positive. Learning to speak properly to [others], and being diplomatic and all that sort of stuff, and also being able to have a swag of tools to be able to say right, you know, I can make a call here, here is an opportunity for you." (Story 5)

"You know growing up as a young man being around family violence and all that sort of stuff, me father was a very staunch man, I had me own staunch ways. Being part of the Program, has brought out a little bit more awareness in my own job roles, but being a parent as well, so it has been really good for me myself on a personal level, being a family man, I will put it that way." (Story 1)

Increased awareness and use of support services

As previously discussed, the Program has enabled some participants, as reported in several stories, to seek advice and help through sharing and connecting with others through the Program (see outcomes: 'Men feel stronger and more resilient particularly in solidarity with other men' and 'Confiding in other men and reduced social isolation'). In addition to this, one (1) participant in particular demonstrated his awareness of professional health services external to the Program and his capacity to refer a family member to these services. This account illustrates that the participant was not only in a better position, personally, to deal with a difficult situation, but was also knowledgeable about where to seek professional help and confident enough to refer a family member to such services. Moreover, the participant explained the importance of handing over the 'power' to his family member to take ownership of their own problems and actions towards resolving them.

"I gave him a hug, told him I loved him, and said get it together, I want to see them all together, and here is an opportunity for you to go to professional counselling, and I made the arrangements and left it for him to make the appointment, and he did. It has given that power to those two that have got the issue, and letting them know that they have a right to have that power, and with that power, they have the right earn it together."
(Story 5)

2.2 Most significant change

This section presents two (2) stories selected as representing the most significant change resulting from the Program. These stories were selected from a total of five (5) stories (stories not selected are included in Appendix 2). The reasons for selection are outlined below each story to make the values of those who selected them more explicit.

MSC story # 3: Helping out a fella

What has been the most significant change for you?

"Well beside my own issues, it was just great for me to hear the struggles that other men were going through, a number of them were my nephews, and other men that I knew plus meeting other men from other places from out of town. Just the issues that they were going through, and when we were talking about a number of issues that were coming up from other men, I was able to relate experiences from my own life, that might help them resolve some of the problems that they were going through; through things that they were bringing into the meeting whenever we met. I found that trying to help other men through those experiences they often take a lot of focus off my own problems – and to be able to help other fellas – that brings a lot of satisfaction to yourself, and also takes a lot of focus off your own problems.

That is one side of it, the other side of it was, for my own issues that I raised within the group. I live by myself, and have lived by myself for 30 years or something now, and when I go home at night, I just sit home by myself at night, I don't really mix with anybody in particular, as a matter of fact... nobody, and when you are just dwelling on things by yourself, whether it is through the day or late at night when you can't sleep, it really makes you restless and yeah, you find yourself putting yourself down and you know you get anxious about a lot of things and frustrated. I find that bringing it to the group, and sharing it with the group, just as I share my experiences with them and help them, other men share experiences. And also the leaders

of the group bring their training to help you think about those things, whatever you have shared with the group. Their questions help you to question, their solutions and questions help you to question yourself, and you take some of their suggestions, or solutions in your own mind, and when you go away you reflect on those suggestions. You can work through your own issues, and it helps you resolve those issues. I find that when I share anything with counsellors or within [the] men's group, once I have shared that openly and unloaded, I feel a lot better. It is like you have unloaded a big weight, it hasn't totally gone away, but yeah it is just good to unload stuff, and the other part about what the leaders have suggested, upon reflection, you find a lot of things get resolved within you.

One thing in particular was when I was in the group in Bairnsdale a couple of years ago, I found I shared within that group a relationship and the break-up of that relationship and that has really affected me for the last 30 years, I think. It still does today, but because I shared that I still loved that woman, at that time, and just the support of all, Alan and John, and [XX], and all the men at that camp. I know in that camp a couple of men cried when I shared that story, and when they told me [later] about when they cried, that really had an impact on me. Also, when I wanted to write a letter of apology to that woman, another man who attended that camp [and] some training prior to that camp gave me a couple of hints about how to write that letter – not to be too personal about the things that we fought about when we separated, but just to focus on what were the real issues. I found a lot of the burden was really released. To write that letter of apology was probably the best thing that I could have done about that. Just to share with other men and to receive their support and to write that letter, it brought a lot of healing for me. I find that I deal a lot better now with that separation and the hurt is not as deep as it used to be. Yeah I feel a lot freer from that burden today.”

Why is this change important to you?

“I really valued and appreciated that experience that I took from that personal history that was affecting my life. So through different experiences and training and what I have been through, I think I was able to work out what the real problem was, why we broke up and what the real reason was, it was a failure on my part to know how to live with a woman. I lacked a lot of understanding; yeah I just didn't have hardly any understanding of what it means to be in a relationship. So that camp and some of the people who talked, a couple of the men who talked to me, really helped me understand that, and that brought a tremendous lot of release to me, so I certainly will value those experiences forever until my last day, because I feel a lot better for what happened at that camp.”

Reasons for selection:

- Healing has occurred for this participant, even after 30 years
- The Program provided a safe environment for participants to share their stories and open up
- The participant describes his improved understanding of what it means to be in a domestic/loving relationship
- The participant was able to take action in dealing with an issue, by writing a letter of significance to aid the personal healing process.

MSC story # 5: Bringing it together

What has been the most significant change for you?

"[I have] absolutely [noticed some personal changes in my life as a result of the program]. I could say, I was a bit hot-headed at times and I would be very confronting if I had to be, whereas now I think about things a bit more, and life's journey curve balls and what not. I am able to sort of separate myself a bit and use some of the tools and strategies that were taught in those sessions that we had. In the past I mean conflict came to me, I was pretty abrupt, and there was a bit of bang right, I stood my ground. Prior to our journey beginning, I would be happy to be a bit volatile like most others I suppose. Until I did the course with you guys my way of fixing that was violence and I didn't know how to control it. But after doing the sessions with you guys, I can now sit back and be diplomatic, and I can sit on my own emotions and turn it into a positive. Learning to speak properly to [others], and being diplomatic and all that sort of stuff, and also being able to have a swag of tools to be able to say right, you know, I can make a call here, here is an opportunity for you. So I suppose what [the Program] does, it shows you when to hold and when to fold, and when to be diplomatic and not. It is much better to [solve conflict] in a diplomatic way than it is to be confronting.

Since October, November last year, it has been a real trying time for me and my family, and prior to doing [the Program] and sharing the journey, I would have been a pretty big mess about it all by now I am sure. I have just had my whole family basically crumble around me, and a good friend as well, and I feel that I am standing on my own, but in saying that, with the strategies that I learnt, at Emerald and also at Yarram, it has given me strength to just put shoulder to the wheel and keep moving, and being at peace whilst it is happening. I have suffered, I have suffered physically, but in the same time that I have suffered physically, I have been able to cope mentally a lot easier than I would have before. It has given me the skills to be able to know how to express myself about the situation in the family where it is really close. It has given me the opportunity to be able to not feel overwhelmed or intimidated by what is going on around me, and to be able to offer some real personal genuine top quality advice and initiative in the direction that we should take things. Whereas prior to that... I had no real direction, whereas what I picked up [on] in how we went through the sessions were the different warriors and the connection to those different warriors and how we can deal with it, each of those different aspects, and then how I can relate that back into my family situation in a beneficial way. It was just so helpful to have different warriors and the way to calmly take on what I had to take on, and give it back in a positive way. So far it is working.

Prior to sharing the journey, family was family and you just used to fix it more or less, and you don't really listen to what is going on, and think oh yeah that needs to be fixed I will do my best and fix it. And in fact that is just a bandaid and it doesn't always work because the issue comes up again and again, more or less, and what I have learnt is to really, you have two ears to listen twice as much, one mouth to talk, so you sort of take it all in, and you really have a listen. It gave me some keys, it actually gave me some keys. Now the situation with my daughter and her man, they needed counselling, in the past I would fall into the same trap as most others and say, well look I have taken sides and that is that, and I am really in this situation. Even though now I would still take sides, I don't put it out there, I am more interested in seeing it come together the way it should, and I was able to offer up good quality sound advice, and turn it [from]: "I can't fix this," [to,] "but I can sure open some doors for you to go somewhere else and get it fixed, so that it is workable". And accept that we have all got issues and mistakes and all that sort of stuff and not to be – even though I probably was a bit judgemental – but not to be opinionated to the point that I disengage the other person. So in

fact I gave him a hug, told him I loved him, and said get it together, I want to see them all together, and here is an opportunity for you to go to professional counselling, and I made the arrangements and left it for him to make the appointment, and he did. It has given that power to those two that have got the issue, and letting them know that they have a right to have that power, and with that power, they have the right earn it together.

Prior to our journey that we had as a group and going to the camp, I would have been in a totally different process. I would have just sort of shut down on it, and said, "well I have seen this, I am not really interested. You will have to move on." So instead of doing that, I was bringing it together."

Why is this change important to you?

"Our whole community can learn by that, not just the Aboriginal community but also the whole community. One of the most poignant things you guys have taught me is, the strength in family and community, the solidarity and that is why I want to work with men to get them away from the pick yourself up, brush yourself down, boys don't cry attitude. We have developed a place and space where our men dislocate from family and kids and feelings, and our women are engaged in that process, where they understand feelings etc because they are taught: "come here sweetheart show me where it hurts and kiss it better," and then asked, "how do you feel?" So they are taught to embrace the whole range of emotions, and men are taught to back off from it. So we have separated the community. So what I learnt from you guys was to bring it together, and yeah I just want to do it so much because when you look back at our own culture, it is 15,000 generations in 60,000 years, you know, we never had it, we never had that sort of separation, and it is only in the last 260 or so years that we have had that separation, and it is sad because before that happened, we had that connection to family and we had a broader connection as well, which we still hold today, but it doesn't always get recognised. So there is our cultural connection at the same time. So the value of the community and family, and society, what is society about – it is a separated society right now – and the work you guys do and the work that I do now, helps to take that disillusion away and put a reality in place, and the reality is that we are in need of each other, and men are not separated from women and vice versa, and it shouldn't be that. When you get married and you pledge your life to a girl, it is not about leaving her at home, or wherever, because you don't get on, which [are] most [of the] stories that you hear around the traps, that is the ethos. "Ah the missus, she is so different to me, I never understand her," and the reality is that they don't try, and why has that happened? It goes back to because "I pick myself up, brush myself down and get on with it" [attitude]. That is what the root of it is I believe. I would like to see us, the Aboriginal people, give this back to the broader community and let them understand the truth of it."

Reasons for selection

- This story demonstrates change that has occurred at the individual, family and the community level since the participants' involvement in the Program
- The story also demonstrates all the changes the Program is trying to achieve, and specifically makes mention of how the Program aided this change, including reference to terms and concepts used by the Program.

Section 3: Conclusion

While the findings presented in this report are based on a small sample of participants, the MSC stories collected indicate the Dardi Munwurro Program is having the desired impact on participants. Across the range of short, medium and long term outcomes documented in the Program Logic model (see Appendix 1) it is evident the Program is making some impact across all stated outcomes. The stories demonstrate real life examples of how participants have integrated the core messages of the Program into their lives, and have changed their behaviour as a result. Participants indicated improved understanding of self and their identity, including their personal abilities, and their roles and responsibilities as Koori men. Participants were also able to demonstrate their ability to identify and recognise their own issues, and the impact these issues have both on their own lives and the lives of people around them. They learned new skills to problem solve and discuss their personal issues, particularly with other participants of the Program who they were able to share their experiences with and draw on for advice and support. In addition, some participants also demonstrated new skills in identifying and accessing external support services when needed. In conclusion, from the MSC stories presented in this report it is evident that the Dardi Munwurro Program has made an important contribution to the personal lives of the five (5) men who shared their stories. The Program, through the behaviour change described by participants, also has the potential to reduce family violence in the Koori community more broadly.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Dardi Munwurro Program Logic

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES	GOAL
Engage local stakeholders and workshop facilitators	Introductory sessions promoting the workshops	Koori males attended workshops	Improved understanding of violence	Improved ability to recognise and refrain from violent behaviour	Reduced violent behaviour	Reduced Koori family violence
Select sites to run program	Workshops around topics of 'About Family Violence', 'Being a	Koori males completed workshops	Better understanding of individual behaviour and its impact/s	Increased capacity and practical skills to deal with life challenges	Stronger, more resilient Koori men	
Promote program	Follow-up sessions from work-shops	Koori males attended follow-up sessions	Increased understanding of, and connection with identity	Stronger identity as Koori male		
Obtain funding	Steering committee meetings	Local volunteers/support persons or mentors assisted with program	Increased knowledge of roles and responsibilities of Koori men in traditional culture	Ability to translate understanding of traditional roles into being a role model		
			Increased understanding of different communication	Improved communication skills are more willing to discuss their problems	Improved Koori family relationships	
			Increased awareness of services how to access support	Participants are more likely to ask for help and access services	Participants are using services and supports	

Appendix 2: MSC stories

MSC story # 1 – That awareness

"I think of myself as being a smart man anyway, but since being part of the Program, and being involved with it, yeah no I reckon it has changed my life a fair bit. I used to live by my own book, but having a partner involved and kids, it has taught me to be more resilient I suppose, but not being in a self centred way, put it that way. You know growing up as a young man being around family violence and all that sort of stuff, me father was a very staunch man, I had me own staunch ways. Being part of the Program, has brought out a little bit more awareness in my own job roles, but being a parent as well, so it has been really good for me myself on a personal level, being a family man, I will put it that way. I used to just rush off and do things, by myself for myself, but now I tend to ask the question, just to have, through my own kids and my partner, I involve them a lot more in decisions that I actually make.

The most significant change has been just that awareness, knowing and making the right choices, but actually slowing myself down with my thinking as well, not like a bull out of a gate, and it just tends to make you think a little bit more – not only with me myself, but with my family, my kids choices, with my nephews and nieces as well. And not only that, it teaches me to slow down a bit in particular jobs and roles that I play in the community. I have been wiser, just around my own personal experiences, myself having kids, some of the skills that I sort of picked up through the actual program, has just sort of made me a little bit wiser.

Leadership is a huge thing in today's society with our Koori people. Leadership has taught me to be a little bit more confident as well. I always have been confident but in my own ability, but since doing the Program, it has been huge for myself, really, the awareness side of things. It has actually made me a little bit more confident in my choices and in my roles, more resilient, just to take on challenges as well. I actually sit and think, and I strategise, put it that way, about how I tackle things these days, which has been good, I never used to strategise before... It has always been a challenge over the years about putting yourself out there, but when it comes to a time in your life, when you need to make change, and the change has always got to be for the better, and these particular Programs, I find really helpful.

Why is this change important to you?

[The Dardi Munwurro Program is a] good Program to do, all about the awareness, because a lot of our mobs don't realise what issues they actually have, they just think they are living the normal way of life, but once they start seeing it, the way [Alan and John] actually do [their] workshops, they sit back and they actually think about it.

There are a lot of issues here [in Echuca]. Me and [XX] and [XX], we know what the issues are, and it is just a matter of getting the fellows together. We have just established a men's group again, getting that up and running again, which is good. We have been getting good numbers there, so we are hoping to utilise Alan again, hopefully sooner than later, but from the first group that we did out at Morning Glory, like even though it was a little bit disorganised, by the Echuca mob itself I thought, some of those guys got something out of it.

What I noticed about the Robinvale mob, those guys we put through down there, they actually cut back on their drinking, their domestic violence issues are pretty much stopped. It was a bit of a shock to myself actually, because they done the Program and after we slowed down doing stuff down there, they were actually asking when Thorpe and Burns were coming back down, which is good."

MSC story # 2 – The wise man within

What has been the most significant change for you?

Just since I have known the Program it has enlightened the wise man inside me to start thinking that maybe we have got stuff that we never deal with in our lives, but to know that when we have to start looking at ourselves, I think this Program has actually opened up the door to start thinking about it. I feel better because it is starting to make me answer the stuff that I have never worried about because I have been hiding things, but it just makes you stir inside a little bit more, just by a program getting into those little areas where it just unearths a little bit of stuff that you can talk about. I believe that by understanding myself, is by someone coming in and helping me to have the key for me to start talking about the issues that I need to talk about, and I think this Program is starting to open up that area to enable me to start thinking about supporting myself, in the healing process.

I believe that it has [helped to understand roles and responsibilities], because it gives that man the understanding to what a man is, and when men get back into these Programs that we have here, I do believe that men can look upon each other, and see who is wise and who is not, and who has got information and who hasn't, and it is about finding the right person and to share it. It has certainly given me an insight and for me to understand more about my family, knowing that we think that we are doing okay, but then it has helped me understand how a family is a part of a man's role to keep it together. So it has actually given me an insight to actually look in and say, "well, what is a man? What is his role?" I do believe [the Program] brings it out.

I think about myself and I think about others too. Knowing that I can actually talk to men, you know, I have always wondered sometimes we go around and I don't know whether I am talking to the right people sometimes, but then we can talk to a lot of people and I think within men's area, it has helped me to look at other men to know that they have problems, and I can share my problems with them, and maybe we can help ourselves with what we deal with every day. Treating men with a little bit more dignity and knowing that they do have struggles in their life, and some people can move on, but some struggle with it, so it helps me. Looking upon some men it has helped them to adjust and understand, it has given us an idea to say, well I might be all right, but it is looking at someone else that mightn't be right. It has helped me to look upon other people to think about some less unfortunate people that they can't get the guidance that some people find.

Why is this change important to you?

For me, to understand my hurt and my pain so that I can understand and talk to my children about what I have gone through, so that I can make them understand, that is my stuff and I understand it now, but I am moving on from it, and not to carry the hurt because then my children feel the hurt.

We talk about the wise man within everyone, and I believe that we have all got that. By someone coming along and just helping me understand that we all have that wise man and it is when we dig deep enough to find out where our answers come from, our guidance come from, it is all within."

MSC story # 4 – Walking taller

What is has been the most significant change for you?

The Program seems to have strengthened some of our men; I see them walking a bit taller, a bit more information on where their problems lie. At some of these meetings we have, men speak about their problems with other men. I more or less look towards helping others get their strength to stand up and it has made me strong to speak out here.

Through the Program, men spoke about a lot of issues that were affecting them, so you become more aware of what their problems are, so you have more of an understanding of that person and what they are going through, and why sometimes they behave like they do. The Program gives you the skills to go through those problem solving issues with people.

I often find that within organisations, you have only got a few strong men that are standing up all the time, so to share information with other men, it lessens our role, and it gives others the empowerment. [The Program] more or less enhanced [understanding of culture and responsibilities as a man] by being able to share knowledge with others as well.

There are no barriers up between the men now, if you have a problem you can go face to face and yarn about it now, and it is because of that bonding that we have done through the Program, that they feel comfortable talking about it now. A lot of men spoke about substance abuse, domestic violence, it made them aware that domestic violence just isn't physical, it can be spiritual, it can be monetary. Yeah, it doesn't have to be physical to be violent.

I feel more connected definitely to the men, because of the amount of time that we do spend together, and we just seem to bond, yeah we are all more or less going through the same things in life. So I feel that it does bring us all together, even some of the exercises that Alan and John have provided that strengthens the group as a whole.

Why is this change important to you?

I just get strength in community when I see them do well that really lifts me. You seem to draw strength from one another."