



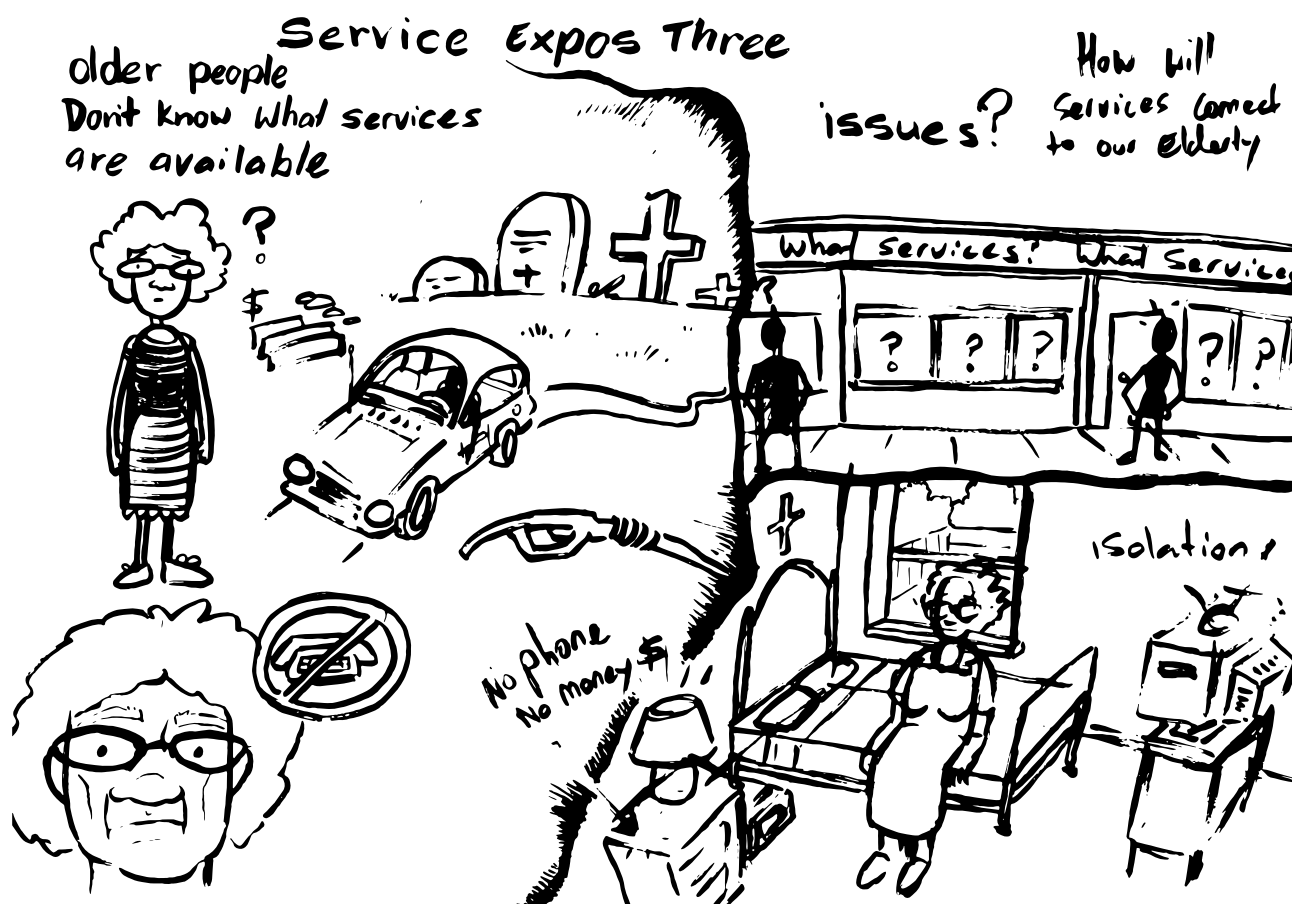
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GROWING OLD IN KEMPSEY 2018 WORKSHOPS REPORT



Burbangana Group
Working together for community wellbeing
FORMERLY MORETON CONSULTING





The artwork featured throughout this report was drawn by Stephen McLeod during the Joint Action Planning Workshop held in South West Rocks on 3 December 2018.

We are grateful for Stephen's permission to share it with you.

We pay our respects to the Dhungutti¹ People and Elders past and present. We also pay our respects to all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the Kempsey area and the many people who are working together for change.

Thank you to the people from Aboriginal controlled and mainstream services who participated in the two workshops in 2018 which informed this report.

This report was authored by Kerry Pearse and Jane Grant with input from Ken Craig, Sandra Avuri and Margaret Girdwood of Burbangana Group Pty Ltd in December 2018.

It was funded by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services as part of the Kempsey Place Plan Project.

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¹ Dhungutti spelling as requested by the Dhungutti Elders Council

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides an overview of key issues facing older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey and some responses that local service providers have discussed. It outlines the key issues discussed at two workshops in 2018 commissioned by the Kempsey Place Plan Team, NSW Department of Family and Community Services. These workshops followed up earlier work undertaken by Moreton Consulting (now Burbangana Group) in 2015 and 2016.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

GROWING OLD IN KEMPSEY PROJECT (2015)

In 2015 the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) engaged Moreton Consulting to undertake a deep community consultation on the needs of Aboriginal people in Kempsey as they age. An advisory group comprising thirteen organisations was established to co-design the consultation methodology and oversee the project. Thirty people from nine locations in the Kempsey Shire were interviewed, along with fourteen people from nine services.

In June 2016 the project report approved by the advisory group was provided to NSW FACS. A summary of the report was also disseminated across the community through the participating organisations and provided to project participants.

The key findings relating to the needs of Aboriginal people in Kempsey as they age were that:

1. Most people started to feel and identify as old before they turned 55.
2. Most are living under significant financial pressure.
3. Most are concerned about their health yet seem to be accessing few services.

4. Housing is a major concern, including the need for urgent repairs and maintenance.
5. Lack of transport is a major challenge.
6. One half of the participants were raising young children (e.g. grandchildren or great grandchildren) and worry about the impact on these children as they age.
7. Community safety and the impact of drugs, alcohol and violence are all a concern.

The Growing Old in Kempsey Report (2016) is available on Burbangana's website www.burbangana.com.au/resources-reports.



GROWING OLD IN KEMPSEY – NEXT STEPS PROJECT (2018)

In 2018 FACS engaged the Burbangana Group (previously Moreton Consulting) to design and facilitate the second phase of the project.

The purpose of this second stage was to work with the original project advisory group and Kempsey service providers on how agencies could respond to the issues raised in the earlier consultation.

RECENT CONTEXT

The FACS Kempsey Place Plan has implemented a range of new initiatives since the Growing Old in Kempsey Report was finalised in July 2016. However, local people participating in the Kempsey Place Plan activities indicate that the ageing needs of Aboriginal people in Kempsey and surrounding communities continue to be an urgent priority.

There are several government agencies, local service providers and advisory groups with significant interests in and responsibilities for providing relevant support and services. These include Commonwealth, NSW and local government funded services such as NDIS providers, Centrelink, aged care providers, community housing providers, faith-based agencies and Aboriginal controlled services. These stakeholders span the aged care, health, disability and out of home care sectors.

In addition, the NSW Inclusion and Early Intervention Directorate, the area within NSW FACS responsible for ageing policy, have indicated strong interest in this project.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

There were three parts to this project.

PART ONE – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Burbangana representatives re-engaged key stakeholders with the Growing Old in Kempsey initiative, by:

- meeting with the previous members of the Aboriginal advisory group individually to brief them on this project and invite their participation in the action planning workshops;
- scanning the environment to identify additional relevant local Aboriginal community members to participate in the action planning workshops; and
- briefing relevant Kempsey agencies about the project, in collaboration with NSW FACS.

PART TWO – PREPARATORY WORKSHOP

A one-day workshop was held with the original members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group plus some additional Aboriginal stakeholders on 23 October 2018 in Kempsey. The purpose of this workshop was to:

- re-familiarise participants with the Growing Old in Kempsey Report findings;
- brief the group on new activities since the report was written – including the Kempsey Place Plan and other relevant local initiatives;
- explore the underlying causes of the issues identified in the 2015 Growing Old in Kempsey consultation and prioritise areas for action; and
- co-design the action planning workshop.

During this workshop participants unpacked the underlying triggers and causes behind the findings of the report and prioritised areas of focus for the second workshop. They identified the following issues as the top five priorities for consideration by Aboriginal controlled and mainstream services:

1. Housing
2. Access to Aged Care Services

3. Cultural Competency (Protocols, Kinship, Accountability)
4. Safety (including Domestic Violence)
5. Community / Services Unity

A list of planning workshop participants is in Attachment A.

*older people
Don't know what services
are available* Awareness, Training,

PART THREE – JOINT ACTION PLANNING

On 3 December 2018 Aboriginal controlled and mainstream service together to share information and start to identify ways of working issues and improve outcomes for older Aboriginal people living in workshop was held at South West Rocks and is referred to as the workshop' throughout the remainder of this report.

In addition to local service providers, a member of the NSW Ministerial Committee on Ageing (MACA), Wendy Morgan, attended the spoke about the role of the MACA and committed to advise the issues raised during the workshop. The link back to the MACA and the NSW Inclusion and Early Intervention Directorate, the area within NSW FACS responsible for ageing policy, was important. Ms Morgan's involvement provided a way of alerting decision makers and policy developers to the issues facing older Aboriginal people in Kempsey.

A list of joint action planning workshop participants is Attachment A.



WORKSHOP

providers came to respond to Kempsey. This 'joint

Advisory workshop. She MACA on the

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE JOINT WORKSHOP

LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES IS A BIG PROBLEM

One of the most compelling concerns expressed by participants in both workshops is the lack of information about what services other agencies offer; what their intake and service delivery policies are; and who is funded for what.

In particular, they spoke about service expos that had occurred in the past in Kempsey that

really helped with referrals. This identified a high need for information sharing about the services available in Kempsey and limited readiness for action planning.

Sharing information between agencies became the main focus of the joint workshop.

Twelve agencies presented information about the services that they provide at the workshop on 3 December 2018.

- Aboriginal Community Housing Ltd – Ken McIntosh
- Aged Community Services, MNCLHD – Dorelle Steel
- Community Housing Ltd – Emma Belcher
- Durri AMS – Sue Wilson
- Kempsey Hospital and Discharge Planning – Brandi Welsh
- Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council – Greg Douglas
- Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre – Cheryl Davis
- Many Rivers Regional Housing Services – Louise Robinson
- Mid Coast Communities – Paul Tracey
- Mission Australia – Jocelyn Box
- NSW Aboriginal Housing Office – Jamie Walker
- NSW FACS Commissioning and Planning – Ruth Lovelock

The purpose of these presentations was to help build a shared understanding across the workshop participants of the range of support services available for older Aboriginal people in Kempsey and to enable participants to build relationships with other agencies to strengthen collaboration and coordination across the service system.

Whilst these presentations meant that there was a big focus on information provision, rather than participative discussion, most workshop participants indicated in the post-workshop survey that they valued these presentations.

LISTENING CIRCLES – EXPLORING THE TOP 3 PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

During the workshop listening circles explored the top three priorities for change – housing, access to aged care, and cultural competency. These sessions were intended to provide an overview of each topic in a way that helped the workshop participants develop a shared understanding about the experience of older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey.

The key themes and issues identified through this listening circle process are summarised below.

HOUSING

Context

There were 3,353 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Kempsey on the 2016 Census night.¹ This is an increase of 8% since the 2011 Census. In 2016, 804 people in the Kempsey LGA were older than 45 years of age, with 195 people being older than 65. The number of people aged 65+ has risen by 60% since 2011.

Whilst Aboriginal home ownership rates in Kempsey are starting to increase, most Aboriginal people in Kempsey (57%) live in rented dwellings (2016 Census). This is mainly public housing, soon to be transferred to Community Housing Ltd, housing owned by the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council (Kempsey LALC) or housing managed by Many Rivers Regional Housing Management Services Aboriginal Corporation (Many Rivers).

Unlike older non-Aboriginal people who are often home owners, most older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey are social housing tenants. This means that older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey often have less flexibility to change their housing circumstances. It also means that social housing providers face significant costs in trying to adapt their stock to the changing life circumstances of their tenants.

This context has particular impacts on older Aboriginal people and is one of the reasons that housing was raised as such a significant priority.

There are a number of reasons why housing is such a big concern for older Aboriginal people in Kempsey.

Inclusion not isolation

- The mainstream service system is often focussed on reducing the isolation of older people. However, many older Aboriginal people in Kempsey are not isolated, although they may seek more social contact with people of a similar age. Cultural and socio-economic factors can mean that older Aboriginal people often live with family members, so isolation is not necessarily a problem. However, for some over-crowding can be a problem. Large families have disadvantages and advantages: family is a responsibility but also a strength.
- There is usually a large group of people using the house, both as residents and visitors. The range of relationships and activities across generations often puts more pressure on the house. It is often the older residents who take responsibility for this.

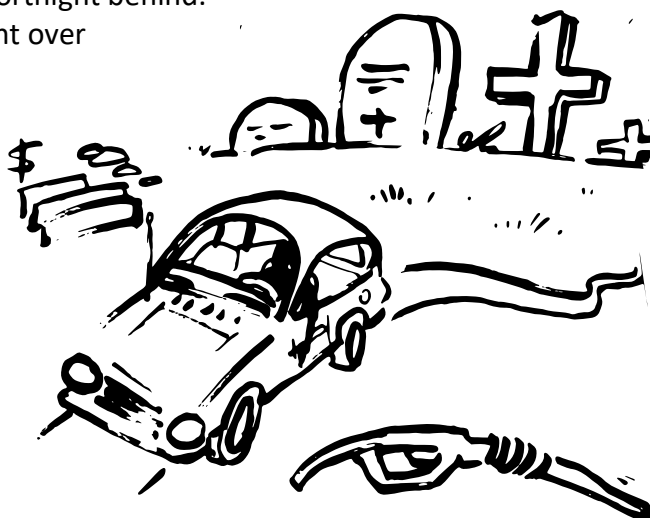
¹ It is important to note that the Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges that there is significant undercounting of Aboriginal people in Census data. The ABS estimates that the net Census under count rate nationally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 17.5% in 2016.

Housing design

- Housing design is not always culturally appropriate. Housing is currently designed for small nuclear families, which often does not meet the needs of Aboriginal families. Examples of better design include: space for respite from caring for grandchildren; having a separate space for elders; and incorporating social spaces within the house as well as outside the house to decrease disruption to neighbours and tenancy issues.

Housing stress and financial pressure

- Passive elder abuse was raised as an issue during the housing discussion. This was described particularly in the form of financial abuse where other people living in the house or visiting the house are not contributing to household expenses. Examples include: rent; food; electricity bills; and family coming to use services at the house (e.g. laundry facilities). The flow-on effects of this are that older occupants often pay increased costs and have little discretionary money or even enough money for essentials, such as food and transport. There can be conflict around finances within the household. This issue is very subtle and not spoken about by older people directly. They might just say “I have no money left”.
- Financial pressures and other financial issues were also raised:
 - It's very easy for people to get behind in their rent. If bills get taken out of a bank account and there is not enough left for rent, Centrelink won't take any rent out. This leaves the tenant a full fortnight behind. Many tenants stop paying rent over Christmas and get behind.
 - Older tenants often bear the added expenses of looking after grandchildren.
 - Older Aboriginal people often incur the expense of funerals for family members and worry about the cost of their own funeral. Having to travel to funerals is also a financial pressure. The Local Aboriginal Land Council can provide petrol money and there are individual elders in the community that assist with funeral costs. The Dhungutti Elders now have a partnership with Hastings Macleay Community Transport to support transportation for funerals.
- Physical and emotional elder abuse is also an issue for some people. Often this is hidden and older people put up with this abuse, as they are focussed on caring for their grandchildren.



Range of housing needs

Older Aboriginal people have a range of housing needs and there are no one-size-fits-all solutions.

- Some older people in large houses want to be re-housed to a smaller dwelling, so they can get away from abuse and stress. There are not enough two-bedroom dwellings to meet this need. (It was suggested that increasing applications for small dwellings could drive increased supply. However, this requires new funding for growth to be invested in the social housing system.)
- Some older people want modifications to their current house to enable independent living and ageing in place.
- Some older tenants have complex needs, including a need for disability support and help with social and emotional wellbeing.
- Some older people are fearful of moving into aged care facilities including the cost of moving and associated expenses.

Structural issues

- A range of structural issues creates significant challenges for Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Aboriginal community housing providers. These include:
 - the way that Centrelink administers Centrepay for the direct payment of rent can mean that Aboriginal tenants fall into rent arrears unintentionally;
 - sustainability of rent levels and difficulties in changing rent setting policies because of long term tenant's expectations and poverty;
 - waste management, especially on larger estates and ex reserves or missions;
 - maintenance backlogs;
 - increased cost of asset management because of strain on housing infrastructure due to more people living in and using the house;
 - the cost and willingness of tradespeople to go to ex reserves and missions was raised as a concern; culturally competent and ethical tradespeople are needed – this is also an economic development opportunity for Aboriginal tradespeople;
 - no capital growth – housing stock is at capacity with no provision for emergency housing and no flexibility for tenants to move to more age appropriate housing, leading to over-crowding; and
 - the NSW Lands Right Act was described as a barrier to modifications and developments.

Addressing housing issues experienced by older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey requires a holistic approach as many other factors impact on the ability to sustain tenancies and age well in place. This is particularly the case for multi-generational households. These factors can include:

drug and alcohol abuse; school attendance; healthy eating; mental health; and current and intergenerational trauma.

Actions

The following housing related actions were discussed during the workshop.

1. Advocate to government on the need for change in housing design.
2. Improve education and support to community housing tenants around reporting maintenance needs through the correct channels, so that the issues are actioned and the housing provider can be held accountable.
3. Ease financial stress at Christmas time, by collecting a little extra rent from tenants throughout the year so that rent is forward paid over the Christmas period.
4. Increase availability of culturally competent tradespeople by training local Aboriginal people. Provide cultural competency training to existing tradespeople.
5. Centrelink can provide financial literacy workshops. Centrelink is keen to work with Elders groups and Land Councils and has worked with the Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre in the past.
6. Mid-North Coast Local Health District personnel committed to meet with Mission Australia, Many Rivers Regional Housing Management Services and any other interested housing provider to make sure that providers have up to date information about accessing health and aged care services.



- increased water usage
- electricity
- bigger area = land rates
- low income families
- who pays? passive elder abuse?

ACCESS TO AGED CARE SERVICES

Context

The Growing Old in Kempsey report (2016) found that some people interviewed during the consultation started to feel old in their mid-forties, with most starting to feel old before they turned fifty-five. This is very relevant to service providers and agencies providing support to people living in the Kempsey LGA.

Most (81%) of the people interviewed for the Growing Old in Kempsey Report received support from Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service (Durri) and/or Boorroongen Djugun Ltd (Boorroongen). Only 6% of the people interviewed were on home care packages and 13% had some type of help at home.

Most people said that they found out about what services are available through word of mouth. And most are receiving their support through the Aboriginal controlled system and are not accessing additional services that could be available to them. No-one mentioned My Aged Care (apart from Boorroongen) and discussion about services was almost entirely focussed on Aboriginal controlled agencies.

Similarly, during the two workshops held in 2018, it was clear that people working in both the Aboriginal controlled and mainstream service systems are unaware of the extent of services provided across agencies. This was identified as a significant issue in the first workshop and led to the emphasis on information provision in the joint workshop.

In addition to the services that Boorroongen and Durri provide, access to information on aged care services is initially managed through the federal My Aged Care portal. This relies on IT access and competence. Alternatively, people can access My Aged Care via a 1 800 number. However, telephone support is limited and strictly managed by the Commonwealth – requests for help are closed if calls are not responded to within set time periods.

In 2016, 59% of Aboriginal households in Kempsey had an internet connection. Aboriginal controlled service providers advise that most older Aboriginal people do not have internet access or are not confident using the internet. Many Aboriginal people, including older people, use pre-paid mobile phones as a way of managing telephone service on limited budgets and, consequently, access to phones may be difficult.

In 2017 the Australian Government posted a small number of resources on the My Aged Care website aimed at making information more available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These resources include an animated video which directs people to the 1 800 help line and some translated brochures for people living in three remote communities in the NT and WA.

The following is a summary of the listening circle discussion in relation to accessing aged care and related services.

Ageing in place

- Many older people would like more support at home to allow them to age in place.
- Some people aren't linked into the aged care system and don't access packages.
- Others are not on adequate aged care packages (e.g. they are stuck on a level 1 when they should be on a level 4). It is very hard to remain healthy, look after yourself, look after grandchildren and stay at home in a safe, healthy environment, when there is not enough funding and support to create that life.
- Whilst many older Aboriginal people in Kempsey are living with large families, some older people would like more opportunities to socialise with others of a similar age. Social connection is an important way of sharing information with each other about what services and supports are available.
- Some older Aboriginal people are concerned about their safety and security, largely because of the impact of nearby drug and alcohol abuse.



Accessibility

- Some services are not welcoming to older Aboriginal people. Services look too clinical. People want to be able to walk in, sit in an arm-chair and have a yarn, not just fill in a form and look on the internet. Older Aboriginal people are not very good at looking for things online.
- There is a lack of awareness that an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer is available for patients at Kempsey Health Campus (hospital).
- There are currently barriers to older Aboriginal people accessing aged care support. All referrals to aged care support must come through My Aged Care (MAC) online or the related 1 800 number, while many older people have limited IT literacy and access to the web. Aged care assessments are expected to be conducted in a certain timeframe and only two attempts are made to contact a referred patient after which the referral is closed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can take longer to open up about issues and may not have access to a phone.
- It is challenging to work a patient's needs into an NDIS application and to complete a successful application.
- It can be challenging to know what elements of aged care support a person is already accessing and what other support they might be able to access. Sometimes people have forgotten or do not understand what package they are on or where their support is coming from.
- Ineligibility for different aged care packages can be a barrier (e.g. accessing a small part of one program, can make a person ineligible for another package). There needs to be a service map or community navigator to help people.
- It is difficult to keep up with changes to funding and packages available – hard to keep up with who is providing what. There is no capacity to create and share funding pamphlets. Funding for this should be addressed.

Actions

The following aged care services related actions were discussed during the workshop

1. Build awareness that an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer is available for patients at the Mid North Coast Local Health District Service.
2. Allocate more time for intake into aged care support.
3. FACS should promote the need for Aboriginal carers for older Aboriginal people.
4. Improve information about what services are available. For example, brochures and a wallet card for service users to record their main points of contact/support were discussed. It was suggested that these could be a project for the Kempsey Interagency.

5. Incorporate a requirement to coordinate with other agencies across the system to help services keep up with changes to funding and packages available. Frontline workers need to be supported to stay up to date with the rest of the service system, so they can help their clients find the help they need.
6. Develop a Kempsey service system directory which lists the services and what they do. This should be in plain English and list who the services are for and what they do. If agencies don't know what each other do, how can we expect local people to navigate the complex system?
 - Could be part of Kempsey Place Plan?
 - TAFE students generally develop a community service delivery directory each year – not sure when last happened?
 - Kempsey Shire Directory – is it kept up to date? Internet based.
 - Challenge – things change so much, that printed copies go out of date.

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Context

During the first 2018 workshop, Aboriginal participants talked about the need for the mainstream service system to strengthen cultural proficiency in service delivery. This discussion covered a range of issues in relation to service delivery design, access and quality. Examples of systemic institutional racism and the need to change service delivery responses were discussed.

The role of the Aboriginal controlled service system was discussed and the potential for Aboriginal services to partner with mainstream services to improve service delivery to Aboriginal people was canvassed. The need to value local Aboriginal knowledge and expertise was identified. Genuine partnerships across the two service systems must be based on respect, trust and reciprocity.

The following is a summary of the listening circle discussion in relation to cultural competency in service delivery.

What cultural competency means

Cultural competency can be thought of as structural and individual cultural competency.

- Structural cultural competency is where the rules of the system do not disadvantage certain groups due to their cultural differences (e.g. rules in aged care service which mean that Aboriginal people can't access the system if they have not called back in time).
- Individual cultural competency relates to an individual's cultural awareness – understanding lives, history of place, family formations – so that they understand Aboriginal people and provide them with appropriate services.

Valuing different world views and experiences

- Having compassion and understanding around the way other people live (e.g. what some might view as over-crowding, other families might view as enjoying being all together).
- Quote: 'I would make up mattresses all over the floor to have my family around. I like them being there.'
- Some older Aboriginal people don't feel comfortable with non-Aboriginal workers because they feel shame knowing that their homes are different to non-Aboriginal people.
- There is a need to understand a little bit about the local family structure that you are working with. It's not like walking into a non-Aboriginal family, "where you're just going to talk to a person and their partner".
- Many Aboriginal people have cultural, knowledge and leadership responsibilities. This is often particularly the case for older Aboriginal people who are passing on their knowledge. They need to be active and live on country to meet these responsibilities.

Effective service delivery

More effective service delivery could include the following:

- Allowing more time and more attempts to contact when working with Aboriginal clients. Some people don't have a phone and if they miss a call, they miss an opportunity. They then see accessing support as not worth the hassle.
- Taking an Aboriginal worker with you or asking the person if they'd like to have someone there with them.
- Understanding that some Aboriginal people nod or agree even though they don't understand, as they're too shamed to ask. Some people would rather go without than ask.
- Seeing people's support needs through to the end and beyond.
- Using culturally inclusive visual aids and imagery in promotions (e.g. use photos of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together).



- Putting the person at the centre by treating them as an individual and listening to their needs. You must be true to your word to build trust – if you say you’re going to do something, do it. Return to check in with the person to find out if what you did met their needs. Have a conversation about any gaps. If you can’t meet their needs, acknowledge that. Reflect on whether you can improve that area of service delivery.
- Understand that people are grieving and suffering from trauma (e.g. stolen generations, domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues). This means that services need to have a trauma informed approach and be able to be flexible to meet people’s needs.

Learn about history

- Understand Aboriginal history, culture, and language – in particular, the history of Kempsey. Get information on cultural differences before you go in.
- Explore what the back-story of Aboriginal people’s experience with ‘government’ means for current service delivery.

Systemic change

- The key to cultural competency is asking Aboriginal people their views. Services need to have Aboriginal staff, listen to those staff, give them more leeway, and let them do what they’re employed to do. If programs are running successfully then let them continue.
- A lot of the time when talking about cultural competency, we are preaching to the converted. The Cultural Competency of decision and policy makers needs to be improved.
- Organisations may need to undertake workforce development. This could include:
 - assessing whether the current workforce has adequate cultural awareness and the capacity to engage and be successful with clients;
 - making sure there is an adequate mix of male and female workers (some things are men’s business and some women’s, so an Aunty may ask for a female worker); and
 - implementing an employment strategy if the workforce needs development.
- There is a need for stronger employment strategies to create employment for local Aboriginal people, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Employers also need to think about how to reach and target potential Aboriginal employees. For example, there is a group of young people in Kempsey who have completed their Certificate 3 and 4 in Aged Care – they are job ready, but not yet employed.
- Mainstream services should implement strategies to employ more Aboriginal people (e.g. setting targets – Health and Neighbourhood centre both have 5% target).
- Mainstream services should develop Reconciliation Action Plans to strengthen their organisational cultural competency.

- Criminal history screening can be a barrier to employing local Aboriginal people. Many people feel too ashamed to apply and talk about their history. There is a need for more flexibility and for lived experience to be recognised for the value it brings.
- Include cultural competency in organisational strategic plans (e.g. acknowledge traditional custodians).

Actions

The following cultural competency related actions were discussed during the workshop.

1. Make mainstream services more welcoming to older Aboriginal people.
2. Take services out to community rather than expecting people to come into an office.
3. Review time limits on accessing some aged care packages/services as they can be too restrictive.
4. Create positions for Aboriginal community navigator roles or social workers to check in with people, help them navigate the service system and link them up to other services. These roles might report to a group of agencies, not just one. The Commonwealth is trialling an aged care coordinator role – is this a possibility?
5. Implement the Mid-Coast Communities commitment to inviting Aboriginal services to attend meetings and pass on first-hand information.

ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

One of the key objectives for the joint workshop was to support the group to develop individual and collective action plans. The purpose of the plans was to drive local actions across the service system – both within the agencies and between them.

The workshop was only partially successful in this regard. Much more time was needed for agencies to share information, build a shared understanding of the extent of services already in place, and identify opportunities for collaboration across the system. However, a number of actions were discussed during the workshop, which have been outlined on the preceding pages.

In addition, via the post-workshop online survey, a number of workshop participants committed to undertaking various actions.

Joint Workshop Participant Actions

Eight agencies committed to undertaking actions via the post-workshop survey. These actions outline a range of activities which will be started or continued within existing resources. They largely focus on information sharing, improved coordination and working collaboratively across service boundaries.

1. "Aboriginal Health Team to continue to work closely with Booroongen and Durri. Include the following in our 2019 planning activities: – Booroongen walking group – Aboriginal Hydrotherapy group (in partnership with Booroongen) – Otitis Media working group in partnership with Durri – Golf/Health education days in partnership with various organisations."
2. "As a result of this workshop I will continue to influence my funded organisations to work more collaboratively with each other and across the service sector and incorporate a stronger practice and spirit of collaboration in my workplace."
3. "Link with different housing agencies to share knowledge between aged care assessment services and tenancy support workers. Mission Australia and Aboriginal Community Housing are hopefully both options to date. Keep linkages with Durri to provide updates on aged care community services."
4. "I will be following up with the services that did express interest in working with us. Have also got on the invite list for the Kempsey Aboriginal Interagency which is a good step in getting information out there and working on the challenges and barriers of people and services in the region."
5. "I'd like to meet again ... I'd like more services to be there – for example the hospital ALHO, and our hospital SW. I'd like to get more practical feedback about what I can do to help be a better clinician to Older Aboriginals in Kempsey."
6. "Increase networks in the Kempsey area."
7. "Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal Housing to retain Aboriginal Tenants."
8. "Create Service Lists for all areas we work in."
9. "Drive the ideas of Tenants being the focus of Housing and not the homes."
10. "Take time to acknowledge that Many Rivers provides a service different to mainstream and that although we can always do better we are on the right track."
11. "Make extra time to reach out to other service providers within the community."
12. "Seek & create networking opportunities & develop more robust professional relationships."
13. "Reflect upon my & organisations cultural competence during interactions with Aboriginal people & communities."
14. "Listen deeply & remain present during interactions."
15. "Continue to seek interest from other departments to work with Kempsey Place Plan to progress the findings."

FINDINGS

This section highlights some significant issues and some possible sector-wide strategic actions for change that complement the individual agency actions outlined above.

1. HOUSING

There are significant challenges in providing appropriate housing for older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey which will continue to increase if they are not addressed.

Most older Aboriginal people are social housing or Local Aboriginal Land Council tenants rather than home owners, which creates less flexibility to respond to changing life circumstances and a lack of security of tenure. Additionally, housing providers are often the first point of contact for older Aboriginal people in Kempsey.

It is important that close and ongoing working relationships between housing providers and health care, aged care, NDIS providers and other human services agencies are strengthened. This will help to ensure that older tenants are referred to services that can provide support as early as possible.

There are a number of significant structural challenges impacting on the housing and health experiences of older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey. Additional to those issues discussed earlier in this report, the implications of population growth also are significant.

Between 2006 and 2016, Kempsey's Aboriginal population rose by 32%. Kempsey's non-Aboriginal population fell by 2% over the same period. The Aboriginal population of Kempsey had a similar proportion of working age people (15-64 years), with a higher proportion of children under 15 and a smaller proportion of people aged 65 or older.²

The present day structural barriers as well as the forecast population growth will lead to continued pressure on the Kempsey housing system to provide appropriate housing for Aboriginal families, including older people. This pressure will continue to grow, leading to poor housing outcomes for an increased number of older Aboriginal people and their families.

² NSW Department of Education Aboriginal Affairs *Community Portrait: Kempsey LGA, 17 November 2017. Pages 5 - 6*

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, FACS NSW and local housing providers could work together to undertake a review of housing for Aboriginal people in Kempsey and surrounding areas. This could include:

- demographic analysis to determine a housing growth forecast; and
- a housing needs assessment with Aboriginal tenants to better understand people's intentions as they age, as well as their current housing needs. This could inform government investment in increased supply; individual provider's planning and the investigation of innovative local responses.

The Housing for Health Initiative recently rolled out in Kempsey shows a lot of promise in improving health outcomes. Consideration could be given to broadening this project to other local providers.

The interface between Centrelink and tenants in relation to the payment of rent is a problem, particularly the inability of Centrelink to transfer part rent payments. This needs consideration as this practice is creating unintended consequences and increasing rent arrears.

Lastly, there could be value in local housing providers meeting regularly to share good practice.

2. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

Immediate effort is needed to improve access to information about the services that currently exist, both for workers and community members.



There was strong support in both workshops for finding ways to disseminate information about the range of services available and to increase cross sector and agency collaboration.

Most of the workshop participants indicated that they want to continue to be involved in an ongoing network of people working together to improve outcomes for older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey.

Feedback from both workshops indicated that most participants found the agency information sharing useful. There was also a lot of support for the preparation and publication of a service directory or similar publication.

Some agencies, such as Mid Coast Communities and the FACS NSW Kempsey Place Plan Team, have committed to finding ways to bring people together more regularly. This needs to be prioritised and coordinated. Bringing Aboriginal controlled and mainstream agencies together regularly will provide opportunities for relationships to develop and service coordination and access to be improved.

The aged care services system is complex and not accessible to older Aboriginal people. Support is required to help older Aboriginal people navigate services and intake processes to get the help that they need.

There is a serious disconnect between the complexity of the local service systems and the reality of many older Aboriginal people's lives. Many people don't know about services that they are eligible for. This is not surprising given that most service providers don't know the extent of support available from other agencies.

Many older Aboriginal people are also caring for children. Most live in poverty and are managing significant financial pressures. Transport is a big issue. It is also very difficult for many older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey to engage with services through the internet (like My Aged Care) or for some people, even by phone.

There was discussion at both workshops about the possibility of establishing a small number of new, local positions to work with older Aboriginal people to understand their needs and link them up with appropriate services. This would involve helping them to apply for services and being an advocate and support to ensure that they receive services that they are eligible for. This type of position could also help agencies build relationships with local Aboriginal people and continue to strengthen their culturally competent service delivery.

It is preferable that these positions are filled by Aboriginal people who can build strong trusting relationships with both the families and agencies. One suggestion was that these positions could report to an interagency group which would help to strengthen cross agency collaboration and coordination. Another suggestion was that two social workers be appointed to fulfil this role.

3. STRENGTHENING CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Delivering quality human services for older Aboriginal people needs a high level of cultural competency – both across agency systems and policies and in relation to services delivered by individual workers.

Understanding Aboriginal world views, the local historical context of dispossession and intergenerational trauma and the contemporary lived experience of older Aboriginal people and their families is critical to providing appropriate services and support.

Recognising the value, knowledge and expertise that Aboriginal controlled services bring to service delivery is critical. There is a significant opportunity for Aboriginal controlled services and mainstream agencies to work as equal partners, each bringing their own expertise to the table with mutual respect, to improve outcomes for older Aboriginal people in Kempsey. This requires an ongoing commitment to relationship building and the development of trust and productive working relationships.

Similarly, there are times when Aboriginal controlled services are best placed to provide support and their important role in the service system needs to continue to be recognised and resourced.

My Aged Care

None of the older Aboriginal people interviewed during the 2015 Growing Old in Kempsey consultation knew about the changes to accessing aged care services.

This is a critical issue as My Aged Care is now the gateway for assessment and access to Australian Government funded aged care services. My Aged Care is a fundamental part of the aged care system. However, this system is under-resourced and facing significant pressure nationally. There are not enough funded aged care packages to meet need. The referral, assessment and provision of services through this system is managed tightly and governed by rigid policies and procedures.

Discussions during both workshops indicate that it remains very difficult for older Aboriginal people to engage with My Aged Care. Much more needs to be done to make this system culturally competent and effective for Aboriginal people.

Local advice and support for mainstream services

Kempsey is in the unique position of having a local Aboriginal aged care and community services provider and Registered Training Organisation. The first community-based services offered by

Booroongen Djugun Ltd started in 1992.

Booroongen Djugun Aged Care Facility was opened in 1997 to provide care to Aboriginal and non-Indigenous frail aged and people with disabilities, who can no longer live independently in the community. Booroongen offers High Care, Hostel and Dementia Specific secure beds. They also have a range of services available for people who stay living in their own homes as they age in place.

Over more than twenty years Booroongen has developed significant expertise in the provision of aged and community care services for Aboriginal people. They are also a Registered Training Organisation with expertise in workplace learning. The CEO of Booroongen has been appointed to the recently established National Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care.

Booroongen are an important community resource and centre of expertise. They are very well placed to provide training, coaching and advice to mainstream agencies committed to delivering culturally competent services, on a consultancy fee for service basis.

Build a local Aboriginal aged care workforce – both as carers and aged care workers

Increasing the number of skilled Aboriginal aged care workers and community care workers is one way to strengthen cultural competency across the service delivery system. Developing a service system wide approach to training and employing local staff could help deepen cultural competency in service delivery as well as provide employment pathways for younger people.

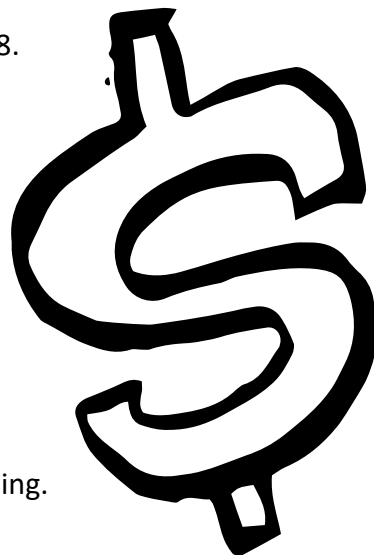
TWO MORE CHALLENGES

Two additional issues were raised in the two workshops held in 2018.

These were:

1. the financial pressure experienced by many older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey and the impact that this has on their ability to access services and strengthen their own wellbeing; and
2. the likely extent of passive and active elder abuse.

Further work needs to be done to understand the extent of these issues and the impact they have on older Aboriginal people's wellbeing.



A WAY FORWARD

This project was ambitious and only partly realised the aim of bringing people together to plan how to improve support for older Aboriginal people in Kempsey. It soon became apparent that more time was needed to help people learn about what services currently exist and identify opportunities for working together.

Some of the issues discussed in this report are systemic and need policy responses from relevant government agencies. The gap between the complexity of the aged care service system and the reality of older Aboriginal people's lives and their capacity to engage with this system is deeply concerning.

However, there is also the potential and goodwill to do better within existing resources by working together and refining service delivery approaches.

Participants are very committed to continuing to work together on the ageing needs of Aboriginal people in Kempsey. It is critical that the momentum be maintained and that an ongoing forum be established to review the findings of this report, support change and improve outcomes for older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey.

ATTACHMENT A

PARTICIPANTS WORKSHOP ONE

Kempsey | 23 October 2018

Booroongen Djugen – Gary Morris
Burun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation – Alison Martin
Cootamundra Girls – Aunty Doreen Webster & Aunty Janet Smith
Dhungutti Elders Council – Bob Mumbler
Kempsey LALC – Fred Kelly
Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre – Cheryl Davis & Kristy Walker
Kempsey Place Plan – Gai Southwell
Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation – Crow, Richard Campbell & Tiffany McComsey
Local Advisory Group – Madeline Donovan
Many Rivers Regional Aboriginal Housing Services – Louise Robinson
Mid Coast Communities – Paul Tracey
MNC Family Referral Service – Natasha Donovan
MNC Local Health District – Ro Stirling-Kelly
NSW Aboriginal Housing Office – Jamie Walker
Guest: Department of Family and Community Services – Deborah Kuhn
Burbangana Group: Ken Craig, Sandra Avuri, Kerry Pearse and Jane Grant

PARTICIPANTS WORKSHOP TWO

South West Rocks | 3 December 2018

Aboriginal Community Housing Ltd – Kelly Stronell & Ken McIntosh
Aboriginal Housing Office – Jamie Walker
Centrelink – Jo Sullivan
Community Housing Ltd – Emma Belcher & Rebekah Elsley
Dhungutti Elders Council (Aboriginal Corporation) – Uncle Bob Mumbler
Durri Aboriginal Medical Service – Priscilla Morrison & Sue Wilson
Kempsey LALC – Fred Kelly & Greg Douglas
Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre – Cheryl Davis & Kristy Walker
Many Rivers Regional Aboriginal Housing – Louise Robinson
Mid Coast Communities – Paul Tracey
Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) – Marie Beswick
MNCLHD, Aged Care Kempsey – Brandi Welsh
MNCLHD, Aged Community Service – Dorelle Steel
MNCLHD, Aboriginal Health Service – Stephen McLeod & Clinton Gibbs
Mission Australia Housing – Jocelyn Box
New Horizons, Kempsey Place Plan – Vicki Hunt & Karina Strange
NSW FACS – Deb Kuhn, Gai Southwell & Ruth Lovelock
Uniting Aged Care – Josh Friefeld and Kay Donelley
Guest: NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing – Wendy Morgan
Burbangana Group: Ken Craig, Sandra Avuri, Kerry Pearse & Jane Grant