

# GROWING OLD IN KEMPSEY

Aboriginal people talk about  
their ageing needs



With permission

## SUMMARY

September 2016

# THE PROJECT

The North Coast Ageing Strategy Task Group wants to find out more about the ageing needs of Aboriginal people on the North Coast. For this reason, in 2016 the Task Group decided to fund a small pilot consultation with Aboriginal people living in Kempsey.

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services funded Moreton Consulting Pty Ltd, a small Aboriginal majority owned company, to consult with Aboriginal people in Kempsey on their ageing needs. The people on the project team were Ken Craig, Sandra Avuri and Kerry Pearse.

# WHO WAS INTERVIEWED

A local advisory group of Aboriginal people, mainly from relevant services, was set up to co-design and oversee the consultation. The Advisory Group organised the interviews.

30 Aboriginal people were interviewed across nine locations in the Kempsey district.

In addition, 14 people from 9 services were interviewed.

# KEY MESSAGES FROM INTERVIEWS

**1**

Most people started to feel and identify as old during their 40s through to the mid-50s.

**2**

Most people are living under significant financial pressure.

**3**

Most people are concerned about their health yet seem to be accessing few services.

**4**

Housing is a major concern. Modifications are needed to create healthy homes for older tenants. A number of people also raised the need for urgent repairs and maintenance.

**5**

Lack of transport is a major challenge – particularly for those living in coastal or inland areas.

**6**

One half of participants are raising young family members and they 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.



# KEY MESSAGES FROM THE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group approved the report and are concerned about the findings. In addition they stressed the following points.

## **Out of home care**

The increasing numbers of young children who are being raised by their grandparents or other elderly family members is a real concern. The need for children to be safe is critical. However, little effort goes to providing support to help families to strengthen healthy and positive parenting practices.

Also grandparents and other older family members caring for young children get little financial and other support from services. The health and financial impacts on older people as they age is a great concern.





## **The ageing needs of members of the Stolen Generations**

There is a tragic history of forced removals throughout the Macleay Valley. The Advisory Group understand the whole of life impacts of this trauma on adults who were forcibly removed as children and their families.

The Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation's (KBHAC) is lobbying for a healing centre at South West Rocks. The Advisory Group supports this. It is also important for aged care providers to meet the complex needs of KBH survivors and other elderly members of the Stolen Generations returning to Kempsey, by working in partnership with the KBHAC.

## **Responding to future demand**

The Advisory Group stressed the implications of the demographics of the Kempsey Aboriginal community. There will be real pressure on the aged care and human services systems to meet the needs of older Aboriginal people living in Kempsey in the near future. Something needs to be done about this now.

Moreton Consulting sincerely thanks the people who participated in this project for being honest and willing to talk about the reality of their lives as Aboriginal people. This report is their story.

We pay our respects to the Dhungutti<sup>1</sup> 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.

*<sup>1</sup>Dhungutti spelling as requested by the Dhungutti Elders Council*



***For more information about the project or a copy of the full report contact***

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