

ABORIGINAL CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL



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Government lies to Community Councils over Justice Study

Representatives of the Premier's Department have lied to the Aboriginal Coordinating Council's working group on the Cape York Justice Study Report says members.

Speaking after a meeting last week in Cooktown, the working group in the course of expressing concerns over the future of the ACC was told the Report's proposed Coordination Unit was yet to be established.

Later in the meeting the group was told the existing Coordination Unit would be expanded.

"How is something that doesn't exist going to be expanded?" said members of the working group.

"This so-called consultation process is a farce and has been since day one.

"First we have Judy Spence 'consulting' with communities just five days after the release of the report - long before any hard copies were seen on the Cape.

"And then, three weeks ago Ms Spence held further 'consultations' in the NPA with just a week's notice and which some Councils in the area weren't even aware

were happening.

"No one was asked if and when the meetings should have taken place, the timing and place of the meetings have all been according to her itinerary with the expectation that we will be there.

"If they can't 'consult' us effectively over a meeting time and place how do they expect to properly 'consult' us about our future and the future of our communities?"

Community representatives, Councillors and ACC staff have been meeting on a regular basis since November to formulate the ACC's response to the Justice Report.

Working group members asked how they were supposed to formulate an adequate response firstly in the limited time allowed but also, with what appeared to be an attempt by government representatives to 'cloud' what was going on.

"They seem to be using Cape York communities to get the outcomes they want without any regard for our needs or wishes," said members. **(continued page 2...)**

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Consumer affairs take to communities

Consumer awareness has reached new heights on a number of communities, particularly Old Mapoon and Napranum following a visit from various agencies organised by the ACC. They included the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the Qld Office of Fair Trading, the North Qld Consumer's Association and Cairns Community Legal Service. Pictured are the team visiting Old Mapoon in September last year.

Government lies to Community Councils over Justice Report

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE...)

"Why can't they just speak in plain language and tell us what their intentions are?"

"It makes us ask ourselves if they are here to genuinely help us to fix our problems or if their agenda is set regardless of what we say?"

Information about the Coordination Unit is readily available on the internet (see page 6) but most Councillors across the Cape either do not use the internet or have limited access.

The ACC will discuss the Justice Report at length during the March Full Council Meeting at Yarrabah.

ACC Chair Thomas Hudson said communities had tried to take the Report as seriously as they could in the limited time allowed but were finding it difficult.

"On one hand our futures and the future of our children is at stake," he said.

"On the other hand we have this situation where our people are being told different stories by different people and we have government people flying in and holding meetings whenever it suits them, not us.

"We are being treated disrespectfully and this, along with the issues raised by the Report, will be discussed very seriously and at length at the Yarrabah meeting."

Four individual communities have submitted responses to the Report.

Graduations a start for Operations and Maintenance Pilot Project

Graduation ceremonies are complete for the Operations & Maintenance Pilot Project.

Certificates have been passed on accordingly to the successful students from Kowanyama, Pompokuraaw, Woorabinda, Yarrabah, Hopevale and Wujal Wujal. Five graduates from Woorabinda attended the ACC Full Council Meeting in Townsville last October to receive their certificates from Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Policy Minister Judy Spence.

Ms Spence said she wanted to congratulate the men.

"I'd like to add my congratulations to the five men who have completed their certificates for the operations and maintenance of sewage and water infrastructure," she said.

"It was in October 1998 that I came to an ACC meeting and passed over the first cheque for the program so it's really good for me to



*Kowanyama Graduate
Aaron Teddy*

be able to stand here today and meet some of the students from the program.

"I'm sure that you've now attained skills that very few people in this room have, and in fact, skills that will be transportable throughout your life.

"Please be encouraged to go onto the next level certificate as this is an area that allows good employment not only in your communities but throughout the state."

ACC Chair Thomas Hudson said the students had been taught in a field of "great importance to our communities".

"And that is sewage and water, which boils down to our community's health," he said.

"So these boys are going in the right direction and I hope this is not the end of it, that we can carry on and they can also carry on to doing other great things in the community."

From Peter's Desk



Networking the Nation

The ACC has had discussions with Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) representatives on the Networking the Nation project. The basic aims of the indigenous component of the program include: "to significantly improve internet access for members of Aboriginal communities". The LGAQ has met representatives from Yarrabah and Cherbourg on the proposal and the ACC has written a letter of support for their participation.

Financial Accountability Improvement Program (FAIP)

The Community Councils have recently been advised that for the remainder of this financial year each will be receiving a grant of \$40,000 towards the FAIP activities of the Councils. The ACC, however, has approached DATSIP and said given the current climate of financial problems, there is an urgent need to establish a rapid response unit within the ACC to further assist Community Councils with corporate governance issues.

Meeting with Minister Spence

In late January representatives from the ACC met with DATSIP Minister Judy Spence to discuss a wide range of issues including the Cape York Justice Study Report and the Review of the Community Services Act completed by members of the ACC late last year. On the Review, the Minister advised the ACC she would be setting up a working party on the green paper to look closely at the recommendations. The ACC has sought some additional clarification on the roles, function and purpose of the working party.

ATSIC & the ACC

In early March three members of the ACC Executive met with State Advisory Committee (SAC) members in Mt Isa. During the course of the meeting the ACC and ATSIC agreed to work together on a number of issues of mutual concern including the Community Services Act Review, the retail store transfers and future funding for the ACC's Consumer Awareness Project. The group also agreed to revitalise the Indigenous Leaders Forum.

Focus on Full Council Meeting...

Education blueprint sought for towards the next decade

A discussion of strategic directions, key initiatives and an open forum were the three main areas of discussion generated by Education Queensland's Assistant Director General Marie Roberts at the Full Council Meeting.

Ms Roberts said the directions and initiatives were part of QSE2010 which provided a ten year planning agenda for the department.

She said the agenda was characterised by and about: a new model for helping schools, one that acknowledges and responds to the diversity of the communities in Queensland;

skilling the workforce to strengthen the professionalism of our workforce, particularly those in school-based positions so they are well-trained to deal with the diversity of the communities that they work in;

the curriculum for the future, including a program called The New Basics which looks at the basics required for life and work and it focusses on the knowledge, skills and discourses required for a new future; and,

a focus on quality, maintaining educational leadership and school standards in order to meet the needs of different students for higher levels of education attainment.

"These directions enhance the potential for all Queensland students to become active citizens in a learning society and support the Queensland government's priority of a 'smart state', Ms Roberts said.

"Education Queensland's directions have strategic linkages to the whole-of-government activity including the Ten Year Partnership and the Cape York Partnership Plans.

"These are exciting and challenging times for our schools and the communities that they serve."

Among the achievements today Ms Roberts outlined was a new model of community-based management "that means the community being involved in the selection of principals and teachers".

"As a result of negotiations with the Queensland Teachers Union, a new model of community-based management has been developed for schools that have over 80 per cent of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander enrolments," she said.

"This new model aims to involve greater school community involvement in the decision-making about the recruitment selection of principals and teachers in these schools.

"It's about providing remote schools with high quality leaders and teachers and it's also about ensuring program continuity in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that have been characterised by a high degree of staff turnover in the past."

What Councillors said...

Cr Billy Daniels, New Mapoon

"I found it very useful to hear the views of other councils mainly over education or the lack of education there. But I would like to stress that the teachers should be taught cultural awareness within their curriculum before they come out to communities to teach. They come straight out of uni and without that cultural awareness they stay within their own boundaries and inflict on others and the children do suffer from that learning. I'm an Environmental Health Worker and I got taught to go in and heal the



healer. Instead of the healer going in to heal somebody and not being healed themselves, the same goes for the teacher. They're trying to teach something to indigenous people but they know nothing about indigenous people. They just there for the recognition of their studies and when they leave from there within 18 months we're still left where we started from. It's the same in all the communities, literacy and numeracy are major problems and we can't start living properly again until we fix that one."

Cr Steve Kemp, Woorabinda

"Marie Roberts was talking about the Partners for Success, we haven't actually seen it in Woorabinda but we've talked about it. I was on an executive with



a group that made some suggestions to them on how the curriculum should be run at schools but I just think the kids should be trained up for identified jobs on the community. If the kids are interested then you've got the bums on seats and you can teach literacy and numeracy. Learning more life skills is what it's about, there's a school near us at Moura who have done a deal with forestry. What they've done is a deal with forestry and education and they pay them one day to do the forestry stuff and they go back to school the other four days. So that could work on an Aboriginal community and the advantage the community has is the CDEP which we haven't even looked at yet. We were tossing the idea around of paying kids some CDEP money not just to go back to school but to be doing things around the community. She took some notes and took it on board but the wheels are in already in motion to try something different at Woorabinda."

Focus on Full Council Meeting...

More on what Councillors said...

Cr George Ropeyarn, Injinoo, on Emergency Services Minister Mike Reynolds

“From the Emergency point of view if there’s an evacuation we’re still using battery flares so I just made that clear to him and he said he’s going to try and talk to Steve Bredhauer and his department. His presentation was really useful in regards to the Cape area because my concern is that the SES and coast guard vessels are based in Seisia and the concern there was concern from the other communities that when a rescue was done it should be the local people who go to them but we’ve got a boat there subsidised by the government not being used. And because I made him aware of the Injinoo Custodial Land which also includes the sea country on the western side, I just made him aware that anything there should be dealt with through the land trust or the Injinoo Council. He took that on really well, he said he would do that.”



Cr Peter Guivarra, Old Mapoon, on Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Policy Minister Judy Spence and the auditing process

“Surprisingly the Full Council feels the way I do and that was Judy’s speech was pretty good. We didn’t expect her to come out as positive as she did. I’m not sure she answered my question properly but maybe I should have asked the Auditor General as well. Aboriginal people are just as embarrassed about the number of qualified audits affecting the councils and we are lined up to get everything back on the road again. But my question to the Minister was about who actually goes around to see that those recommendations made by the Audit Office are enacted. There doesn’t seem to be a process there, nobody takes it on. Maybe it’s DATSIP’s job, they have 12 community services officers who go around and help. She didn’t really answer it. If the councils are getting regular visits by these community services officers why aren’t the results better?”



Cr William Gulf, Woorabinda, on Transport & Main Roads Minister Steve Bredhauer

“Actually Mr Bredhauer didn’t give me an answer, he gave me a story that went right around the issue instead of answering me directly. My main concern was our road between Woorabinda and Booralaba which is 40km of dirt road used by the high school students and some local people. A lot of our people use it to go fishing on the Dawson River there. As far as I’m concerned he never gave me an answer. You’ve got little places like Bauhinia Downs, there’s about 10 people there and there’s bitumen through that place,



Rolleston has about 100 people, same thing, Duinga, all these communities all around Woorabinda which has 1500 people. So our children are running the gauntlet every day of the week and it’s only a matter of time, there already has been a number of deaths on the road. Not satisfactory, we’re in the 21st century now aren’t we, but we’ve still got a dirt road.

Cr Eddie Walsh, Palm Island, on Transport & Main Roads Minister Steve Bredhauer

“In general what was said was alright but it still hasn’t solved the problem for Palm and what needs to be done with our roads. We had main roads in there a few years ago to do it but they just grabbed the money and left, they didn’t do it properly. So now they want us to fund it to get the roads done again. I asked the Minister if he had been on our roads lately or on our jetty. We’ve had marine parks out there and they’re not too happy about the dredging system we need for that. He said they’d meet us half way and back us dollar for dollar but we’ve put dollars in before. Main Roads came and they did the roads



but they’ve just deteriorated. There was no upgrades and now they want us to upgrade it but we don’t have anyone out there to show us properly how to upgrade it. At the moment we’ve got potholes everywhere - if you want swimming pools you just drive on our roads in the wet season. I don’t think it was a satisfactory answer, he’s looking at priorities but what are they?”

Focus on Full Council Meeting...

We're talking about Palm Island, our cars are registered and we pay registration so I don't know what he means by priorities."

Cr Peter Yeatman, Yarrabah, on Police & Corrective Services Minister Tony McGrady

"I think Tony did a good presentation, he covered most of the issues which all the DOGIT communities had a great concern about. It was very useful because of a lot the community people from different places expressed their different problems about the QPS within their different communities. In Yarrabah we have four state police and five QATSIP police but my thing was that the rostering system and my deputy wanted to touch on that with the Minister. The system which doesn't meet the needs of the Yarrabah community. I was very pleased to hear him canvass something asap because Yarrabah is a growing community and things happen just like happen in Cairns - sometimes we have very bad accidents or problems - and I just hope that he can get around to the Sergeant to do something with the roster which will be in support of the community. I do appreciate the QATSIP project, it's a necessity and I fully support it and the coordinator. I'd just like to see that sort of project be projected outside of the community where there is a need for extra police or QPS services."



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Cr Peter Wallace, Wujal Wujal, on Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Policy Minister Judy Spence

"I was pretty satisfied with that speech from Judy there, the Minister. One thing I really was happy about was that she said that the government wasn't going to let us go down as a Council. We've been given that assurance and we have confidence with that. We had a community meeting last week to keep them updated and we're going to do that again when we go back home on Monday. We told them that if we can't get any results down here with the government we might have to make some hard decisions but they assured us again



they're not going to let the community go down so that still gives us hope that mainly our staff will still stick by us. We've got good staff from the community and I would hate to see them go, they are very good managers and we can now go back and let them know we've

got that assurance it will all come through. The other thing she said was that they are encouraging councils to make their own laws and govern their own affairs so I was pretty happy with that response also. That is the way to go, to put in long term and short term goals and to own our projects, to govern our own affairs and it's good she said that."

Cr Lloyd Fourmile, Yarrabah, on Education Queensland Assistant Director-General Marie Roberts

"I was suggesting we have to look at alternatives in trying to educate our kids. We've got to find an alternative and we need to develop some multi-purpose buildings where if they want to drop out in year 9 or 10 we've got to try and accommodate that. One of the ways of doing that is to have skill centres where we're looking at a different kind of curriculum where we're looking at trades. My suggestion was that we have to look at alternatives in trying to educate our kids. The kids are our future and what are we



doing? What are the tangible results? So all I'm saying is that we've got to find an alternative and we need to develop some kind of multi-purpose academic building where young people, if they want to drop out, we've got to try and accommodate that. And I think one of the ways of doing that is this multi-purpose skills centre and looking at putting all kinds of trades and ideas into that facility. They were trying to look at Yarrabah as a model for setting up some kind of literacy and numeracy program to try and help the kids. The sort of things Marie was saying was helpful but the problem is that the statistics can tell you one thing but reality tells you another."



Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Policy Minister Judy Spence faces the media at the Full Council Meeting

Focus on Full Council Meeting...

Call for cohesive approach to liquor management on communities

A “cohesive” and “holistic” approach towards solving community alcohol problems were hoped for at a recent joint workshop between the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the Liquor Licensing Commission and a number of other concerned organisations late last year.

The workshop was held in Townsville just days before the launch of Fitzgerald’s Cape York Justice Report Study and one day before the ACC Full Council Meeting in October.

ACC Chair Thomas Hudson said the aims and agenda of the workshop had been compiled “over many months” through community consultations with the Liquor Licensing Commission.

“It’s quite an intensive issue on the government’s agenda about drinking habits in our communities,” he said, during a media conference at the time. “From where I sit the control of alcohol in our communities, local members and leaders have been addressing the problems from many angles for many years.”

He said a cohesive approach, inclusive of all stake holders, was imperative.

“We have to approach it altogether, it’s not just for council’s now it’s for Government and Liquor Licensing and everyone to get in together,” he said.

“We started the morning with key speakers and some of the problems they’ve seen which I think we will be addressing this afternoon when we will come to a stage where we can look at each issue step by step in how we approach it.

“I would hope that we’ll try it altogether, that we’ll try to implement it through everyone concerned - the local police, the local council, liquor licensing - it has to be a holistic approach.

“And it’s absolutely important that the community be a part of the solution because that’s where the problem is and we have to address that.”

He said of primary concern to the

communities were the issues of sly grogging and under-age drinking.

“I suppose we can restrict our canteen and introduce all sorts of by-laws to fix that but I think unless we control the sly grogging we will be going nowhere,” Mr Hudson said.

“In our by-laws we need to address that as well which means reinforcing somehow those by-laws, working with the licensing commission and the local police somehow.

“Our canteens have control, the council’s put in a lot of controls there within the law but outside of that we have no control.”

Kowanyama CEO Bob Sands agreed. “This is causing a lot of problems in our communities in terms of the social structure, and you know we’ve had speakers today talking about how children are suffering and I’m saying that if we’re going to address these things then we’re going to have to first address sly grogging, because that’s where people get their grog after hours,” he said.

“We can ban people from the pubs, we can have by-laws and our local justice system and we have been doing that, a lot of our communities are doing it, but we can’t address this problem in a bigger way.

“We can’t say ‘alright we’re going to close our pubs for a certain amount of time to try and meet these requirements’ because people just go to the sly groggers and get their grog.”

Liquor Licensing Commission Executive Director, Michael Tolhurst said the Commission had developed a program aimed specifically at indigenous communities involving community management plans.

“We’re producing in conjunction with the communities alcohol management plans which relate to things such as the operations of the canteens they have, where in all cases the licenses for the canteens are actually held by the councils,” Mr Tolhurst said.

“We’re in the process of sitting down with Councils and working through perhaps more appropriate licensing arrangements, such things as conditioned on the license such as whether there is takeaway alcohol, hours of consumption.

“Also what we’re in the process of discussing with the communities is a whole range of issues in relation to other support that can be provided by other agencies and we’ve also had some discussions with a range of other agencies.

“The issue really is one of much more coordination in terms of service delivery to provide support to combat some of these alcohol related issues.”

He said it was important to the Commission not to “impose” a solution.

“It’s not an imposed solution, it’s very much a solution that the community desires and wants, the community has been very much a part of developing,” he said.

“I think also the thing is it’s not going to be a quick fix, it’s very much a long term issue but I think forum’s such as these are a great start and certainly they need to be encouraged to maintain the impetus to keep going forward.”



Bob Sands

Focus on Cape York Justice Study...



Queensland Government
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Community Engagement

**INFORMATION
FROM THE
QUEENSLAND
STATE
GOVERNMENT
WEBPAGES**

<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/capeyorkreport.htm>

Cape York Justice Study Report

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<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/capeyork.htm#about>

Cape York Coordination Unit

Role: The role of the Cape York Coordination Unit is to deliver on Government's stated policy commitments, including land tenure outcomes, incorporated in:

* Cape York Partnerships "Finding Common Ground"

* The Cape York Heads of Agreement (CYHOA)

* The property planning component of the Cape York Natural Heritage Trust Plan (CYNHT)

* Cape York Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS).

About the Cape York Coordination Unit

The Cape York Coordination Unit comprises the Property Planning Team and Cape York Partnerships.

The business goals of the unit are to:

* Continue to build the capacity of the Cape York community to engage with the processes of government

* Increase the Government's capacity to respond to the interests of all stakeholder groups for the benefit all the Cape York community

* Create and use effective engagement spaces for all stakeholders with government, and

* Enrich the quality of community life by valuing the diversity for the positive future of Cape York.

The Property Planning Team (consisting of the Tenure Resolution Group and the Property Planning Technical Group)

The Property Planning Team provides support to the Cape York Property Planning Technical Group (CYPPTG) and the newly formed Cape York Heads of Agreement Implementation Group (CYHOAIG). While Property Planning is the main focus of the team, its members also have responsibilities in other areas such as developing Indigenous Land Use Agreements and resolving priority tenure issues on State lands.

The team also provides administrative support to the Cape York Partnerships Project and other State Government projects.

For more information, visit www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/propertyplanning or telephone (07) 4048 1420.

Cape York Partnerships

Cape York Partnerships aims for closer collaboration and co-ordination of government activities by securing State Government Department and Agency participation.

The Cape York Partnerships project brings a new approach to the way government deals with issues impacting on Indigenous communities on the Cape. The project offers the potential to significantly redesign both current public policy and day-to-day service delivery, building on existing work to provide greater opportunities for partnerships with our colleagues across the division and government.

For more information, visit www.capeyorkpartnerships.com (non-Queensland Government link) or telephone (07) 4048 1422.

Responses

The ACC

Aboriginal Coordinating Council MEDIA RELEASE: 13 DECEMBER, 2001

Aboriginal Coordinating Council calls for more time on Justice Report consultations

Elected representatives from nine community councils across Queensland have met today to decide on a strategy for responding to the 'Fitzgerald Inquiry', or Cape York Justice Report.

Of primary concern to Councillors and Chairpersons was that the three month consultation period was insufficient.

Many Councillors expressed their concern and anger over a consultation visit made by Minister Judy Spence just five days after the 500-page report was released into areas where internet access was inconsistent and a hard copy had yet to be seen.

Today's meeting agreed on six courses of action to be taken immediately in regards to the report. They were:

1. The document is to be analysed by both a legal person and an expert in public administration to provide a full opinion as to the implications of the recommendations;
2. A letter seeking an extension of time - to the end of May in 2002 - for this analysis and community discussions to take place. Mr Beattie will be asked for a response to this request by the end of this month.
3. Support will be offered for the submissions thus far received by the ACC from Umagico and Hopevale Community Councils.
4. A committee will be appointed to present the ACC's view to the Premier.
5. The ACC will henceforth stress the need for joint ventures, rather than partnerships.
6. Councils will discuss the document with the communities they represent.

ACC Chairperson Thomas Hudson said the document was legalistic in both terminology and intent and on that basis required close examination which he said "was not possible over a three month period".

"We are about to enter into the wet season making

meetings difficult, if not impossible," he said.

"And added to that, it has been a busy year and I think we are entitled to our Christmas and New Year breaks.

"Plans have already been made and this has been sprung upon us on very short notice.

"And it simply isn't good enough to expect communities to come on board with something most of them have barely had the chance to read, let alone understand the full implications and provide a full response."

He said while Mr Beattie's determination to solve the problems of the Cape was admirable, the changes he was proposing had long term implications for governance on the Cape.

"And this is not something he or anyone else should be rushing into without the full consent of the communities involved - and he knows that, his media statements and interviews with the press have been littered with inconsistency.

"On one hand he says this is a process that needs to be owned by the communities themselves and on the other hand he is setting impossible deadlines for our people to adhere to.

"We simply must have that time to take this to our people properly and allow them full consideration of what is being proposed."

He said without the support and understanding of the communities themselves any application of the recommendations of the report simply wouldn't work.

The Aboriginal Coordinating Council is the peak representative body for the

Deeds of Grant in Trust (former mission and reserve) communities across the Cape as well as those in other areas of Queensland.

The majority of communities in Cape York are DOGIT communities.

Quotes from Deputy Chair Alf Lacey who hosted a media conference on November 20, 2001.

"The issues that have been raised have been raised in previous reports and I think when the government gets its head around making sure that those reports are addressed then we can see light at the end of the tunnel.

"It just changes hands from one supplier to the next supplier, certainly if governments feel comfortable that they can do a better job than the

councils then governments need to enhance government funding to these communities.

"We've been sitting on a freeze for the last 20 years with no increase to our annual budget from state government, it's been on that freeze for the last 20 years that's left our councils with no option but to raise revenue through enterprise.



Alf Lacey

Focus on Cape York Justice Study...

Responses

ATSIAB

Media Statement: Dr. Robert Anderson, Chairperson Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Advisory Board

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP DEMONSTRATED IN THE NORTH

Indigenous leadership has been demonstrated in Queensland by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board who convened a three day workshop to formulate policy and strategies to address family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lives.

The past week has raised yet again the level of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a result of investigation undertaken by Justice Tony Fitzgerald. The report commissioned by the State Government was based on the prevalence of violence in Indigenous communities located in Cape York and was said to result from extensive consultation with Indigenous peoples themselves located in the Cape region, enabling Justice Fitzgerald to present a report that has been hailed as a piece of inspired politics on behalf of Mr Beattie, who commissioned the report as it used the hugely respected Fitzgerald to examine the problem of violence with a kind of independent respectability.

On inspection of the report tabled by Fitzgerald, one would be forgiven for experiencing some degree of déjà vu as only two years ago a report was tabled that was so comprehensive in its examination and exposure of violence in Indigenous communities, that it was hailed as history breaking. The Report, "The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force Report on Violence" prepared by 50 Indigenous women, working with their men in communities, was tabled in Parliament in December 1999 and contained 300 recommendations for change. Consultation for the report was extensive and inclusive of Indigenous men, women and youth and non-Indigenous service providers and examined all aspects of violence and associated issues such as economic development, health, policies, education, youth, law and justice and many other contributing factors in an effort to address the degree of violence in Indigenous communities regardless of whether they were urban, rural or remotely based.

The Premier at the time of the launch of the Report and in the Government's response in 2000 indicated that the Report would be seen as a blue print for change in this state and committed his government to working with the Task Force to ensure that the 300 odd recommendations would be addressed. Some 2 years later, with few of the recommendations of the Task Force report addressed, Mr Beattie in his wisdom commissioned Mr Fitzgerald to examine the degree of violence in Cape York, resulting in the Cape York Justice Report or the Fitzgerald report as it will no doubt be titled which was tabled this week in Parliament.

The report oddly enough was so similar to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force Report on Violence and other reports prepared by Indigenous Australians such as that of the Liquor Licensing Commission, that one would be forgiven for believing that it was simply a result of a political strategy designed to yet again undermine the contributions of Indigenous peoples in trying to solve the problems in their own communities.

It could also be forgiven for believing that the Indigenous peoples in Queensland have been too complacent since the tabling of the Fitzgerald report as many non Indigenous forums would have been extremely vocal in their condemnation should they have been put in a similar situation.

Surely one of the most prominent aspects of the Governments commitment to helping to deal with the violence in Indigenous communities would be to support their empowerment and to work collaboratively with them to identify the source of the violence and propose sustainable and workable solutions for change. Such solutions would need to be both short and long term, community based and accomplishable by communities and service providers who would be mandated to deal with the violence and its consequences. The Task Force Report, working with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women in communities, young and Elders, accomplished just that.

In the text of the Taskforce report and in the numerous recommendations that were made, the emphasis was on collaboration with Governments, service providers, men and women working together to address the violence in a co-ordinated and integrated approach. The consultations from the Task Force gave a resounding message to Governments of all persuasion and service providers, that there was no need for more enquiries as the answers were already known and that the situation in some communities, was so critical, that there was no time to waste with more enquiries and empty commitments and promises. The degree of murder, rape and crime, youth suicide and poverty was reported to be of such a degree that it was a national disgrace, with some communities not only stressed but also imploding.

It was said that the degree of violence had both historical and contemporary sources with many families and communities experiencing consequences that were now generational and demonstrative of a situation that was not only a critical but like a war zone. The Report while prepared by the Taskforce, had the input and support of Indigenous men, s groups, the Aboriginal Co-ordinating

Focus on Cape York Justice Study...

Responses

ATSIAB

(continued from previous page)

Council, a number of Community Councils, Youth groups, Elders and organizations such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service and QEA Aboriginal Legal Service. Following its tabling it was given endorsement and support by ATSIC and has been used to form the basis of many initiatives to amend outdated legislation, to appoint Indigenous Liquor Licensing Officers across the state and has helped to direct numerous State and Commonwealth Round Tables to address the issue of Family Violence and victim and perpetrator issues. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board to Government has been mandated with the responsibility of monitoring Government response to the Task Force report culminating this week in a three-day workshop.

Ironically and shamelessly, Peter Charlton reported earlier this week that the use of Fitzgerald for the latest report has helped to examine the problem of violence and give it a kind of independent respectability. This statement not only makes mockery of the courageous efforts of all the Indigenous Australians who gave their time, energy and sometimes safety, to prepare the comprehensive Task Force Report, but it also begs a response to a number of vital questions.

Is a report prepared by Indigenous Australians about issues within their own communities, not deemed to be respectable as alluded to by Peter Charlton in his article 21.11.01? This question is even more serious given that the Task Force Report was hailed by government representatives in numerous media releases and in public statements and also by the media itself, as historic and perhaps one of the most exposive and comprehensive reports tabled for a long time.

Could the commissioning of another report on violence in Indigenous communities so close to that which was tabled 2 years ago, be seen as nothing other than a squandering of public funds and reminiscent of the paternalistic practices of government toward Indigenous Australians as reported quite frankly in the Task Force Report?

Is the latest report an example of what Government do when they are at a loss as to what to do with a particular crisis, a situation so poignantly discussed in the Task Force report?

For too long the broader non-Indigenous communities have looked to Indigenous peoples living in these war zones and questioned their lack of activity to try and eradicate it from their lives. For too long it has been considered that Indigenous Australians need to demonstrate more responsibility in trying to deal with their own issues and for too long, non Indigenous Australians have been allowed to believe that violence and all of the associated issues are acceptable to Indigenous Austral-

ians, when there are many who have worked tirelessly and collectively to eradicate it from their lives.

Why is it that content of the latest Fitzgerald report was reflective of the text and recommendations of Reports prepared by Indigenous Australians in the past and yet little if any reference is made to them in the citations of the report?

What does the Fitzgerald report mean in terms of the Governments ongoing commitment to the Task Force Report?

On the basis of what has transpired over the past week Indigenous people throughout Queensland have every right to be cynical. If there is an inspired political process in all that has transpired, it would be from the many Indigenous men and women who came forward and courageously gave their stories in a hope that they would at last be able to work with Governments, to bring about the much needed change in the level of violence and the cause and consequences in their lives. For it is those people who have provided all Queenslanders with the greatest hope that something is finally being done about the issues that have been raised.

If anyone is heroic in the entire process it is the Indigenous women who in 1999, risked a great deal to help expose the level of violence, crime and sexual abuse in their lives and to work with men to provide solutions as a way forward.

If there is an independent respectability in the process, it would be from the Indigenous people themselves who did not apportion blame but accepted the need for communities and governments to work collaboratively in the spirit of unity and reconciliation to address the crime and violence.

If the quest for self determination is said to be stifled by the current levels of violence in Indigenous communities, it is difficult to understand, the level of paternalism that has been demonstrated by Mr Beattie in what appears to be a blatant disregard for the efforts of

Indigenous peoples to work toward their own solutions in partnership with Government to address such a serious concern.

Finally if a demonstration of leadership is deemed to be obvious in this process, it should be for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board who facilitated a three-day workshop this week to address the State Governments response to the Task Force Report under a process of demeaning politics. Together with over 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland, the Advisory Board is working strategically to ensure that they continue to place pressure on Government to progress the Task Force report and in so doing has helped to maintain a sense of optimism amongst Indigenous people who would be forgiven if they were pessimistic about what has transpired.

Developing community leadership main focus of Weipa conference

Long term strategies for developing leadership in Aboriginal communities from within Aboriginal communities have been on Bruce Gibson's mind for sometime now.

Mr Gibson grew up and has worked across many of the communities of Cape York in various capacities, including Chair of the Injino Land Trust and, most recently as the organiser for an Indigenous Leadership Conference held in Weipa late last year.

A clearer picture of where the gaps and challenges are to community-driven leadership on Cape York was developed by the Conference which aimed to identify models for community leadership and then how these can best work with mainstream, regional, state and commonwealth agencies.

Youth, elders, community Councillors and community people from more than 10 communities across the Cape worked through a process of identifying vehicles for leadership such as community councils, youth groups, justice groups and enterprise bodies which were then matched with challenges, visions and responsibilities.

The forum was then able to clearly identify areas where support for community-based leadership was required.

"The gaps that were identified by the Conference were within both the community itself and the support groups around the community," Mr Gibson said.

"Even though the councils are set up to provide essential services and they have a support structure in place through the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, they are overloaded with a range of additional issues including social issues."

Mr Gibson is adamant that "community people themselves know what the solutions are".

"There's two different patterns of leadership in communities, the western way and the cultural way," he said.

"Councils are a western style and the community looks at them in a cultural way and that's where the breakdown is.

"Councils have to adapt to the western style to 'succeed' with the government and other departments they are dealing with but the community see that western style as being not involved with them.

"Therefore the councils are not accessing those community-generated solutions because they are alienated from the whole process.

"In order to develop, the community must go forward as one.

"By making sure all the communities have at least the most basic, community-driven structures and services you can see a chance for change primarily through empowerment in order to carry the community forward.



Youth, elders and Councillors from 11 communities attended the Indigenous Leadership Conference in Weipa

"At the moment I think our communities are going forward very slowly and who knows what could happen if we look at the community from a different perspective, we could go forward much faster and create for ourselves a better lifestyle."

He said the Conference tried to look at the two styles of leadership on communities and search for models which allowed the nurturing of both.

"And we think we've done that, or at least taken the first step," he said.

A working group of six, four of whom are under-23, has been formed to progress the outcomes of the Conference. They are: Leonie Ishmail (New Mapoon), Bruce Gibson (Hopevale), Brendan Brown (Old Mapoon), Barbara Norman (Pompuraaw), Elijah Bosun (Lockhart River) and George Kulka (Wujal Wujal).

Brendan Brown, 18, said the Conference had given him "lots of ideas".

"Out of this I seem to be understanding a bit more about being a leader and what leadership means, like how they are expected to work with people, meeting together and doing something to make it better for everyone," he said.

Mr Gibson said it was not necessarily about people working in partnership with government nor was it a short term or quick fix solution.

"This is about the community themselves bringing together the best talent they've got into groups, such as women's, men's or land groups, and giving them direction and purpose for leading their communities into the future," he said.



*Conference Facilitator
Bruce Gibson*

Focus on ACC Staff Projects...

Focus on Housing Officer Training by Ramon Davis



For several years the ACC has been working within a Commonwealth / State Social Housing Skills Development Strategy to make vocation training available for our Community Housing Officers.

This housing training is nationally accredited and is included with a range of other qualifications within the Community Services Training Package. Both Certificate III and Certificate IV courses are being offered and the ACC has been working with Community Councils and registered training organisations to develop course arrangements and encourage community enrolments.

The ACC has especially forged a strong working relationship with Cairns Tropical North TAFE and has negotiated the inclusion of ACC training resource material into its courses. This includes elective subjects in relation to the ACC's computerised Housing Management System (HMS), now installed on 13

communities. Council interest and support for the housing officer training has been strong.

The ACC congratulates all those students who took up the training opportunity during 2001. Their efforts may be listed as follows:

* Nine students graduated in the Certificate III Course while a further nine are continuing studies during 2002.

Graduates included: Greg Duncan (Cherbourg); Janine Yeatman (Yarrabah), Carol Toby (Wujal), Lynnette Liddie (Cooktown), Damien Harrigan (Cooktown), Norman Sailor (New Mapoon), Eirela Miskin (Napranum), Lillian Owens (Normanton) and Enid Namok (Injinoo).

* Four students graduated in the Certificate IV Course while a further two are continuing studies during 2002.

Graduates included: Ernastine Yeatman (Yarrabah), Angela Gutchon (Laura), Collina Reuben (Umagico) and

Maria Guivarra (Mapoon).

ACC Officers have recently been contacting all Community Councils and Affiliated Housing Organisations in preparation for the 2002 student intake. We have identified 23 students for the Certificate III course and a further eight students for the Certificate IV course. This is an excellent response.

All students will be workplace assessed by TAFE trainers to determine credits for prior learning and to decide the most suitable method of training delivery which includes workplace training, correspondence and residential workshops in Cairns.

We wish all students success in their studies and their efforts will no doubt go a long way towards the provision of truly professional housing services to our communities.

Which way? success ongoing

Cape York communities have six youth councils up and running with a seventh in the process of forming, says Aboriginal Coordinating Council Which Way You Mob project coordinator Wendy Wust.

Ms Wust said the Which Way You Mob project had supported the formation of the councils through workshops but the decision to get them up and running lay with the communities themselves. "It's getting there and it's a slow process but it's starting now," she said.

"Everybody is talking about 'Which Way' and what it is on about in the community.

"Before that it was a scary name, something about far north and youth suicide, but we got the youth themselves together last year and came up with some names.

"The name now says to the kids, okay you mob which you gonna go? - down the road of self-destruction or into good things."

The Which Way You Mob youth program provides funding and resources for youth in communities for school holiday programs and other longer term projects.

The six youth councils or groups now in action are on Hopevale, Yarrabah, Palm Island, Doomadgee, Kowanyama and the Northern Peninsula Area with Pompuuraaw hoping to form one soon.

"Kowanyama is the most recent with 13-year-olds to 21-year-



olds and three in high school and three working," she said.

"There's an activity grant of \$6,000 which is only for school holidays or there is a special purpose grant which can be up to \$20,000 for an emergency or crisis response if something is needed straight away or if there's something long term that communities need to set up we can help them," Ms Wust said.

"For example Kowanyama has \$26,000 for developing an outstation

to take young people who are in trouble with the law and have community orders, they go out to live with the elders out in the bush for the whole wet period of six months.

"It's a very good outstation, it's like a cattle station so it's well set up and a lot of thought has gone into that.

"It's been community driven, thought out by the council, the justice group and police as well as the young people themselves." She said the project was about planting ideas and providing resources where they were needed but ultimately it was up to the community to form the ideas and work together on projects.

"The Youth groups and councils are community-owned and community-driven and the onus is back to the community," she said.

"They live it, they see it, they do it, it's got to be up to them."

Focus on ACC Staff Projects...

Fuel pricing and phone services potentially on track after consumer awareness visit

A visit from representatives of various consumer watch dog organisations has consolidated much of what has been spoken about in workshops says Mapoon Consumer Relations Officer Ailsa Ling.

Ms Ling was present for a meeting with the Mapoon Councillors between former ACC Consumer Awareness Officer Andrew Lewis, ACCC Commissioner David Cousins, North Qld Consumer's Association head Ken Kipping and various other interested groups including representatives from the Qld Office of Fair Trading.

Mapoon Chair Peter Guivarra said he also found the meeting to be useful and raised some important issues that affected day to day life on a remote community.

"I thought it was very good, there was a couple of things I didn't know about and if those fellas can help us with things like fuel pricing, as we talked about, then maybe we can get cheaper fuel prices and that's very important," he said. "There was also a telephone issue and it seems like we've been put on the right track there to getting quicker and prompter service.

"As for the car issue, I know with the video if people are prepared to watch it before they buy a car that's going to be helpful."

Napranum CEO Ross Andrews agreed.

"I think it was informative, what they had to say about assisting indigenous communities in Cape York with the proactiveness about the areas of consumer awareness," he said.

"In terms of their jurisdiction and their powers to investigate complaints it was useful but I also think the ACC and the Office of Fair Trading have probably got a lot of work to do in Aboriginal communities in terms of making people aware

of scams.

"I think it's a moral and ethical to instil into our people and also to the wider community, a lot of our mob will put pen to paper but not really know what they are signing.

"Our mob has been ripped off for years and as long as we know there are watchdogs out there who can protect us from these operators then we have a chance.

"Every little cent adds up, the issues are similar except for the remoteness and the isolation of being up here and contending with other issues such as electronic banking, freight charges and the cost of basic essentials."

ACCC Commissioner David Cousins said he also found the visits to both Napranum and Mapoon to be "a very useful exercise".

"Useful to get the various agencies together to present a bit of a united front and also to see some of the issues that are around in these communities and perhaps those issues are more readily dealt with when you've got a joint agency approach," he said.

"Having the joint agencies I think is very important for us so this was a useful two days in terms of building relationships with these other agencies and also making the communities aware of our presence which I think is probably the most valuable part of it from the ACCC's point of view.

"It's about letting people know that we are as concerned about rural and remote regions as we are capital cities.

"We had a number of issues raised with us mainly to do with selling practices but also advertising and promotion and there were a number of issues raised there by the communities which are quite familiar to us in other parts of Australia."

Andrew Lewis has left the ACC to be with family in South Australia.

Place of many waters promotes life

The Mass Media Tools Project has completed filming on both Kowanyama and Palm Island with the Northern Peninsula Area next on the agenda as communities continue to make their own videos in their own way aimed at saving the lives of their young people, says Project Coordinator Aaron Davis.

Mr Davis now has a number of videos and projects on the burn as he gets out to as many communities as he can to keep the fires fanned.

"The Mass Media Tools Project is going fantastic," he said.

"We've also been working in

partnership with Queensland Health to create a video called 'Taking Big Steps' which is about the transition kids go through between going to school in the community and then coming down to Cairns or Townsville and having to go to boarding school."

Mr Davis said the launch for 'Taking Big Steps' would take place late in March in conjunction with Queensland Health.

"And at the moment I'm also producing a promotional video for the ACC which will be used to show people on the communities," he said.



New ACC Staff: Carmen Daniels, Website Administrator - Which Way Youth Project and Nik Lachajczak, Cameraman/Editor - Mass Media Tools Project

Focus on Lockhart River Carnival..



Rugby League Results

Under 12:

Best Back: Christopher Johnson
Best Forward: Alistair Bowie
Man of the Match: Tony Hobson

Under 16:

Best Back: Steven Nona
Best Forward: Akitau Salee
Man of the Match: Mia Baira
Player of the Carnival: Grayson Gunnarra

Senior:

Semi Finals:

Injinoo Crocs 16 def Weipa Raiders 6
Alua Eagles (Umagico) 26 def Lockhart Scorpions 10
Third Place equal points between Weipa Raiders & Lockhart Scorpions

Final:

Injinoo Crocs 53 def Alua Eagles 38
Best Back: Jason Nixon (Weipa Raiders)
Best Forward: Connie Young (Alua Eagles)
Rookie of the Carnival: Robbie Wilson (Alua Eagles)
Man of the Match: Jeffrey Tugai (Injinoo Crocs)
Player of the Carnival: Wilfred Namai (Injinoo Crocs)



More from the Lockhart River Sports Carnival...



Softball Results

Softball Shield Under 16:
Coen Connection def
Lockhart Rebels
Best Pitcher: Jasmine Accoom
Best Batter: Magella Peter
Best Catcher: Jenny Creek

Senior Shield: Lockhart Pythons 17 def Coen Falcons 16
Best Pitcher: Tanya (Lockhart Pythons)
Best Batter: Latonya Creek
Best Catcher: Karen Liddy
Player of the Final: Natasha Accoom
Player of the Carnival: Lucretia Creek

Roads working for communities

The new Big Annan River Bridge was officially opened and renamed by Transport & Main Roads Minister Steve Bredhauer in October adding to a long list of developments and investments in road infrastructure throughout the ACC DOGIT community areas.

The new bridge over the Annan River was named the Yuku Baju - Big Annan Bridge in to recognise the traditional owners, the Yalanji.

Mr Bredhauer said more than \$178 million would be spent on road works in far north Queensland over the next two years.

On the Peninsula Developmental Road, two more projects will improve local access during the coming wet season.

"The re-sheeting of sections totalling 11km, between the Bamaga turn-off and the Aurukun turn-off, is now completed," Mr Bredhauer said.

"At Bourne Creek, between Coen and Archer River, the new floodway is in the final stages. This will make a big difference in improved accessibility by preventing a build-up of sand at this spot.

"As well as tackling trouble-spots and individual projects there will, of course, be ongoing maintenance along the Peninsula Developmental Road."

Mr Bredhauer said other key projects planned in Far North Queensland in 2001-02 to 2002-03, the first two years of the five-year program, included:

* \$27.7 million of Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding, mostly to assist remote communities in the Cape and Torres Strait. The funding helps councils to upgrade their local roads and includes 100 per cent subsidies for remote indigenous communities. This includes funding of \$1.7 million over two years for Main Roads' Remote Communities Services Unit (RCSU), which provides training in road maintenance and construction for Aboriginal and Islander communities in the Torres Strait and on the Cape.

* \$8 million to continue sealing the Cooktown Developmental Road - Bitumen sealing the full length of the road remains on target for completion by the end of 2005. Main Roads

expects to call tenders for the next project in early 2002, with construction to begin after the wet.

* \$6 million to improve conditions on the Peninsula Developmental Road between Lakeland and Weipa - Over two years substantial work will be done to upgrade low formations and carry out gravel re-sheeting as well as ongoing routine maintenance. Funding was also provided to complete the upgrade of a floodway at Bourne Creek, about 40 km north of Coen.

* A total of \$516,305 has been provided for several projects on the Bloomfield Road in Cook Shire. Most of the projects will probably get underway after the wet season. They include paving and sealing of sections of the Bloomfield Road, near Rossville, and projects to improve safety on school bus routes by upgrading the road's formation between Ayton Primary School and Wujal Wujal and upgrading both its formation and alignment between Wujal Wujal and Bloomfield School. Further work will be carried out between Ayton Primary School and Wujal Wujal in the following year, with an extra \$50,000 allocated.

* On the section of the Bloomfield Road within the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Community Council, \$165,581 has been allocated over two years to upgrade the road's formation south of the causeway. Work will begin after the wet season in 2002. Funding of \$18,550 is also allocated for repairs and maintenance to the causeway after the next wet season, as needed. Upgrade formation south of the causeway.

Key projects in North West Queensland in 2001-02 and 2002-03, the first two years of a five-year program, included:

* In the Doomadgee community, a total of \$615,807 will be spent over the next two years on the Old Doomadgee Road and Wollogorang Road. In addition, \$166,299 will be spent on sealing town streets.

* The Kowanyama Aboriginal Community Council will receive \$400,000 in 2001-02. In the Mornington community, \$382,000 will be spent over the next two years forming and sealing the Gununa cemetery road and \$218,000 will be allocated to forming and gravelling the Ballaleah Road.

Murrandoo visit to ACC Office



Pictured (L-R) are Which Way Coordinator Lloyd Fourmile, Rod Burke, ATSIC Commissioner Murrandoo Yanner and ACC Executive Director Peter Opio-Otim



Title to more than 354,000 hectares was granted to nine representatives of clan groups (pictured above) making up the Mankuma and Pul Pul Land Trusts and making it the largest freehold title grant to Aboriginal people in Queensland's history. - cause to celebrate!

Lockhart River Land Hand Back - October 2001



October/ Townsville Full Council Meeting Pics....



In November last year rugby league legend Artie Beetson made it all the way to Injinoo and New Mapoon as part of Sport & Recreation's 'Thanks Coach, Thanks Ref' campaign. He is pictured here with Injinoo Council members.



Darren's a Dad!



ACC staff member Darren Miller & his wife Debra are the proud new parents of Jabin Dalbamdji Miller (above)

