

DAUGHTERS OF THE DREAMING

Monday 22nd October 2001 - Tuesday 23 October 2001

WORAWA ABORIGINAL COLLEGE

DAUGHTERS OF THE DREAMING

Leanne Miller, Chairperson Koorie Women Mean Business

On behalf of the Board of Koorie Women Mean Business I would like to welcome you to Daughters of the Dreaming. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this region.

This forum has been designed on the survey responses that Aretha Briggs provided you with at Worawa Aboriginal College. (attachment A) Worawa Aboriginal College approached KWMB to assist in the facilitation of this program.

We have tried to cover the issues that you said you wanted and needed to know, along with more information about some topic areas. We intend to focus on the legal points raised in your responses and also discuss career paths. Also included are a few outdoor activities that we thought you might like to take the opportunity to try whilst you are here.

Hopefully you will be able to use the information and resources to help out in the future.

I would like to briefly get an introduction from everyone in the room I ask that you introduce yourself and name 3 values that you operate with.

After which we will begin the day with a welcome to country via technology in the Dreaming Theatre.

SESSION ONE – GIRLS OWN

LM: In response to your survey results we have divided our legal session into two joining us today is **Allyson foster, Community Legal Education worker, Womens Legal Service Vic.,**

AF: Acknowledge the traditional owners and briefly described that we will have two sessions, the first session focuses on a publication and the second session is on the legal system and information about the law.

The Women's Legal Service is about to release their next edition of Girls Own this is a book that focuses at the specific issues of young women. We have provided you with a photocopy of parts of the current Girls Own, which you can take with you to browse through. There area a few questions to think over while your browsing through the book.

In the 4th edition we are proposing to expand the page for young Aboriginal girls we ant to know what you would like to include, what messages you want to send to young girls? what pictures do you think should be on your page? do you want to draw some. What do you like? What do you dislike? What's missing? I would like to open up discussions on this.

Discussion focussed on the contents page and information which should be included in the section which should cover issues such as discrimination, court systems, teen pregnancy, who are service providers and which one is user friendly for Aboriginal girls.

The opportunity for the girls to contribute sparked a brainstorm on design and language. The information that will be made available will be based on what the girls have identified.

Some messages that were clear for example "it was very hard for them to access in the mainstream community services," "It is difficult to obtain resource materials and information concerning the law and teenage girls." Also that most information that the girls have found easy to access is aimed at teenage situations and not preventative measures. They also commented that the materials they had seen did not read like it is written and designed with the audience in mind.

The group workshopped girls own quiz and contents of the book (see attachment b) and drafted a page addition. (see attachment c)

The girls agreed to provide feedback to Aretha or directly to Alison.

LUNCH

SESSION TWO - Bike Trail activity with Grampians Adventure....objective was to focus the girls, team work, and task accomplishment.

Session Brief : Dot May, Project Worker, KWMB

We arrived at Brambuk Adventurers shop to be met by Matt. Who was going to be our Tour guide/Torture Master for the next 2 Hours. There was a lot of laughing happening before we left the shop it was mainly over watching everyone get their bikes and helmets as a lot of measuring was going on (the bikes have to be a certain size). A few of us had a bit of a practice run around the front of the shop.

For the first 10 minutes we road on the flat tar road surface the girls said that the going was easy. They had to keep stopping to wait for us poor folk at the back. The girls did a lot of laughing at me but they also provided me with a lot encouragement and inspiration to keep me going for the whole of the bike trip.

Then when the ten minutes was up it was all up hill, tar and gravel - this was a shock. The going very tough in some spots we had to get off our bikes and push them over obstacles on the track. Again there was a lot of puffing, laughing and smiling going on.

Finally after what seemed like ages we arrived at the most beautiful water fall imaginable. It was 26 degrees the sight of the cool gushing water soon found everyone soaking their heads and drinking the crystal clear fresh water of the falls.

Matt had taken us on this track because in the days prior there had been heavy rain and he knew that the falls would be in full force. He commented that it was the best that he had seen all year.

As we sat and recovered from our up hill journey, Matt answered the girl's questions about the area and the problems in the bush. As we were sitting there a feral pig ran through the bush creating a disturbance.

Some of the questions were "What kind of damage do the feral goats do", "What is the government doing about land care in the area?" "Are there problems with keeping young people in the area?" and "how long will it take the bush to regenerate". The girls were very interested in getting information on the bushland and waterways around Australia. Matt was knowledgeable on the Grampians and gave the girls precise answers to their questions. If he did not have the information he told them whom in town they could ask.

By the time we left the falls and started our much quicker descent we were all a happy laughing bunch of women. Laughter was heard for hours afterwards. Most of us even felt refreshed and invigorated by the time we cruised down the hill. We all had a very enjoyable time and that was a surprise to everyone. One of the things that stood out for me about the whole ride was that the girls surprised themselves by being much more capable than they had at first thought. Everyone was surprised that we had had such a good time and that we were not completely exhausted.

SESSION THREE : GIRLS RIGHTS - Allyson Foster, Community Legal Education, Womens Legal Service Vic., and Leanne Miller, Indigenous Womens Legal Project

Leanne and Alison provided an overview of the legal system, the types of Law's that affect our lives and the court systems they then posed three questions. If you were going to create a law what would it be! What Law don't you like and Why? And What do you think there should be a law against ?

There was a discussion about the way that discrimination plays a big part in the day to day of the girl's lives. The girls were totally surprised to learn that some of the incidents they brought up were cases of discrimination.

Alison and Leanne were able to provide the girls with information on their rights what is discrimination and what is not. The participants were eager to know about the processes of complaints. It also became apparent that they had no idea of what discrimination is and what people are allowed to do and what they are not.

When they were told that they do not have to put up with this behaviour was amazing. The girls had so many questions about how this kind of thing can be stopped and wanted to know all the processes of complaint. The girls are worried about what sort of life the next generation is going to have to inherit.

Questions like "will my children have to put up with the same kind of discrimination and racism" and "What is there that we as young koorie women can do to ensure that our children don't have to have the same problems that we are facing"?

The overall feeling was that the mainstream system does not do any thing to help and only creates more problems.

Some of the problems that these girls are facing could be alleviated if there was education about the law and about how to access the law as a service to them.

The process of complaints was also something that the girls thought they needed information to be made available to them so that they can access for themselves or family members.

It became apparent that in their eyes and going on the experiences that they have had, there is no hope, equity or justice available to them in dealing with the police or court systems.

The girls stated “that they felt they had no voice, no comeback, no say, with people in authority” even in their own communities. The girls also stated “that they thought that the people in authority are not open to them and their needs.”

Leanne gave a brief overview of a proposed circle sentencing trials which are currently in other states and how the systems operate. The circle sentencing came about as part of the recommendations of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody, where it was identified that some people were being punished more than once for the one crime in the top half of the country. For some the punishment was physical in line with tradition. In recent times there has been support for the formation of sentencing circles where for example we have a judge, police rep. family elders, community legal worker, and high profile peers. They prescribe and monitor your punishment which should fit the crime. There is no need to have the incident go before a court of Australian Law. This is currently being trailed for petty crime and juvenile offences. How do you feel about that practice?

The girls were receptive to the concept and said that this would weigh much more on them as individuals and their behaviour. It is an interesting alternate to what is currently in operation they viewed it as a joke. There is no real incentive to not repeat an offence as the sentence is petty and does not deter in some instances. They drafted and discussed how it would be appropriate and where they aligned it with the college. (see attachment d)

The informality of the venue and the relaxed atmosphere allowed some of the girls to ask questions about their rights under issues of family law, child abuse and sexual abuse.

SESSION FOUR: NATURE WALK: BRAMBUK CULTURAL CENTRE

This activity was a nice way to wind down day one. The girls were in a group with three of the guides from Brambuk Cultural Centre. They were taken for a walk around the grounds of the centre they discussed the plants, their uses for medicine or as food. The girls were also given the opportunity to talk with the guides and ask whatever questions they wanted.

The girls feedback was that it was very informative and that it was nice to hear about other community cultures apart from their own. Some added that they learned something that they did not know before about the culture of the Gariwerd region.

DAY TWO

SESSION ONE : ABSAILING – goal setting, self-accomplishment and risk.

Brief: Dot May, Project Worker, Koorie Women Mean Business

We met outside the backpackers. Everyone was excited and scared at the same time. Glen arrived to take us to get our ropes and safety gear we were provided with the fundamentals of do's and don'ts for first time climbers. We trekked through the bush to the rocks with scattered showers overhanging. Looking up the overhang didn't look too high but it was a different story looking down from the top.

Some of the girls gathered their courage and ambled over the edge and down to the bottom. Glen was very good and very patient with everyone. Whilst they received at least one turn and some lined up for a couple more. There was no pressure to decide to do the abseiling. They were given a choice. Their questions were around the healthy aspects to this as a sport and what the benefits are in applying the principles to choices we make!!

Afterwards the discussions were all very positive about not being able to think they could get down, the feeling of achievement having done the abseiling, and pleased to get the opportunity to be able to try something so different.

SESSION TWO: REVISION DAY ONE

Leanne and Aretha facilitated revision of day one.

SESSION TWO: Gina Edwards, Indigenous Apprenticeship Advisor, Ariginisle Training Company

Ariginisle is a private company that is funded by the Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs.

I have been in my role for three years as an Indigenous apprenticeship advisor. I work with registered training organisations, TAFE, ACFE, and neighbourhood houses. I also provide cultural advice on training programs and with group training companies in relation to apprentices or trainees. I provide employees with a list of Aboriginal consultants. I am based in Melbourne and cover the state and Tasmania. A lot of the work is advisory developing registered training programs from new apprenticeship centres.

Ariginisle focus support provided after you are registered at Centrelink there are different types of apprenticeships some can be modified to suit individual's needs

New apprenticeship field officers ask when they sign up new apprentices if they the apprentice is Aboriginal. On my visits I ask do you sign up Koories? They react with no I don't think so, I say are you sure because I am one. The question is framed as do you identify and they can tick the box.

I advise new apprentice field officers of the employer programs available to assist such as Indigenous Employment Program, wage assistance program which pay's employee's \$4,400 to use for trainee equipment or to top up the wages, or provide training assistance.

I liaise with lots of job network members, employment agencies that do find work for Aboriginal people. We work for [Diversity@work](#) (pamphlet available) they are funded to assist people getting resumes together dealing with employers across the field directly, and to getting people into different fields. Traineeships target 15-24 year olds it is hard to get Koorie people to apply. They do pre screen on employees interview tips, referral to employees take support person to interview.

Careers teachers at schools have assisted in developing school based apprenticeships in some regional areas, this where an apprentice can be at school 3 days and on the job 2 days. Tutorial assistance is provided under ATAS. Also we ensure that the training is accredited and nationally applicable. Ensure employers can provide the trainee with 4-6 hours top undertake study.

Discussions were on how to get an apprenticeship once leaving school what support is on offer and .