

Ian Sweeney and Michael Klerck

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Hon Margaret White AO and Mr Michael Gooda
The Royal Commission into the Detention of Children in the NT
3-5 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2066
ChildDetentionNT@royalcommission.gov.au

5 September 2016

Dear Commissioners,

RE: The Royal Commission into the Detention of Children in the Northern Territory

We are writing to you in response to the Royal Commission into the Detention of Children in the Northern Territory as former Coordinators of the Deadly Treadlies Youth Bike Mechanics Project.

Deadly Treadlies was an early intervention, diversion and crime prevention program that offered vulnerable children and young people an opportunity to engage in appropriate recreational activities and to learn new skills. Deadly Treadlies operated in Central Australia between 2003 and 2009.

Deadly Treadlies achieved significant outcomes and operated at Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Service (ASYASS) and through outreach workshops delivered to Alice Springs Town Camps, remote communities and schools. Deadly Treadlies was facilitated in a manner that invited the collaboration of children, family, teachers, youth workers and police. Importantly outreach workshops delivered in Town Camps and communities helped to facilitate the referral of young people (and their families) to support mechanisms such as case management, education and support services.

1. Scope of Service Delivery

Deadly Treadlies was accessed by in excess of 1000 children and young people per annum in a large number of localities across Central Australia.

Whilst operational Deadly Treadlies delivered outreach program across greater Central Australia including the following local government areas:

- Alice Springs;
- The Alice Springs Town Camps;
- MacDonnell Shire;
- Central Desert Shire;
- Barkly Shire;
- the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (SA); and
- the Ngaanyatjarra Council (WA)

Appendix 1 outlines the list of Town Camps and communities where outreach workshops were conducted on multiple locations during the life of the project.



One positive consequence of this work was that children and young people travelling periodically to Alice Springs from remote locations would recognise the Deadly Treadlies logo and would approach Deadly Treadlies for a range of assistance providing program workers the opportunity to assist with service navigation and referral.

2. Outcomes

Whilst operational Deadly Treadlies delivered a number of outcomes, which included the following:

- Increased Bike Use
- Increased Appropriate Recreation
- Improved Health and Lifestyle
- Increased Self Esteem
- Increased Community Engagement
- Reduced Rates of Truancy
- Reduced Antisocial Behavior
- Reduced Crime
- Reduced Recidivism
- Reduced Volatile Substance Misuse

- Increased Enrolment in School
- Enrolment of participants in VET Courses
- Positive Promotion of Young People
- Reduced Substance Misuse
- Reduced Welfare Dependence
- Reduced Community Anxiety and Fear

The majority of young people who accessed the project were Aboriginal, however there were also a number of non-Aboriginal young people who attended the ASYASS based bike workshop. Approximately one third of the participants were female. It wasn't uncommon for the project's workshop to have a diverse mix of 10-15 young people working together on their bikes.

The project also employed young people on a casual basis to assist with running the mechanical side of the workshop, as well as a small social enterprise selling reconditioned bicycles.

3. Ongoing Community Recognition

Deadly Treadlies was Deadly Treadlies remains highly regarded by a diverse range of service providers, community members and participants. It has been our experience that former participants have frequently outlined the need for something similar to Deadly Treadlies. It is not uncommon to hear that DVDs produced between 2003 and 2007 are still being circulated and watched by former participants and community members. In some cases, a legacy of Deadly Treadlies has been the operation of small scale programs by community schools and other service providers.

4. Official Recognition

Despite an ongoing issue with a lack of recurrent funding Deadly Treadlies received formal recognition for its work as an early intervention, diversionary and crime prevention project from multiple sources including:

- Urban Crime Prevention and Youth At Risk Compendium of Promising Strategies and Programmes from around the World (11th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2005);
- Ministerial Community Safety Award (March 2005), NT Government;
- Certificate of Merit (2005), Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards;
- Special Achievement Award for a Cycling Organisation (2006), Australian Bicycling Achievement Awards ;
- 2004 Givewell Best Charity Project, 4th Annual Ethical Investor Corporate Awards;
- Best Youth Project (2005), Territory Tidy Towns.

5. Positive Promotion of Central Australian Young People to the World

Deadly Treadlies worked to build the self esteem and wellbeing of young people at the same time as attempting to address the stigmatization of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

The Deadly Treadlies video made by Suzy Bates in workshops with young people from Santa Teresa, Titjikala and Papunya communities in Central Australia in 2004 is one example of this work.

Deadly Treadlies has been screened at the following Film Festivals:

- Wild Spaces Film Festival- screened in 23 towns and cities across Australia;
- Aotearoa Environmental Film Festival (New Zealand);
- 777 Seconds Film Festival (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne);
- International Festival of Cinema and Technology (9 cities Inc. New York, Los Angeles, London, Sydney, Toronto and Paris);
- Broadcast on Imparja Television;
- Bicycle Film Festival (Alice Springs).

6. So what happened?

Deadly Treadlies was well regarded and loved by program participants and their families. The project operated in the open and was accessible to participants and their families. Deadly Treadlies would particularly target communities and Town Camps without youth workers or dedicated sport and recreation workers.

Residents and service providers would comment that the project would have short term, medium term and longer term impacts. In the short term participants would be fully engaged in a safe and supervised activity, in the medium term they would have bikes to ride for weeks or months to follows (depending on how well they were maintained) and in the longer term the videos would circulate for the enjoyment of the participants. Return trips were eagerly anticipated and bikes and bike parts stockpiled.

Despite the regard of the community, service providers and funding agencies Deadly Treadlies struggled to find recurrent funding. On this basis it was a constant task seeking finite amounts of funding for discreet periods, Deadly Treadlies for example often received \$5000 grants to operate bush programs. In part it appears that the program delivered outcomes that were to diverse and addressing to many program areas for example crime prevention, alcohol and other drugs, safety, sport and recreation and in support of school attendance.

Sadly the Northern Territory government disbanded the Office of Crime Prevention in 2006. The closure of the Office of Crime Prevention meant the end of funding for projects supporting diversion and crime prevention.

The Office of Crime Prevention had also been an advocate for Deadly Treadlies, for example it had been the Office that had recommended that Federal Attorney Generals nominate Deadly Treadlies for inclusion in the Urban Crime Prevention and Youth At Risk, Compendium of Promising Strategies and Programmes from around the World. Deadly Treadlies was one of only two projects that was included from Australia.

About Us

Michael Klerck is currently working as the Social Policy and Research Manager at Tangentyere Council. Prior to this Michael has worked as a practitioner working with children, young people and those at risk of homelessness in Alice Springs, the Town Camps and remote Central Australia. Michael has worked for the Territory Government, non Indigenous NGOs and Aboriginal Corporations in a number of capacities with direct relevance to the Royal Commission. Michael is currently undertaking a Graduate Certificate in Loss, Grief and Trauma and is developing a better understanding of the impact of childhood trauma on children, young people and adults.

Ian Sweeney has been working with Alice Springs Town Camps and remote communities in Central Australia since 2003. He has worked for a number of Aboriginal organisations and a non-Aboriginal NGO in a variety of capacities relating to supporting young people and communities. He is passionate about Aboriginal led development, and for the last five years he has been working for the Central Land Council in their Community Development Unit, assisting groups to implement community benefit projects with their own income.

Conclusion

Firstly, we would welcome an opportunity to meet with you in person or via teleconference to discuss Deadly Treadlies and the value of such projects.

Secondly, we would like to recommend the re-establishment of the Office of Crime Prevention to assist in the funding and coordination of youth diversion and crime prevention programs. Such programs should be place based and developed with the participation of children, young people and their families.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the award winning Deadly Treadlies video which is available at the following URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73QFfAzLlp8>

Thanks for your assistance.

Yours,

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Ian Sweeney

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Yours,

Privacy [Redacted]

Michael Klerck

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Appendix 1: Outreach Locations

Mt Nancy	Inarlenge (Little Sisters)	Mpwetyerre (Abbotts Camp)
Anthelk Ewlpaye (Charles Creek)	Ewyenper Atwatye (Hidden Valley)	Lhenpe Artnwe (Hoppys Camp)
Ilparpa Camp	Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta Valley)	Irrkerlantye (White Gate)
Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa)	Titjikala	Aputula (Finke)
Watiyawanu (Mt Liebig)	Papunya	Ikuntji
Kiwirrkurra	Imanpa	Epenarra
Laramba	Kaltukatjara (Docker River)	Mutitjulu
Kaltjiti (Fregon)	Pukatja (Ernabella)	Amata
Indulkana	Kenmore Park	Kanpi
Nyapari	Pipalyatjara	Kalka
Laramba	Yuendumu	Willowra
Epenarra	Warakurna	