# Building Indigenous research workforce capacity

## Researcher

Professor Dennis Gray

## Summary

The original objectives of this project were to create a three-year research internship for an Indigenous graduate; to provide the intern with 'on-the-job' research training in both a national research institution and an Indigenous community-controlled substance misuse agency; to enable the intern to manage a research project, and to undertake two or three other projects in his or her own right; and to equip him or her to embark upon a career in the alcohol and other drugs field.

The project was a response to calls for greater involvement of Indigenous people in health and substance use research; and in the local Perth context, an attempt to overcome barriers to such involvement.

## Outcomes

The training provided included both informal and formal aspects. The intern participated in and learned from various research projects and received mentoring in these activities from both NDRI and Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service of Western Australia (AADS, formally known as Noongar Alcohol and Substance Abuse Service Inc.) staff. However the intern left before the project was completed.

A second intern was recruited in 2005 and achieved a number of revised objectives. The formal training included NVivo qualitative data analysis computer software training, and ongoing Endnote software training at AADS. In addition the intern participated in the NDRI Research Seminar (Journal Club) and professional development workshops, including the Cultural Histories Workshop (presented by AADS for staff of Cyrenian House). The intern worked towards and completed an Occupational Health and Safety in the Workplace course and a TAFE Certificate Four Training and Assessment.

Unfortunately, participation in research projects and undertaking research projects in her own right was somewhat curtailed due to the shortened timescale; however, the intern did participate in a various research projects of small and intermediate scale, including the AADS Natural Therapies Program; the initial phases of the Narrative Therapy for Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drug Clients project and, as co-investigator, "Evaluating the management of alcohol-related problems among urban Aboriginal People in Western Australia: using an action research approach to enhance service delivery and collaboration for client care".

As a result of the training and research opportunities, the intern was equipped to embark upon a career in the alcohol and other drugs field.

One by-product of the project was the provision of an Indigenous community organisation with its own research capacity. The project provided an example for AADS staff and Board members of the practical utility of research, giving it a profile within AADS, and contributing to the normalisation of research activity within the organisation.

The training and research activities have also linked the intern into a wider research support network which is essential to a career in the field. As well as the links with NDRI, this includes those with the Centre for International Health at Curtin University and with the Discipline of Social Work at the University of Western Australia.

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