



Bagwa Bugalma

Byron Shire Aboriginal Services Coalition Report 2014 - 2019



Report prepared by Belle Arnold for Byron Shire Council 2019

Aboriginal Services Coalition – Bagwa Bugalma Report 2014 - 2019

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Aboriginal Services Coalition – Bagwa Bugalma

Summary

This report documents the work done by the Aboriginal Services Coalition 2014 – 2015, to develop framework and advocate for a community service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people in the Byron Shire. Recommendations from this report outline the priorities for addressing the unmet need and service gaps for the community.

Due to the lack of identified community services the Byron Shire ATSI community is fractured with: no hub, no collection of authentic data on community needs, no expert peak organisation to represent in consultation of broader decision making forums and no lead in community development. This had led to a lack of strategic planning for community development, poor partnerships to develop opportunities with mainstream organisations, poor community cohesion and identity. For Bundjalung people this has resulted in difficulty living and working on country and fulfilling cultural obligations creating social, economic and spiritual pressures. The community live with poor health support, education outcomes, and limited pathways to meaningful employment and are inevitably forced to move off country.

Introduction

The Byron Shire Aboriginal Services Coalition formed in response to the ongoing lack of Aboriginal Service Delivery in the Byron Shire in 2014. Over the course of years the Aboriginal Services coalition was named in Bundjalung Language to **Bagwa Bugalma** – meaning to heal and to do correctly.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition formed to address the unmet need of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Byron Shire due to the absence of any targeted services for the community.

State and Federal government fund service for the Byron Shire ATSI community through services based in Tweed Heads, Ballina and Lismore with no clear transparency, consultation, engagement or accountability. As a result there is a complete lack of autonomous, identified Indigenous services operating in Byron Shire. Outreach from services already under funded and under pressure in their substantive communities is adhoc, difficult to access and does not benefit the wellbeing of Aboriginal community in the Byron Shire.

The aim of the Coalition was to establish coordinated service delivery with cultural framework, and understanding of the socio political barriers for ATSI people to access mainstream service, within the Byron Shire. The service would be holistic community hub for the Byron Shire ATSI community, collocated at the Mullumbimby District and Neighbourhood Centre that has existing programs and services that can enhance service and reduce duplication of service to maximize funding outcomes. The service would also act as a peak body for the Byron Shire ATSI community to consult and advocate for programs and services including health, housing, transport, education, and employment, NOT cultural heritage matters which remains the sole business of traditional owners the Bundjalung people.

A current challenge for the Byron Shire ATSI community is being caught in a funding loop hole – there is no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community service the community are not eligible for ATSI targeted government funding, but funding is required to establish the service. The

Aboriginal Services Coalition – Bagwa Bugalma formed to address these complex issues.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition - Bagwa Bugalma developed as an Aboriginal organisation acting as a consultative and representative body for the Byron Shire ATSI community. During the period of 2014 – 2019 members of this process included:

- Leweena Williams (Tweed Byron Local Area Land Council CEO)
- Dave Kapeen (Tweed Byron Community Transport)
- Julie Williams (Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre Manager)
- Belle Arnold (Byron Shire Council Aboriginal Project Officer)
- Larissa Smyth (Tweed Byron Local Area Land Council Board member and LHD Aboriginal Sexual Health Worker)
- Gavin Brown (Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal Corporation CEO)
- Delta Kay (Arakwal community member)
- Dhinawan Baker (Dhinawan Dreaming, Aboriginal Educator)
- Tim Ives (Community member)
- Scott Sentence (Mullumbimby High School)
- Project Worker – Anscer Czygan

Background

The Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal

Byron Shire Council and the Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal people had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from 2013 – 2018. This agreement outlined the priorities for the two organisations and the framework for their partnership. The agreement followed the Aboriginal Heads of Agreement in 2018. The MOU outlined:

5. Social Justice and Community Development

Council and Arakwal to work together to create and support a healthy, vibrant, strong and resilient Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

5.1 Social Justice and Community Development: Guiding Principles

5.1.1 Development of Social and Cultural Capital

5.1.2 Housing and homelessness

5.1.3 Closing the Gap, improving health of Indigenous Community

5.1.4 Eco/Cultural Tourism Opportunities for Arakwal People

5.2 Social Justice and Community Development: Specific Projects

5.2.2 Aboriginal social, economic and community development projects

Arakwal and Council to work in partnership on Aboriginal social, economic and community development projects that have positive outcomes for the wider community.

Arakwal have identified that community safety and social issues in Byron Bay are having direct and broader impacts on their families and communities, notably drug and alcohol use, law enforcement, housing, employment, education and health.

Byron Shire Council staff and elected representatives have played a central role in the formation of the Aboriginal Services Coalition and delivery actions and strategies as a part of the commitment to the MOU.

Traditional Owners

Bundjalung of Byron Bay – Arakwal People’s native title claim over a large area of land within the Byron Shire was determined in 2019. Other traditional Aboriginal clan groups within the Byron Shire include the Widjabal people and the Mindjungbal people from the Bundjulung Nation. Bundjalung people have been heavily impacted upon the ‘Sea Change’ boom and growth in tourism in the Byron Shire and surrounding areas in the first instance from the steady rise in property costs and availability of rental properties within their ancestral homelands – referred to in the Aboriginal community as the new wave of dispossession. This has presented considerable boundaries for traditional owners to live in and continue their cultural responsibilities to country and community. This has created division in community as families compete for very limited resource and opportunity. This has further been compounded by the lack of culturally appropriate service delivery and amenity and has fractured the community’s sense of connectedness and cohesion.

Government and Community Consultation

Compounded to the problem of a lack of service provision, clarity around how and when outreach is delivered and how to access is the question is consultation undertaken about government funding and community service delivery in the Byron Shire. The community has no entry or access point for government to undertake consultation, as there is no service hub mapping trends and issues within our community. Consultation is carried out with an ad hoc, tick a box approach with pressure being placed on the Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal Corporation as the only Aboriginal organization in the Byron Shire. The Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal Corporation’s core business in Native Title, Cultural heritage management and protection and are under resourced to maintain the demand on them to respond to the high demand of development applications with in the Byron Shire.

Funding Transparency

Central to the methodology of the work of the Aboriginal Services Coalition was to request transparency from all levels of government around service provision. The Coalition worked with government agencies to request service mapping to create a comprehensive picture of where the funding was sitting.

The results from this process were disappointing. Many agencies did not provide the information, while other government agencies attempted to ‘divide and conquer’ by creating conflict with Aboriginal Health Services based in other regional centers. With the information provided from funding agencies, services receiving funding for the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) community were invited to provide outreach from the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre with the view to unify the deliver of service for the benefit of the ATSI community.

Target Areas for Program Delivery

1. Aboriginal Health Service

Existing mainstream health and community services have limited experience or knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs, funded programs, family structures or understanding of how to engage and treat the ATSI people in Byron Shire community.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- Providing culturally appropriate services and delivery with professionals trained and experienced in working with ATSI communities,
- Accessible and affordable specialist services including coordinated and integrated outreach of allied health services based within Byron Shire,
- Culturally appropriate Mental Health support services operating in the Byron Shire,

2. Aboriginal Housing

There is very little opportunity or support for the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to access affordable housing in our community. The 'Sea Change' boom has affected the price of housing in the Byron Shire and ATSI people are priced out of living here.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- Increased number of Aboriginal housing options including single, small and large families for long term and short term accommodation needs,
- Existing process to access community housing is clarified, streamlined and affectively communicated to ATSI community,
- Development of a Aboriginal Hostel with different size units for short term and long term options with case support for holistic support
- Support for exit of Aboriginal Housing into mainstream housing market through holistic support.

3. Employment

Very limited opportunities for employment, career pathways and employment that support liveability in the Byron Shire. Transient nature of community and large number of young tourists and backpackers are willing to work for board, which further reduces opportunities for employment for local young people ATSI people. Limited, irregular and expensive public transport creates further barriers to employment.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- Work with employment agencies and Centrelink to support case management of ATSI people to create meaningful employment pathways,
- Promote employment incentives to local industry and employers,
- Promote local industries with employment opportunities to local young people,
- Work with schools, TAFE, Universities and industry to hold ATSI specific employment expos.

4. Community Development

Byron Shire ATSI community has been disengaged and under supported for decades. Community is disenchanted and divided. Services have poor relationships with community and ATSI workers. Cultural and creative programs can be an effective method of engaging Aboriginal people into services.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- Culturally developed holistic men's, women, young people and children programs to build community and provide engagement and referral opportunities for ATSI community to services,
- Cultural revitalisation, increased visibility and vibrancy to foster belonging and well being of community,
- Create opportunities for public art to increase visibility for the community and encourage a sense of validation and belonging in broader community.

5. Transport

Transport is the key to accessing opportunities to break cycles of poverty. Byron Shire has limited, expensive and irregular public transport preventing ATSI people from accessing employment, health services, education and other opportunities.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- The formation of the Byron Shire Aboriginal Transport Committee including community members and representatives of local and state governments,
- Identify barriers created by lack of public transport, how these are impacting local ATSI people to access essential services and develop strategies to overcome these barriers,
- Work with local and state government to develop transport programs and incentives,
- Promote existing programs and services and opportunities in the local ATSI community.

6. Education

Lack of services to support families through the education system has impacted on retention rates especially for Bundjalung people. Lack of community's resources, community divisions and poor relationships between schools and traditional owners have impacted on ATSI resources and educational outcomes in schools. Poor transport and employment has limited pathways to higher education.

The Aboriginal Services Coalition advocate for:

- Formation of a Byron Shire AECG – Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, to work with community and local schools to build relationships, resources and improve educational outcomes for local community.
- Services and programs for the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community need to be holistic and integrated to be culturally appropriate, respond to need, be cost effective and sustainable in the community.

Objectives for the Aboriginal Services Coalition

A core objective of the Aboriginal Services Coalition is to develop a program of outreach service delivery 'Making Outreach Work' with part time case coordination to support our mob to access services available. 'Making Outreach Work' would work with service providers based in other regional centres and coordinate and promote the service to local community.

The objectives of the Aboriginal Services Coalition have been developed through a series of workshops and consultations with local ATSI community. Core to the principles of the Coalition are to bring the community together, to overcome divisions based on common goals and priorities of the community. The Coalition do not want to take funding away from existing ATSI programs or services in the region but work with services to provide outcomes for the Byron Shire ATSI community.

1. Establishing an organization for our people in our community to deliver culturally appropriate services in the Byron Shire

- Community owned and managed,
- Responsive to community needs,
- Holistic and integrated – health, community, housing and employment,
- Reference point for government agencies to consult or access community,
- Community reference point.

2. Visibility, accessibility, contact and reference point

- Visible and accessible point/ place for ATSI community, members and for services wanting to deliver to our community,
- Foster belonging for our mob within the broader community,
- Bring the community together,
- Create a community hub, which is an entry point to various pathways.

3. Cultural Safe Space

- A place to feel welcome, understood and accepted,
- An organisation that understands ATSI communities and socio historical and economic factors that have contributed to current cultural community identities – understand what has happened to our people to shape our current situation,
- Showcases cultural safety to broader community.

4. Culturally based projects and programs

- Targeted, well informed for men, women, children and youth, looking after the well being of our whole community,
- Integrated with other services,

- Cultural revitalisation as an engagement tool,
- Building a strong sense of cultural identity,
- Men's business / women's business.

5. Focus point for our community, center point to build strength

- A place to come together and build on common grounds,
- Grow and develop opportunities for our mob,
- Encourage live-ability for ATSI people to stay in the Byron Shire.

6. Clear consultation with the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

- Community access point for government to consult with community,
- Organisation that is 100% representative of ATSI community priorities.

7. Community owned and engaged future

- Creating relationships and partnerships to strengthen outcomes for our community.

Outcomes – Short Term 12 Months

1. Increased presence of ATSI service delivery in Byron Shire,
2. Increased use of available space at Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre (MDNC) – across all target areas,
3. Deliver holistic and integrated project based at MDNC early intervention for early childhood – supporting whole of family/ community wellbeing,
4. Secure sustainability of our work for the next 1 – 5 years.

Outcomes – Long Term 3 – 5 Years

1. Community owned and operated ATSI organisation – management committee structure,
2. Aboriginal Hostel,
3. Measureable outcomes for our mob in all target areas,
4. Building healthy vibrant strong community.

Time Line of the Aboriginal Services Coalition – Bagwa Bugalma

July 2012	Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre (MNDC) hosts inaugural NAIDOC Week event
March 2015	Close the Gap Services Expo with 'Medicare Local'
July 2015	NAIDOC Week event at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre (MNDC). MNDC commit to host annual NAIDOC week event
February 2016	North Coast Area Health (LHD) 5 Year Strategy Planning Consultation Forum – held in the Byron Shire Council Chambers. Senator Jan Barham contacts the Minister for Health following up on the lack of Aboriginal health services in the Byron Shire.
March 2016	Close the Gap Services Expo held by Byron Shire Council at the Mullumbimby Civic Hall with 25 services based outside the Byron Shire attending.
April 2016	Bugalwena (Tweed Heads) Aboriginal Health Service contact manager MNDC requesting to refer their Aboriginal clients to the MNDC for support. MNDC were not receiving funding to deliver to Aboriginal community and invited Bugalwena to meet to discuss
May 2016	First Aboriginal Services Coalition Meeting held at the MNDC with members invited from services in attendance of the Close the Gap Day Monthly meetings
July 2016	Intensive consultation for community needs assessment
October 2016	'Community Services Where' forum held in the Mullumbimby Civic Hall
November 2016	Coalition members met with Megan Lewis, Manager of Commissioning and Planning – from the Department of Family and Community Services. Coalition members requested that a detailed list outlining the services funded to deliver to the Byron Shire ATSI community and to discuss the current lack of cohesive, culturally appropriate community services in the Byron Shire.
January 2017	Monthly meetings become fortnightly coalition meetings, held at the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre commence and continues until the end of 2018
February 2017	Coalition members met with Wayne Jones Regional Manager of North Coast Local Area Health District to request that a detailed list outlining the services funded to deliver to the Byron Shire ATSI community and to discuss the current lack of cohesive, culturally appropriate health services in the Byron Shire. Funding was committed for a 2 day a week position for a 12-

	month period.
March 2017	Project Worker position created and funded by North Coast Health and Primary Health Network. Position was advertised and appointed
October 2017	Community forum 'Towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Community Service in the Byron Shire' held in the Byron Shire Council Chambers
November 2017	Work commences on a strategic plan for Aboriginal Community Service
December 2017	The Koori Christmas party held at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre
June 2018	5 year strategic plan developed and presented to Council and government service providers
July 2018	Funding provider meeting – Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, NSW Health Local Area Health District, Department of Family and Community Services, Byron Shire Council, Tweed Byron Local Area Land Council, MNDC
July 2018	NSW Health Local Area Health District commit Bugalwena workers to providing outreach through the MNDC
August 2018	Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) presentation of OCHRE Local Solutions funding process and how to access Regional Aboriginal Development Alliance (RADA)
August 2018	Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service (Ballina) commence outreach on Mondays at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre after confirming they receive funding to deliver a range of health service in the Byron Shire. No engagement or promotion to local community takes place.
August 2018	Meet with RADA about Byron Shire having representation in RADA
September 2018	Bagwa Bugalma members and Councils Manager Community Services Met with CEO of PHN – Julie Sturgiss and the Acting Director of Aboriginal Health Monica Wheeler
November 2018	Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service (Ballina) withdraws outreach on Mondays at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre due to lack of engagement and change of management.
December 2018	NSW Health Local Area Health District and the Primary Health Network do not commit to further funding for the Aboriginal Projects Worker at the MNDC

December 2018 – December 2019	Bugalwena continue to provide adhoc outreach to the MND
March 2019	Close the Gap Women’s Engagement and Culture Day held by Byron Shire Council and MNDC.
May 2019	Aboriginal Service Coalition regular meetings cease due to burn out of members decreased funding and support from all levels of government.
July 2019	MNDC hosts NAIDOC Week event in Mullumbimby With decrease of funding and formal support from government and funding agencies MNDC approaches local Aboriginal Dance Troupe – Bunyarra Culture Collective who part fund NAIDOC Week with funds raised from art sales and dance fees. Concerns for the ongoing sustainability for this event and as ATSI community’s only engagement and cultural activity.

Community Events

The Aboriginal Services Coalition – Bagwa Bugalma employed the methodology of building community through forums, events, workshops and cultural and arts events and activities. These events provided an entry point for the ATSI community to engage with mainstream services available at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre.

Obstacles

Byron Shire has no Aboriginal community health or community service operating from a base within the Byron Shire and no history of service provision. The impact of ongoing absence of service resulted in community having poor knowledge of existing funded programs, how to access services, low rates of engagement and participation and lack of trust in community services. This pattern led to poor uptake of services when they were offered.

Aboriginal Health Services provide community hub for additional specialist services and community development to build for Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (ATSI) have complex histories with government services due to historical government policies. Aboriginal Health Services work with community to break down some of the barriers for ATSI people to access services, without a cultural conduit many ATSI people will not attempt to access support from health and other community services that can lead to numerous negative outcomes affecting quality of life. This has been well document through the Federal Government’s Closing the Gap report.

The government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services in the Byron Shire is administered in adhoc approaches without clear consultation with or outcomes for our community.

This has resulted in barriers to ATSI people in the Byron Shire facing barriers to accessing services resulting in the development of complex problems. Often community members are no referred to support programs and services until they are in crisis and have entered the justice or hospital system.

Engagement

The Byron Shire ATSI community is over Outreached with no coordination or consistency in the way outreach is delivered. Byron Shire ATSI residents encounter the further barrier of transport to access services in other regional centres and can find it difficult to access services that are at capacity. There is no opportunities for providers to develop relationships or to case manage complex cases. Information and referral pathways are unclear and under utilised resulting in incorrect statistics on need.

Mainstream services operate with a minimal of outreach and the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community do not find out about funded services and programs or how to access them.

Position Description: Project Officer – Aboriginal Services Coalition

The position was funded for 16 hours per week for a period of 12 months and was located at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre – 55 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby.

The position reported to the Manager, Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre, (Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre Management Committee) and was directed by Aboriginal Services Coalition. It was an identified Aboriginal Position

Duties included:

- Administration for Aboriginal Services Coalition meeting including agendas and minutes,
- Develop an Aboriginal Services Coalition for the Byron Shire,
- Engage state and federal agencies to provide culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal Community in the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre,
- Develop services activity program for the Aboriginal Services space at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre
- Assist with advocacy to state and federal government agencies for increased program funding,
- Coordinate and promote the program to the local Aboriginal Community,
- Contact person at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre for the Aboriginal Services Coalition,
- Contribute to and support the development of a five-year strategic plan for Aboriginal Services in Byron Shire.

Review of the Outcomes from the Aboriginal Services Coalition Aboriginal Projects Officer

Anscer Czygan was employed for 14 hours per week at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre for 12 months in the role of the Aboriginal Projects Officer. The North Coast Local Health District and the Primary Health Network funded the role.

The Project Officer actively networked with funded services and networks to engage them in delivering to the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre (MNDC). The Project Officer worked with Bunyarra-Ga to set up a Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the MNDC. This Men's group met weekly at the MNDC for a few months when the program providing the outreach to the MNDC lost funding and could not continue the group. Bugalweena Health commenced support for the group through a male worker. MNDC staff supported the Men's group to access ten thousand dollars from Splendour in the Grass Community Support Grants in 2018.

Key Outcomes from the Bagwa Bugalma Team with 2 day a week Aboriginal Project Worker 2017 - 2018		
Project work undertaken	Outcomes/Achievements to date:	Challenges/barriers to date:
<p>Funded services mapping: FaCs District funded programs provided</p> <p>LHD referred to the Northern NSW Integrated Health & Wellbeing Plan 2015-20</p>	<p>Services were contacted and invited to provide outreach at the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre</p>	<p>Accurate and transparent service mapping for the Byron Shire LGA</p>
<p>Provision of appropriate space for services providers to delivery</p>	<p>Appropriate space available</p>	<p>Resourcing and responding to the community need for integrated case work in line with cultural principles.</p> <p>Building network and presence t the MNDC increased the presentation of need for support and identified further gaps in service delivery to ATSI community</p>
<p>Building networks and relationships with the mainstream and regional Aboriginal community service sector.</p>	<p>Services engaged/ relationships initiated and or established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bunyarra-ga • Aboriginal Sexual Health • Community Transport • Bullinah Aboriginal Health • Bugalwena • 	<p>Services not resourced to do outreach with ATSI community to build trust and ongoing relationships with ATSI clients.</p>
<p>Commitment from service providers to deliver from the MDNC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullinah (in train) • Bugalwena (in train) • Solid Mob (in train) • Aboriginal Sexual Health (established) 	<p>Outreach and engagement required to link community to services. Information barrier to community</p>
<p>Increase service providers represented at community events</p>	<p>Community Transport</p>	<p>Conflicting times with other NAIDOC events</p>

Key Outcomes from the Bagwa Bugalma Team with 2 day a week Aboriginal Project Worker 2017 - 2018		
Project work undertaken	Outcomes/Achievements to date:	Challenges/barriers to date:
- NAIDOC	Solid Mob OTCP Family Centre Abilitylinks	
Community engagement	Increased participation and engagement for Aboriginal community members at the MDNC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support/ER-increase of 60% • Community support (showers, meals, referrals) - Increase of 65% • More Than a Meal (soft entry point into services) – ATSI 600 meals over 12 months • Increase in access to WDOs reducing risk of incarceration 	
	Men's Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running weekly with increased participation • Group members fundraising for a bus 	Unfunded Transport to and from the group
	Dubai Days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women attending from Tweed, Byron, Ballina LGAs • Resources provided by Byron Shire Council and MDNC 	Unfunded Cost of venue Materials Guest Facilitators

Key Outcomes from the Bagwa Bugalma Team with 2 day a week Aboriginal Project Worker 2017 - 2018		
Project work undertaken	Outcomes/Achievements to date:	Challenges/barriers to date:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women connecting, identifying issues of concern, sharing information 	

The Aboriginal Project Worker has primarily worked across two levels of focus:-

1. The services system
2. Community engagement

Impact of Men's Group

<p>Impact of the availability of the Aboriginal Project Worker</p> <p>Case Study 1: Homeless community member with mental health issues, poor physical health presented at the MDNC extremely angry, aggressive and threatening self harm. Maintained that only a guitar calmed him and his had been stolen. MDNC worker referred to the Aboriginal Project Worker who was able to engage him. MDNC and Aboriginal Project Worker linked with community members and Bunyarra Collective who provided a guitar.</p> <p>Outcome: community member remained engaged for 5 months until being arrested for an outstanding warrant. During the 5 months of engagement the community member accessed community support, physical health improved, general wellbeing improved with weight gain and access to showers and the support of an Aboriginal male worker.</p> <p>At the time of arrest there had been possibilities of accessing dental care emerging. He was engaged with other community members but was still homeless and unable to access a mental health worker.</p> <p>Case Study 2:</p> <p>Multiple community members connecting with the Aboriginal Project Worker. Relationships of trust developing and resulting in increased access to services currently available. Community Support/Emergency Relief, housing applications, connecting with community, reduces incarceration outcome by accessing WDOs and participation in activities.</p> <p>Outcome: While the Project Worker is successful in engaging community members, accessible services health and human services remain an issue.</p>

Case Study 3:

Family connecting with community through Close the Gap event. Single mum with 6 children (partner recently deceased) returned to community. Children supported through school and Deadly Dancers, linked into MDNC supports.

Outcomes: While the family is linked in the housing crisis remains a primary issue with two families (3 adults and 9 children) living in a 2.5 bedroom house. Health of both families starting to be impacted with increasing stress.

Recommendations

The discussions from the meetings, forums and consultations throughout the work of the Aboriginal Services Coalition Recommend that:

1. Service Centre
 - Develop and fund an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service based at the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre.
 - Service to have a holistic approach to service delivery and create a culturally based community hub for ATSI community.
 - Service to have a strong visibility and cultural identity to foster belonging in broader community.
 - Service to be managed by an Aboriginal Steering Committee under the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre Management Committee.

2. Outreach Coordination and Aboriginal Community Development Manager –Funded Position
Full Time position to work with services across the regional to develop and promote a program of outreach services,
Community engagement and relationship building by participating in ATSI community events,
Promote interests and priorities of local ATSI community in inter-agencies and decision making processes and forums,
Identify gaps in services and develop strategies and opportunities to address these gaps
Develop partnerships to apply for and attract funding for projects.

3. Case Workers
 - Male and Female part time case workers to case manage for complex needs,
 - Support access to services and create pathways,
 - Facilitate group work, peer support for healthy community networks,
 - Support delivery of special projects to engage and build community.

4. Improve Housing for Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
 - Increased number of Aboriginal housing options including single, small and large families for long term and short term accommodation needs,
 - Existing process to access community housing is clarified, streamlined and affectively communicated to ATSI community,
 - Development of a Aboriginal Hostel with different size units for short term and long term options with case support for holistic support
 - Support for exit of Aboriginal Housing into mainstream housing market through holistic support.

5. Create an Employment Pathways Officer
 - Work with employment agencies and Centrelink to support case management of ATSI people to create meaningful employment pathways,
 - Promote employment incentives to local industry and employers,

- Promote local industries with employment opportunities to local young people,
 - Work with schools, TAFE, Universities and industry to hold ATSI specific employment expos.
5. Form the Byron Shire Aboriginal Transport Committee
 - Identify barriers created by lack of public transport, how these are impacting local ATSI people to access essential services and develop strategies to overcome these barriers,
 - Work with local and state government to develop transport programs and incentives,
 - Promote existing programs and services and opportunities in the local ATSI community.
 6. Form a Byron Shire Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
 - To work with community and local schools to build relationships, resources and improve educational outcomes for local community.
 - Services and programs for the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community need to be holistic and integrated to be culturally appropriate, respond to need, be cost effective and sustainable in the community.
 7. Implement the strategies in the Bagwa Bugalma 5 Year Strategic Plan
 8. Develop a Byron Shire Aboriginal Social and Economic Development Plan