



Community mediation

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Community mediation

- Background
- Information gathering and building relationships
- What we learned
- Program implementation

Background



- LAQ family dispute resolution conferences operating since mid-1980s
- Family law issues
- Commonwealth funded matters only
- Program developed through work of Dispute Resolution Services (DRS) and Integrated Indigenous Strategies Unit (IISU) within LAQ

Background Continued



- IISU established December 1999
- Aims to enhance access to justice for Indigenous people particularly women and their families
- Increase use of LAQ services
- Remove barriers to use of mainstream legal services

Background Continued



- Increase awareness of legal rights and services available
- Develop better working relationships with existing and developing services
- Northern Outreach Report published September 2001
- Identified benefits to communities in early resolution of disputes through mediation

Information gathering and building relationships



- DRS identified low usage of mainstream services
- Investigate feasibility of establishing an Indigenous mediation model by a series of questions
- Is there a need?
- Should LAQ be the service provider?

Information gathering and building relationships continued



- What model would meet community needs?
- How can we work together?
- Community visits during 2003/2004 to Cape York and Western Queensland regions (20)
- Inclusive (representatives from 53 agencies participated)

What we learned



- General agreement dispute resolution services needed for Indigenous communities
- Flexibility in delivery to meet cultural and community needs
- Local community members need training
- Two mediators required

What we learned continued



- Processes need to be respectful and ensure cultural sensitivity i.e. not have to repeat the same story, different people involved etc
- Wider family may need to be involved in the process



Program implementation

- Confirmation of partnership
- Consultant engaged
- Initial training delivered May 2006
- Follow up training June 2006
- Observation of mainstream processes
November 2006
- Promotional material developed



Program implementation continued

- Challenges
- Outcomes include:
 - Early intervention outside scope of program
 - Skills used more broadly for conflict resolution for various issues
 - Other agencies recognising skills
 - Wider Yarrabah community interest in training
 - Interest from other communities

