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Community safety in
Australian Indigenous
communities: Service
providers' perceptions

Matthew Willis

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Foreword

The disadvantages faced by Indigenous Australians are well-documented and are the focus of determined efforts by government and non-government agencies throughout Australia. Indigenous justice and safety are priority issues for the Council of Australian Governments and law enforcement. The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has contributed to work on closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage by increasing knowledge about justice and community safety issues affecting Indigenous people. This report on the development of a community safety survey complements the AIC's recent Australian Crime Commission-funded research on risk factors for Indigenous violent offending and victimisation.

This project arose from a desire to know more about the safety issues that impact on life in Indigenous communities. Specifically, it arose from a need for a greater level of awareness about the behaviours and circumstances that affect community safety and the services available to communities to deal with them. It was important also to capture some of the initiatives being taken by Indigenous Australians to respond to their safety concerns and to identify community priorities and needs.

The perceptions of service providers, who often work with the people affected by safety problems and contribute to resolutions, are a valuable way of building this knowledge. This report shows that while service provider respondents felt safe in most situations, they were concerned about their safety at night and the safety of others in the community, particularly female children and young people. While perceptions of crime and safety do not always align with the realities of risk, other evidence highlights the extent of the work ahead in ensuring that young people are able to pursue their potential free of the impacts of violence and trauma.

While government investments have increased the availability of fundamental services, such as police and schools, challenges remain in making sure that these services are reaching the people who need them most. This report highlights the gaps that exist for Indigenous Australians in being able to make use of available services that can lead to real gains in community safety. Victims of crime need to be confident they can go to police for help without fear of retribution and further victimisation. Children need to be able to go to school and not have their education affected by the consequences of behaviours like family violence, alcohol use and gambling. Beyond government services, this report points to the desire for community-based services targeting specific needs, such as men's places and community patrols that can play a vital role in preventing unsafe behaviours from occurring or minimise the impacts on victims.

Alongside the research findings detailed in this report, the project has produced a survey questionnaire and methodology that will be available for use by Indigenous organisations, service agencies and policymakers. This report details how these tools were developed through consultation and feedback from the pilot phase for use in an Indigenous community context. Together with the draft guidelines included in the report, these tools can help create an evidence base for developing initiatives that build on the resilience and capacity in Indigenous communities.

Adam Tomison
Director

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Executive summary

This report details the development and implementation of a survey designed to capture perceptions of community safety in Australian Indigenous communities. Issues of violence among Indigenous Australians have been widely discussed through research, government inquiries and the media. However, there is little understanding of the safety issues that impact on Indigenous Australians in their daily lives, including issues outside the boundaries of criminal behaviour. This research aims to explore these issues and place them within the context of the positive steps taken by Indigenous communities to bring about solutions to community safety and priorities for further positive change. Through the survey, the research also aims to increase understanding around the issue of under-reported or non-disclosed victimisation and through this understanding, contribute to increasing the willingness of victims to report and seek help.

The work focuses on the perceptions of service providers who work with Indigenous communities. This group of service providers have not previously been investigated through empirical research, yet they are a group exposed to a broad range of community safety issues through their work and, for those that live within communities, in their daily lives. Many service providers are themselves Indigenous, often working in their home communities. Service providers' insights and knowledge may differ from other community members and are not a proxy for these other views, but are a valuable source of knowledge in themselves.

As well as the findings gained from the community safety survey, this research aims to develop a research tool and methodology that will be freely available to Indigenous communities and the organisations that work with them. These materials may be used as practical resources to generate evidence about local community safety issues and, in this way, contribute to the development of community-driven initiatives and solutions.

The questionnaire devised for this work was developed with input from a range of stakeholders and tested through survey work, focus groups and individual consultations in urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. Drawing on the results of this work, the questionnaire was modified to better reflect the community safety issues seen as relevant and important to Indigenous Australians and to better meet the aim of investigating community safety within a positive and solution focused context. A phase two survey using the revised questionnaire was then undertaken, again in urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia, as well as through online surveying in New South Wales. In this report, the results of the two phases are presented together and combined where possible.

Surveys were collected from a total of 159 respondents across New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. These covered, in almost equal numbers, remote communities, small country towns and larger towns/regional centres/cities. Just over one-third of respondents identified as Indigenous and just over one-half as non-Indigenous, with the remainder not identifying their status. Respondents provided a wide range of services to Indigenous communities, with the respondents identifying a total of 459 types of service delivered by them, most commonly in the areas of health and victim support. More than half of the respondents delivered services located within the community and a quarter delivered their services both in the community and through outreach.

Phase two respondents were asked to identify the strengths and positive features of their community. The largest proportion of responses focused on interpersonal relationships and community connections, including relationships and proximity to family, friends and community elders. Many respondents saw community strength as linked to the people in the community, with many citing the honesty, generosity, caring and resilience of community members as strengths.

Respondents were given a list of crime and other social problems, identified through this research as being potentially significant in Indigenous communities and asked to indicate how serious each problem was for their community. The highest proportion nominated overcrowded homes as a serious or very serious problem, especially in larger towns and centres, where almost all respondents saw this as a problem. Other problems indicated as particularly serious included public drunkenness and misuse of alcohol in public, young people being out unsupervised at night, children not going to school, violence within families and misuse of alcohol within homes. Perceptions of serious problems were broadly consistent across the different community types, although respondents in remote communities were more likely to cite problem gambling and mental health problems, together with children not going to school, rather than other issues, as serious or very serious problems.

Through a number of questions, service provider respondents were able to identify areas of service delivery need, initiatives taken within the community to address safety problems and priorities for improving community safety. Across these questions, a number of needs and priorities emerged. Respondents strongly indicated a need for men's places, where men could go during periods of conflict or to be in the company of other men, as well as services and support for strong men in the community. Many respondents saw a major need for other initiatives or services to improve the safety of children and young people, such as refuges or safe houses for children, improved child protection services and programs for young mothers. Following on from concerns identified through earlier questions about alcohol misuse, many respondents saw the need for initiatives to

deal with this and other drug use, such as alcohol restrictions, sobering-up and detoxification facilities and education programs. Other community safety priorities identified by respondents included improved physical security, improved access to housing and accommodation, developing vocational and pro-social skills within the community and improving community justice mechanisms such as night, elder and youth patrols and having more Indigenous police.

Alongside these needs and priorities, respondents identified many positive steps already taken in communities to improve community safety. These included the development of learning and healing centres and safe houses, community justice responses such as community police and night patrols, improved physical security such as street lighting and CCTV, recreational options for young people and better collaboration between the community and law enforcement.

A set of questions around perceptions of personal safety for the respondent and others in the community showed that most service providers felt safe in most situations. However, a majority of respondents in larger towns and centres, and just under half of respondents in remote communities, felt somewhat unsafe or very unsafe walking around the community at night. Nearly one-half of respondents in remote communities felt a bit unsafe or very unsafe while doing their job at night, although this is may be a function of the type of work they performed, rather than indicative of general safety in the community. Respondents who indicated feeling safe in most situations tended to link this safety to personal attributes, such as having learned through experience how to stay safe and knowing when problems are likely to happen, although a relatively high proportion also indicated their feelings of safety were related to feeling supported by the community. Respondents were most likely to link feeling unsafe in certain situations to the possibility of alcohol-related violence, together with criminal behaviour and disturbances occurring in their local area. The smallest proportion of respondents suggested their community was, overall, a dangerous place to live. Together with responses to other questions, the findings suggested that respondents saw alcohol-related violence and problem drinking as isolated to some individuals and situations, rather than being widespread across the community.

While respondents tended to indicate feeling personally safe in most situations, they also indicated a perception that certain groups of Indigenous people were relatively unsafe in the community. The highest proportions indicated concerns for the safety of Indigenous young people and children, particularly female children, female teenagers and female adults; and in larger towns and centres in particular, the frail or elderly. In each type of community, male teenagers and male adults were seen as quite safe. Consistent with other community safety studies, respondents felt that safety in the community decreased after dark and especially on Fridays and Saturdays, although in this sample, Thursday also emerged as a day that was considered relatively unsafe. Areas near certain homes, licensed premises and parks were considered relatively unsafe areas and certain events, particularly 'payday', funerals, festivals and sporting matches, were seen as making the community feel less safe.

Respondents' perceptions of the help-seeking and reporting behaviours of Indigenous victims of violence were examined through the survey. Respondents considered that victims would generally be reluctant to report victimisation to police or other agencies and would be more likely to disclose the victimisation to family and kin, friends or elders and strong people in the community. For female victims of violence, respondents saw this reluctance as most commonly resulting from fear of violent retribution or further violence from the offender, being blamed for the consequences of disclosure, feelings of shame or embarrassment, or fear of having children taken away.

This research has informed the development of a survey questionnaire and methodology that have been developed specifically for use with Indigenous Australian communities and that can be used to create an evidence base around community safety issues at a local level or to build upon broader knowledge of these issues. Application of the survey has identified perceived problems in a number of main areas, particularly overcrowding and insufficient suitable housing, and the impacts of alcohol misuse. The research has shown the need to do more to deal with these and other community safety problems, but has also shown the willingness of communities to develop initiatives and ideas for solving these problems.

Introduction

The occurrence of violent behaviour in some Indigenous communities has been documented through inquiries, reports and studies (eg Gordon, Hallahan & Henry 2002; Memmott et al. 2001; Mullighan 2008; Wild & Anderson 2007). Violence in Indigenous communities can be complex and includes family violence that may encompass extended kin relationships with individuals or groups as perpetrators and victims, violence and sexual abuse against children and young people, psychological and economic abuse and cycles of violence transmitted through culturally-influenced patterns of behaviour and the inter-generational transmission of violence (Memmott et al. 2001). The literature on this topic, including government inquiries, has concentrated attention on issues involving serious criminality, such as assault and child sexual abuse, and recommended approaches for dealing directly with these problems. Media reports have generally focused attention on a small number of Indigenous communities with high levels of violence, child abuse and other antisocial behaviours. The focus on serious forms of offending and antisocial behaviour, while important, can divert attention away from other less apparent behaviours and situations that may impact on community safety and the daily lives of Indigenous Australians.

There remains a need for a greater empirical understanding of community safety in Indigenous communities to provide a more balanced and solution-focused understanding of how antisocial behaviours impact on lives in those in communities. Recognising the positive aspects of communities that contribute to increased feelings of safety is integral to this understanding. Despite all that has been written about Indigenous violence, there is a lack of knowledge about perceptions of overall safety in Indigenous communities, the particular crime and safety issues that impact on the lives of Indigenous Australians, the factors influencing interpersonal safety and the potential value of contributing to positive, community-led responses to these issues.

Community safety surveys

Community safety surveys provide a means of gathering information about things that make people feel safe or unsafe within their communities from the people affected by the issues; giving them an opportunity to express their concerns and contribute to the development of solutions. Community safety surveys are often run by local government authorities seeking to inform local crime prevention plans. They may also be run for research purposes to gather local- or broader-level data. Some aspects of community safety surveys may be designed to

gather empirical information, such as on the number and type of offences or antisocial behaviour occurring within the community, or they may assess the views of community members about the things that make them feel unsafe and what can be done to improve levels of safety. The types of issues that may be covered by community safety surveys include:

- the main crime and social problems occurring in an area;
- experiences of victimisation within the community in a specified period (sometimes including information on whether the victimisation has been reported);
- feelings of safety across different times, places and situations within the community;
- perceived changes in local crime across a specified period; and
- the effectiveness of existing or proposed strategies to improve safety and prevent crime.

However, community safety surveys often only provide information on perceptions of safety. Research has found that the fear of crime may remain stable even when actual levels of offending change and that the fear of crime may exceed the demonstrated likelihood of people becoming victims of crime (Davis & Dossetor 2010). These limitations of perception-based surveys need to be borne in mind when considering the results and observations they produce.

The present research

The present research sought to fulfil two aims. The first was to generate information about community safety issues in a range of selected Indigenous communities. The second was to produce a research tool and methodology that would then be available as a resource to Indigenous communities and the organisations that work in and with them.

Through the use of community safety surveys, focus groups and individual consultations, the research aimed to gather indicative data and generate information on social problems influencing community safety, temporal and situational determinants of safety, respondents' feelings of personal safety, perceptions of personal safety for others in the community and perceptions of help-seeking behaviour among victims of violence. Importantly, the research also sought to generate information on positive measures and initiatives being undertaken in communities to improve community safety. In this way, the research aimed to not merely identify problems but to investigate solutions to them and to contribute to a greater understanding of Indigenous community safety issues.

The surveys and consultations also contributed to the second aim of the research—producing a research tool and methodology. The phase one form of the survey provided a focus for generating discussion about the usefulness of the questionnaire as a tool for use by community groups and ways the questionnaire could be improved. These discussions took place through focus group and individual discussions conducted with Indigenous community members, Indigenous representatives and those providing services to them. Many of the service providers were themselves Indigenous, as detailed in the section on demographics below.

The input from respondents and participants, and the results from the phase one survey, led to the development of a revised form of the questionnaire, referred to as the phase two survey throughout this report. It is an intended outcome of this work that Indigenous community representatives and organisations, and other organisations that work with or provide services to Indigenous communities, will be able to use this questionnaire, together with guidelines for its use to be developed by the AIC, as practical resources to contribute to the development of initiatives and solutions to improve community safety.

Service providers' perceptions

This research draws primarily on the perceptions of people providing services to Indigenous communities. Some of these service providers are Indigenous and have come to their roles as members of the communities in which they live and work. Others have moved to the communities to do their job. Some individuals live within the safety

survey communities and others live elsewhere and provide services to communities on a visiting outreach basis. Questions in the demographic section of the survey asked respondents to indicate how long they had lived in Indigenous communities, how long they had worked in roles providing services to Indigenous communities and whether they provided services on a resident (ie while living in the community) or outreach basis.

The decision to base the research on service providers' perceptions was the result of a number of considerations. The community safety perceptions of people providing services to Indigenous communities have not previously been investigated through empirical research and, as such, they are a previously un-researched group of participants. While the perceptions of service providers may not necessarily be the same as those of other community members, and are not intended through this research to provide a proxy for those other views, they are nonetheless a legitimate source of information about community safety issues. Service providers are exposed to safety issues in the communities through their work and, if they live in the community, through other aspects of daily life. They will have perceptions about their own safety

and the safety of particular places and situations, as well as social problems that impact on safety. While the perceptions of service providers may differ from those of others in the community, the perceptions of some members of the community will in any case differ from those of others. Elders, for instance, are likely to have different perceptions than those of young people. Investigating the perceptions of service providers has equivalent informative value to that of investigating any other segment of the community. Most service providers, particularly those in health and justice roles, are also uniquely placed through their roles to broadly see the contributors to, and consequences of, community safety-related problems and have insights into solutions.

While the survey questionnaire is designed to investigate the perceptions of service providers, it could be readily adapted to use with community members and/or community organisations as well as employers such as government agencies and community-based organisations. With modification, the questionnaire could be adapted for other uses, or for use with other populations (eg culturally- and linguistically-diverse communities).

Survey design and focus groups

Developing the questionnaire

The phase one survey questionnaire developed for this project aimed to gather information about a range of aspects of community safety across urban, rural and remote communities, including:

- issues and behaviours perceived to constitute the main community safety problems;
- community safety-related services available, or needed, in the community;
- perceptions of relative safety for the respondent and others in the community;
- times and places when the community becomes more or less safe;
- initiatives put into place to address community safety concerns; and
- help-seeking behaviour following violent victimisation and reasons for not reporting violence.

The questionnaire was developed taking into account input from a range of sources, including:

- participants at a roundtable workshop conducted by the AIC, including representatives from an Aboriginal justice advisory group, key stakeholders, researchers and representatives of a range of government bodies involved with Indigenous issues;

- comments from a small number of key stakeholders and academics;
- the literature on violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities; and
- published community safety surveys and their results.

Many of the questions were drawn from, or based on, questions in published surveys (ABS 2005a, 2005b, 1998, 1996; Challice & Johnson 2005; Delahunty & Putt 2006; Forbes Shire Council 2006; National Research Institute 2005; Surrey Heath Borough Council 2007). A copy of the phase one questionnaire is at *Appendix A*.

Methodology

To facilitate engagement with a range of Indigenous communities, involvement was sought from consultant researchers with the skills, knowledge, background and contacts to consult with local Indigenous organisations and secure the involvement of service providers. Expressions of interest were sought, and discussions held, with potential consultants from a range of organisations within health, legal and academic fields. Those engaged to do the work were:

- a criminological researcher with extensive experience working on Indigenous justice issues, particularly in Western Australia; and

- a national child protection organisation, represented primarily through a senior officer, who has worked closely with many service providers throughout the Northern Territory, including remote Indigenous communities.

The consultant criminological researcher undertook phase one surveying, individual interviews and focus groups in the Kimberley area of Western Australia and North Queensland; the work in Western Australia was assisted by a local Indigenous woman. Across these two states, surveys, interviews and focus groups were conducted in:

- two regional centres;

- three remote townships; and

- two remote communities.

Staff of the child protection organisation undertook phase one surveying, individual interviews and focus groups in a number of areas of the Northern Territory (central and northern Australia), including:

- an urban area;

- two small regional towns/centres; and

- two remote communities.

All fieldwork activities were undertaken following consultation with a range of local Aboriginal-controlled organisations involved in community safety issues, including health-related organisations, and with the assistance of local Aboriginal people.

As discussed below, following the phase one survey, a range of changes were made to the survey questionnaire and a follow-up surveying phase was conducted. Focus groups were not held during this phase but during visits to communities, individual service providers were asked to complete the survey. For this phase of the research, the consultant researcher visited a number of areas in the central and northern areas of the Northern Territory, north Queensland and the Kimberley region of Western Australia, including:

- three large towns/regional centres;

- two small towns; and

- two remote communities.

These visits included town camps. Further surveys were distributed online through a number of areas of New South Wales.

Focus group participants

Focus group participants and individuals consulted during the phase one period comprised a broad range of service providers involved in areas of service provision to Indigenous people, including:

- general health and medical;

- justice (including community and night patrols);

- child protection;

- aged care;

- drug and alcohol; and

- refuge services.

While some other key service providers, such as police and welfare workers, participated through the completion of survey questionnaires, attempts to involve them in focus groups were unsuccessful due to time constraints. The range of service providers covered included Indigenous community-owned and community-controlled organisations, other non-government organisations and government agencies at local, state, territory and Commonwealth levels.

A total of 27 people participated in focus groups held in remote townships in Western Australia, with a number of others interviewed individually or in small groups of two or three in the remote communities. Service providers involved in consultations within two of the remote townships provided outreach services to other remote communities in the region, effectively extending the coverage of the surveying activity into those areas.

One focus group was held in far north Queensland, involving 10 people. Other service providers were interviewed, individually or in small groups, in a small town and remote communities. Service providers involved in consultations provided outreach services to several remote communities on the Cape York Peninsula.

It was estimated that the 37 people involved in the larger focus groups in Queensland and Western Australia covered just over half of all service providers in the relevant areas.

A total of 33 people participated in focus groups and interviews in the Northern Territory across eight communities. These included urban areas, regional centres and remote communities. Focus group participants included senior and younger Indigenous women, members of night patrols, children's services and women's shelter workers, health services staff and traditional owners.

Surveys

Ethics approval to conduct surveys was granted by the AIC Research Ethics Committee, after some modification to the methodology and questionnaire design originally proposed, and also by the West Australian Aboriginal Research Ethics Committee. The informed consent of focus group, consultation and survey participants was achieved through a plain English statement that accompanied the questionnaire and was read out to focus groups and those involved in individual consultations. The statement emphasised that participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The phase one survey questionnaire was produced in hardcopy and electronic formats. The consultants distributed copies of the hardcopy surveys during field trips. The consultants also made contact with service providers by telephone and email and distributed links to an internet address where the survey could be completed online.

Approximately 120 hardcopies of the survey were distributed during field trips to the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. An estimated 200 email messages were sent by the child protection organisation to workers in relevant service provision organisations in the Northern Territory. The email invitations also covered services in some communities not covered through field visits.

During the phase two work, a smaller number of surveys were distributed. The consultant researcher sought participation in the survey from service providers in the communities visited, requesting they be completed at the time or returned by mail. Members of the NSW Aboriginal Community Justice Groups were also invited to complete the survey online.

Some surveys, in both hardcopy and online versions, were received partly completed and with insufficient useable data to be included in the analysis. A total of 159 useable surveys were received, 85 (53%) from the phase one survey and 74 (47%) from phase two. Of the total useable surveys, 104 (65%) were in hardcopy and 55 (35%) were completed online. Given the method of distribution, it is not possible to calculate the response rate, although based on estimates of the number of online versions of the survey distributed via email, it can be estimated that the online surveys had a response rate somewhere below 20 percent and possibly well under that rate. It can be estimated that the response rate for hardcopy surveys was higher than that. Factors contributing to the low response rate for online surveys and the likely higher rate for hardcopy surveys, and their implications for further survey-based work on this topic, are discussed below.

Methodological issues arising from the phase one study

Online/electronic surveying and Indigenous communities

As noted above, the survey response rate in this research cannot be determined with any accuracy. This is particularly so for the online version of the survey, for which the response rate appears to be lower than the hardcopy response rate. While some reviews suggest that web-based survey response rates are considerably lower than those for surveys delivered in other forms, this was disputed in a meta-analysis of experimental comparisons between web-based and other survey modes (Lozar Manfreda et al. 2005). Other studies have found no significant differences between the use of web-based survey and a mailed hardcopy questionnaire (if both were preceded by an advance mail notification), with both producing response rates of around 30 percent (Kaplowitz et al. 2004). Another study compared response rates among health education professionals sent either an email survey (43% response rate), or an email asking them to go to a web page to complete a survey (48% response rate), finding no significant difference between the two modes. While the number of responses received for the phase one survey and the methodology used

do not allow the online and hardcopy response rates to be directly compared, information gained through previous research gives some insights into the differences.

There are several reasons why online surveying may be a relatively ineffective way of surveying Indigenous communities, both for the present research and future applications of web-based surveys for communities. Electronic forms of communication can be somewhat impersonal, compared with face-to-face or telephone contact. Having a more personal form of contact is likely to be important when seeking responses from Indigenous communities, especially when the respondents are traditional Indigenous people. Indigenous languages have traditionally been verbal and unwritten and Indigenous people tend to be more comfortable giving information in a more personal manner. Service providers living and working in remote areas are likely to experience a degree of social isolation and to have demanding workloads, which may make them reluctant to respond to requests from anonymous, centrally-based researchers.

Through the impacts of colonisation and other elements of Indigenous and mainstream interaction, Indigenous people may have a distrust of government agencies and researchers, particularly when they are not able to connect with researchers directly. Within this project, engaging consultant researchers with extensive knowledge and experience of the communities they were accessing seemed to be an important contributor to their ability to gain the support and involvement of key local Indigenous stakeholders and to involve a high proportion of local service providers as respondents and focus group participants.

Direct face-to-face engagement by the consultants was able to increase the response rate for the hardcopy surveys in one sense, through securing the involvement of service providers who may not have responded in other forms. At the same time, this tended to reduce responses as it led to respondents sometimes spending lengthy periods of time discussing and critiquing the survey and talking through community safety issues with the consultant. However, this provided clear value for phase one of the project.

Sampling method

It is acknowledged that this research used a convenience method of sampling that is not representative either of the diversity or range of Indigenous communities in Australia or the service providers working with them. Consultant researchers selected communities to visit based on an attempt to achieve a general cross-section of remote, rural and urban locations. The precise locations were selected based on considerations of locations the researchers were familiar with, had connections with and especially in the case of the child protection organisation, locations they had planned to visit in the pursuit of their normal operations. The selection of remote and rural communities was also influenced by accessibility. Some communities are very difficult to physically access at certain times of the year, mainly during wet seasons when roads to and from the community may be impassable. At particular times, communities and people within them may also be inaccessible to visitors due to cultural business and activities, whether regular and scheduled or irregular and unpredictable, such as when funerals are being held.

The selection of service providers to be surveyed, and community representatives to be included in focus groups and individual consultations, was also based on a convenience sample. This took into account people who were known to the consultant researchers and who were available during the very limited times the researchers were in each location. While the consultant researchers set out to achieve as diverse a cross-section of service providers as they could in each location, this was not always possible. In remote and rural communities, some service providers were either not in the community at the time of the visit or were otherwise occupied. In urban areas and larger centres there was somewhat more flexibility for the researchers to arrange consultations and focus groups, but given the greater range of organisations providing services in these larger areas, a smaller proportion of service providers was able to be covered.

Community diversity

Recognition of the diversity that exists across and between Indigenous communities is an important

consideration in assessing the findings of this report, or using the survey questionnaire. Such diversity was highlighted by focus group participants from far north Queensland, who noted the Indigenous population of that area includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people. They referred to differences in the historical experience of ATSI people and how this related to community safety issues. Participants noted that Torres Strait Islander (TSI) communities had not experienced cultural dispossession or been subject to child-removal policies in the same way as Aboriginal people. However, the traditional cultures of the Torres Strait had been damaged through colonisation and while TSI family structures were seen as very strong, they were under threat from cultural, social and economic changes as well as impacts on gender, age and clan structures.

Developing the phase two survey

Revising the phase one questionnaire content

A primary aim of the focus group discussions, as well as the individual discussions undertaken by the consultants was to gain feedback from stakeholders on the format and content of the survey questionnaire. Discussions were directed towards identifying ways in which the questionnaire might need to be modified to reflect the circumstances and concerns of Indigenous communities and to ensure the questionnaire would have ongoing utility and relevance as a crime prevention tool. Reports provided by each of the consultants were examined as a basis for improving the tool, together with observations made by the author when analysing the data gained through the phase one phase of the study. Modifications made to the questionnaire are described below, arranged by the relevant sections of the instrument.

Social problems

The phase one questionnaire contained a list of 16 social problems and respondents were asked to indicate whether each of these was *not a*

problem, *a small problem* or *a big problem*. There was also an option of *don't know* for each problem, as well as capacity to enter *other* problems. Most of the problems listed were crime-related, covering major types of violent and property crimes, property damage, alcohol and drug misuse and misuse of motor vehicles. The list also included *neglect of children*, *teenage pregnancy* and *children not going to school*.

Feedback on the questionnaire identified ways in which some of the listed items needed to be changed as well as a range of additional social problems that impacted on community safety. Many of the additional problems identified were not crime related, but nonetheless were perceived to affect the ability of people to feel safe in their communities. The additional problems resulted in the list being expanded to 37 items, split across two separate sections:

- social problems—crime-related problems; and
- social problems—other social problems.

Some of the crime-related problems included in the original questionnaire were split to capture different manifestations of the problems, such as different forms of violence. One item, *disorderly conduct* was removed as being overly generic. Based on advice from the consultants, the list of crime-related problems was re-ordered to give priority to the issues identified by stakeholders as most important and relevant to Indigenous communities.

The item *sexual assault (of adults)* was changed to *women being raped/forced to have sex*, based largely on research indicating that many people do not consider forced or pressured sex within marriage to constitute sexual assault (eg Taylor & Putt 2007). A category of *girls being raped/forced to have sex* was also included to reflect reports that some Indigenous girls agree to having sex, not because they want to, but because they realise that resistance will likely be met with violence (eg Mullighan 2008). Some other crime-related problems, including *physical abuse of children* and *sly grogging/grog running*, were added based directly on feedback provided by the consultants.

An issue to note for any further development of the survey was that these categories excluded recognition of the sexual assault of male victims,

including boys, as a problem. Inquiries have produced evidence of widespread, increasing and generally unreported sexual abuse of boys in some communities (Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce 2006; Robertson 2000). It will be important to try and capture indications of the extent of this problem in future surveys.

In analysing results from the phase one surveys, the author noted that the three options available did not allow respondents much scope to indicate how much of a problem each was in the relevant community. If a problem did exist (ie was not considered to be *not a problem*), respondents could only indicate whether it was a small or big problem. The available options were expanded to a five point Likert scale with the options *1—not a problem*, *2—minor problem*, *3—moderate problem*, *4—serious problem*, *5—very serious problem*. The option of *don't know* was also available in the revised questionnaire.

The same five point Likert scale was used for the question on *social problems—other social problems*. This list was derived almost entirely from information gained during focus group discussions as well as observations made by the author when analysing free-text included in phase one responses and considering literature, such as reports of major inquiries into violence and child sexual abuse (eg Mullighan 2008, Wild & Anderson 2007). The list includes items that may not directly affect community safety, in the way that behaviour such as violence might, but can contribute to community dysfunction leading to problems more directly related to community safety. In some cases, the issues are not criminal in nature but directly impact on community safety. For instance, dangerous dogs were raised by a number of focus group participants and survey respondents as an issue as dogs have killed or injured people in a number of communities (eg Jenkin 2008). Other respondents and participants noted the need to include commonly seen problems such as *humbugging*, a term referring to the practice of aggressive and sometimes violent demands for money, food, cigarettes and other items from family and friends, as well as public begging and demands for sex. Some noted that especially in towns and larger centres with mixed communities, problems such as disorderly behaviour or theft are just as likely or more likely to be caused by non-Indigenous people.

The item *teenage pregnancy* from the original list was changed to *girls having babies too young*, based on observations from the literature, consultant's comments and recognition of differences in age profiles and perceptions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It was also noted that the term *teenage* covered girls above and below the age of consent. Information gained by the consultants indicated that some girls were having babies at an age where they did not have the knowledge, education or life experience to care for them properly.

Community strengths

One of the principles underlying the research and development of the questionnaire as a resource for Indigenous communities was that the focus on community safety be primarily positive in nature. This was based on observations from a broad range of crime prevention and community development materials developed from Indigenous perspectives, as well as advice received during consultations for the current research (see Dodson 2006; Homel, Lincoln & Herd 1999; Lawrence 2007).

This research therefore aimed to develop a resource that would help to draw on community strengths and resilience and provide support for the efforts of Indigenous people to improve safety in their communities. The inclusion of a question about initiatives that were *making a difference* was one reflection of this aim, as well as the development of questions that would suggest solutions to some of the issues identified through the research.

Feedback provided by the consultants indicated that the original survey did not adequately achieve this aim as it did not allow enough scope to indicate possible solutions. While the addition of a much longer list of social problems in the revised questionnaire reflected feedback gained by the consultants, it also became apparent to the author that the long list of problems at the beginning of the questionnaire tended to orient it towards a negative emphasis and was likely to give respondents a negative view of the questionnaire's intended purpose.

In the revised questionnaire, the questions on social problems were preceded by a question on

community strengths, which asked respondents to identify up to five of the 'best' things about living in the community and the community's strengths and positive features. This question was loosely based on the survey used in a study comparing problems and strengths in two rural NSW towns, each with a large Indigenous community (Jobes, Donnermeyer & Barclay 2005). In that study, a closed list of options was given, allowing comparisons between the towns. As the current study did not seek to make comparisons between communities, the question was presented with five free-text fields without limits, giving respondents the best opportunity to reflect on positive aspects of their community.

Services available in the community

The original questionnaire used in phase one of this study provided respondents with a list of 14 services that might be available in the community. Information gained during phase one, as well as the author's observations during analysis of the phase one results, suggested the need for some clarification and expansion of the nominated services. In particular, the item *safe house* was expanded to include *women's refuge/safe house*, *men's refuge/safe house* and *children's refuge/safe house* to more accurately capture the different types of services that might be available. Other services added to the list included *Aboriginal legal service* in addition to *legal aid* from the original list, *community justice group*, *men's group* and *women's group*. As a result, the revised questionnaire contains 21 listed services, as well as spaces for adding up to three *other* services.

The options available against each service were also expanded in the revised questionnaire to support the community-building principles of the research and give respondents a greater sense of having contributed to possible solutions to community safety problems. Rather than merely the option of *not available* in the original questionnaire, respondents to the revised questionnaire who indicated the service was not available could at the same time indicate whether the service was a necessary one by indicating it was *not needed*, a *minor need* or a *major need*. There was also a further option of *don't know* incorporated into the revised questionnaire.

How safe is this community?

The original questionnaire asked respondents how safe they felt while in different situations in the community, such as doing their job, walking alone in the local area and being at home. For each of these, separate items asked about safety in these situations during the day and at night. In the revised questionnaire, these items were retained, with the addition of an item about socialising after dark as focus group and individual discussions indicated this was a further situation that might raise safety concerns. The five item Likert scale, ranging from *very safe* to *very unsafe* was retained, but a numerical scale (1 to 5) was embedded in these options for ease and clarity. The option *don't know/ not applicable* was retained.

The revised version of the questionnaire included the categories of boys and girls, to differentiate the perceived safety issues of younger children from those of teenagers.

Reasons for feeling safe

To further lend a positive orientation to the survey and more effectively meet its aim of identifying community strengths and resilience, an additional question was added to determine reasons why respondents may feel safe and protected in the community. This question asked those who answered *very safe* or a *bit safe* in some of the personal safety scenarios to identify the things that helped them feel safe. The possible reasons were drawn from the focus group and individual consultations as well as from comments made on completed phase one questionnaires and on the author's consideration of the literature.

Reasons for feeling unsafe

A question in the original questionnaire asked respondents who had indicated that they felt a *bit unsafe* or *very unsafe* in any of the personal safety situations to identify why they felt unsafe. Twelve possible reasons for feeling unsafe, such as because the respondent had been a victim of violent or property crime, or because of crimes and disturbances occurring in the local area, were given as options. There was also space to add additional reasons.

In the revised version, the list of options was expanded from 12 to 15 items to incorporate some issues arising during focus group and individual consultations. The additional items related to the possibility of alcohol-related violence, the possibility of there being many people in the community with serious problems and the possibility that respondents may find it generally a dangerous community to live in.

Where and when is it unsafe?

Both the phase one and revised versions of the questionnaire asked respondents to identify areas of the community they thought were unsafe as well as times of the day and days of the week that were most unsafe. These questions and options were unchanged for the revised questionnaire, other than a minor clarification to the option where respondents could indicate they considered no areas of the community to be unsafe and an added option for respondents to indicate more clearly if they thought no days of the week were more or less safe than others. The hardcopy version of the revised questionnaire was also reformatted to allow more space for respondents to indicate any particular times of the year or events that made the community less safe.

Making a difference

An important area of amendment in the revised questionnaire was around the question *making a difference*, which sought in the phase one version to identify positive things that had been done in the community to deal with problems like violence and child abuse. The phase one version had a list of 15 initiatives. Some of these covered situational crime prevention, which involves measures that focus on changing the immediate environment where crime occurs to make it more difficult or risky and less rewarding to commit crimes; this may be achieved, for instance, by increasing physical security (Clarke 1997). Other initiatives in the questionnaire covered community-owned measures, welfare and justice services, facilities and activities, including cultural activities. Respondents could choose any or all of these options or add others in free-text forms to indicate what positive things had been done in the community.

Through the focus group and individual discussions, as well as comments made by the consultants and comments added to completed phase one questionnaires, it became apparent that this question was not effectively achieving its aim. It was apparent that some respondents were unclear as to whether they should be indicating initiatives that had already been put in place or initiatives that *should* be in place. Some questionnaire respondents marked every one of the 15 initiatives, suggesting they thought that all of them were things that could, or should, be done rather than things that had actually been done. The consultants reported that some discussion participants felt the question did not allow them the capacity to indicate what they saw as priorities for change in the community and what would give them a sense of contributing to change or 'making a difference'. Even in cases where respondents clearly understood that the question was asking about initiatives that had been put in place, merely ticking those off did not allow them to indicate whether the initiative was an effective one or whether it was an area in which further change was needed. Participants and respondents also indicated a range of other areas in which initiatives might be needed, beyond the 15 listed.

For the revised questionnaire, the list of possible initiatives was expanded to 23 items. The wording of most of the options was also amended to better reflect them as possible initiatives or areas for change, rather than initiatives that were in place. The revised version of the question also incorporated a four point Likert scale, ranging from *1—no need for change— effective measures are already in place*, through to minor and moderate needs for change to *4—major need for change—this is a high priority need and no effective measures are in place*. An option of *don't know/not applicable* was also included.

To build on the positive aims of the survey and give respondents more opportunity to show ways in which communities were solving their own problems, gain a sense of ownership and contribute to change, three further questions were included, asking respondents in free-text form to:

- identify three to five positive things the community had done in the last two years to improve community safety and deal with community problems;

- suggest the three main priorities for improving safety in the community; and

- suggest the help or resources the community might need to address these problems.

Seeking help

A series of questions in the phase one questionnaire sought to identify the likelihood of Indigenous victims of violence turning to various persons or services to report the incident or seek help. Separate questions asked who men, women and children were likely to turn to for help. A further question asked how likely Indigenous people experiencing each of three forms of violence (family violence, sexual assault and other violence/assault) would be to report the incident to police. Another question asked respondents to indicate, through a checklist, reasons why an Indigenous female victim of violence might not report to police.

This section of the questionnaire was amended primarily due to comments made on completed phase one surveys and some difficulties the author experienced in interpreting responses. While respondents could indicate which services or people a victim would be likely to report to, there was no capacity to indicate how likely the victim would be to report to each of the services or people, other than the police (through the separate question). The lists of possible sources of help did not include a number that might be important in an Indigenous community, such as elders and strong men or women, men's or women's groups, community police, night patrols and community justice groups or a shelter/refuge/ safe house. Having been based on community safety surveys developed for mainstream communities, the list included *employer* and *colleagues*, which seemed only marginally relevant to many of the target communities and failed to include the community-owned services mentioned above or family violence and legal aid services.

In recognition of comments and observations that women's help-seeking behaviour may be different in sexual assault cases than in family violence cases (for a range of cultural and other reasons), separate questions were included for each of these categories of violence, rather than having one question to cover both. For each of the women's, men's and children's questions, the question was also clarified to refer to

serious violence, in recognition that less serious violence is less likely to be reported and this may distort the overall findings.

The question asking reasons why an Indigenous female victim of violence may choose not to report the violence was expanded and clarified to include seeking help from other agencies. This reflects the observation from the phase one results and the literature that violence is generally very much under-reported to police. By expanding the field of inquiry to other agencies, the revised questionnaire aimed to capture a broader range of reasons for not reporting. The list of possible reasons was also expanded from 15 to 22 items.

To allow results to be interpreted with greater precision and clarity, each of the questions in the help-seeking section was adapted to include a Likert scale. For those questions assessing the likelihood of different categories of victim turning to various sources of help, a four point scale was used and the question on reasons for women not seeking help included a three point scale. A *don't know* option was also available. A free-text field was also included to allow respondents to indicate other common or likely reasons for not reporting or seeking help.

Demographics

Questions in the phase one questionnaire covering the sex and Indigenous status of the respondent, their service provision role, the duration of their experience in service provision roles and the number of remote Indigenous communities they had worked in or with, were not amended between the phase one and revised versions of the questionnaire. The question asking what type of service the respondent or their organisation provided was expanded from 14 to 20 listed services, with the added services reflecting those most commonly added by phase one respondents using the free-text *other* option. The question asking how the service was delivered was amended to allow for respondents to indicate both *located in the community/town* and *outreach to a region*, rather than just one of these. While the online version of the phase one questionnaire only allowed one option to be selected, a number of respondents who completed hardcopy questionnaires during phase one selected both options, suggesting it was viable for the service to be delivered in both modalities.

Conclusion—amendments to survey

The amendments included in the revised version of the survey allowed it to better reflect community safety issues and concerns in Indigenous communities, provide for more precise and more easily interpreted results, give respondents a greater sense of having made a positive contribution to building community safety initiatives and make the survey more practical and relevant as a community safety resource. The consultants who ran phase one of the survey and accompanying consultations each separately advised that the revised version effectively captured the issues raised during consultations.

In achieving the positive elements of the revision, the survey also became more complex and took longer to complete. Whereas the phase one version typically took about 15 minutes to complete,

the revised version took 30 minutes or, for some respondents, considerably longer. While there is now more information to be provided, this is offset, at least to an extent, by the greater clarity in the questions.

To gauge the reactions of respondents to the revised version of the survey, as well as to generate a set of responses for analysis, the consultant criminologist was again engaged to deliver the phase two survey in regional, rural and remote locations of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. Sixty-one surveys were fully or mostly completed and a further 18 surveys were started but not completed. This survey was distributed in hardcopy (n=59) and electronic (n=20) formats. The phase two survey is provided in *Appendix B*.

Results from surveys and focus groups

In this section, the results of the phase one and phase two surveys will be presented through an examination of the survey data, together with perceptions and insights gained through focus groups and individual consultations. As discussed in the *Methodology* section, changes were made to the survey questionnaire between the phase one and phase two surveys. Where possible, results from the two phases have been combined in these results. For questions that did not alter in form, the results have been added and presented together. Where options appeared in one phase but not another, this is noted in the text and tables and percentages are based only on the number of respondents in the relevant phase. In some cases, where the response scale changed between the phases, for instance from a three point to a five point scale, results from the phases have been aggregated as explained for each relevant question. In other cases, the results from the two phases have been presented separately for reasons explained in the part of the section covering the relevant question. Due to rounding, percentages reported in this section may not total 100.

Demographics

Types of communities

The 159 partially and fully completed surveys covered a range of Indigenous community types. The survey aimed to cover remote, rural and urban Indigenous communities. Some 31 percent of the completed surveys (n=50) related to remote Indigenous communities (small communities of generally fewer than 1,000 people, in remote areas and with majority Indigenous populations), 23 percent (n=36) related to small country towns (towns with a population of fewer than 10,000) and 35 percent (n=56) related to large towns, regional centres or cities (with populations over 10,000). Surveys relating to town camps—11 in total—were classified according to the town they were located in, or adjacent to. Eleven percent (n=17) of communities were not identified by type.

State/territory

One hundred and forty-five surveys included an indication of the state or territory in which the subject community was located, through inclusion of a postcode and/or the name of the community. Of

these, 56 communities (39%) were in the Northern Territory, 44 (30%) were in Western Australia, 26 (18%) were in Queensland and 19 responses (13%) came from New South Wales.

Sex

The majority of survey respondents were female (n=97, 61%); 47 respondents (30%) were male; and 15 respondents did not indicate their sex.

Indigenous status

The majority of those participating in focus groups across the jurisdictions were Indigenous. In the Northern Territory, 30 of the 33 participants (91%) were Indigenous.

Among those completing the survey questionnaire, 48 people (30%) identified as Aboriginal, five people as TSI and four people as both Aboriginal and TSI. Eighty-five respondents (53%) identified as non-Indigenous, while 17 respondents did not indicate their Indigenous status.

Type and mode of service delivered

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of service their organisation provides to the Indigenous community. Respondents were able to select as many of the listed options as they wished, and/or indicate a non-listed service in free-text form. A total of 459 responses were submitted by the 159 respondents. The selection of multiple options may suggest many respondents were from generalist services that provide a range of forms of direct assistance and referrals to other agencies, particularly in rural and remote communities where direct service options may be limited.

As indicated in Table 1, the greatest number of respondents worked in organisations that delivered health care as part of their service, while the next most common types of service were victim support and sexual assault support. The 45 responses in the 'other/miscellaneous' category included family and domestic violence counselling, youth services, refuge/crisis accommodation, childcare and court/legal services. While the range and frequency of services covered necessarily reflects the organisations

accessed by the consultants, in turn reflecting their individual contacts, it does give an indication of the types of services provided to Indigenous communities and suggests the phase one survey reached quite a large proportion of the available service types. One service type not well accessed was Australian Government and local shire staff, who could provide valuable sources of information for any future iterations of the survey.

Table 1 Types of services delivered	
Type of service	**n**
Health	44
Victim support	39
Sexual assault service/support	37
Substance abuse/rehabilitation	32
Indigenous cultural support	31
Allied health	29
Emergency services	26
Aged care	25
Child welfare	24
Adult learning	21
Legal aid	20
Mental health	17
School education	14
Adult corrections/juvenile justice	10
State/territory police	10
Recreation activities	9
Night patrols	8
Community justice group	7
Housing	7
Income support	4
Other/miscellaneous	45
Total	459

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one [computer file]

In all, 136 respondents (86%) indicated how their service was delivered. A total of 80 respondents (59%) indicated the service was located in the community, while 22 (16%) said it was provided by outreach and 34 respondents (25%) identified in-community and outreach service provision. Of the 89 hardcopy responses, 41 (46%) said the service was located in the community, 15 (17%) said it was

provided by outreach and 33 (37%) selected both in-community and outreach provision. Most of the 47 online responses showed the service was located in the community (n=39; 83%) with seven (15%) indicating provision by outreach and one service indicating both forms of service provision.

Respondents were asked how long they had worked providing services to Indigenous communities, both to communities overall and to the specific community they were answering in relation to. Overall experience ranged from two months to 35 years, although the sample demonstrated that the majority of service providers were generally quite experienced, having an average of just over 10.5 years experience (median of 9 years experience) in the field. Experience in the specific community ranged from six weeks to 28 years, with an average of just under eight years and a median of five years.

Service provider respondents were also asked how many Indigenous communities they had worked in, or with. The number of communities ranged from one to 100, with a mean of 8.4 and a median of five communities. More than two-thirds of respondents said they had worked in, or with, more than one Indigenous community.

Community strengths

Survey respondents, during the second phase of the study, were asked to identify what they thought were the best things about living in their community—the community's strengths and positive features. Space was provided for up to five free-text responses. The majority of the 79 respondents who gave answers to this question identified multiple strengths and positive features, giving a total of 219 responses.

The greatest proportion of responses (34%) reflected the value placed on interpersonal relationships and community connections. These responses focused on being in close proximity to friends, relatives and community elders and emphasised feeling strong ties to the community because of a shared cultural identity. One respondent identified valuing the sense of 'togetherness, [being] part of a whole'.

Some responses indicated that one of the strengths of the community was its 'small town feel', where everyone knows everyone else and there is a good environment to raise a family. Respondents noted the presence of good, friendly, hospitable people who care for each other. For example, one person stated 'I love the people, they're honest, giving, caring [and] live very simple lives—I love it'.

These respondents also described the commitment of community members to bringing about social improvements, through their ability to help one another and work together to resolve issues. One respondent stated that in their community there is 'a core group of people who are strong in their commitment to the betterment of life in the community'. Many respondents described people helping one another and sharing resources including food and accommodation or offering assistance with childcare. As one person noted, there is 'diversity and good will that exist[s] within the community to overcome complex issues'.

Other responses focused on the location of the community, its landscape and nature. Some respondents described the community's isolation from other areas as a positive feature. Where respondents nominated an aspect of the environment as a strength of the community, it was generally in the context of physical aspects of the environment, rather than cultural or spiritual aspects, although a number identified connections to country and people living on their land as positive features.

A few responses to this question focused on the presence of law and justice initiatives and improvements to local governance or internal politics arrangements. Individual respondents noted the presence of more Indigenous people in law enforcement and other government roles, improvements to the relationship between police and local community members, having a 'motivated council' and that a 'new council has given strength, confidence and optimism to people'. These respondents also drew attention to the way government and non-government service providers work with the community members and each other to achieve positive benefits for the community.

Given that the survey respondents were service providers, it is not surprising that some of the responses focused on the support they provide as a strength of the community. These respondents noted specific support services they deliver, as well as access to a general range of activities including shopping areas, sporting events and religious services. Some of these respondents noted the strength of the working relationships between service providers and the community, or the strong service-system networks that have been established. One respondent noted that, within their community, there are 'many opportunities for interesting and rewarding work'.

One theme that emerged strongly was the emphasis by many of the non-Indigenous respondents on positive aspects of Indigenous community residents, such as honesty, generosity, caring for each other and resilience. While it is not necessarily surprising that those who work providing services to Indigenous people will have positive views of those they work and live with, these views nonetheless provide a balance to the negative perceptions that exist in the broader community and suggest positive factors that may be leveraged in reducing the problems of violence and dysfunction that exist in many Indigenous communities.

Crime and other social problems

Based on a review of the literature on Indigenous violence and crime, the survey questionnaires presented a range of social problems that were anticipated to impact on safety in Indigenous communities.

The identified criminal and other social problems are shown in Table 2 in descending order of perceived seriousness. For the purpose of presenting the combined survey results, items rated as a *small problem* in the phase one study were combined with those rated as *minor* or *moderate* problems in the phase two survey and items rated as *big* problems were combined with those rated as *serious* or *very serious*. For ease of reading, the combined results of a *bit serious* and *very serious* are referred to as *major* problems in this section.

There were some broad differences in the main problems identified by phase one respondents, in contrast to phase two respondents. At least three-quarters of respondents to the phase one survey identified children not going to school/truancy (80%; n=67), illegal drugs, public drunkenness, violence between adults and family violence (75%; n=64 for each) as serious community problems. In the phase two survey, three-quarters or more of respondents identified overcrowded homes (90%; n=65) and public drunkenness/misuse of alcohol (75%; n=54) as serious problems, with smaller proportions nominating young people being out unsupervised at night (72%; n=52) and drunkenness/misuse of alcohol in homes (70%; n=39).

Overcrowding

With the survey results combined, the greatest proportion of respondents (90%) saw overcrowded homes as a serious or very serious problem, although this was only asked in phase two. This was the only social problem to be rated as very serious by a majority (68%) of respondents. Homelessness was nominated as a very serious problem by the second highest proportion of respondents (39%), although as a serious problem by a lower proportion (36%) than several other nominated problems.

Overcrowding may result from a shortage of appropriate housing for community residents and the impact of visitors, particularly family and kin, especially in the context of high rates of migration and movements for purposes such as funerals or other cultural business. While not directly a community safety problem, overcrowding has the potential to contribute to a range of safety problems. A number of writers have linked overcrowding and violence in Indigenous settings. For example, it has been suggested that overcrowding can set off a chain of disagreements, leading to emotional, financial and physical abuse (Bailie & Wayte 2006; Paulson cited in Cooper & Morris 2003). Various submissions to the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody gave evidence linking extreme overcrowding to behaviours such as child abuse, alcohol abuse, self-mutilation, suicide, family and interpersonal violence and aggression (RCIADIC 1991: 18.7.9, 18.7.11). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence to show whether overcrowding

Table 2 Perceived crime and other social problems, all communities

Type of problem	n	Not a problem %	Minor, moderate or small problem %	Serious, very serious or big problem %	Don't know %
Overcrowded homes[a]	72	1	7	90	1
Public drunkenness/misuse of alcohol	157	1	23	75	1
Young people out unsupervised at night[a]	72	0	25	72	3
Children not going to school	157	3	21	72	4
Violence within families	157	0	25	70	5
Drunkenness/misuse of alcohol in homes[b]	56	2	25	70	4
Children being neglected or not looked after properly	157	2	27	66	5
Mental health problems[a]	70	0	30	64	6
Violence between adults in public	157	0	34	62	4
Illegal drug use	156	2	31	62	5
Problem gambling[a]	73	1	27	62	10
Family/kin feuding[a]	72	1	35	61	3
Disorderly behaviour[c]	85	6	31	61	2
Homelessness[a]	69	4	28	61	7
Unlicensed/unregistered driving[a]	72	0	38	57	6
Girls having babies too young[d]	157	3	28	57	12
Jealous fighting[a]	72	0	38	56	7
Drunk driving[a]	71	3	39	55	3
Emotional abuse of children[a]	73	0	29	55	16
Young mothers not knowing how to care for children[a]	70	3	31	53	13
Damage to property, vandalism, graffiti	157	3	42	52	4
Loud parties or drinking sessions[a]	73	1	44	51	4
Problems caused by visitors[a]	72	6	39	50	6
Sexual abuse of children	156	3	31	42	24
Break & enter/theft from homes	154	7	43	42	8
Physical abuse of children[a]	69	1	42	42	14
Youth suicide[a]	73	10	37	42	11
Elder abuse[a]	73	10	40	38	12
Women being raped/forced to have sex	157	4	33	38	25
Humbugging[a]	71	3	52	37	8
Sly grogging/grog running[a]	69	12	33	36	19
Girls being raped/forced to have sex[a]	71	7	32	34	27
Hoon/dangerous/noisy driving	156	12	48	33	7
Dangerous dogs[a]	71	11	51	32	6
Robbery/stealing from people	155	8	51	31	10
Stealing cars	156	17	43	28	12
Young people trading sex (for drugs, money etc)[a]	71	7	30	25	38
Petrol/glue sniffing	154	27	42	18	14

a: phase two survey only

b: hard copy phase two survey only

c: phase one study only

d: includes *teenage pregnancy* from phase one

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

directly contributes to violence and child abuse, or how overcrowding influences the role of other causal factors such as alcohol use and existing family feuds and tensions.

Nonetheless, as a form of shelter, a basis for security and a base on which to build pro-social behaviours, such as employment and a stable lifestyle, housing is a fundamental human requirement. When overcrowding interferes with the basic purposes of housing, it may contribute to the development or exacerbation of disadvantage, personal stress and potentially antisocial behaviours. The high proportion of respondents who cited overcrowding as a serious or very serious social problem is an indication of how pressing the need appropriate housing for Indigenous Australians is perceived to be by service provider respondents.

Alcohol and other substance misuse

Drunkenness and the misuse of alcohol in public or at home were viewed as a major problem by 75 percent (n=118) and 70 percent (n=39; only asked in phase two) of respondents respectively. As noted above, illegal drugs were considered a big problem by 75 percent of respondents in phase one, but as a very serious problem by only 31 percent and serious by just 15 percent of phase two respondents.

A number of studies have pointed to the misuse of alcohol as being the major contributing factor to the high levels of violence seen in some Indigenous communities (eg Bryant & Willis 2008; Snowball & Weatherburn 2008; Wundersitz 2010). Sixty-two percent of respondents (n=97) pointed to illegal drug use as a serious or very serious problem, although this was cited by a much higher proportion of respondents in phase one (75%; n=64) than in phase two (46%; n=33). Research on the policing of illicit drug use in Indigenous communities has shown that while alcohol is the biggest substance problem facing Indigenous Australians, the use of some illicit drugs, particularly cannabis and amphetamines, is emerging as a serious issue in some communities (Delahunty & Putt 2006). In urban areas, the use of cannabis and other illicit drugs appears to be increasing among Indigenous people at the same time that it is decreasing in the broader community (Willis 2009). As detailed below, the present research

suggests that illegal drug use tends to be seen as a greater problem in urban Indigenous communities than in small towns or remote communities.

While only tentative conclusions can be drawn from these limited data, such varying perceptions may result from differences in the public behaviour that individual service providers are exposed to. Some communities will have less of a problem with alcohol use than others, some will have alcohol restrictions in place limiting consumption, while in some communities, drinking may tend to occur in private rather than public spaces.

Another potential explanation of the varying service provider perceptions is differences in the nature of their client group and the services they provide. As many respondents indicated their organisation provided a range of services across different fields, it is not possible to conclude from the available data whether there is any systematic variation in perceptions in relation to alcohol misuse across types of service providers or their fields of operation.

Young people—supervision and schooling

A large number (n=113; 72%) of respondents saw children not attending school, or truancy, as a serious or very serious problem for their community. One respondent, using the free-text options field, noted that only 150 of the 300 children in his community attended school. Focus group participants also discussed school attendance as a problem, suggesting that young people who did not attend school had little to do to keep them occupied and out of trouble and were experimenting with drugs as a result. While the reasons children did not attend school may be complex, answers in the free-text field referred to a lack of parental supervision and responsibility, and parental alcohol use, which could be factors underlying the large proportions of respondents who indicated children not attending school, young people being out unsupervised at night (72%; n=52) and neglect of children (n=103; 66%) as serious or very serious problems. In focus groups and consultations, concerns about young people being out at night were related to them being engaged in antisocial behaviours (including drug use) and their increased potential for victimisation and neglect.

A complexity that arises in interpreting this finding comes from observations made by one of the consultant researchers, who noted that the views of community members on some issues will differ from those of service providers, although in many cases, service providers will also be community members. This complexity arises for many of the issues covered by this survey and will be discussed in greater depth in the concluding section of the report. For example, parents and community members may consider attendance at ceremonies, funerals and other cultural business more important than attending school; this view may not be shared by teachers or other service providers. Another issue to note in interpreting any of these results is that there is enormous variation between communities and while some will have serious problems with certain issues or types of behaviour, others will not. The existence of a certain type of social problem in one Indigenous community does not in any way mean that it will necessarily exist in any other community.

Other problems considered 'very serious' or 'serious'

Mental health and problem gambling were each considered a very serious problem by the fourth highest proportion of respondents (36%), although a serious problem by a smaller proportion of respondents (29% and 26% respectively) than several other nominated problems. Family/kin feuding was considered a serious problem by 50 percent of respondents, although only 11 percent considered it a very serious problem. Similarly, jealous fighting was considered a serious problem by 40 percent of respondents, but a very serious problem by just 15 percent.

Less serious problems

The sniffing of inhalants, such as petrol or glue, was viewed as a major problem by just 18 percent of respondents, with 27 percent considered it to not be a problem at all in their community. A small proportion of respondents (6%) saw sniffing as more of a very serious problem than any of the other problems nominated in the questionnaire, followed by young people trading sex (7%), robbery/stealing

from people (7%) and stealing cars (8%). Stealing cars was viewed by 25 percent of phase one respondents as not a problem at all, although this was the view of only eight percent of phase two respondents. In phase one, 29 percent of respondents viewed stealing cars as a big problem; it was considered a serious problem by 18 percent and a very serious problem by nine percent in phase two. Across both phases, 12 percent of respondents considered dangerous driving and sly grogging/grog running not to be problems at all.

While non-sexual violent behaviours, such as family violence and violence between adults, were considered major problems by a majority of respondents, this was not the case for sexual offences such as sexual abuse of children (42%), woman being raped/forced to have sex (38%), girls being raped/forced to have sex (34%) and young people trading sex (for money, drugs or other goods; 25%). Abuse of elders was also considered a major problem by only a minority of respondents (38%). That serious offences such as these are considered less serious problems by service providers working in and with Indigenous communities than many of the non-criminal social problems listed in the questionnaire is open to a range of interpretations.

While bearing in mind that this survey examined perceptions, it is notable that sexual offences, particularly sexual abuse of children, are the types of offences on which a number of inquiries into Indigenous communities have focused (eg Gordon, Hallahan & Henry 2002; Mullighan 2008; Robertson 2000; Wild & Anderson 2007). They are also the issues that tend to get mainstream media attention. One possibility is that these behaviours simply do not occur in the communities surveyed to the extent they have been found to, or are believed to, elsewhere. Another possibility is that they do occur to a greater or lesser extent, but are not reported or otherwise made visible to service providers, perhaps due to the work roles of the service providers or barriers to service providers' awareness. These may result from differences in age profiles of service providers or different cultural viewpoints. As discussed later in this report, Indigenous victims of violence may be very reluctant to report or disclose victimisation to police or other agencies and other studies have found that as much as 90 percent of violent victimisation may go unreported (Robertson

2000; Taylor & Putt 2007). Barriers to disclosure, such as fear of reprisals or negative consequences, shame and distrust of police and other agencies, may mean that service providers are not aware of the extent of sexual violence that may be occurring and therefore do not perceive it to be as much of a problem as other behaviours (Mullighan 2008; Robertson 2000; Taylor & Putt 2007; Wild & Anderson 2007). Service providers may be more exposed to non-criminal social problems and see them as contributing to other problems, such as children not attending school or violent disputes.

Against this, it is important to note that aggregated perceptions do not necessarily reveal the problems that are most serious for a given community or individuals within that community. For instance, while relatively small proportions of service providers perceived the sexual assault of women and girls to be serious problems compared with other issues, in each case, more than one-third of respondents across the whole sample perceived these to be major problems, with much higher proportions in large towns, regional centres and cities. These are still substantial proportions of respondents. Wherever there are grounds for people in a community to have a level of concern about violent and antisocial behaviours occurring in that community, there are grounds for responses to deal more effectively with these behaviours and to reduce the victimisation resulting from them. While it is not appropriate to identify specific communities in this report, analysis does suggest that the sexual assault of girls and women is perceived to be a more serious problem in particular communities and the same is true of other behaviours covered by this research. Considerations of relative seriousness at an aggregate level should not detract from the need for problems and solutions to be identified and responded to locally, or the need to deal appropriately with individuals affected by antisocial behaviours.

Community comparisons

Table 3 breaks down social problems by perceived seriousness and community type, ordered by perceived seriousness across the sample. Results for 17 records where the community type was missing are included in percentages for 'all communities' but excluded from other columns.

Remote communities

The problems cited as the most serious in remote communities differed somewhat from larger centres. While problem gambling was only included in the phase two survey, all respondents (100%; n=11) from remote communities cited this as a serious or very serious problem. This was not seen as a problem to the same extent in other types of communities.

As was the case with other community types, overcrowding in homes was considered a major problem in remote communities and was cited as very serious by a higher proportion of respondents than any other issue, with eight of the 10 respondents (80%) citing this as very serious and another citing it as serious.

The next highest proportion of respondents in remote communities (78%) nominated children not going to school as a serious problem, followed by mental health problems (73%), young mothers not knowing how to care for children (73%), violence within families (66%), young people being out unsupervised at night (64%), jealous fighting (64%) and emotional abuse of children (64%). Relatively few people in remote communities saw petrol or glue sniffing (14%), stealing cars (16%) or young people trading sex money or goods (18%) as major problems.

Small towns

Small town respondents cited overcrowded homes as the most serious social problem for Indigenous communities, with 80 percent of respondents seeing this as a very serious problem. Public misuse of alcohol was seen as a problem by 83 percent of respondents, with 75 percent of these considering it very serious. Just over four-fifths (82%) also saw the misuse of alcohol in homes as a major problem.

In small towns, dangerous dogs were considered a serious or very serious problem by only seven percent of respondents, with petrol and glue sniffing (11%) and robbery/stealing from people (22%) also not seen as major problems. Thirty-six percent of small town respondents considered sniffing to not be a problem at all, while 27 percent saw elder abuse as not a problem in their community.

Type of problem	Remote communities	Small country towns	Large towns/ regional centres	All communities
Table 3 Issues perceived as serious problems, by community type (%)				
Overcrowded homes[a]	90	87	93	90
Public drunkenness/misuse of alcohol	58	83	88	75
Young people out unsupervised at night[a]	64	73	77	72
Children not going to school	78	75	69	72
Violence within families	66	67	77	70
Drunkenness/misuse of alcohol in homes[b]	55	82	74	70
Children being neglected or not looked after properly	58	60	78	66
Mental health problems[a]	73	50	77	64
Violence between adults in public	62	64	64	62
Illegal drug use	59	67	71	62
Problem gambling[a]	100	67	47	62
Family/kin feuding[a]	55	53	71	61
Disorderly behaviour[c]	54	57	76	61
Homelessness[a]	45	54	73	61
Unlicensed/unregistered driving[a]	36	47	61	57
Girls having babies too young[d]	60	50	63	57
Jealous fighting[a]	64	60	55	56
Drunk driving[a]	36	47	61	55
Emotional abuse of children[a]	64	53	63	55
Young mothers not knowing how to care for children[a]	73	43	52	53
Damage to property, vandalism, graffiti	52	39	61	51
Loud parties or drinking sessions[a]	45	73	40	51
Problems caused by visitors[a]	27	36	57	50
Sexual abuse of children	32	33	60	42
Break & enter/theft from homes	29	37	59	42
Physical abuse of children[a]	45	40	43	42
Youth suicide[a]	55	27	43	42
Elder abuse[a]	45	27	43	38
Women being raped/forced to have sex	30	28	54	38
Humbugging[a]	50	29	23	37
Sly grogging/grog running[a]	45	36	31	36
Girls being raped/forced to have sex[a]	30	33	45	34
Hoon/dangerous/noisy driving	22	31	49	33
Dangerous dogs[a]	40	7	33	32
Robbery/stealing from people	20	22	48	31
Stealing cars	16	28	43	28
Young people trading sex (for drugs, money etc)[a]	18	27	33	25
Petrol/glue sniffing	14	11	25	18

a: phase two survey only

b: hard copy phase two survey only

c: phase one study only

d: includes *teenage pregnancy* from phase one

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

Large towns, regional centres and cities

In large towns, regional centres and cities, almost all respondents (93%) saw overcrowded homes as a serious problem. Respondents in these communities also saw public drunkenness and misuse of alcohol as a major problem (88% of respondents). In larger centres, 78 percent of respondents saw children being neglected or not looked after as a major problem, followed by family violence, young people being out unsupervised at night and mental health problems (77% each).

Respondents in larger centres saw humbugging, petrol and glue sniffing and sly grogging/grog running as less serious than other problems nominated in the survey.

A much higher proportion of respondents in larger centres (71%) cited illegal drugs as a major problem than was the case for remote communities (59%). Service providers in large towns, regional centres or cities were also more likely (88%) to see public drunkenness as a serious problem than those located in remote communities (58%). In the phase two hard copy format of the survey, respondents were asked whether alcohol misuse in homes was a problem. It was evident that alcohol misuse was seen as a more serious problem in small towns (82%) and larger centres (74%) than in remote communities (55%). This may suggest that there is less actual, or perceived, use of alcohol in some communities. However, this is likely to be influenced by individual perceptions. It is notable that in one Northern Territory remote community, five of the nine respondents thought public drunkenness was a big problem, while three thought it a small problem and one respondent indicated it was not a problem. Similar results were seen in a Northern Territory small country town. In one Queensland community, four respondents indicated public drunkenness as a big problem, with two stating it was a small problem. This indicates the diversity of perceptions that can exist within a community and indicates the different experiences of respondents.

Similarly, respondents in larger centres were more likely (71%) to see family/kin feuding as a serious or very serious problem than those in small country towns (53%) or remote communities (55%). The proportion of respondents citing violence between adults in public as a serious or very serious problem was relatively consistent across community types with 64, 64 and 62 percent of respondents from large, small and remote centres respectively identifying the problem. As was the case for illegal drugs and public drunkenness, there was variation within some communities, with around half of service provider respondents in two Northern Territory communities citing these forms of violence as big problems, while half cited them as small problems.

Young mothers not knowing how to care for children was cited as a major problem by a smaller proportion of large centre respondents (52%) and small town respondents (43%) than was the case in remote communities (73%). This may reflect differences in the types of support available to young mothers in remote areas. It is notable that the issue of girls having babies too young was seen as a major problem by a larger proportion of respondents in large centres (63%) than remote communities (60%) or small towns (50%).

Other social issues

In the original phase one survey, only three of the 16 pre-set options to identify social problems were non-criminal activities. As noted in the *Methodology* section, responses given in the free-text *other* field on the phase one survey and issues raised during focus groups, led to the inclusion of a larger range of social problems in the phase two survey. A number of focus group and individual participants drew a very strong link to alcohol use as the main cause of social problems in Indigenous communities. Other issues raised by consultation participants included:

- parents spending money on drugs and alcohol rather than healthy food for children and exposing children to drunken behaviour;
- people from 'dry' communities where alcohol is prohibited coming into communities without alcohol bans, creating itinerant populations and alcohol-related problems in homes where they did not previously exist;
- girls having babies at too young an age and not receiving adequate school education for themselves, or education on how to care for children;
- some parents being over-confident about the level of safety in their community and letting children stay out late at night without supervision;

- personal issues of isolation, being ignored, being alienated from the wider community, low self-esteem and being 'pushed from place to place, until it was the last straw';

- loss of identity, particularly among young Indigenous men, reflecting loss of traditional law and culture;

- lack of direction for young people;

- lack of roles for Indigenous men;

- declining respect for elders in ATSI populations, contributing to reduced social cohesion, greater individualism, youth crime and drug use;

- feelings of failure and insecurity, leading to jealousy and violence; and

- noisy, sometimes out-of-control parties.

Services available in the community

Respondents were asked to identify what services were available in the community and whether these services were resident or visiting. This question arose from comments generated at the roundtable workshop that suggested it is important to know what services are available to deal with identified community safety problems and also to what extent service providers are aware of other services available to the community in order to be able to make appropriate referrals. It is important to note that although services may be perceived to be unavailable, this does not mean they *are* unavailable, as it may be the case that the respondent is simply not aware of them. Further, services reported as 'unavailable' may not actually be required to meet the particular needs of that community, thus their absence may not represent a real gap in service delivery. The phase one survey asked respondents to indicate whether a service was available in the community on a residential or visiting basis. The phase two survey asked respondents to indicate the level of need for services they perceived to be unavailable and also to indicate if they knew whether or not a service was available.

The responses to the two surveys are combined in Table 4, which sets out perceived service availability. For presentation purposes, these are ordered by the

proportion of respondents indicating this service was available on a residential basis. Responses to the phase two survey, identifying the level of perceived need for unavailable services, ranked by the proportion indicating a major need for that service, are shown in Table 5.

With the survey responses combined, almost all respondents (91%) identified that community health services were available to the community in a resident or visiting capacity, reflecting both the relatively high proportion of responses from health service providers and also the widespread distribution of these services. State or territory police were reported as available by 88 percent of respondents, although some (9%) indicated there was only a visiting police presence. While seven of the 14 respondents who gave this answer were in remote communities, two were in small towns and three in large towns or cities, with two in unidentified communities. While some remote communities only have a visiting police presence, many have a permanent police presence, especially larger towns or cities. This result might therefore reflect respondents focusing their perceptions on communities located within urban environments, where police are available throughout the Indigenous and wider communities, but are stationed outside the Indigenous community itself. In the context of the survey, respondents may have seen this as police visiting the community. The other possibility is that some respondents did not answer accurately. Importantly though, nine percent of respondents (n=13), including six in large towns/cities and two in smaller towns, indicated they did not think there was a state or territory police service available to the community. Three respondents in large towns/cities and one in a remote community, did not know whether there was a state or territory police service available.

While drug and alcohol services were perceived to be available to almost all communities (85% of responses), they were resident in only 58 percent. Many communities did not have, or were perceived to not have, a sobering-up or detoxification facility (58%), a rape crisis service (46%), a men's refuge (80%), a children's refuge (57%), night patrols (41%), Aboriginal community police (37%) or men's and women's groups (62% and 53% respectively). While these are not necessarily required in all communities, the findings suggest some possible areas where the

addition of these services may be valuable for improving community safety and improving outcomes for victims. Alternatively, the high proportion of respondents who indicated that wardens were not available (60%) may not indicate a gap in service as much as a limited application of the concept of wardens, or understanding of this terminology, outside particular areas. Under the Community Warden scheme that operated in certain areas of Western Australia, wardens enforced community council by-laws and undertook activities such as ensuring children attended school (Government of Western Australia 1999). The scheme ceased some years ago, although there are indications that consideration is being given to the scheme being reintroduced in that state (Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services undated; Tjulyuru undated).

The question of service need was addressed specifically in the phase two survey. The major area of need indicated by respondents was the provision of refuges or safe houses for men (67% of all respondents; 56% of female respondents and 79% of male respondents) and children (54%; 58% of female respondents and 52% of male respondents). Women's refuges or safe houses were not identified as such an important need, but respondents also indicated they were much more likely to be already available than facilities for men and children. While the survey did not provide the opportunity to explore the particular kinds of facilities respondents felt were needed, they would likely be different between men and children and between men and women. Women and children are likely to need a place they can go to escape violence. Men are more likely to need somewhere they can go to 'cool down' and avoid becoming violent, perhaps while affected by alcohol and/or when facing a conflict situation. This was the basis of the Australian Government program, under the NT Emergency Response—to put safe houses and men's cooling off shelters in place. Awareness of this program may have influenced service providers' perceptions of demand and need. A refuge may also provide a service to women affected by alcohol. This is not to disregard the need for men to escape violence or for women to need cooling-off places. The need for facilities to respond to the immediate effects of alcohol misuse was also reflected in the relatively high proportion (51%)

who saw a major need for sobering-up or detoxification facilities.

In most cases where respondents indicated a service was not available, they indicated a major need for that service. In the case of rape crisis and sexual assault services, nearly half (46%) of all respondents to both phases of the survey indicated such a service was not available to their subject community. In the phase two survey, 29 percent of respondents indicated a major need for these services, but 10 percent indicated only a minor need. Of the seven individual respondents who felt there was only a minor need for a rape crisis or sexual assault service, two indicated that the rape of women was not a problem in their community, while four indicated it was a minor problem and one did not know how serious a problem it was. Of the 20 respondents who felt there was a major need for these services, 11 thought there was a serious or very serious problem with the rape of women in their subject community, while six thought it was a minor or moderate problem. Three did not know and none thought it was not a problem.

Phase two survey respondents were also asked to identify other services, beyond those listed, for which there was a major need in their subject community. Responses to this question were received from 32 respondents, some of whom identified multiple service needs. Some of the responses indicated a need for specific programs such as a domestic violence perpetrator program, support service for children who experience bullying and a young mother's support group. Other comments indicated general service needs such as family support and housing services. Five respondents identified the need for either increased service funding, service provider training or the recruitment of service coordinator/manager positions. Four respondents identified a need for transportation services to increase community member access to interventions and facilities. Three respondents identified a need for Indigenous-specific services and for services to be provided in a culturally-appropriate and sensitive manner.

As noted above, some of the findings on service availability may reflect a lack of awareness by service providers of other services provided to communities and this may point to a broader ongoing problem in

ensuring Indigenous Australians have access to appropriate and needed services. Advice provided by the consultants showed a limited awareness among some service providers of other services available in their communities and little interagency communication or cooperation. For example, one of the consultants indicated there was little awareness among service providers generally about drug and alcohol services available to the community. In some cases, this was because these services were provided as a part of broader-based counselling, not specifically focusing on drug and alcohol but including support for these issues. This consultant also indicated that while many service providers may be aware that child welfare services are available, they did not know how to access them and that knowledge of domestic or family violence services is also very limited. The consultant advised that the

Table 4 Services perceived to be available to communities, all communities

Service	n	Resident %	Visiting %	Not available %	Don't know %
School education	151	87	3	9	1
Community health	149	81	9	9	<1
24 hour emergency health	150	81	5	14	0
State/territory police	149	79	9	9	3
Drug and alcohol	150	58	27	15	<1
Child welfare/protection	149	56	32	11	1
Community justice group[a]	63	56	6	29	10
Women's refuge/safe house[b]	149	56	5	38	1
Night patrols	150	53	3	41	2
Aboriginal community police	147	52	8	37	3
Women's group[a]	66	52	3	53	9
Men's group[a]	65	48	2	62	9
Aboriginal legal service[a]	71	46	38	14	1
Mental health[a]	69	45	32	22	1
Legal aid	151	45	35	20	2
Other victim support/counselling	148	45	30	24	1
Sobering-up shelter/detox	146	39	1	58	1
Children's refuge/safe house[a]	68	32	3	57	7
Rape crisis/sexual assault	147	27	24	46	4
Wardens	131	22	4	60	14
Men's refuge/safe house[a]	66	12	0	80	8

a: phase two survey only

b: includes generic 'safehouse' responses from phase one survey

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two survey [computer file]

Table 5 Services perceived to be unavailable to communities by need					
Service	n	Not needed %	Minor need %	Major need %	Don't know %
Men's refuge/safe house	66	0	14	67	8
Children's refuge/safe house	68	0	3	54	7
Sobering-up shelter/detox	68	1	6	51	3
Men's group	65	2	2	38	9
Night patrols	69	0	6	38	4
Aboriginal community police	67	3	6	37	6
Women's group	66	2	2	33	9
Rape crisis/sexual assault	69	0	10	29	9
Other victim support/ counselling	69	0	1	28	3
Women's refuge/safe house	71	0	3	27	1
Mental health	69	0	0	22	1
Wardens	55	9	7	22	33
Community justice group	63	0	8	21	10
Drug and alcohol	71	0	0	21	1
Child welfare/protection	69	0	0	17	3
Community health	70	0	0	16	1
State/territory police	69	0	1	12	6
24 hour emergency health	70	3	0	11	0
School education	70	0	0	11	1
Aboriginal legal	71	0	4	10	1
Legal aid	71	1	4	10	4

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two survey [computer file]

lack of knowledge of available services, even in very small communities, is an ongoing issue of concern. Focus group participants also noted that some people were aware of services but did not necessarily access them, with most issues being handled by 'strong' family members.

Feelings of safety

As a way of examining the perceived safety of communities, respondents were asked to indicate how safe they felt in a range of personal safety situations. These situations were based around typical activities of doing their job, walking around the community or being at home, with questions about each activity being conducted at night and during the day. The perceived level of personal safety of service providers in these various situations are shown in Table 6.

As noted by one of the consultants, there was no evidence in the consultations or survey responses to indicate any widespread fear among service providers in going about their usual business. The majority tended to feel safe in most daytime situations, particularly being at home during the day (79% felt *very safe*) or doing their job during the day (77% felt *very safe*). None of the respondents felt *very unsafe* at home during the day and only two felt *very unsafe* working during the day. One of these respondents who provided night patrol services in a town camp also indicated feeling *very unsafe* working at night. The other managed a range of social programs in a small town; a role which may

have brought the respondent into contact with some very troubling situations and perhaps violent people.

Not surprisingly, levels of perceived safety decreased at night, with half of all respondents (49%) feeling a lack of safety walking around at night; almost one-quarter of respondents (24%) felt *very unsafe* in this situation. More than one-third (36%) felt unsafe doing their job at night, although for most, this was feeling a *bit unsafe* rather than *very unsafe*. While 71 percent felt safe at home at night, nearly one-fifth (19%) felt unsafe to some degree. By comparison, the Personal Safety Survey 2005 showed that, among people in the general Australian community who are sometimes at home alone at night, 91 percent (96% of males; 86% of females) felt safe, while nine percent (4% of males; 14% of females) felt unsafe (ABS 2005b).

Given the relatively small number of respondents, the results are not generalisable, but there appeared to be some variation in the perceived safety of respondents in different communities. Table 7 shows respondents' perceived safety while walking around

their community at night, by community type. Respondents in large towns or regional centres were more than twice as likely (31%) than those in small country towns (14%) to feel *very unsafe* walking around at night. Not only does this appear to show a greater level of perceived threat in larger centres, this perceived threat may be coming from non-Indigenous people in the broader community. That is, in a larger community, there may be a greater number or range of sources of perceived danger and the types of perceived danger may be different from those in a small town or remote community. Focus group participants in one regional centre noted that shopping centre car parks could become dangerous at night. As a result, they generally tried to go shopping without their children and asked security staff to walk them to their cars if shopping at night.

A consideration in interpreting these results is that, for various reasons, many people in any given community do not tend to walk around at night. The *Personal Safety Survey 2005* showed that 61 percent of respondents did not walk in their local area alone after dark, with 30 percent of

Table 6 Perceived safety in various situations, all communities (%)

Situation	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know or n/a
Doing your job in daylight[a]	77	13	4	4	1	1
Doing your job after dark[b]	21	21	12	25	11	10
Walking in local area alone in daylight[b]	68	17	5	6	2	2
Walking in local area alone at night[a]	17	15	15	25	24	4
At home alone in daylight[b]	79	10	4	3	0	4
At home alone after dark[b]	47	24	6	11	8	4
Socialising after dark[c]	43	17	12	14	9	5

a: n=156

b: n=155

c: n=58

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

Table 7 Perceived safety while walking around community at night, by type of community (%)

Type of community	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know or n/a
Remote	14	14	20	22	26	4
Small country town	32	8	16	27	14	3
Large town/regional centre	6	19	12	27	31	2

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

respondents indicating they did not because they felt unsafe (ABS 2005b). Other respondents indicated they did not walk alone after dark as they only ever walked in the company of others or always used a car. Thirty-nine percent did walk in their local area alone after dark, with 29 percent of all respondents indicating they felt safe doing so. Males were almost three times more likely than females (61% vs 22%) to walk alone at night. In a Tasmanian survey that asked what precautions people took against crime when going out at night, the most common precaution was to go out with other people (ABS 1998). Very similar results were found in a New Zealand community safety survey (Mayhew & Reilly 2007).

As Mayhew and Reilly (2007) noted, for those who do not actually go out at night, perceptions of safety are based more on hypotheticals than for those who have experienced the community at night (Mayhew & Reilly 2007). When people choose to go out at night, they might choose to do so because they feel relatively safe and are thus likely to report perceptions of safety, whereas for those who do not, a perceived lack of safety may be one of the reasons underlying their choice. In the New Zealand survey, those who *did* walk alone at night were much more likely to feel very safe (41%) than those who did not walk alone (11%) and much less likely to feel very unsafe (1% vs 18%).

Whether the proportion of service providers who go out at night in Indigenous communities is the same as for the general Australian and New Zealand population is not discernable from the current research. For remote communities in particular, there are likely to be some differences, given the small physical size of the communities and the lack of entertainment, dining and other social locations people are likely to go to at night. In any case, the proportion of respondents who felt unsafe walking around at night should be interpreted as a combination of those who did actually walk around at night ('experienced' perception of safety) and those who did not ('hypothetical' perception of safety).

As shown in Table 8, it is interesting to note that respondents in remote Indigenous communities were only a little more likely to feel unsafe doing their job at night (32% *a bit unsafe*; 12% *very unsafe*) than those in large towns/regional centres (21% *a bit unsafe*; 13% *very unsafe*) or small country towns (27% *a bit unsafe*; 5% *very unsafe*). This is in spite of the fact that remote communities are generally perceived to have a relative lack of support or emergency services available at night and a lack of infrastructure such as adequate street lighting. This may reflect the nature of the work undertaken by respondents, which included night patrols, mental health services, working in a women's shelter and various justice roles. People in any of these roles may be impacted by increased antisocial behaviour and alcohol consumption at night.

Further insights into the reasons why some people may feel unsafe while working at night came from focus group participants in one large centre who provided crisis accommodation for women and children—a service that by its nature could create safety issues for workers. They spoke of their clients' male partners often approaching the service while affected by alcohol and demanding access to their partner, as well as being angry and abusive towards staff. Sometimes the female clients, some of whom had drug addiction or mental illness problems, would direct anger and frustration about their circumstances towards staff. Staff of this service sometimes had to visit Indigenous communities at night and face men who were 'drunk and cheeky'.

Table 8 Perceived safety while doing job at night, by type of community (%)						
Type of community	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know or n/a
Remote	16	20	14	32	12	6
Small country town	32	11	8	27	5	16
Large town/regional centre	13	29	13	21	13	10

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

Reasons for feeling safe

Respondents to the phase two survey, who had indicated that they felt *very safe* or *a bit safe* in situations as noted in the previous section, were asked to identify the things that helped them feel safe. Respondents were provided with 18 possible reasons and asked to identify those that contributed to their feeling of safety. They could select as many of the reasons as they felt applied to them. Table 9 shows the relative frequency of responses for all communities.

A majority of responses attributed feelings of safety to their personal experience in learning how to stay safe (72%) or their ability to identify potential problems (55%). Only 38 percent identified training in safety as a reason for feeling safe, although 46 percent credited their workplace's safety plan with contributing to their feeling of safety. Relatively high proportions of responses linked feelings of safety

with the environment, either by having adequate home security (54%) or living in a quiet and peaceful area. Around one-third identified the community as being a safe place, with lower numbers linking safety to aspects of leadership, law and culture, or the community dealing well with any safety problems or issues. At the same time, nearly half of all responses (49%) linked perceptions of safety to feeling supported by the community, or a belief that people in the community would protect the respondent from violence or danger because of the respondent's role or status.

Overall, respondents tended to attribute their feelings of safety to their own safety-related behaviours or actions. Only a small proportion attributed feelings of safety to the community itself being a fundamentally safe place or to the police or community maintaining safety. While this does not necessarily reflect a perception that communities are unsafe, it demonstrates a perception that there are

Table 9 Reasons for feeling safe, all communities		
Possible reasons	n	% of total
I have learned through experience how to stay safe	53	72
I can tell when problems are going to happen	41	55
My home is secure enough	40	54
I feel supported by the community	36	49
I live in a quiet and peaceful area	36	49
Violence usually only happens between community members and doesn't affect me	35	47
My workplace has a good safety plan	34	46
People in this community will protect me because of my role or status	32	43
I have family in this community	31	42
I have learned through training how to stay safe	28	38
This is a safe community	27	36
The police deal well with any safety problems and issues	25	34
The people in this community respect and care for each other	23	31
This community is in my country	21	28
People in the community will protect me because they are caring people	21	28
The community has strong and effective leadership	17	23
The community has a strong respect for traditional law and culture	15	20
The community deals well with any safety problems and issues	14	19

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two [computer file]

safety problems in communities and that service providers feel they have to take steps to protect themselves, or need to be protected by people in the community. These findings should be taken in the context of the earlier findings showing that behaviours such as misuse of alcohol, public violence and disorderly behaviour were considered serious or very serious problems by a majority of respondents.

Reasons for feeling unsafe

Respondents who indicated they felt a bit unsafe or very unsafe in various situations were asked to indicate why they felt unsafe. Respondents could indicate as many of the suggested reasons as they felt applied to them, with the results shown in Table 10 below.

Just under half of responses to this question (n=35; 47%) indicated the respondent felt unsafe because of the possibility of alcohol-related violence and 41 percent identified a belief that people in the community have 'serious problems'. Forty-one percent of responses (n=65) linked unsafe feelings to crimes that had occurred in their area, with 39 percent identifying disturbances occurring in their area as a safety issue. The antisocial behaviour that contributed most to unsafe feelings appeared to be behaviour that occurred 'in the area'—most likely involving victims other than the respondent—rather than incidents occurring within the respondent's personal domain or from them personally experiencing victimisation. This is supported by the finding in the previous question that nearly half of the respondents attributed feelings of safety to a belief that violence would only occur between community members and would not involve them. While many

Table 10 Reasons for feeling unsafe, all communities		
Possible reasons	n	% of total
Because of the possibility of alcohol-related violence[b]	35	47
Because of crimes that have occurred in my area[a]	65	41
There are people in this community with serious problems[b]	30	41
Disturbances occur in my area (eg gangs, fights, vandalism, drunkenness)[a]	62	39
Because my work puts me in contact with unsafe people or places[a]	52	33
I have been threatened or harassed by somebody[a]	45	28
There is a lack of respect for traditional law and culture[b]	21	28
Someone broke into my home or stole things from my home[a]	28	18
Because of things I find out about from the media[a]	27	17
I have seen or heard people acting suspiciously[a]	25	16
There is nobody around to help if something happens[a]	25	16
My home is not secure enough[a]	24	15
I have been attacked or treated violently by somebody[a]	24	15
I am physically unable to defend myself[a]	12	8
Because of my age[c]	5	6
This is a dangerous community to live in[b]	4	5

a: total n=159

b: n=74

c: n=85

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

respondents attributed a lack of safety to problems in the community, only four respondents, the lowest of all the available options, indicated a belief that the community itself was a dangerous place to live.

A smaller proportion of respondents related feeling unsafe with regards to personal victimisation, either through property theft (18%) or actual personal violence (15%), although a reasonably high proportion (28%) indicated they had been threatened or harassed. Notably, 33 percent of respondents indicated it was their work and the way it put them into contact with unsafe people or situations that contributed to reducing their perceived level of safety, raising some potentially serious occupational health and safety issues for service provider employers. Few respondents linked feeling unsafe directly to their own characteristics or that of their personal environment, such as their age or inability to defend themselves, poor home security, or a lack of support and help if needed.

In a limited way, these conclusions are borne out by comments made by respondents using the free-text field. One respondent stated that the area they worked in at night was isolated with poor lighting. Another said they felt unsafe because another professional in the same field had been attacked, while a third respondent referred to colleagues having left the community because of threats of violence. Others related their feelings of reduced safety to potentially unsafe neighbours, dangerous dogs and a cultural belief in 'black magic' that made things change shape at night.

Safety for Indigenous people

How safe is the community for Indigenous people?

Phase one survey respondents were asked to indicate how safe they felt their community was for different groups of Indigenous people—male and female adults, male and female teenagers, children and frail or elderly people. In the phase two survey, the category of 'children' was divided by gender in order to identify if gender acted as a protective factor for this age group, as it appears to for adults.

The results, shown in Table 11, indicated a perception that male adults and teenagers were very much safer than other groups, especially female teenagers and young girls. Thirty percent of respondents felt that male adults were *a bit unsafe* or *very unsafe*, with just nine percent feeling they were *very unsafe*. Thirty-seven percent felt that male teenagers had a reduced level of safety, the majority (60%) of them in the *a bit unsafe* category. In contrast, nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%) felt the community was unsafe for children, where 'unsafe' was measured as a combination of *a bit unsafe* and *very unsafe*. Nearly the same proportion (61%) felt the community was unsafe for female teenagers, but a marginally higher proportion thought that the community was *very unsafe* for female teenagers than thought it was *very unsafe* for children (33% versus 28%). In the phase two survey,

Table 11 Perceived safety of various Indigenous groups, all communities, by group							
Indigenous group	n	Very safe %	A bit safe %	Neither safe nor unsafe %	A bit unsafe %	Very unsafe %	Don't know or n/a %
Young girls[b]	65	5	12	12	31	35	5
Young boys[b]	62	10	11	13	34	24	8
Children[a]	79	8	16	11	36	25	4
Female teenagers	145	5	15	15	28	33	4
Male teenagers	145	15	18	23	22	15	6
Female adults	144	9	17	16	33	22	3
Male adults	145	23	21	21	21	9	6
Frail or elderly	146	10	17	15	27	25	6

a: phase one survey only

b: phase two survey only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

where the gender of children was identified, girls were more likely to be considered *very unsafe* than were boys (35% vs 24%) and less likely to be considered *very safe* (5% vs 10%). Nonetheless, a majority of respondents (58%) considered boys to be unsafe, in contrast to the smaller proportions who considered teenage males (37%) or adult males (30%) to be unsafe.

More than half of respondents also perceived a lack of safety for female adults (33% *a bit unsafe* and 22% *very unsafe*) and frail or elderly people, with this group considered the third most likely behind young girls and female teenagers to be at risk of being *very unsafe* in the community (27% *a bit unsafe* and 25% *very unsafe*).

Tables 12 to 14 show the perceived safety of various Indigenous groups for each of the three community types. Highlighting the earlier comment that safety in larger towns and regional centres may be linked to risks or threats from the wider community, rather than necessarily other Indigenous people, Indigenous groups were considered by larger proportions of respondents to be unsafe in larger towns and regional centres than in other communities. In larger centres, seven of the eight nominated groups were considered to be *very unsafe* by more than 30 percent of respondents. In remote communities all groups were considered *very unsafe* by 30 percent or less of respondents, while in small country towns no group was considered *very unsafe* by more than 30 percent of respondents. Therefore, based on the proportions of respondents

who selected very unsafe, all Indigenous groups in larger towns, cities and regional centres—with the exception of adult men—were considered less safe than even the safest groups in remote communities and small towns.

Nearly half of respondents (49%) in larger towns and regional centres considered female teenagers to be *very unsafe*, with 38 percent considering both the frail and elderly and adult women to be *very unsafe*. More than one-third (35%) of respondents in phase one considered children overall to be *very unsafe* and when the gender of children was separated in phase two, young girls were more likely than young boys to be perceived to be *very unsafe* (54% vs 42%).

Indigenous male teenagers were generally perceived as a relatively safe group, however, the proportion of respondents who considered young boys to be *very unsafe* was much higher in larger towns and regional centres (34%), was higher than in remote communities (9%) or small country towns (3%) and also higher than for any group in remote communities and small towns. However, similar proportions of young girls (33%) in small country towns and young girls (33%) and female teenagers (30%) in remote communities were seen to be *very unsafe*. Overall, female children and teenagers were considered to be the least safe group in all communities.

These findings raise concerns about the perceived safety of Indigenous people, other than those who are physically relatively strong. Female teenagers

Table 12 Perceived safety of various Indigenous groups, remote communities, by group							
Indigenous group	n	Very safe %	A bit safe %	Neither safe nor unsafe %	A bit unsafe %	Very unsafe %	Don't know or n/a %
Young girls[b]	10	10	20	20	20	30	0
Young boys[b]	10	10	20	0	40	20	10
Children[a]	35	11	20	11	34	17	6
Female teenagers	46	9	17	20	22	28	4
Male teenagers	46	24	20	22	17	9	9
Female adults	46	13	24	11	30	17	4
Male adults	46	30	26	15	13	9	7
Frail or elderly	46	13	28	15	22	15	7

a: phase one survey only

b: phase two survey only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

Table 13 Perceived safety of various Indigenous groups, small country towns, by group

Indigenous group	n	Very safe %	A bit safe %	Neither safe nor unsafe %	A bit unsafe %	Very unsafe %	Don't know or n/a %
Young girls[b]	14	0	14	14	50	21	0
Young boys[b]	12	8	17	25	33	8	8
Children[a]	21	10	19	5	33	29	5
Female teenagers	35	3	14	17	34	26	6
Male teenagers	34	15	26	24	21	3	12
Female adults	33	12	12	21	36	12	6
Male adults	34	32	24	18	18	0	9
Frail or elderly	35	9	17	11	31	26	6

a: phase one survey only

b: phase two survey only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one phase two[computer file]

Table 14 Perceived safety of various Indigenous groups, large towns/regional centres, by group

Indigenous group	n	Very safe %	A bit safe %	Neither safe nor unsafe %	A bit unsafe %	Very unsafe %	Don't know/ n/a%
Young girls[b]	26	0	8	8	27	54	4
Young boys[b]	26	4	8	12	31	42	4
Children[a]	23	0	9	17	39	35	0
Female teenagers	49	0	12	10	29	49	0
Male teenagers	50	6	14	18	28	34	0
Female adults	50	4	10	14	34	38	0
Male adults	50	8	18	18	36	18	2
Frail or elderly	50	4	10	14	28	38	6

a: phase one survey only

b: phase two survey only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one phase two[computer file]

and young girls were considered particularly unsafe, which is worrying given the high rates of physical and sexual violence against young women observed through various inquiries (eg Mullighan 2008). The perceived safety deficits for children and the frail or elderly, as well as female adults to a lesser extent, are also concerning given their inherent vulnerability and their need for, and entitlement to, protection within their communities. Focus group participants in one remote community provided some insight into why female Indigenous teenagers were so at risk, relating accounts of young women providing sexual favours in exchange for taxi rides, cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. The exchange by young women of sex for such items, as well as for very basic items like

food, has been reported in an inquiry into the sexual abuse of young people (Mullighan 2008).

Where is it unsafe?

A question in the survey asked respondents to indicate particular areas in the community they thought were unsafe, with a range of possible places suggested. Respondents could also indicate other areas using a free-text field or indicate that they felt none of the suggested places was unsafe. Given the way the question was presented, it should be noted that the non-selection of some suggested areas may mean the respondent did not consider it an unsafe

area, or it may mean that the suggested area did not exist in the subject community (for instance, public toilets or bus stops/terminals may not exist in small towns or communities).

The areas and places nominated as unsafe by respondents, by community type and ordered by the proportion nominating that area or place across all communities, are shown in Table 15.

Notably, a large proportion of respondents from the phase one survey (n=57; 67%) felt there was an increased risk near certain homes in the community. This was a concern in remote communities (n=21; 54%), small country towns (n=15; 71%) and larger centres (n=21; 84%). In the phase two survey, the category of safety near certain homes was split to allow respondents to identify whether it was particular individual homes or groups of homes that were considered unsafe. Almost equal proportions of respondents identified a safety concern around individual homes (43%) and groups of homes (41%). This finding points to a concentration of antisocial behaviour in certain residences, perhaps by certain individuals, suggesting in turn the possibility of

targeted policing or situational crime prevention responses. It is also supported by the earlier finding that loud parties, typically involving alcohol use and actual or potential violence, are seen as a major social problem. Focus group participants in one community observed that it was the homes of 'the drinkers' that were likely to be dangerous.

A majority of responses (n=104; 65%) showed a perception that areas around pubs and nightclubs were unsafe, which is not surprising given the well-documented link between alcohol and violence in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, particularly in the context of licensed premises (see Briscoe & Donnelly 2001; Donnelly et al. 2006; Graham & Homel 2008; Livingston 2008). The vast majority of respondents in small country towns (78%) felt pubs and nightclubs were unsafe, as did those in larger towns/regional centres (77%), although this was less relevant to remote communities (50%), which may not have licensed premises.

The responses also indicate that parks, sports fields and recreation areas carry an elevated degree of

Table 15 Areas and places considered unsafe, by community type				
Area/place	Remote communities % of total	Small country towns % of total	Large towns/regional centres % of total	All communities % of total
Near certain homes[b]	54	71	84	67
Around pubs and nightclubs	50	78	77	65
Near particular homes (individual homes)[a]	55	40	39	43
Near particular groups of homes[a]	45	47	39	41
Parks, sports fields, recreation areas	24	39	48	35
Public toilets	28	28	52	34
Around the beachfront/by the river	24	25	38	28
In the city centre/centre of the community	22	19	34	25
Shopping centres/community shop or canteen	22	19	32	23
Bus stops/bus terminal	12	8	38	19
Around health clinic/hospital/drug and alcohol service	4	6	11	7
None of the above	8	3	4	6

a: phase two survey only

b: phase one survey only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

risk, likely because they are poorly lit areas where people may gather to drink or use substances without observation. Where public toilets exist, they were also perceived to be relatively dangerous places. This is likely to be because of the opportunities they present to commit sexual and other acts of violence, particularly against children, or to use substances without observation. Respondents to a Tasmanian survey who had experienced victimisation were asked whether there were certain places they avoided at night for fear of assault by a stranger. The places most commonly avoided were public toilets and parks (ABS 1998). These respondents were also most likely to nominate public toilets and parks as unsafe areas, followed by car parks and shopping centres.

Overall, respondents in remote communities were less likely to identify areas they considered unsafe than those in other communities, particularly large towns and regional centres. This may reflect the greater number and variety of discrete locations in larger towns, but also perceptions of a closer link between those responsible for unsafe behaviours, rather than the locations in which those behaviours occur, in smaller communities.

A number of respondents made comments in the free-text field. Many respondents emphasised that safety is reduced at night, indicating that areas such as parks, schools, late-night service stations became less safe at night. One respondent indicated they thought 'anywhere' was unsafe at night and another indicated 'on the streets' generally. Other respondents noted that some Indigenous people were most at risk in their own homes, including children when parents were misusing alcohol. Others linked dangers more directly to people, noting that anywhere people gathered to drink, or anywhere that antisocial people could access could be unsafe, as could the community store when certain people were refused service. One respondent discussed the issue of racism, noting that any area with a predominance of either Indigenous or non-Indigenous people could be dangerous for people from the minority cultural group.

Focus group and individual consultation participants identified a range of unsafe public places, such as places around the beach and within walking distance of pubs, where people would gather to drink alcohol bought at the pub. A lack of adequate street lighting was identified as making a range of places unsafe.

Which times are most unsafe?

Respondents were asked to identify the times of the day that were most unsafe; respondents could nominate more than one time period (see Table 16). Respondents in all communities nominated the evening and at night as the most unsafe times (74% of all respondents). The hours between midnight and dawn were considered an unsafe time for respondents (52%), while very few respondents considered the later morning (5%) or afternoon (6%) to be unsafe.

Taken together with other results from this survey, the perception of a lack of safety at night is likely linked to alcohol consumption and the possibility of alcohol-related violence. Other studies have shown that alcohol-related violence is most likely to occur during the latter part of the night and the early hours of the morning (eg Briscoe & Donnelly 2001; Ireland 1993).

Which days are most unsafe?

As indicated in Figure 1, respondents felt that community safety decreased on Fridays and Saturdays. This was particularly so for those responding in relation to large towns/regional centres where 70 percent saw Fridays and 66

Table 16 Times considered unsafe, by community type (% of total)				
Period of day	Remote	Small country towns	Large towns/regional centres	All communities
Early morning (12 am–6 am)	50	50	59	52
Later morning (6 am–12 pm)	0	8	7	5
Afternoon (12 pm–6 pm)	2	8	9	6
Evening/night (6 pm–12 am)	78	61	82	74

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

percent saw Saturdays as unsafe. These days were also nominated as unsafe, although with smaller proportions of respondents, in remote communities and small country towns. As suggested above, this is likely linked to the increase in alcohol-related violence on Friday night/early Saturday morning and Saturday night/early Sunday morning (see Briscoe & Donnelly 2001; Ireland 1993).

An interesting variation in this survey, compared with those conducted in mainstream communities, is that Thursday also emerged as an unsafe day. Overall, there was little variation across community types between levels of perceived safety on Thursdays and Saturdays. While some further investigation would be required to fully understand this result, it may be due to the influence of social security or salary payments that are made every second Thursday ('payday' as it is sometimes called by Indigenous people), or royalty payments arising from land ownership being paid on Thursdays. Whether there is, in reality, an escalation of violence on Thursdays and whether any tendency for such an escalation has been changed in the Northern Territory by the Australian Government's approach

to income management would need further investigation. Some focus group participants also referred to Thursday as 'grog day'. On 'payday' the likelihood of people engaging in antisocial behaviours resulting from alcohol consumption, or practicing behaviours such as 'humbugging', is increased. This conclusion is supported by the finding from the subsequent question described below about particular events that make the community unsafe.

Respondents in larger towns and cities considered most days of the week (particularly Sundays) to be less safe than did respondents in other, smaller communities. It is not clear whether the greater perceived danger on Sundays reflects dangers extending across the later part of Saturday into the early part of Sunday, but this is likely given the very high proportion of larger town and city respondents who saw the early hours of the morning as being relatively unsafe. It may also reflect a greater level of social activity, including drinking, occurring on Sundays in these communities, relative to smaller communities.

Figure 1 Days of the week considered unsafe
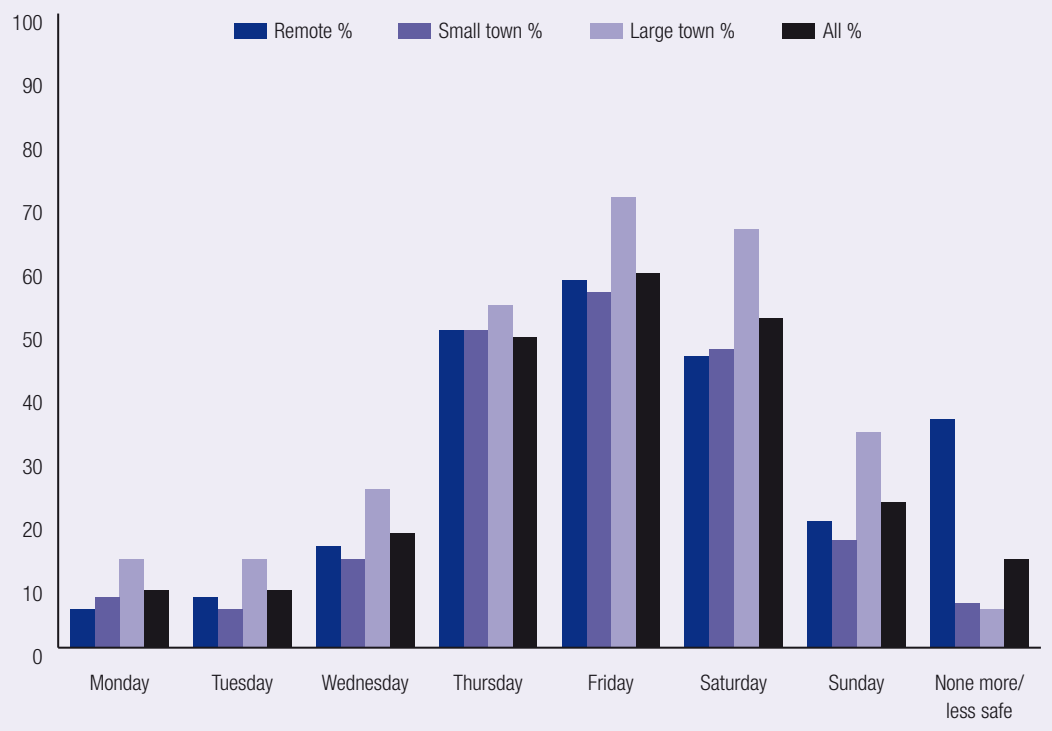
Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety survey [computer file]

Are there events that make the community unsafe?

Respondents were asked, using a free-text field, to identify whether there were particular events or times of the year that made the community unsafe. An analysis of the frequency with which particular words appeared in the comments showed that 'paydays' and times when royalty payments from land rights were made were considered especially unsafe times. These are times when members of the community receive money that some choose to spend on alcohol, creating an increased risk of alcohol-related violence and humbugging (de Crespigny et al. 2004; DoHA nd; Douglas 2007; Office of the Public Advocate 2005; Robertson 2000).

Another event nominated with relative frequency was the wet season, when many communities are inaccessible and the pressures of forced social contact may increase tensions, which leads to family and other forms of violence. Also nominated were events like festivals, funerals and sporting matches that tend to bring people together in circumstances where alcohol is consumed. People may travel from other communities for these occasions, typically staying with family, which increases the pressure in what may already be overcrowded living conditions. Overall, these findings point to the role of excessive alcohol consumption, particularly binge drinking, in increasing risks of violence and making communities more unsafe.

Making a difference

One part of the survey that seemed problematic for respondents was identifying positive things that had been done in the community to deal with problems like violence and child abuse. The phase one questionnaire included 15 suggested initiatives, with respondents asked to mark all those that applied to their community and a free-text field for 'other' initiatives. As discussed in the *Methodology* section of this report, a number of problems were identified with this question. These were subsequently amended for the revised version of the questionnaire. Given that this question was completely revised for the phase two survey, the results of the two surveys are presented independently from one another.

Community safety initiatives and perceived need for change

Phase one survey

The results of this question from the phase one survey may be best interpreted as indicating the range of initiatives that respondents consider important for improving community safety in Indigenous communities. From this perspective, the greatest number of respondents (n=41; 48%) indicated that community-based (or, more correctly, community-owned) measures like night patrols and community police were the most important community safety initiatives. There was also relatively strong support for:

- activities or programs to give young people more to do (n=39; 46%);
- increased police service or police presence (n=38; 45%);
- community events to bring people together (n=38; 45%);
- dealing with offenders through the justice system (n=37; 44%);
- sport and recreation facilities (n=36; 42%); and
- improving safety around dangerous areas (n=35; 41%).

In the context of these findings, it is worth noting the comments made by a focus group in one Northern Territory remote community where there is a swimming pool which could provide health benefits and positive activity for young people, but cannot be used by community children because there is no one available in the community with lifeguard qualifications. As a result, the pool is generally only used by non-Indigenous residents, visitors and contractors. This situation is not unique to that particular community, as the same thing was observed by the author during a visit to another Northern Territory remote Indigenous community.

Within the range of responses, there appeared to be a preference for either proactive enforcement measures, such as night patrols and police presence, or initiatives that provided positive activities and events, rather than those focused on responding to antisocial behaviour after it occurred. At the same time, focus group participants in several locations linked a perceived lack of safety in their

communities to inadequate street lighting. Focus group participants noted the importance of using local knowledge in designing strategies, but commented that this rarely occurred.

Other initiatives identified by focus group participants as being put in place or needed included:

- a playgroup for young mothers where they could learn child-rearing skills (identified as already being in place);
- childcare to allow more women to work (identified as needed);
- safe accommodation for vulnerable people, particularly those with mental illness (needed);
- safe places for children, women and men (in place in some communities, needed in others);
- family healing centres (needed);
- free services and community activities provided by local councils to help to build strengths in families (in place); and
- forms of policing sensitive to local concerns (needed and already in place in some communities).

Worth noting is that service providers in some focus groups made particular reference to their own services and programs as making a difference, such as youth programs that helped young people reconnect and re-engage with their families and community.

Generally speaking, employment and positive activity were linked to increased community safety by a number of focus group participants who saw these as protective factors against drinking and antisocial behaviour. In many communities, young people who were not working, attending school or engaged with sporting or other pro-social activities often become involved in antisocial behaviour, including alcohol and illicit drug use.

Phase two survey

In the revised phase two survey, respondents were asked to identify the level of need for change against 20 community safety initiatives. Table 17 shows the responses to this question, ranked by the proportion of responses indicating a major need for change.

The findings from this question indicated that improvements were needed across all suggested community safety initiatives. Fifteen of the 20 identified initiatives were perceived by more than half of the respondents to require major change. Areas perceived to need the most change focused on those initiatives that ultimately benefit men and children including men's refuges/shelters/safe houses (82%), children's refuges/shelters/safe houses (79%), strong men's services (73%) and educating young mothers about childcare (68%). These latter two initiatives were identified by all respondents as requiring at least some degree of change.

There were some differences in respondents' perceived need for change, based on the sex of respondents. A major need for change in men's refuges and shelters was noted by 83 percent of female respondents and 80 percent of male respondents. Female respondents were more likely (89%) than male respondents (67%) to identify a major need for change in relation to children's refuges or shelters, with males being more likely than females to identify these as being in minor need of change (14% of males; 3% of females) or moderate need (10% of males; 3% of females). Conversely, females were more likely (81%) than males (62%) to perceive a major need for change in strong men's services, while 19 percent of males and eight percent of females perceived a minor need for change in strong men's services and a further 19 percent of males (and 6% of females) identified a moderate need for change. Males were slightly more likely (71%) than females (63%) to see educating young mothers about childcare as an area with a major need for change. Eleven percent of females saw educating young mothers as an area needing minor change and 26 percent saw it as an area for moderate change, while all remaining male respondents (29%) saw it as an area for moderate change. Female respondents were more likely than males to perceive a major need for change in relation to women's refuges/shelters/safe houses (60% of females; 32% of males), drug and alcohol services (68% females; 43% males) and improved community governance (49% of females; 38% of males). There was little difference between female and male respondents in other areas perceived to need major changes.

Table 17 Community safety initiatives—perceptions of need for change, all communities

Initiative	n	Perceived level of need for change required				Don't know/ n/a %
		No need %	Minor %	Moderate %	Major %	
Men's shelter/refuge/safe house	60	3	0	8	82	7
Children's shelter/refuge/safe house	61	2	7	7	79	7
Strong men's services/support	62	0	11	13	73	3
Educating young mothers about caring for children	60	0	7	25	68	0
Community-owned measures like night patrols, community police	63	3	2	27	67	2
Help for children who have been sexually abused	62	5	8	16	65	6
Programs to improve school attendance	59	3	8	22	66	0
Activities/programs to maintain traditional culture	59	5	8	15	66	5
Services to help offenders in the community	60	2	0	28	65	5
Recreation activities and programs for young people	61	5	5	28	61	2
Drug and alcohol services	60	3	10	27	58	2
Community events or activities to bring people together	59	8	8	25	56	2
Safety around dangerous areas (eg improved lighting)	59	3	14	24	56	3
Strong women's services/support	62	8	18	15	56	3
Services for people with gambling problems	62	3	6	27	55	8
Women's shelter/refuge/safe house	61	15	13	20	49	3
Improved community governance —such as improving the way the local council is run	60	10	17	23	45	5
Sport and recreation facilities	61	7	18	33	41	2
Increased police service or police presence	58	7	10	43	36	3
Security around dangerous areas— (eg locking up certain areas at night)	51	14	18	24	35	10

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two [computer file]

These findings are broadly consistent with the earlier question aimed at identifying service need. Together, they indicate support for the notion that supporting men and children is a very important part of responding to safety issues in communities. The lower level of support for initiatives aimed at women, such as those involving strong women and refuges or safe houses for women, may indicate a perception that more initiatives have targeted women than men in recent years and there is now a need for services directed at men to complement those provided directly for women.

Positive steps

Phase two survey respondents were asked to identify three to five positive things the community has done in the last two years to improve community safety and deal with community problems. Respondents identified a range of initiatives including:

- direct service delivery (drop-in centres, flexible learning centres, healing centres, safe houses);

- increased presence of justice-related services (circle sentencing courts, community police, night patrols);

- improved security measures (street lighting, installation of CCTV cameras and security alarms);

- improved access to, and diversity of, recreational activities;

- improved collaboration between law enforcement personnel and community members; and

- overarching improvements within community leadership structures.

Given the breadth of responses to this question and the importance of understanding the initiatives being developed by Indigenous communities to improve their own safety, a list of the initiatives identified by respondents is presented in more detail at *Appendix C*.

Priorities and resources for improving community safety

Phase two respondents were also asked to identify priorities for improving community safety and the help or resources the community would need to address these areas. A total of 154 responses were received from 57 respondents. The majority of responses identified a need for the provision of a specific service rather than an overarching priority area. These responses, however, clearly demonstrate a strong desire for programs or initiatives that focus on:

- improving the safety of children and young people (examples included parenting programs, improved child protection services and safe houses);

- alcohol and illicit drug misuse (detoxification facilities, education programs, drink driving courses, introducing bylaws to restrict the sale and consumption of alcohol);

- skills development (learning centres, driver's education);

- improving security (better lighting, introducing curfews);

- community justice (elder/youth patrols, legal centres);

- improving access to accommodation and housing; and

- justice system responses (improved police presence and community engagement, recruitment of Aboriginal police officers, Indigenous identified liaison officer positions, mandatory attendance at anger management and similar programs for specific behavioural issues)

Forty-seven respondents identified help or resources required to implement their ideas for improving community safety. Twenty-two (46%) identified a need for general funding or funding relating to specific program or infrastructure development. Many respondents also indicated a need for a whole of government or whole of community approach to identify and deal with issues. One respondent suggested focusing on one identified need at a time and to 'do it properly and comprehensively' before moving on to the next, as some of the associated 'problems' would be 'taken care of' using this approach. Other respondents suggested establishing working parties between the community, law enforcement and service providers to assist in identifying relevant services for the community and ensuring they are adequately resourced.

In this paper, it is important to capture and present these priorities and the resources needed to implement them in greater detail than above. A more detailed list of the priorities identified by respondents is at *Appendix C* and the help and resources identified as needed to achieve them is at *Appendix D*.

Seeking help

A set of questions in the surveys sought to identify who Indigenous victims of violence might turn to in seeking help or reporting their victimisation and for female victims, some of the reasons why violent victimisation might not be reported. The exploration of reasons for not reporting was limited to female

victims to manage the scope of the questioning and not make the questionnaire overly burdensome for respondents. While the questionnaire included questions on sources of help for male victims, limiting the questions about reasons for not reporting to female victims meant that the survey did not explore these issues for male children who are victimised. Including a similar question for young male victims should be considered for any further development of the questionnaire.

Reporting and help—female victims

Phase one

In the phase one survey, respondents were asked to indicate those agencies or people female victims of violence in the community would be likely to turn to for help, or to report their victimisation. Respondents could mark as many options as they felt applied. In the phase one form of questionnaire, this question referred to female victims of 'violence (including sexual assault and family violence)'. As the phase two survey asked separate questions regarding victims of sexual assault and victims of violence, and provided different forms of response from the phase one survey, the results from each phase are presented separately.

The greatest proportion of responses to the phase one survey indicated a perception that a female victim of violence would turn to the health service for support. One respondent noted in the free-text field that this would only be if they were hurt very badly and not necessarily even then. The next most commonly-selected source of help was family or kin (n=52; 61%). This supports the findings of other studies that have considered under-reporting of violence and found informal reporting through family or friends was more likely than official reporting to police or other agencies (Taylor & Putt 2007).

Just over half of all respondents (n=46; 51%) indicated that they thought a female victim of violence would be likely to report to police. This proportion was higher than expected, based on levels of under-reporting to police and issues around mistrust of police reported in other studies (eg Cunneen 2001; Lievore 2003). It is also contradicted by findings on the subsequent phase one question, discussed below, which asked specifically about

how likely various categories of Indigenous female victims of violence would be to report to police. A limitation of the phase one questionnaire, later corrected in the phase two version, is that while it asked respondents to say which sources of help victims would be likely to turn to, it didn't allow respondents to indicate *how likely* they would be to turn to that source of help, or whether they would be more likely to turn to one than another.

Focus group participants in a number of places also observed that female (and male) victims were most likely to seek help from family members, but would go the police if the violence was very serious or the family could not stop the violence. Other studies have noted that Indigenous communities tend to call the police only when situations are life-threatening or extreme (Cunneen 2001). Participants in one urban-based group felt that people in town would be most likely to go police rather than health services, while those in smaller Indigenous communities would tend to go to health services as they were familiar with going there for other issues and the health services could also help with physical injuries.

The suggested options of 'fellow workers' and 'employers' were drawn from other safety surveys but, given the high levels of unemployment in many Indigenous communities and the few respondents selecting these options, they are not likely to be relevant for most communities targeted by this survey. These options were therefore removed from the phase two survey.

Comments in the free-text field, together with information given by focus group and individual consultation participants, highlighted a number of other areas of help not identified in the list included in the phase one survey question. Ten respondents suggested that female victims would be likely to go to women's refuges or women's safe houses. That respondents are less likely to write fee-text comments than they are to tick boxes (27 substantive comments were made on this question from a total of 85 phase one surveys received) suggests that women's refuges and safe houses are an important and utilised source of help. Strong women in the community, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, community police liaison officers, family violence prevention and support services and justice groups were also mentioned in free-text comments as likely

avenues for help. Importantly, a number of respondents indicated that they thought there was a lack of awareness or understanding within the community about available services.

Phase two

As discussed in the *Methodology* section, questions on help-seeking behaviours were different in phase two of the survey.

Family violence

Table 18 shows the perceived likelihood of female victims of serious family violence reporting to, or seeking help from, various sources, ranked by the proportion of *very likely* responses. The sources of help that female victims of serious family violence were considered most likely to turn to were family/kin (75%), female elders (72%), health services, friends and women's shelters (all 64%).

While these were the most likely avenues of help, respondents appeared to perceive at least some reluctance among female victims to report victimisation, especially to official agencies or male community members and groups. Approximately

one-third of respondents felt that women would be *very likely* to seek help, with 34 percent indicating help would be sought for family and kin. The proportion of *very likely* responses reduced to 23 percent for health services and then sharply to nine percent for police. Police were considered by 63 percent of respondents to be an *unlikely* or *very unlikely* source of help, with 25 percent considering it *very unlikely* a female victim would report to police. Community justice groups were considered a relatively unlikely avenue for help, perhaps due to the presence of strong men or male elders, who themselves were considered the least likely avenue female victims would consider, but also because nearly a quarter of respondents indicated these were not available in their subject community. More than one-third of respondents (35%) thought it very unlikely victims would turn to male elders and strong men, although only eight percent thought it very unlikely victims would turn to female elders and strong women. This is likely to be a result, at least in part, of cultural considerations that may prevent women from speaking with men about certain issues, rather than (or in combination with) a perception by women that the men would be

Table 18 Who are female victims of serious family violence likely to turn to report the offence or seek help?

Source of help	n	Very likely %	Likely %	Unlikely %	Very unlikely %	Don't know %	Not available %
Family/kin	56	34	41	18	4	4	0
Female elders/strong women	53	30	42	15	8	6	0
Friends	53	28	36	15	9	9	2
Shelter/refuge/safe house	58	26	38	17	9	2	9
Health service	56	23	41	21	9	5	0
Police	56	9	27	38	25	2	0
Legal aid/legal service	52	8	19	31	23	10	10
Night patrol	55	7	33	18	20	7	15
Family violence service	54	7	31	26	15	4	17
Community police	50	6	28	24	16	6	20
Male elders/strong men	51	6	14	31	35	14	0
Victim support service	52	4	25	37	13	8	13
Community justice group	51	4	22	18	20	14	24
Priest/nun/chaplain	52	0	23	27	23	23	4
Some/any form of help at all	39	8	46	21	15	10	0

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two [computer file]

abusive or unsupportive. No respondent thought that a female victim of family violence would be *very likely* to seek help from religious figures such as priests, nuns or chaplains.

Sexual assault

Table 19 shows the perceived likelihood of female victims of rape reporting to, or seeking help from, various sources, ranked by the proportion of *very likely* responses. Female victims of rape were considered by respondents as most likely to report to or seek help from essentially the same sources as victims of family violence, although fewer respondents thought it very likely that rape victims would seek help from any of these sources. At most, just over one-fifth (21%) of respondents thought a victim would be very likely to seek help, in this case from friends, followed by family and kin (18%). If the *likely* and *very likely* responses are taken together, respondents thought the health service to be the most likely source of help (59%), although only 11 percent of respondents thought this *very likely.*

As was the case for family violence victims, respondents thought victims would tend not to

report the victimisation to police, with 38 percent considering this *very unlikely* and only 22 percent considering it *likely* or *very likely*. A number of other possible sources of help or reporting were also considered by a relatively high proportion of respondents as *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to be chosen as avenues of help for rape victims. This was especially the case for male elders/strong men, religious personnel and community justice groups (see previous question). One notable finding was that nearly half of respondents (47%) thought victims would be *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to seek help from a sexual assault service. None thought it *very likely*, although a small majority (51%) of respondents noted in earlier questioning that such a service was available in their subject community and only 21 percent indicated that a sexual assault service not being available was a reason for victims not reporting to such as service. The reasons why rape victims are perceived to not seek help from sexual assault services warrants further investigation, as does the perceived reluctance of rape victims to seek help from night patrols.

Table 19 Who will female victims of rape turn to report the offence or seek help?							
Source of help	n	Very likely %	Likely %	Unlikely %	Very unlikely %	Don't know %	Not available %
Friends	53	21	30	17	15	15	2
Family/kin	56	18	36	18	16	13	0
Female elders/strong women	54	15	41	15	19	11	0
Health service	56	11	48	20	16	5	0
Shelter/refuge/safe house	53	11	32	23	15	9	9
Police	55	7	15	31	38	9	0
Family violence service	54	6	19	30	22	7	17
Male elders/strong men	50	4	10	22	46	18	0
Community police	51	4	6	25	33	10	22
Victim support service	53	2	19	28	26	8	17
Priest/nun/chaplain	51	2	18	29	25	22	4
Community justice group	52	2	13	19	29	15	21
Legal aid/legal service	52	2	6	40	33	12	8
Night patrol	51	0	20	24	24	14	20
Sexual assault service[a]	47	0	19	26	21	13	21
Some/any form of help at all	47	2	36	23	21	17	0

a: Omitted from online survey; included in hardcopy version only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two [computer file]

Combined results—reporting to police

As noted above, the phase two survey results suggest that victims of serious family violence and rape would be unlikely to report the offence to state/ territory police, community police or night patrols. This is consistent with research showing that a high proportion of violent victimisation is not disclosed. While this is the case in mainstream communities as well, as noted earlier, studies have indicated that as much as 90 percent of violence against Indigenous women is not disclosed (Robertson 2000; Taylor & Putt 2007) and neither are most cases of sexual abuse of Indigenous children (Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce 2006; Wild & Anderson 2007). It should also be noted that as family violence tends to occur in private, much of it will not come to the attention of many service providers and this may influence their perceptions.

The results from this survey relating to reporting to police are compared with the results of the phase one survey in Table 20 below. In the phase one survey, respondents were asked about how likely female victims of particular categories violence— family violence, sexual assault and other violence— would be to report the violence to the police, although relative likelihood was not explored for other sources of help.

Respondents felt that female victims in each category would tend to be *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to report their victimisation. This finding was most pronounced for sexual assault/rape victims, with 67 percent of phase one respondents and 69 percent of phase two respondents feeling that these victims would be *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to report to police. Only 22 percent of phase one and phase two respondents thought victims would be *likely* or *very likely* to report a sexual assault/rape. For family violence victims, 58 percent of phase one respondents and 63 percent of phase two respondents thought they would be *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to report to police. For 'other violence' cases (only asked in the phase one survey) the margins were smaller, with 44 percent indicating that reporting would be *unlikely* or *very unlikely* and 39 percent indicating they thought victims would be *likely* or *very likely* to report.

These findings echo those found in the limited literature on under-reporting, which suggests that sexual violence in particular is under-reported in Indigenous communities for a range of reasons, including:

- fear of violent repercussions either against the victim or other family members;
- shame and embarrassment;
- fear of being ostracised by the community;
- difficulties in accessing services or a lack of awareness of services; and
- an expectation that the complaint will not be taken seriously or produce a desirable result (see Willis forthcoming).

Table 20 How likely are female victims of violence to report offences to police (%)?

Relative likelihood	Family violence		Sexual assault/rape		Other violence[a]	
	Phase one	Phase two	Phase one	Phase two	Phase one	Phase two
Very likely	13	9	7	7	13	n/a
Likely	22	27	15	15	26	n/a
Neither likely nor unlikely[a]	4	n/a	2	n/a	7	n/a
Unlikely	38	38	41	31	32	n/a
Very unlikely	20	25	26	38	12	n/a
Don't know	4	2	8	9	10	n/a

a: Phase one only

Note: n/a=not applicable

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

Reasons for not reporting

To explore possible reasons for under-reporting of violence, respondents were asked to indicate reasons they thought an Indigenous female victim of violence might not report to police. Table 21 depicts the proportion of responses from both the phase one and phase two surveys, although the two are not directly comparable. Table 20 is ranked by the proportion of very common or likely responses in the phase two survey.

The highest proportion of respondents thought that fear of payback (a form of violent retribution or revenge against the victim), was a very common or likely reason for not reporting violent victimisation (86%). Other very common or likely reasons cited by 80 percent or more of respondents included fear of further violence from the offender as a result of reporting (84%), fear of being blamed for the consequences for the offender or others (84%), shame or embarrassment (82%) and fear of payback or revenge against children or other people (80%).

These findings suggest that, at least in the perception of respondents, the fear of adverse consequences is a major factor behind decisions not to report violence. This is consistent with the findings of other studies of violence and non-disclosure of victimisation among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and also some inquiries into violence and abuse of Indigenous women and children (Memmott 2001; Mullighan 2008; Robertson 2000; Willis forthcoming). These studies and inquiries show that women who report violence may face consequences such as further violence from the initial perpetrator, violent retribution from the perpetrator's family and kin towards the victim, the perpetrator themselves or other family members. Ostracism from the community is also a possibility. In this survey, other negative consequences also emerging as common or likely reasons cited by a high proportion of respondents, included:

- fear of having children taken away by child protection agencies (67% very common or likely); and

- fear of being shunned by the community (66% very common or likely).

Fear of negative, often violent, consequences is perceived by respondents as a reason for non-

disclosure over and above more pragmatic reasons such as:

- distrust of police and other agencies;

- believing there is nothing the police can do;

- expecting not to be believed;

- being unaware of services and sources of help; and/or

- cultural and language barriers.

In addition to violence consequences, respondents thought that factors linked to the circumstances and cycle of violence experienced by victims, such as low self-esteem, believing violence is something that must be accepted and tolerated, and self-blame were also more likely reasons for non-disclosure than these other more pragmatic factors.

The finding that relatively few respondents thought the victim would prefer help from family or friends runs somewhat counter to the perception reported above that victims would be more likely to report violence to family than to police. Some studies with non-Indigenous victims have found the desire of the victim to deal with the matter herself is a major factor in non-reporting, although respondents did not perceive this to be the case with Indigenous victims (eg Fisher et al. 2003). At the same time, a majority of respondents (55%) saw preferring help from family and friends as a very common or likely reason for not reporting to police. It may be that the reasons for not reporting are interconnected. Reporting to family or friends may place the victim in a position where further violence or retribution (or the fear of these) becomes a possibility and respondents may therefore perceive that the victim's fear of violence overrides the inclination to report to family or friends. Fear of violence may be seen as a more compelling reason for not reporting than help from family or friends. Family violence in Indigenous society occurs in the context of marital and personal relationships that involve strong intra-familial bonds and interests that may be prioritised over the needs of one partner, especially female partners, leading to family being unable or unwilling to provide help even when sought (Taylor & Mouzos 2006; Taylor & Putt 2007).

Comments made in the free-text *other* field referred to a loss of faith and lack of trust in police, poor relations between the community and the police, police attitudes and low self-esteem leading to a

lack of empowerment as other possible reasons for not reporting. Poor social justice engagement and a belief among Indigenous women that non-Indigenous women may not understand their circumstances were also cited in comments.

Focus group and individual participants observed that there can be a general acceptance of violence against women, especially if the woman is seen to deserve the violence for having done something wrong. One participant cited shame as a 'massive' issue and a real hurdle to moving forward, but one that was slowly being overcome through the work of female and male leaders and strong people in the community. This participant also noted that change had to be carefully managed through Indigenous leaders and any imposed change could reduce reporting even further. Survey and focus group participants in a range of communities also saw fear of payback, or culturally-influenced violent retribution against victims or their families as a likely reason for not reporting.

Table 21 Reasons for not reporting violent victimisation to the police					
		Phase two (%)			
Reasons for not reporting	Phase one (%)	Not common or likely	Moderately common or likely	Very common or likely	Don't know
Fear of payback or revenge against themselves	71	2	10	86	2
Fear of further violence from the offender	81	2	14	84	0
Fear of being blamed for the consequences	60	2	14	84	0
Shame or embarrassment	74	4	12	82	2
Fear of payback or revenge against children/others	58	4	14	80	2
Fear of having children taken away[a]	n/a	10	15	67	8
Fear of being shunned by the community	54	6	23	66	4
Don't trust police[a]	n/a	15	17	65	4
Low self-esteem[a]	n/a	2	28	64	6
See violence as the way things are/just have to put up with it	51	8	27	61	4
Blame themselves/they think they deserve it	45	10	23	60	6
Prefer help from family or friends[a]	n/a	19	23	55	2
Don't feel they have a choice about whether to have sex or not[a]	n/a	6	29	55	10
Don't think there is anything the police can do	44	9	33	53	4
Don't want the offender arrested	58	11	37	50	2
Would not expect to be believed	42	11	23	50	17
Don't think the courts will help	45	17	36	45	2
Unaware of services available and sources of help[a]	n/a	9	40	44	7
Lack of strong community leadership[a]	n/a	11	30	43	16
Don't trust other agencies/services[a]	n/a	16	40	42	2
Prefer to deal with it themselves	31	16	38	36	11
Cultural or language reasons	41	23	29	33	15

a: phase two only

Note: n/a=not applicable

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two survey [computer file]

As discussed in the *Methodology* section, some of the comments made through the phase one survey, focus groups and consultations were subsequently incorporated in the phase two survey.

Reporting and help—male victims

Data from police and support services suggest that between 15 and 20 percent of sexual assault victims are male (ABS 2009; Crome 2006). Indigenous Australians, whether male or female, are much more likely to be victims of violence than non-Indigenous Australians. There is little difference between physical violence victimisation rates for Indigenous males and Indigenous females, in contrast to non-Indigenous populations where males are generally more like to be victims of physical violence than females (Bryant & Willis 2008).

There is very little empirical information available to show the extent to which males, particularly Indigenous males, perceive themselves as victims of violence or the extent to which they are likely to report or disclose being *victims* of physical or sexual violence. Males may be reluctant to place themselves in the category of 'victim' or to see themselves as needing help when victimised. Research into the impacts of sexual violence against males suggests that male victims may be particularly reluctant to report out of fear they will be labelled as future perpetrators, as homosexual, outcasts or emotionally weak and that concerns about sexuality, gender roles and fear of not being taken seriously are among the most common repercussions of sexual violence against men (AIFS 2005, 2003). Through social stereotyping, men and boys are expected to be self-reliant, invulnerable and independent and being a victim of violence, particularly sexual abuse, may lead males to believe their stereotyped role or image has been damaged (Crome 2006). For Indigenous males, there may be other barriers to disclosure that arise from cultural perceptions of their place in Indigenous society and the difficulties of remaining anonymous in a small community. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous male victims may see few avenues for support when those services available for victims, particularly sexual assault survivors, are primarily female-oriented (Crome 2006). When males seek support, it is more likely to be for behaviours that have manifested or

deteriorated as a way of coping with their experiences, such as mental health problems or alcohol use (Crome 2006).

The present research sought to contribute to an understanding of male victimisation through assessing perceptions of the likelihood that male victims of violence would seek help in response to their victimisation. Phase one survey respondents were asked to identify, from a list, those agencies or people they thought male victims of violence would likely turn to for help. In phase two, this list was expanded and a scale introduced to gain a more finely-detailed understanding of likelihood. Table 22 shows the perceived likelihood of male victims of violence reporting to, or seeking help from, various sources as measured in both the phase one and phase two surveys. For the purposes of presentation, the results in this Table are ranked by the proportion of *very likely* responses given in the phase two survey.

These results were generally similar to the phase one results for female victims, although the results are not directly comparable due to questions regarding female victims being separated into different forms of violence. This was not done with the questions relating to males. For male victims, family and kin were perceived as the mostly likely source of help by 73 percent of phase one survey respondents and 74 percent (*very likely* and *likely* combined) of phase two respondents. Friends were considered the next most likely source of help, cited as *very likely* or *likely* by 67 percent of phase two respondents. Male elders and strong men and the health service were also seen as relatively likely sources of help or avenues of reporting.

Some differences were seen between the phase one and phase two survey results. Phase one survey respondents thought it more likely that male victims would turn to the health service or the police rather than elders and strong men, whereas phase two produced the opposite result. In some cases, as opposed to phase one respondents, phase two respondents indicated that victims were not likely to turn to any source of help. This difference in findings between the two phases was most apparent in the case of the police, with 49 percent of phase one respondents and 22 percent of phase two respondents indicating they were a likely avenue

of reporting or help for victimised men. Some 74 percent of phase two responses indicated it was *very unlikely* or *unlikely* that male victims would report their victimisation to police. These response differences are most likely due to differences in the question between the two survey phases, rather than differences in the respondent groups.

It is notable that some community-owned sources of help, including shelters/safe houses, night patrols and community justice groups, were viewed as relatively unlikely sources of help. This may be linked to a general unwillingness by Indigenous males to seek external help when victimised, or issues relating to the role of these initiatives and possible connections between victims and perpetrators. Given that the establishment of safe houses and shelters was a new Australian Government initiative at the time of the surveys, it may also be the case that the facilities and those running them were simply too new to have gained trust within the community. Another complicating factor may be

the role of alcohol in violent confrontations, where both victim and perpetrator are drinking, making the victim in some cases at least partly culpable and also reducing the likelihood that an intoxicated victim will seek help. Also important to note is the relatively high proportions of responses indicating that many of the possible sources of help, in particular community-based justice services, victim support and legal aid were not available in the subject communities.

While no respondents to either the phase one or phase two survey said there was a complete lack of support available for female victims, a small number (n=4) said that there was a complete lack of support for male victims. This aspect of the findings was reflected in comments made in the *other* field, with some respondents stating that Indigenous men will rarely tell anyone about an incident of violence, keep things to themselves and 'bottle up their feelings', do not feel they can ask for help and be taken seriously, and are generally unlikely to report. At

Table 22 Who are male victims of violence likely to turn to for help (%)?

Source of help	Phase one		Phase two				
	Likely	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Family/kin	73	23	51	8	9	9	0
Friends	n/a	19	48	6	13	12	2
Male elders/strong men	36	19	40	13	12	15	0
Health service	55	14	31	27	22	6	0
Police	49	8	14	38	36	4	0
Community police	n/a	4	19	23	25	6	23
Shelter/refuge/safe house	n/a	4	2	33	24	8	29
Night patrol	n/a	2	20	27	20	12	20
Community justice group	n/a	0	19	19	23	13	27
Legal aid/legal service	n/a	0	14	33	27	10	16
Priest/nun/chaplain	9	2	12	24	31	22	8
Victim support service	12	0	4	42	29	6	19
Some/any form of help at all	n/a	2	32	23	20	20	2
Fellow workers[a]	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Employers[a]	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
General counselling[a]	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No support available[a]	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

a: phase one only

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase one and phase two [computer file]

the same time, respondents indicated some other possible avenues men might turn to for help, including night patrols, outreach and other men's services and the justice group, some of which were incorporated in the phase two survey.

Reporting and help—child/young victims

Due to some issues with how the question was delivered through the phase one survey, the results of the phase one question relating to children and young victims have been omitted from this report. In the phase two survey, respondents were asked *if an Indigenous young person is a victim of serious violence, how likely is he or she to talk to the following agencies or people about what they have experienced?* Table 23 shows the results from the phase two survey, ranked by the proportion of *very likely* responses given. While this question explored a different form of help-seeking behaviour, results from this question were quite similar to the phase two results for male and female victims in the avenues of help likely to be chosen.

Friends were the most commonly cited source of help, with 66 percent of respondents indicating child victims would be *very likely* or *likely* to tell friends about their experiences. In this case, it may be that children are not necessarily talking to their friends in order to seek help or some form of protection, but as an avenue to share what they have experienced with peers who have a similar level of understanding to themselves and who may have had similar experiences. Through speaking with friends, children may be able to confirm they are not alone in being victimised (see Mullighan 2008). One consideration for future iterations of this survey would be the extent to which the concept of 'friends' has validity for Indigenous young people, as distinct or intertwined with the role of significance of kin or other young people in the community in their social perceptions.

A similar proportion of respondents (63% combined from *very likely* and *likely* responses) thought child victims may talk with their family or kin about their victimisation, followed by elders or strong men and women in the community (45%). It can reasonably be supposed that in some cases, these elders or strong people may also be family or kin of the child. External sources of help in the form of youth support services (43%), youth recreation workers (42%) and the health service (42%) were also seen as relatively likely people for child victims to talk to. Statutory services such as the police and child welfare were considered *unlikely* (74%) or *very unlikely* (69%) to be approached for help. For some victims, there may be strong disincentives through family members for a child to speak with statutory services, especially where family members have committed the violence against the child.

The comments made in the free-text fields of the phase one and phase two surveys, and by focus group participants, reflected some of the barriers to providing services for victimised children and young people. A number of respondents noted that children are not aware of services, lack the confidence to approach them, or fear reprisals from parents. Respondents noted that children may be silenced by families as the person offending against them may also be a family member; the important role of shame in preventing children from seeking help was also noted. Other possible sources of help identified by respondents included school liaison officers, youth workers or youth support groups, as well as friends and peers, some of which were included in the phase two survey. According to focus group participants, in some cases, young people who are victimised may be reluctant to turn to the police as they may be afraid of their own misdemeanours coming to light.

Table 23 Who are child victims of violence likely to turn to for help (%)?						
Source of help	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Friends	15	51	13	9	11	0
Family/kin	15	48	22	6	9	0
Elders/strong men and women	9	36	30	13	9	2
Health service	8	35	35	17	6	0
Youth recreation workers/groups	8	35	27	12	8	12
Youth support service	4	39	22	12	10	14
Teacher/school	4	28	34	19	15	0
Police	6	15	38	36	6	0
Community police	4	14	33	24	4	22
Victim support service	2	18	36	22	2	20
Shelter/refuge/safe house	2	18	33	20	6	20
Child welfare service	2	17	38	31	6	6
Priest/nun/chaplain	2	13	33	28	17	7
Community justice group	2	12	28	26	8	24
Night patrol	2	8	40	22	8	20
Some/any form of help at all	5	35	21	16	19	5

Source: AIC, Indigenous community safety phase two [computer file]

Conclusion

This research sought to develop a questionnaire and survey methodology for researching community safety issues in Australian Indigenous communities and to gain an understanding of the issues through survey research using the questionnaire. The research focused on the community safety perceptions of service providers working in and with Indigenous communities, through individual surveys, consultations and focus groups. While these perceptions may not be the same as those of Indigenous community members, they are the perceptions of people who work directly with communities and often are resident in those communities. Many service providers will work in roles that put them in contact with some of the negative consequences of community safety problems, such as those in health or justice services who deal with the aftermath of violence. Service providers also work in roles where they see and are often involved with the positive steps being taken by Indigenous Australians to maintain and where necessary, improve the safety of their communities. Thirty percent of respondents and the majority of focus group participants were themselves Indigenous.

The results of this work mirror in some ways those from other studies and inquiries into crime and victimisation among Indigenous Australians, the non-disclosure of violent victimisation and factors influencing perceptions of safety in mainstream communities, but this study also expands on those topics in various ways. The survey questionnaire developed for this study was developed specifically to take into account the safety-related issues that may impact on the lives of Indigenous Australians in different community settings. It included questions focusing on safety-related services, where changes needed to be made to these services, attempted to identify community safety-related initiatives being put in place by Indigenous Australians and gave respondents an opportunity to contribute to improving community safety by identifying priorities for change and the assistance and resources that might be needed to implement them.

One area where the results were consistent with other studies and inquiries is in showing that alcohol-related violence is a problem for many Indigenous Australians, whether as perpetrators or victims. While violence may only be perpetrated by a small proportion of those in a community, it has widespread impacts throughout the community. A high proportion of respondents identified certain homes in the community as being unsafe, with some commenting that it was the homes of the drinkers that were unsafe, while others noted that any area where people were drinking could be an unsafe area. Identifying problem drinking and related behaviour to certain people and places within the community was also borne out by the proportion of

respondents who identified loud parties and drinking sessions as a serious or very serious problem. It was the possibility of alcohol-related violence that made the greatest number of respondents feel unsafe in the nominated situations.

In line with these concerns, many of the initiatives and priorities identified by respondents focused on the reduction of alcohol use. This suggests a priority for government in continuing to assist communities to address alcohol problems. This may involve developing or supporting initiatives such as banning alcohol entirely from communities, establishing alcohol-free areas or times, providing better services to assist people with alcohol problems, education and awareness campaigns and having detoxification facilities or safe places for intoxicated people to go when feeling at risk of perpetrating or suffering violence. It may also involve initiatives to address the underlying reasons for misuse of alcohol, aiming to reduce demand for alcohol and its supply, as well as increasing harm minimisation. The right response or combination of responses to alcohol misuse will vary from one community to another and depend on factors peculiar to that community (NIDAC 2010; Queensland Government 2007). Individual communities and their representatives are best placed to identify local needs, but their ability to identify and implement the right response will be aided with the input of ideas, practical support and resources from outside the community.

The importance of community-owned solutions was also reflected in the types of services that were identified as major needs for the community. These were services that would be based in the community and would likely to be led by community members, such as men's places, men's and women's groups, children's refuges and shelters, justice groups and night patrols. These types of services and initiatives also dominated respondents' perceptions of priorities for change. Other main priorities for change focused on services that were not directly safety-related, but were aimed at building better futures for children, such as increasing school attendance and educating young mothers about caring for children. Services delivered by governments and/or those focused more on immediate circumstances, such as health and policing, were seen as less of a need. To a large extent, this may be because these services are already adequately provided by government.

However, the responses of service providers in this survey suggest they are not perceived to be adequately meeting community needs in major areas and it is initiatives delivered by the community, rather than by government and outside agencies, that respondents feel communities want and need.

The views expressed by service providers through this work need to be balanced by the recognition that addressing issues relating to violence, child abuse and other social problems in communities and implementing initiatives to deal with them, is complex. As the responses of participants in this research suggest, community safety is the product of more than actual or perceived levels of crime and criminal behaviour. While preventing and reducing crime, and dealing effectively with perpetrators and victims, can in itself lead to improved community safety outcomes, crime and safety are also influenced by a wide range of other factors, including the multiple forms of social disadvantage that impact on Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009; Homel, Lincoln & Herd 1999; Weatherburn, Snowball & Hunter 2008). Measures that aim to address community safety issues in Indigenous communities need to take into account these contributing factors and operate at multiple levels within the social and demographic context of each community so that long-term change can be achieved.

Developing community services of the kind needed to make sustainable community safety changes requires time and capacity building through education, training, mentoring and ongoing support. The extent to which development and change should be the responsibility of Indigenous communities and organisations, and the extent to which responsibility should lie with government, is a contentious issue beyond the scope of this report. Nonetheless, even if change is to be driven and shaped by Indigenous Australians, there is a need for governments to provide structure, frameworks and support to facilitate and enable Indigenous people and organisations to make the necessary changes (Dillon & Westbury 2007; Hunt 2005).

Communities need to have confidence in the motivation of those implementing and supporting the initiatives and their capacity to provide support and

implement measures effectively and appropriately. This is the case whether the measures are implemented by Indigenous Australians, or whether mainstream agencies or community groups work together in partnership. Previous negative experiences of measures and attempts to implement initiatives need to be addressed. Further, governance mechanisms need to put in place to address the possibility of abuse of power, the appropriateness of key personnel and steps taken to ensure that adequate infrastructure and resources are available, or are able to be put in place, to support the initiatives and measures.

As an element of capacity building, community consultation, involving meaningful dialogue that recognises the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms of communication, is important to ensure that the initiatives proposed are culturally appropriate and will be used by the community. Further, attempts to improve justice outcomes should include measures to improve the disclosure of victimisation and to ensure the safety of those who do disclose (see Franks et al. 2001; Hunt 2005; NH & MRC 2003). Individual communities will have different issues, needs and views and may differ in the extent to which they desire and support the involvement of mainstream services in developing and delivering measures to improve community safety. Careful and meaningful consultation with communities will be important to ensure that issues such cultural tensions, kinship loyalties and obligations and impacts on the capacity of individuals in a community to make use of services are taken into account in implementing and supporting initiatives and monitoring their ongoing effectiveness in addressing the issues and problems they are designed to address.

The other area of need that strongly emerged from this work is for initiatives to address the problem of non-disclosure of violent victimisation. Violence, particularly family violence and sexual abuse, can arise in complex circumstances in Indigenous communities through the interaction and influence of kin relationships and cultural influences. The embedded nature of violence, reinforced by inter-generational transmission of norms and behaviours, contributes to low rates of disclosure of violent victimisation and requires responses that involve the provision of appropriate, interconnected

services and changing attitudes and behaviours at individual and community levels. Service provider respondents clearly perceived an unwillingness among victims of violence to report offences and to seek help from police and other government agencies; a finding supported by other research on this topic (Mullighan 2008; Robertson 2000; Taylor & Putt 2007; Wild & Anderson 2007). Female victims withhold disclosure largely through fear of violent and other negative consequences, perhaps only seeking help when badly injured. Some of the factors leading to this fear may be cultural in origin, with victims fearing culturally-determined payback against themselves or others (Mullighan 2008; Robertson 2000; Taylor & Putt 2007; Wild & Anderson 2007).

However, it is also possible that violent consequences are not only cultural in origin, but stem from attitudes towards women and violence arising in individual or shared values and beliefs. The National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey provided evidence that there are still challenges ahead in changing attitudes and beliefs about family and other violence against women (FaHCSIA 2009). The problem of non-disclosure of violence is not unique to Indigenous communities; in these communities and among other Australian communities, it can arise from fear of further violence at the hands of the perpetrator, or the more practical consequences for women that arise from having partners arrested and children possibly being placed in care. There is a need for greater support to be available to female victims so that they can seek help and achieve justice, and receive the help they need to continue their lives, without fear.

There are also barriers for children in reporting violence they have experienced. These include the traumatic nature of court proceedings, family pressure and community responses, shame, humiliation, embarrassment and the interpersonal power issues and dynamics that arise when the child is dependent on the perpetrator (Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce 2006; AIFS 2005; Mullighan 2008; Wild & Anderson 2007). These barriers may be even more acute for male children, given issues of sexuality and further levels of shame that sexual assault by a male perpetrator may bring. Cultural and societal constraints may also tend to

operate against adolescent and adult males reporting violence. Thus, as well as greater support for female victims of violence, there needs to be both greater support for child victims in general and a broader understanding and awareness of their needs.

Application of the research findings

As noted earlier, this research was not intended to provide a comprehensive picture of community safety issues across Australian Indigenous communities, nor was it intended to produce a representative sample of communities or service providers. A comprehensive examination was outside the scope of this project and arguably would be difficult to achieve in any case, given the number of Indigenous communities in Australia, their distribution across very large geographic distances and the many issues involved with gaining access to these communities for research purposes.

While there are benefits to producing results that can be generalised across communities, it is arguable whether a representative sample is either a feasible or appropriate goal for this kind of survey, given the diversity between Indigenous communities at many levels. These include differences in language, traditional law, world view and other elements of culture, historical impacts from European colonisation, the extent to which communities consist of different family or clan groups, community governance arrangements, the nature and extent of government involvement and whether the community is in an urban, rural or remote location. These elements of diversity can also interconnect with factors that contribute to the incidence of violence and other antisocial behaviour problems, such as alcohol and illicit drug use, unemployment, financial stress, family conflicts, the impacts of colonisation and historical government policy (eg Gordon, Hallahan & Henry 2002; Memmott et al. 2001; Snowball & Weatherburn 2008). For this reason, the results gained through the current research are only intended to be indicative and to highlight the major issues identified in a range of communities.

Application of the questionnaire

This research aimed, in part, to develop a survey questionnaire and methodology that could be applied to a range of community safety-related applications for Indigenous communities. The questionnaire will available for use from the AIC website (www.aic.gov.au), together with draft guidelines for its use with Indigenous communities (see *Appendix E*).

In its phase two form, there was feedback from respondents that the questionnaire was overly long and time-consuming. For those with limited English language skills, it may also be too complex. As the questionnaire was also designed to be applicable not just to service providers, but for use with Indigenous community members:

- the questionnaire may be considered as consisting of two separate parts, or modules; and
- the section dealing with help-seeking behaviour was included in this research to gain an understanding of factors contributing to non-disclosure of violence and may therefore not be applicable for other intended uses of the questionnaire. Thus, this section will be available for use, but will be provided as a separate document, to be used if appropriate.

Further, if intended for use with respondents who have limited English language skills (including some community members or persons other than service providers), there may be a need for the questionnaire to be delivered verbally by an interpreter. There may also be value in the questionnaire (or parts of it) being modified into a pictographic form or for supporting materials in pictographic form to be developed for use with the questionnaire to aid understanding of the questions and the available responses. The responses given to the phase two survey also highlighted the need for further consideration of questions and answer options, as indicated in various places in this report. For instance, future iterations of the survey would benefit from greater clarification around what is meant by 'men's refuges/safe houses' and consideration of the utility of the concept of 'friends', as distinct from kin and other community members, in questions about children's help-seeking behaviour.

Some of the terminology used in the questionnaire, such as 'sexual assault', 'neglect', 'emotional abuse', has specific meanings that may not be understood by all respondents, regardless of their level of English language skill. An important element of the methodology will be working through the terminology and concepts with respondents and ensuring there is a shared understanding of these meanings. Any further development of the questionnaire and methodology should therefore include guidelines that describe how this discussion should be conducted for face-to-face interviews and which provide definitions for all terms and concepts with specific meanings, either in the form of a glossary at the beginning of the questionnaire or included within relevant questions. This is partly addressed through the guidelines at *Appendix E*, but would need further development before the

questionnaire could be reliably used with community members. This issue also raises more generally the need to further consider the language used in the questionnaire and whether it can be readily understood by Indigenous community members.

Despite the need for these modifications and developments to increase its practicality, this questionnaire and methodology represents an important step in developing materials devised specifically for use both with and by Indigenous Australians. It has been designed to take into account the circumstances of Indigenous Australians, particularly those living outside mainstream communities, to reflect the safety issues that impact on their daily lives and to assist Indigenous Australians and those working with them to have a greater opportunity to determine solutions to the issues that impact them.

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All URLs are correct at 30 June 2010

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Appendixes

Appendix A:
Phase one questionnaire

Service providers' perceptions of community safety in Indigenous communities

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is conducting research with service providers working with Indigenous communities in different parts of Australia.

The research is aimed at learning more about what makes communities safe, or not safe, and some of the ways communities are making themselves safer. The AIC sees service providers as uniquely placed to offer perceptions of community safety issues that have not been looked at before and which will make an important contribution to knowledge in this important area.

This questionnaire and its methodology will be available to communities as a tool which can be used for quickly and easily developing an evidence based, such as to support applications for crime prevention funding.

This survey is anonymous and voluntary. Responses will be held confidentially by the AIC in a secure location and will be reported in a way that cannot identify any individual or agency.

Your responses to the survey will be completely confidential. The information collected in this research will be reported in an aggregated format—this means that no individual person or organization will be able to be identified from their responses.

The survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

If you would like to return the survey by mail, or have any questions about this research project, please contact:

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Service providers' perceptions of community safety

In this survey we would like you to answer questions about crime and safety in a particular community.

Please answer these questions about the community where you live and work.

If you are based in a regional centre or town and provide outreach services to smaller communities, answer the questions about the regional centre/town where you live and are based.

1. Please indicate which type community you are answering the questions about:

   ☐ Indigenous community (remote area)

   ☐ Small country town (rural area)

   ☐ Large country town/city/regional centre

2. Please give the name of the community you are answering questions about: (*this information will be used to help us understand and analyse survey results, but individual communities will not be identified in any published report*).

   Name of community: _____

   Postcode: _____

Social problems

3. How much of a problem do you think the following behaviours are in this community? *Put a cross in only one box for each statement*.

	Not a problem	A small problem	A big problem	Don't know
Break and enter/theft from homes				
Robbery/stealing from people				
Stealing cars				
Damage to property, vandalism, graffiti				
Illegal drug use				
Petrol or glue sniffing				
Public drunkenness				
Disorderly behaviour (including things like trespassing, begging, offensive behaviour, offensive language)				
Dangerous driving/speeding				
Violence between adults				
Family violence				
Sexual assault (of adults)				
Sexual abuse (of children)				
Neglect of children				
Teenage pregnancy				
Children not going to school				
Other (please specify):				

Services available in the community

4.   Are the following services available in the community? *Put a cross in only one box for each statement.*

	Resident in community	Visiting community	Not available
Community health			
24 hour emergency health care			
Drug and alcohol service			
Legal aid			
Rape crisis service			
Other victim support/counselling service			
State police			
Aboriginal community police			
Safe house			
Child welfare services			
School education			
Wardens			
Night patrols			
Sobering up shelter/detox centre			

How safe is this community?

5.   How safe do you feel in the following situations while in this community?

Situation	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know/ not applicable
Doing your job in daylight						
Doing your job after dark						
Walking in local area alone in daylight						
Walking in local area alone at night						
At home alone in daylight						
At home alone after dark						

Reasons for feeling unsafe

6. If you feel 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe' in some of the situations in Question 5, why do you feel unsafe? *Put a cross against all the reasons that apply.*

☐ Someone broke into my home or stole things from my home

☐ I have been attacked or treated violently by somebody

☐ I have been threatened or harassed by somebody

☐ Because of things I find out about from the media

☐ Because of crimes that have occurred in my area

☐ My home is not secure enough

☐ Disturbances occur in my area (eg gangs, fights, vandalism, drunkenness)

☐ There is nobody around to help if something happens

☐ Because of my age

☐ I am physically unable to defend myself

☐ I have seen or heard people acting suspiciously

☐ Because my work puts me in contact with unsafe people or places

☐ Other (please specify)

Level of community safety

7. How safe do you think it is in this community for:

Type of person	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Indigenous male teenagers						
Indigenous adult men						
Indigenous female teenagers						
Indigenous adult women						
Indigenous children						
Frail and elderly Indigenous people						

Where is it unsafe?

8. Which of these areas do you think are unsafe?

☐ Around the beachfront/by the river

☐ Shopping centres/community shop or canteen

☐ Around pubs and nightclubs

☐ In the city centre/centre of the community

☐ Public toilets

☐ Bus stops/bus terminal

☐ Parks, sports fields, recreation areas

☐ Around health clinic/hospital/drug and alcohol service

☐ Near certain homes

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

☐ None of the above

When is it unsafe?

9. What times of the day are most unsafe in this community?

☐ Early morning (midnight–6 am)

☐ Morning (6 am–noon)

☐ Afternoon (noon–6 pm)

☐ Evening/night (6 pm–midnight)

10. Which days are the most unsafe in this community?

☐ Monday   ☐ Friday

☐ Tuesday   ☐ Saturday

☐ Wednesday   ☐ Sunday

☐ Thursday

11. Are there particular times of the year, or during particular events, that make the community less safe? Please give details.

_____

_____

Making a difference

12. What positive things have been done in this community to deal with problems like violence and child abuse? *Put a cross against all that apply*.

- ☐ Improved safety around dangerous areas—such as with better lighting
- ☐ Improved security around dangerous areas—such as locking up certain areas at night
- ☐ Increased police service or police presence
- ☐ Community-based measures like night patrols, community police
- ☐ Set up a safe house
- ☐ Better services for people with drug and alcohol problems
- ☐ Better ways of identifying and helping children who have been sexually abused
- ☐ Used local knowledge and wisdom to educate local people about community problems
- ☐ Ran activities or programs to maintain traditional culture
- ☐ Set up, or arranged for, sport and recreation facilities—like a pool or community centre
- ☐ Organised activities or programs to give young people more to do
- ☐ Organised community events to bring people together
- ☐ Improved community governance—such as improving the way the local council is run
- ☐ Dealt with offenders through the justice system
- ☐ Provided better services to help offenders in the community
- ☐ Other (please specify)

_____

Seeking help—Indigenous adult women

13. If an Indigenous woman is a victim of violence in this community, who is she likely to turn to for help? *Put a cross against all that apply*

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Health service
- ☐ Victim support service
- ☐ General counselling
- ☐ Advice/support from elders/other community members
- ☐ Family/kin
- ☐ Employers
- ☐ Fellow workers
- ☐ Priest/nun/religious person
- ☐ Other (please specify)

_____

- ☐ No support available
- ☐ Don't know

14. How likely do you think Indigenous people in this community are to report being a victim of the following offences to the police?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Don't know
Family violence					
Sexual assault					
Other violence/assault					

Reasons for not reporting violence

15. Why might an Indigenous female victim of violence (including sexual assault and family violence) in this community not report the violence to the police? *Put a cross against all that apply*

☐ Prefer to deal with it herself

☐ Don't think there is anything the police can do

☐ Don't think the courts will help

☐ Prefer help from family or friends

☐ Don't want the offender arrested

☐ Fear of payback or revenge against themselves

☐ Fear of payback or revenge against children or other people

☐ Fear of further violence from the offender

☐ Shame or embarrassment

☐ Fear of being shunned by the community

☐ Fear of being blamed for the consequences

☐ Blame themselves/they think they deserve it

☐ See it as the way things are/just have to put up with it

☐ Would not expect to be believed

☐ Cultural or language reasons

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

Seeking help—Indigenous adult men

16. If an Indigenous man is a victim of violence in this community, who is he likely to turn to for help?
     Put a cross against all that apply

☐ Police

☐ Health service

☐ Victim support service

☐ General counselling

☐ Advice/support from elders/other community members

☐ Family/kin

☐ Employers

☐ Fellow workers

☐ Priest/nun/religious person

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

☐ No support available

☐ Don't know

Seeking help—Indigenous children

17. If an Indigenous child is the victim of violence in this community, who can he or she turn to for help? *Put a cross against all that apply*

☐ Police

☐ Health service

☐ Child welfare

☐ Victim support service

☐ Advice/support from elders/other community members

☐ Protection from elders/other community members

☐ Family/kin

☐ Teacher

☐ Priest/nun/religious person

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

☐ No support available

Demographics

About you and your work

Thank you for answering these questions. The information you've given will be very useful in helping us understand more about crime and safety issues affecting Australian communities.

To help us understand the answers better, please tell us a little about yourself. This information cannot be used to identify who you are and will only be reported in aggregated form—that is, all the information people give us about themselves will be combined so that there is no way of identifying any individual person.

18. What is your sex?

☐ Female

☐ Male

19. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

☐ No

☐ Yes, Aboriginal

☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander

☐ Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

20. What type of services do you/your organisation provide to the Indigenous community?

☐ Police

☐ Health

☐ Allied health

☐ Emergency services

☐ Aged care

☐ Child welfare

☐ Legal aid

☐ School education

☐ Adult learning

☐ Substance abuse/rehabilitation

☐ Indigenous cultural support

☐ Sexual assault service/support

☐ Other type of victim support

☐ Corrections

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

☐ Not applicable—community member

21.   How is the service delivered?

☐   Located in the community/town

☐   Outreach to a region

22.   What is your role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

23.   How long have you worked in roles where you provide services to Indigenous communities or Indigenous people (overall, not just in this region)?

_____ years   _____ months

24.   How long have you worked in roles where you provide services to Indigenous communities or Indigenous people *in this region*?

_____ years   _____ months

25.   How many remote Indigenous communities in this region have you worked in, or directly with?

_____ (number)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Matthew Willis
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Australian Institute of Criminology
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Canberra ACT 2601

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Appendix B: Phase two questionnaire

Service providers' perceptions of community safety in Indigenous communities

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is conducting research with service providers working with Indigenous communities in different parts of Australia.

The research is aimed at learning more about what makes communities safe, or not safe, and some of the ways communities are making themselves safer. The AIC sees service providers as uniquely placed to offer perceptions of community safety issues that have not been looked at before and which will make a valuable contribution to knowledge in this important area.

This questionnaire and its methodology will be available to communities as a tool which can be used for quickly and easily developing an evidence base, for example to support funding applications for crime prevention-type activities.

This survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. Your responses to the survey will be completely confidential and completed questionnaires will be held by the AIC in a secure location. The information collected in this research will be reported in an aggregated format—this means that no individual person or organization will be able to be identified from their responses.

The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete.

If you would like to return the survey by mail, or have any questions about this research project, please contact:

Matthew Willis
Research Analyst
Australian Institute of Criminology
GPO Box 2944
Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: (02) 6260 9287
e-mail: matthew.willis@aic.gov.au

Service providers' perceptions of community safety

In this survey we would like you to answer questions about crime and safety in a particular community.

Please answer these questions about the community where you live and work.

If you are based in a regional centre or town and provide outreach services to smaller communities, answer the questions about the regional centre/town where you live and are based.

1. Please indicate which type community you are answering the questions about:

    ☐ Indigenous community (remote area)

    ☐ Small country town (rural area)

    ☐ Large country town/city/regional centre

2. Please give the name of the community you are answering questions about: (*this information will be used to help us understand and analyse survey results, but individual communities will not be identified in any published report*).

Name of community: _____

Postcode: _____

Community strengths

3. What do you think are the *best* things about living in this community? What are the community's strengths and positive features?

    1.

    2.

    3.

4.

5.

Social problems—crime-related problems

4.   How much of a problem do you think the following behaviours and issues are in this community?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means a more serious problem. Circle 0 if you don't know enough about the issue to answer.

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem	Don't know
Violence between adults in public	1	2	3	4	5	0
Violence within families	1	2	3	4	5	0
Jealous fighting	1	2	3	4	5	0
Family/kin feuding	1	2	3	4	5	0
Women being raped/forced to have sex	1	2	3	4	5	0
Girls being raped/forced to have sex	1	2	3	4	5	0
Sexual abuse of children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Physical abuse of children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Public drunkenness/misuse of alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	0
Drunkenness/misuse of alcohol in homes	1	2	3	4	5	0
Sly grogging/grog running	1	2	3	4	5	0
Illegal drug use	1	2	3	4	5	0
Petrol or glue sniffing	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hoon/dangerous/noisy driving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Drunk driving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Unlicensed driving/driving unregistered vehicles	1	2	3	4	5	0
Break and enter/theft from homes	1	2	3	4	5	0
Robbery/stealing from people	1	2	3	4	5	0
Stealing cars	1	2	3	4	5	0
Damage to property, vandalism, graffiti	1	2	3	4	5	0

Social problems—other social problems

5.   How much of a problem do you think the following behaviours are in this community?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means a more serious problem. Circle 0 if you don't know enough about the issue to answer.

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem	Don't know
Humbugging	1	2	3	4	5	0
Elder abuse	1	2	3	4	5	0
Loud parties or drinking sessions	1	2	3	4	5	0
Problem gambling	1	2	3	4	5	0
Emotional abuse of children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Children being neglected or not looked after properly	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young people out unsupervised at night	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young people trading sex (for drugs, money, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Girls having babies too young	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young mothers not knowing how to care for children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Children not going to school (truancy)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Homelessness	1	2	3	4	5	0
Overcrowded homes	1	2	3	4	5	0
Youth suicide	1	2	3	4	5	0
Mental health problems	1	2	3	4	5	0
Dangerous dogs	1	2	3	4	5	0
Problems caused by visitors to the community	1	2	3	4	5	0

Other serious or very serious social problems (*please specify*):

Services available in the community

6.   Are the following services available in the community? *Put a cross in only one box for each service*.

	Resident in community	Visiting community	Not available			Don't know
			Not needed	Minor need	Major need	
Community health						
24 hour emergency health care						
Mental health services						
Drug and alcohol service						
Legal aid						
Aboriginal legal service						
Rape crisis/sexual assault service						
Other victim support/counselling service						
State/territory police						
Aboriginal community police						
Women's refuge/safe house						
Men's refuge/safe house						
Children's refuge/safe house						
Child welfare/protection services						
School education						
Wardens						
Night patrols						
Community justice group						
Sobering up shelter/detox centre						
Men's group						
Women's group						

7.   Are there are any other NOT AVAILABLE services for which there is a major need? (*please specify*)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How safe is this community?

8.   How safe do you think it is in this community for the following groups:

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very safe' and 5 means 'very unsafe'. Circle 0 if you can't answer.

Type of person	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know/not applicable
Indigenous adult men	1	2	3	4	5	0
Indigenous male teenagers	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young Indigenous boys	1	2	3	4	5	0
Indigenous adult women	1	2	3	4	5	0
Indigenous female teenagers	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young Indigenous girls	1	2	3	4	5	
Frail and elderly Indigenous people	1	2	3	4	5	0

9.   How safe do you feel in the following situations while in this community?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very safe' and 5 means 'very unsafe'. Circle 0 if you can't answer.

	Very safe	A bit safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	A bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know/ not applicable
Doing your job in daylight	1	2	3	4	5	0
Doing your job after dark	1	2	3	4	5	0
Walking in local area alone in daylight	1	2	3	4	5	0
Walking in local area alone at night	1	2	3	4	5	0
At home alone in daylight	1	2	3	4	5	0
At home alone after dark	1	2	3	4	5	0
Socialising after dark	1	2	3	4	5	0

Reasons for feeling <u>safe</u>

10. If you feel 'very safe' or 'a bit safe' in some of the situations in Question 9, what are the things that help you feel safe? *Please put a cross against all that apply*.

☐ This is a safe community

☐ The people in this community respect and care for each other

☐ I have family in this community

☐ This community is in my country

☐ I feel supported by the community

☐ People in the community will protect me because they are caring people

☐ People in the community will protect me because of my role or status

☐ The community deals well with any safety problems and issues

☐ The police deal well with any safety problems and issues

☐ The community has strong and effective leadership

☐ The community has a strong respect for traditional law and culture

☐ Violence usually only happens between community members and doesn't affect me

☐ My workplace has a good safety plan

☐ My home is secure enough

☐ I live in a quiet and peaceful area

☐ I have learned through experience how to stay safe

☐ I have learned through training how to stay safe

☐ I can tell when problems are going to happen

☐ Other (*please specify*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reasons for feeling <u>unsafe</u>

11. If you feel 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe' in some of the situations in Question 8, why do you feel unsafe? *Please put a cross against all that apply*.

- ☐ Someone broke into my home or stole things from my home
- ☐ I have been attacked or treated violently by somebody
- ☐ I have been threatened or harassed by somebody
- ☐ Because of things I find out about from the media
- ☐ Because of crimes that have occurred in my area
- ☐ My home is not secure enough
- ☐ Disturbances occur in my area (eg gangs, fights, vandalism, drunkenness)
- ☐ Because of the possibility of alcohol-related violence
- ☐ There is nobody around to help if something happens
- ☐ I am physically unable to defend myself
- ☐ I have seen or heard people acting suspiciously
- ☐ There is a lack of respect for traditional law and culture
- ☐ Because my work puts me in contact with unsafe people or places
- ☐ This is a dangerous community to live in
- ☐ There are people in this community with serious problems
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Where is it unsafe?

12.   Which of these areas do you think are unsafe? *Please put a cross against all that apply*.

☐ Around the beachfront/by the river

☐ Shopping centres/community shop or canteen

☐ Around pubs and nightclubs

☐ In the city centre/centre of the community

☐ Public toilets

☐ Bus stops/bus terminal

☐ Parks, sports fields, recreation areas

☐ Around health clinic/hospital/drug and alcohol service

☐ Near particular homes (individual homes)

☐ Near particular groups of homes

☐ Other (*please specify*)

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ None of the above—no unsafe areas

When is it unsafe?

13.   What times of the day are most unsafe in this community?

☐ Early morning (midnight–6 am)

☐ Morning (6 am–noon)

☐ Afternoon (noon–6 pm)

☐ Evening/night (6 pm–midnight)

14.   Which days are the most unsafe in this community?

☐ Monday   ☐ Friday

☐ Tuesday   ☐ Saturday

☐ Wednesday   ☐ Sunday

☐ Thursday   ☐ No days are unsafe

15.   Are there particular times of the year, or particular events, that make the community less safe? *Please give details*.

_____

_____

_____

Making a difference

16.   Below are some of the areas in which initiatives can be taken to improve community safety. For each of these, please indicate whether this is an area in which changes need to be made to improve safety in this community.

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means 'no need for change—effective measures are already in place or are not needed' and 4 means 'major need for change—high priority need and no effective measures in place'. Circle 0 if you don't know or can't answer.

	No need for change	Minor need for change	Moderate need for change	Major need for change	Don't know/not applicable
Safety around dangerous areas (eg, improved lighting)	1	2	3	4	0
Security around dangerous areas—(eg, locking up certain areas at night)	1	2	3	4	0
Increased police service or police presence	1	2	3	4	0
Community-owned measures like night patrols, community police	1	2	3	4	0
Women's shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0
Men's shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0
Children's shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0
Strong men's services/support	1	2	3	4	0
Strong women's services/support	1	2	3	4	0
Drug and alcohol services	1	2	3	4	0
Services for people with gambling problems	1	2	3	4	0
Help for children who have been sexually abused	1	2	3	4	0
Activities/programs to maintain traditional culture	1	2	3	4	0
Sport and recreation facilities	1	2	3	4	0
Recreation activities and programs for young people	1	2	3	4	0
Community events or activities to bring people together	1	2	3	4	0
Improved community governance—such as improving the way the local council is run	1	2	3	4	0
Dealing with offenders through the justice system	1	2	3	4	0
Services to help offenders in the community	1	2	3	4	0
Programs to improve school attendance	1	2	3	4	0
Educating young mothers about caring for children	1	2	3	4	0
Community justice groups	1	2	3	4	0

17.   Please identify a few (3 to 5) positive things the community has done in the last two years to improve community safety and deal with community problems.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18.   What are the three main priorities for improving safety in this community?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

19.   What help or resources would the community need to address these priorities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Seeking help—Indigenous adult women

20.   If an Indigenous woman is a victim of serious family violence in this community, how likely is she likely to turn to the following to report the offence or seek help?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very likely' and 4 means 'very unlikely'. Circle 0 if you don't know and 9 if there is no help of that kind available in the community.

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Police (state/territory)	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community police	1	2	3	4	0	9
Health service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Victim support service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Family violence service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Legal aid/legal service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Female elders/strong women	1	2	3	4	0	9
Male elders/strong men	1	2	3	4	0	9
Family/kin	1	2	3	4	0	9
Friends	1	2	3	4	0	9
Women's shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0	9
Night patrol	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community justice group	1	2	3	4	0	9
Priest/nun/chaplain	1	2	3	4	0	9
Some/any form of help at all	1	2	3	4	0	9

Other very likely or likely (*please specify*):

21.   If an Indigenous woman is a victim of rape in this community, how likely is she to turn to the following agencies or people to report the offence or seek help?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very likely' and 4 means 'very unlikely'. Circle 0 if you don't know and 9 if there is no help of that kind available in the community.

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Police (state/territory)	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community police	1	2	3	4	0	9
Health service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Victim support service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Women's outreach service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Sexual assault service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Legal aid/legal service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Female elders/strong women	1	2	3	4	0	9
Male elders/strong men	1	2	3	4	0	9
Family/kin	1	2	3	4	0	9
Friends	1	2	3	4	0	9
Women's shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0	9
Night patrol	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community justice group	1	2	3	4	0	9
Priest/nun/chaplain	1	2	3	4	0	9
Some/any form of help at all	1	2	3	4	0	9

Other very likely or likely (*please specify*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

22.   *Please complete the following if you indicated in question x above that women are 'very unlikely' or 'unlikely' to report violence to the police.*

Below are some of the reasons why an Indigenous female victim of violence (including sexual assault and family violence) might not report the violence to the police or seek help from other agencies. Please indicate which of these you think are the most common or likely reasons for not reporting violence in this community.

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 3 where 1 means 'not a common or likely reason for not reporting' and 3 means 'a very common or likely reason for not reporting'. Please circle 0 if you don't know.

	Not common or likely	Moderately common or likely	Very common or likely	Don't know
Prefer to deal with it themselves	1	2	3	0
Don't think there is anything the police can do	1	2	3	0
Don't trust the police	1	2	3	0
Don't trust other agencies/services	1	2	3	0
Don't think the courts will help	1	2	3	0
Unaware of services available and sources of help	1	2	3	0
Prefer help from family or friends	1	2	3	0
Don't want the offender arrested	1	2	3	0
Fear of payback or revenge against themselves	1	2	3	0
Fear of payback or revenge against children or other people	1	2	3	0
Fear of further violence from the offender	1	2	3	0
Fear of having children taken away	1	2	3	0
Lack of strong community leadership	1	2	3	0
Shame or embarrassment	1	2	3	0
Fear of being shunned by the community	1	2	3	0
Fear of being blamed for the consequences	1	2	3	0
Blame themselves/think they deserve it	1	2	3	0
Don't feel they have a choice about whether to have sex or not	1	2	3	0
See violence as the way things are/just have to put up with it	1	2	3	0
Would not expect to be believed	1	2	3	0
Cultural or language reasons	1	2	3	0
Low self-esteem	1	2	3	0

23.   Are there any other common or likely reasons you know of why a female victim of violence in this community would not report the violence to police or seek help?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Seeking help—Indigenous adult men

24.   If an Indigenous man is a victim of serious violence in this community, how likely is he to turn to the following agencies or people to report the offence or seek help?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very likely' and 4 means 'very unlikely'. Circle 0 if you don't know and 9 if there is no help of that kind available in the community.

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Police (state/territory)	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community police	1	2	3	4	0	9
Health service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Victim support service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Legal aid/legal service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Male elders/strong men	1	2	3	4	0	9
Family/kin	1	2	3	4	0	9
Friends	1	2	3	4	0	9
Shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0	9
Night patrol	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community justice group	1	2	3	4	0	9
Priest/nun/chaplain	1	2	3	4	0	9
Some/any kind of help at all	1	2	3	4	0	9

Other very likely or likely (*please specify*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Seeking help—Indigenous young people

25. If an Indigenous young person is a victim of serious violence (including sexual abuse) in this community, how likely is he or she to talk to the following agencies or people about what they have experienced?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very likely' and 4 means 'very unlikely'. Circle 0 if you don't know and 9 if there is no help of that kind available in the community.

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Not available
Police (state/territory)	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community police	1	2	3	4	0	9
Health service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Victim support service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Child welfare service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Youth support service	1	2	3	4	0	9
Youth recreation workers/groups	1	2	3	4	0	9
Elders/strong men & women	1	2	3	4	0	9
Teacher/school	1	2	3	4	0	9
Family/kin	1	2	3	4	0	9
Friends	1	2	3	4	0	9
Shelter/refuge/safehouse	1	2	3	4	0	9
Night patrol	1	2	3	4	0	9
Community justice group	1	2	3	4	0	9
Priest/nun/chaplain	1	2	3	4	0	9
Some/any kind of help at all	1	2	3	4	0	9

Other very likely or likely (*please specify*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Demographics

About you and your work

Thank you for answering these questions. The information you've given will be very useful in helping us understand more about crime and safety issues affecting Australian communities.

To help us understand the answers better, please tell us a little about yourself. This information cannot be used to identify who you are and will only be reported in aggregated form—that is, all the information people give us about themselves will be combined so that there is no way of identifying any individual person.

26. What is your sex?

☐ Female

☐ Male

27. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

☐ No

☐ Yes, Aboriginal

☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander

☐ Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

28. What type of services do you/your organisation provide to the Indigenous community?

☐ Police

☐ Health

☐ Allied health

☐ Mental heath

☐ Emergency services

☐ Aged care

☐ Child welfare

☐ Housing

☐ Income support

☐ Legal aid

☐ School education

☐ Adult learning

☐ Substance abuse/rehabilitation

☐ Indigenous cultural support

☐ Sexual assault service/support

☐ Other type of victim support

☐ Adult corrections/juvenile justice

☐ Community justice group

☐ Night patrol

☐ Recreation activities

☐ Other (*please specify*):

☐ Not applicable—community member

29.   How is the service delivered?

☐   Located in the community/town

☐   Outreach to a region

☐   Both

30.   What is your role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

31.   How long have you worked in roles where you provide services to Indigenous communities or Indigenous people (overall, not just in this region)?

_____   years   _____   months

32.   How long have you worked in roles where you provide services to Indigenous communities or Indigenous people *in this region*?

_____   years   _____   months

33.   How many remote Indigenous communities in this region have you worked in, or directly with?

_____   (number of communities)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. For further information about this survey and the research project it relates to, please contact:

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Appendix C: Community initiatives

The positive initiatives undertaken in communities to address safety problems and reported on by respondents have been broadly classified and are outlined here. While detail about the initiatives was not sought or given in the survey, the identified initiatives are listed here in the hope that they may stimulate ideas and discussion that may ultimately contribute to improved community safety outcomes.

The initiatives are not listed in any particular order and no ranking of initiatives has been attempted, or should be inferred, as this would be beyond the scope of both the study and the available data. Nor would it be appropriate, as the types of initiatives and the needs and resources underpinning them will differ from one community to another. In many cases, initiatives were nominated by more than one respondent and in some cases were nominated by several respondents. While an attempt has been made to list all initiatives nominated by respondents, the responses of a small number of respondents were too unclear to be included, while a small number of responses that described outcomes without identifying the initiatives that led to them (eg 'willingness to report violence has increased') were also excluded.

Justice

- formed a community justice group;
- night patrol in operation;
  - approval for night patrol vehicles
- elders patrol;
- youth patrol;
- wardens operating afternoon and night;
- Indigenous courts (eg circle sentencing court, Murri court);
- formation of Aboriginal Justice Agreement;
- court being held in community;
- established/improved police presence;
- neighbourhood watch;
- police and judicial crackdown on domestic/family violence, leading to increased willingness to report;
- police domestic violence liaison officer engaged; and
- more community direction to parolees returning to live in community (eg community behavioural expectations).

Alcohol and substance misuse

Alcohol controls

• banning problem drinkers from buying alcohol;

• restricted access to takeaway alcohol;

• banning alcohol from community;

• alcohol-free zones;

• identifying and targeting drinking areas;

• alcohol management plan;

• closing liquor outlets on Friday afternoon and funeral days; and

• liquor restrictions coinciding with stimulus payments.

Substance controls

• working with retailers around volatile substance abuse;

• supply reduction of solvents;

• banning inhalants from town camps;

• reduction of volatile substance abuse in Central Australia means people can 'go bush' for rehabilitation and to avoid substances; and

• local drug action group.

Funding of alcohol and other drugs programs.

Support services

• healing centre/healing camps;

• increased resources for family violence legal service;

• more domestic/family violence workers;

• program to place very young people into care with Aboriginal carers;

• family support for parents;

• increased number of beds in women's shelter;

• setting up safe house(s);

• more counselling services/greater accessibility of counselling services;

• establishment of family relationship centres; and

• extra funding for employment and training services.

Cooperation and collaboration

- police/community consultative committee;
- government-based community partnership project officers;
- community agencies working together/service providers networking;
- community meeting held to discuss increased mental health problems and youth self harm, leading to teams being set up to develop a strategy focusing of prevention, early intervention and dealing with the effects of a suicide or homicide in the community;
- establishment of 'hub' service provision centre in town camps;
- development of community strategic plan, with community involvement on many levels;
- establishment of Regional Coordinated Response Action Group of agencies working together to support families affected by domestic/family violence;
- establishment of Interagency Tactical Command Group to better coordinate service providers; and
- community patrol meetings to coordinate town patrols.

Education and awareness

- family violence campaign with local football team;
- distribution of fliers and brochures on safety and sexual information;
  - removing shame and stigma from issues such as rape and mental health
- established a learning centre;
- improved community awareness of violence/alcohol use programs and better linking people with services;
- free life skills education programs;
- empowerment and leadership programs, encompassing wellbeing; and
- ran child abuse and neglect workshop.

Children/youth services and support

- midnight basketball;
- youth activities at community centres; more youth activities (including after hours);
- increased sporting facilities;
- youth drop-in centre and healthy house;
- using recreation hall as a youth program facility;
- youth camps/residential youth programs;
- local program working to improve retention rates of Indigenous students;
- community truancy patrol;
- after-school programs; and
- youth workers on streets at night.

Community groups

- established men's and women's groups;
- set-up community reference group;
- set-up community council;
- strong families programs/strong families meetings; and
- school community council.

Other crime prevention

- crime prevention plan;
- CCTV in hotspot area/CCTV in town mall;
- community safety planning/crime safety audit;
- improved street/public area lighting; and
- security alarm in clinic.

Other

- improved community governance and leadership; established community council with emphasis on governance training;
- improved housing;
- community programs and events;
- beautification of parks;
- dog program; and
- Implemented community social planner position in local government.

Appendix D: Community safety priorities and resources

The community safety priorities identified by survey respondents have been broadly classified and are listed here. In many respects, these priorities reflect the community initiatives outlined in *Appendix C*, although with different emphases and with additional issues identified as priorities.

This appendix also lists the resources identified by respondents as needed to address these priorities. Many of the responses indicated the need for funding, either generally, or for one or more of the identified priorities. Others re-stated the resources needed directly in terms of the priority identified (eg citing the priority as 'more police in the community' and the resource needed as 'more police'). Other respondents indicated more specific resources or forms of support that were needed, including some suggestions for approaches that would help foster community safety and it is these that are outlined below.

The priorities and resources are not listed in any particular order and no ranking has been attempted, or should be inferred, as this would be beyond the scope of both the study and the available data. Nor would it be appropriate, as priorities and needs will differ from one community to another. In many cases, priorities and resources were nominated by more than one respondent and in some cases by several respondents.

Priorities for improving community safety

Justice

- Increase police presence—permanently in community and at night
  - more responsive police
  - police come when women call;
- More appropriate and regular policing (especially Aboriginal police)
  - Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer;
- 'police need to listen to the community';
- train and employ more community police;
- reduce/stop sexual abuse;
- reduce alcohol-related and other violence;
- bring back wardens;
- community justice programs (base and outreach);
- night patrols
  - for adults and youth
  - extended night patrol hours;
- youth patrol;

- reinstate Elders patrols;
- improved reporting of crime; and
- stronger convictions for violence.

Alcohol and substance misuse

- reduce alcohol abuse;
- address drink driving and unlicensed driving;
- change alcohol bylaws by community and police consultation;
- no drinking on the street or in any public area;
- restrict alcohol trading hours and access to alcohol;
- better drug and alcohol services; and
- culturally-appropriate detoxification service.

Support services

- safe house/place for children;
- safe house for women;
- men's house;
- increased low-cost refuge accommodation;
- better staff training for refuge workers;
- improved access to health services;
- full-time mental health nurse;
- hostel and accommodation support programs, especially for youths with cognitive loss due to alcohol and other drug use;
- therapeutic community residential rehabilitation services;
- greater provision of dental services;
- healing programs;
- family wellbeing programs;
- responsive policy/re-entry programs;
- intensive programs for perpetrators of domestic/family violence and sexual assault;
- intensive support and education for victims of domestic/family violence;
- compulsory anger management programs when in trouble with the law;
- more funding for existing programs with social inclusion focus;
- more services on the ground to meet the needs of each community; and
- more counselling services, especially for grief and loss issues.

Cooperation and collaboration

- the whole of the community working together to put strategies in place;
- all relevant agencies and services working towards one objective to assist and to support the whole community;
- better police engagement with community;

- better communication between Indigenous organisations;
- integration of health services.

Education and awareness

- education programs on alcohol and drug harms;
- community education on mental health issues;
- community education on the impacts of domestic/family violence on children;
- sex education/protective behaviour program for young girls;
- learner driver programs;
- life skills education;
- more education and training generally;
- development of leadership skills and skills for working with people;
- education on people's rights and available supports/services and
- community education about unacceptable nature of violence and violence not being normalised.

Children/youth services and support

- more activities at night for young people (particularly weekends)
  – establish a recreation centre;
- youth services in town that are appropriate for cultural group and go beyond sport and recreation;
- program to develop learning skills;
- improving the mental health of youth;
- preventing bullying of young people at school;
- education and employment initiatives for at-risk youth;
- supervisors with experience and first-aid qualifications; and
- greater access to community pool.

Community groups

- need men and women to work strong;
- supporting strong women (case work; family work);
- leadership within Indigenous men; and
- men taking responsibility for the violence and alcohol abuse
  – improved services for men to help with these issues.

Other crime prevention

- directly address where relevant safety issues are;
- support community to identify safety priorities & develop strategies to address these priorities; and
- better street lighting.

Other

- improved safety for at risk groups in the community;

- more housing/housing designed to meet the needs of Indigenous people
  - visitor accommodation
  - improved security of public housing (eg security doors as a minimum);
- understanding the specific issues affecting each community
  - responding to actual safety issues, not media/hype;
- increased number of public phones in town camps;
- discourage gambling;
- police and department of housing take complaints seriously and action them;
- positive recreation for all (not just youth);
- encourage more community gatherings and activities;
- planning for long-term future needs;
- improved financial, social economic mobility;
- more employment;
- strengthening culture;
- establish a cultural centre;
- increase cultural connections within the community;
- curfew for children and young people;
- exchange of different cultural communication styles;
- reducing accidents; and
- provision of basic needs (shelter, food, safety, education, employment) to help people make better use of available services, supports and participate in activities.

Resources and help needed to improve community safety

Justice

- training and personal development for police; and
- more research into effective court diversion options.

Alcohol and substance misuse

- increased community support for tighter and more practical alcohol restrictions;
- legislation to support alcohol management and increase cost of cheap alcohol; and
- a tailored and graduated system of dry houses/areas and drinking places negotiated with residents and followed with continuing evaluation and negotiation.

Support services

- reinstatement of public health team at local Indigenous organisation, who assisted public housing clients identify areas of concern that affected health outcomes, such as poor housing conditions, isolation and health education and provided a great point of contact for community and avenue for coordinating information between agencies; and
- specialist assistance to set up domestic/family violence program for men.

Cooperation and collaboration

• better whole of government approach to community needs.

Community groups

• family leaders taking a more active role to strengthen family/community connections;

• role modelling and mentoring; and

• council of elders.

Other

• greater government sense of community justice;

• capital works to support priority needs;

• improved communications technology for contacting police, clinic;

• service workers to advocate and assist in developing safety forums, ensuring all residents have voice and equal opportunity to input;

• allow people to not only own the problems, but own the solution as well;

• focus on one need—deal with it properly and comprehensively before moving onto next. As this progresses, some of the other problems will take care of themselves;

• local foster carers for children in need of protection;

• a change in approach that focuses on community development rather than individual pathology; and

• better targeted funding.

Appendix E: Guidelines for use of Indigenous community safety survey

Service providers working in Indigenous communities are often uniquely positioned to provide information on levels of community safety, as well as on the kinds of issues of concern to Indigenous communities. They are also well-placed to understand how victims of family and sexual violence may respond and who they might contact when they become a victim. This kind of local knowledge can play an essential role in guiding and shaping government policy in Indigenous communities as part of a holistic approach to information gathering that will involve formal data records and the views of service providers along with those of community members and Indigenous community representatives. The community safety survey has been developed on the basis of consultation with service providers across Australia. The first part of the survey (Questions 1–20) invites comment on current levels of community safety, personal safety in different situations in the community and perceptions on the safety of community people. It then explores the factors that might make a respondent or others feel safe or unsafe, including specific hot spots (areas where crime and other behaviours that can make people unsafe tend to be concentrated) and times.

Some questions probe the community's strengths as well as weaknesses, others focus on which crime and social problems currently preoccupy the community. The survey goes on to ask about the availability and quality of services in the community and how these can be improved. There is also a section asking about strategies already in place that respondents feel have made a difference to the quality of safety on the community.

From Question 20 onwards, the survey is concerned with identifying how different groups in the community may respond if they experienced family violence or sexual assault. Specifically, they ask where Indigenous women, girls, men and young men would go to for help and whether they would report family and sexual violence to the authorities.

An evolving landscape: Indigenous justice and related mechanisms

Service providers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are working within a shifting landscape. Besides new forms of government intervention, there are community-generated initiatives that are becoming a fixture of local crime prevention and community safety.

Local justice groups and other community-owned initiatives have sprung up across Australia in recent years and have been influential in developing local initiatives such as

- family violence prevention;
- intervention and healing programs;
- men and women's night patrols;
- men's 'cooling off' places;
- women's shelters;

- youth diversionary strategies; and
- Indigenous courts.

These initiatives reflect grass-roots concerns about a host of local issues. While they increasingly receive strong support from police, youth justice workers and drug/alcohol and health workers on a local level, their needs are not always adequately addressed or understood by centralised government agencies. One reason for this is the dearth of adequate data. Given that governments increasingly emphasise the importance of evidence-based policy, this places Indigenous community organisations at a distinct disadvantage.

Overcoming the data deficit

Indigenous people and representatives from key agencies interviewed during the development phase of the survey instrument noted difficulties in sourcing adequate local data on issues of critical importance, such as the impact of alcohol-related violence on community life. This places them at a severe disadvantage when negotiating with government for funding and investment in these local initiatives. They also reported difficulties in making government understand their own quite specific range of local concerns, unique to life in rural and remote communities.

Highlighting local priorities

Service providers also highlighted the incongruence between mainstream priorities and concerns and those existing in Indigenous communities. For example, problems such as:

- those posed (for residents and visitors alike) by roaming camp dogs;
- the 'humbugging' of elderly people for food and money (alongside other forms of aggressive 'demand sharing'); and
- the debilitating impact of family and jealous fighting which may not be well understood in mainstream society.

Conversely, issues such as domestic burglary and car theft may be low on the list of community safety priorities in remote communities.

Evaluating the impact of intervention

Community groups were concerned that they were often unable to evaluate the impact of new initiatives on local people in a consistent and reliable form. This survey instrument will allow communities to measure success and because it can be applied consistently across Australia, allow comparison with outcomes for other communities.

Filling the survey out online will have particular benefits. Communities have the potential of pooling and sharing experiences and information and thus, of learning from one another. This will also allow the development of 'thick' (ie detailed) descriptions of life in communities that may better inform government about needs and priorities, as well as challenging myths and stereotypes.

The strengths of the survey

The strength of this survey is that it has been developed on the basis of the priorities and concerns Indigenous Australians, gathered through consultations and surveys of Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers working in and with Indigenous communities. It can:

- be used as means of developing local data and filling the information deficit, hence strengthening local groups' approaches to government for resources;
- be used as a means of educating government and key agencies about priorities in rural and remote communities;
- help community groups and local agencies develop their own local strategies to combat locally-defined problems;
- assist in generating improved cooperation and coordination between community and government organisations through shared involvement in the identification of local problems and the devising of local solutions;
- be employed as an evaluation tool to plot the success of local strategies. For example, the survey (or even selected parts of the survey) could be employed to develop baseline data prior to the start of a women's safety project (such as installation of new street lights close to an identified hot spot) and then repeated after six months to see if women feel safer on the streets after dark; and
- facilitate dialogue across different communities, as each is able to work from the same instrument.

Use and administration of the survey

The questionnaire can also be used directly to gain the perceptions of individuals in the community, whether as community members, representatives of community organisations or people working with communities. This can be achieved by using the measure in individual consultations or as a tool for focus groups who can generate and focus discussion on issues of community concern. Where the community is not concerned with generating information for wider or comparative use, sections of the questionnaire can be extracted and used on their own or incorporated in other surveys which will assist in developing evidence on community safety-related issues.

In using the questionnaire, all those being asked to participate should be advised that their participation is voluntary, that information they give will be kept confidential and that results from the survey will be only be released in a way that does not identify any individual.

Information on the front page of the questionnaire can be used to tell those being asked to participate in a survey about the purposes of the questionnaire and to inform them of their rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

The questionnaire was developed by the AIC and advice can be sought from the AIC on how to use the questionnaire and how to interpret the results derived from its use.

The questionnaire includes terminology and concepts that may not be familiar to all participants and that may be open to different interpretations and meanings. For example, terms in the social problems section such as 'sexual assault', 'neglect' and 'emotional abuse' may not be clear to participants, or may have different meanings for different participants. As another example, while the term 'humbugging' is widely used in Indigenous communities, it can have many different meanings and may be used in different ways in different communities. In some communities, the term might not be used at all. The person responsible for conducting the survey should make sure that participants understand the terms used in the questionnaire and there is a shared understanding of their meaning with all participants. Further information about the meanings of different terms and concepts, and advice on how this shared understanding should be gained, can be sought from the AIC.

Contact details for the AIC are:
Phone: (02) 6260 9200
GPO Box 2944
Canberra ACT 2601

Further information about the AIC can be found on its website:
www.aic.gov.au

There is a need for a greater level of awareness about the behaviours and circumstances that affect Indigenous community safety and the services available to communities to deal with them. Information in this report will help create an evidence base for developing initiatives that build on the resilience and capacity in Indigenous communities.

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