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# STAGE ONE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

CONTEXTS AND PARTNERSHIPS



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**Cover painting:** Goannas & Eggs by Nesting Area

**Artist:** Priscilla Nagamarra Escobar

Goannas and eggs by nesting area near male goannas on desert sands.

'Yarning On' Initiative

**STAGE ONE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**  
**"CONTEXTS AND PARTNERSHIPS"**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SHine SA, South Australia's leading sexual health agency, has received funding through the National Indigenous Partnerships (Indigenous Early Childhood Development and Close the Gap on Indigenous Sexual and Reproductive Health) to develop and deliver a program of sexual health education programs targeting Aboriginal young people which aim to improve the sexual and reproductive health, wellbeing and safety of young Aboriginal South Australians. There are two programs, the **Investing in Aboriginal Youth Program**, and the **Aboriginal Focus Schools Program** which are jointly referred to as the "Yarning On" initiative

Two separate sets of interviews (6 months apart) were conducted with Yarning On staff from SHine SA to understand the context in which the initiative has been implemented to date, and to highlight the key partnerships which are central to the success of the initiative. In addition, a retrospective document analysis was conducted as a means of providing information on the broader context of developing and implementing Yarning On including the goals, objectives, impediments and achievements of the program.

Overall, the key aspects underpinning the successful roll-out of the Yarning On initiative to date are the time and effort spent on building partnerships and respectful relationships with community, other agencies, and each other. Particularly in engaging with communities, the sense of working the 'right way' - with respect, without rushing or being paternalistic - has emerged as the most important principle underpinning program implementation. The need for flexibility and innovation were other key themes which are vitally important to the program's success and sustainability. This was evident throughout all aspects of the program implementation, including the engagement process, developing curriculum, communications and in the practicalities of travel.



## INTRODUCTION

In 2010 SHine SA received funding through the National Indigenous Partnerships (Indigenous Early Childhood Development and Close the Gap on Indigenous Sexual and Reproductive Health) to develop and implement respectful relationships and sexual health programs targeting Aboriginal young people ('Yarning On'). In January 2010 program staff were recruited, however formal funding was not received until June 2010. Negotiations for the funding and the program occurred between 2008 and 2009.

There are two programs funded under this initiative, both of which aim to build the capacity of the community and workforce to develop culturally appropriate solutions which promote respectful relationships and improved sexual health literacy and therefore health and well-being outcomes for Aboriginal young people and their communities.

The **Investing in Aboriginal Youth Program** is a community based peer education program which aims to work with health, education and community workers, young Aboriginal people and communities, to promote and improve the relationship and sexual health literacy of young Aboriginal people.

The **Aboriginal Focus Schools Program**, based on the established SHine SA Focus Schools program, aims to increase the capacity of principals, teachers, Anangu Education Workers, Aboriginal Community Education Officers, parents and school communities to promote and improve the relationship and sexual health literacy and wellbeing of school students in years 5 to 10.

Both of these programs have been successfully delivered in metropolitan and rural South Australia. The major role of program staff to date has therefore been to **work with communities to develop and change these programs to be culturally appropriate and relevant to meet local needs.**

## POLICY/POLITICAL CONTEXT

Prior to presenting the findings of this Stage 1 Evaluation of Yarning On, it is important to briefly provide a summary of the policy/political context which led to the National Indigenous Partnerships (NIP) Agreements, to highlight the environment in which SHine SA secured funding for Yarning On, and is implementing the program more broadly.

Commonwealth policy aimed at improving the well-being of Indigenous Australians has been described as “a story of good intentions, flawed policies, unrealistic assumptions, poor implementation, unintended consequences and dashed hopes” (Australian Government, 2010, p.39). To provide a brief historical overview: the 1967 referendum gave Indigenous Australians the right to be counted in the national census and can be seen as the symbolic recognition of Indigenous people as the first Australians. In the early 1970s, under the Whitlam government, a period of self-determination and self-management sought to overturn the previous ‘assimilationist’ policies which had existed since the 1920s. This period (which essentially ran until the early 1980s) saw the extension of welfare benefits, and new community councils created, run by community advisors. It was also during this period that the **Racial Discrimination Act** was passed as well as the **Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act** and the **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act**. By the early 1990s, despite the key Mabo decision and passage of the Native Title Act it became clear that the policy frameworks instigated since the early 1970s were failing. As the Commonwealth progressively reduced their presence in and disengaged from communities, persistently high levels of Indigenous disadvantage became apparent, particularly in remote communities where opportunities for employment and education were scarce. Despite considerable government spending coupled with investments in community infrastructure, this was a period which saw high rates of unemployment and welfare dependency. It became evident that “good intentions in Indigenous affairs do not translate easily into good policy, and that the risk of unintended consequences in this domain is often extremely high” (Australian Government, 2010, p. 40).

Too often, programs were introduced which aimed to address indigenous disadvantage by creating small-scale funding programs which failed to take a holistic approach. Instead, programs tended to address only the visible signs of disadvantage, using poorly formulated program logic and objectives and often only adding to complexity and administrative ‘red tape’. Since the mid-1990s, a raft of adjustments to Indigenous policy have taken place which sought to improve outcomes for Indigenous communities, including the controversial **Northern Territory Emergency Response** in 2007. Following the historic **Apology to Australia’s Indigenous Peoples** delivered by the Prime Minister in 2008, an ambitious indigenous reform agenda was set in motion. A key strategy within this context is the NIP Agreements between the Commonwealth, States and Territories, one of which is on **Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes** which is funding the Yarning On program.

Some key factors which need to be considered in planning and implementing the current indigenous reform agenda, including the roll-out of programs such as Yarning On, include the need to keep in mind:

- **Diversity** in circumstance and need amongst Indigenous communities, who are not an homogeneous group
- A **youthful age structure** of the Indigenous population, and importance of focusing on youth
- High levels of **mobility** among Indigenous communities, with growth in migration to larger urban centres
- Special needs of **remote** communities who tend to lack access to economic and social infrastructure and are often associated with high levels of disadvantage
- The importance of **mainstream services** that can be designed to take into account Indigenous cultural perspectives
- **Coordination** of government effort, with co-ordination needed between and within agencies, to reduce fragmentation and unnecessary red tape
- **Partnership with** Indigenous Australians, without which the reform efforts of governments are likely to fail
- The need for **better evidence**, including robust evaluation which have potential to contribute to the achievement of the Closing the Gap targets
- The need for a **long-term perspective**, and policies and programs which target the underlying structural issues around Indigenous disadvantage
- The **challenge of delivery** – the need to deliver on policy intentions in a practical and effective way

The new inter-governmental framework instigated by the NIP Agreements, involves the Commonwealth needing to exercise its influence over outcomes in areas which have traditionally been State responsibility. This has led to the need for rigorous monitoring, accountability and reporting arrangements; and understanding what is working, in particular jurisdictions, systems and locations, for all programs being implemented under these Agreements.

The following section moves on to provide background on the program logic and evaluation framework underpinning this evaluation of Yarning On.

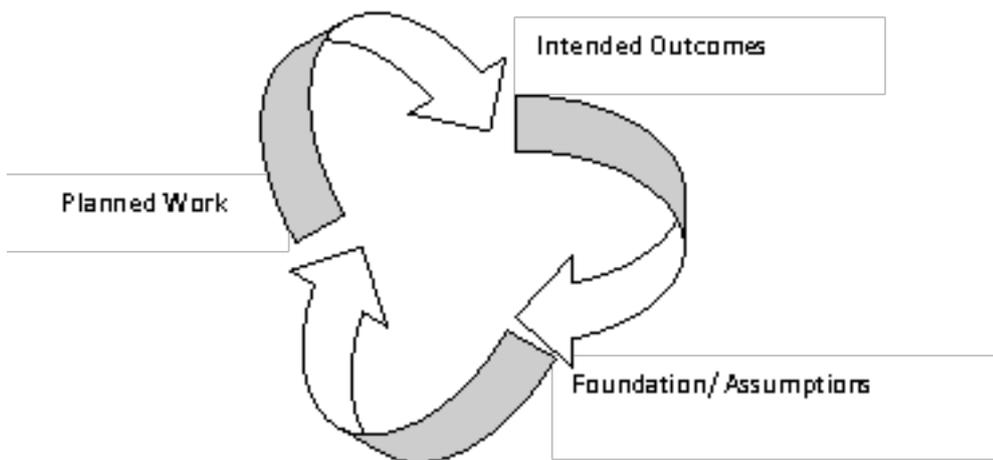


## BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

### PROGRAM LOGIC APPROACH

The approach used to describe the Yarning On Initiative and lay out the framework for evaluation was to develop a program logic model that draws the causal pathway between the establishment of a program, its activities and intended outcomes. The program logic model causal pathways assume that if we plan work based on a sound foundation of evidence, theory, principles and assumptions, and we undertake the work as planned, then our planned work is likely to lead (or contribute) to the desired outcomes.

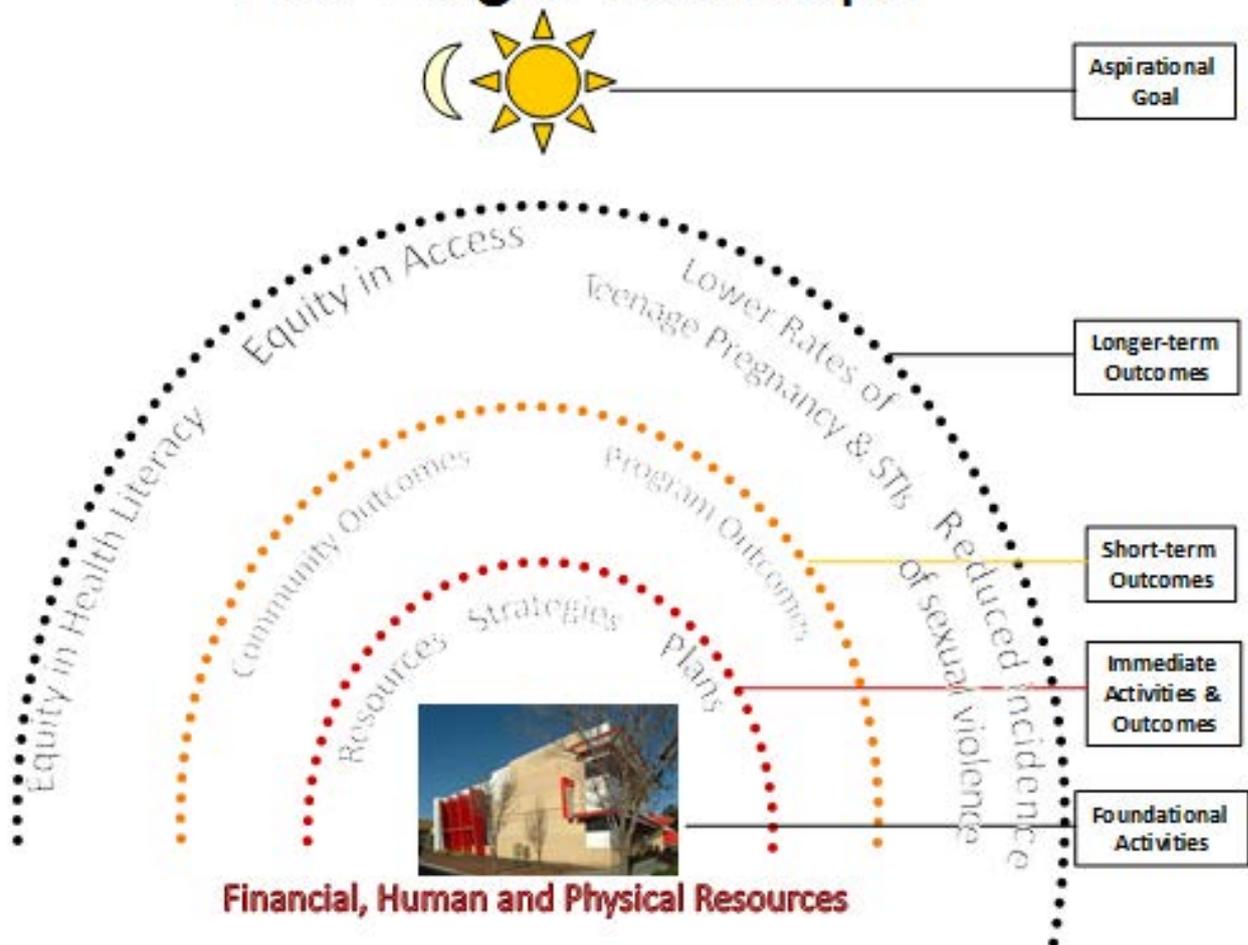
This pathway of Foundation (Assumptions) → Planned work → Intended Outcomes can be seen as a cycle (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: The Program Logic Cycle**

Two workshops (held in January 2010 and February 2010) with SHine SA staff working on the Yarning On Initiative resulted in the following program logic concept (Figure 2).

# The Logic Concept



**Figure 2: Program Logic concept for the Initiative**

The Foundational Activities of this initiative are the Financial, Human and Physical Resources. These include the \$3.25M over 4 years for the program, a Health Service Agreement with SA Health, a staff of 8 FTE with the support of the CEO, training, office accommodation and physical equipment to conduct the program across 17 schools and communities. SHine SA has also invested additional resources to employing a young Aboriginal woman as a trainee with the aim of developing her skills and confidence as a community educator.

The Immediate Activities & Outcomes are the Resources (curriculum, program, training), Plans (action, reporting and evaluation), and Strategies (consultation, communication, engagement, advocacy and sustainability) to put the program into action.

The **Short-Term Outcomes** are:

Within the community, there will be:

- an increased level of knowledge and skills of the community;
- an increased capacity to recognise and foster respectful relationships;
- an increased use of contraception to assist in making choices on having children;
- an increased rate in testing for STIs.

The program will:

- Have principles of best practice in place in program delivery;
- Increase the confidence of teachers, workers, AEWs, ACEOs, and parents to talk and teach young people about respectful relationships;
- Have child protection education that reinforces the right every child has to be safe;
- Deliver curriculum, resources and community programs that address the communities' issues and aspirations;
- Increase the ability to find, understand and use information, and increase the access to services.

**Longer-Term Outcomes** – the SHine SA Initiative aims:

- to contribute to equity in health literacy, equity in access to health services. This is based on the principle that All Aboriginal and Anangu children have access to comprehensive, age and culturally appropriate, respectful relationships and sexual health education programs in school, beginning in early Primary years and delivered by trusted and trained teachers;
- to contribute to a reduced rate of teenage pregnancy and a decreased prevalence in positive results for STIs;
- to contribute to a reduced incidence of sexual violence.

The Aspirational Goal for this Initiative is Aboriginal people having sexual and reproductive health outcomes that are equal to the best.

If empirical evidence of change can be demonstrated at points along the continuum from activities to immediate outcomes, to longer-term outcomes, then evaluation results can be used to reasonably argue that the Initiative is contributing to better sexual and reproductive health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

## **THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

### **Aims**

The overall evaluation of the Yarning On Initiative has two main aims:

1. To evaluate the contribution that the Initiative's programs make to increasing equity and improving sexual and reproductive health in the target communities;
2. To review the whole initiative in the social and political context in order to assess the potential for sustainability and adaptability to other settings.

### **Approach**

The evaluation uses an action research approach, to foster continual feedback and learning for the Initiative. A primary health lens is used to analyse and report findings to highlight ways of working in the Initiative's implementation (e.g. in partnership, with community engagement) that can contribute to the desired outcomes (health equity, and improvements in other social determinants of health such as poverty, education and employment). To capture the contextual factors determining the success of the Initiative across multiple, potentially very different sites, the evaluation strategy concentrates on the questions: **what works, for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects and why?** Understanding the context, mechanisms and outcomes of the Initiative across different sites will be important in assessing the potential adaptation of the Initiative to other communities or settings.

The aim of **this Stage 1 Final Report** is to summarise the findings from stage 1 of a three-stage evaluation. Stage 1 of the evaluation was conducted in three parts:

A) **Interview 1: "Setting the Scene"** - included in-depth interviews with ten SHine SA staff working on the Yarning on Program. These interviews were carried out in January 2011 and aimed to 'set the scene' by developing understandings of local community contexts and broader contextual issues, and by enabling staff to describe their own involvement in the initiative to date;

B) **Document analysis** - (retrospectively, as at April 2011) - was used as a means of triangulation, or "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). It was used in order to complement other aspects of the evaluation methodology (i.e. qualitative in-depth interviews). The purpose was to examine and analyse the relevant documents, as well as the process through which documents were developed, to identify convergence or differences with the findings of the qualitative interviews. The document analysis involved the following approach:

- A **focus group** with program staff to capture the development of each of the three key program documents:
  - o **Aboriginal Focus School Program Curriculums 5-7 and 8-10;**
  - o **Investing in Aboriginal Youth Peer Education Handbook;** and
  - o **Training Manual for Investing in Aboriginal Youth Program.**
- Analysis of the **Action Plan January 2012-2013** and **Monthly Activity Reports** (from January 2010-June 2011) to develop a timeline (developed as an internal document).
- Collation of key documents relating to the Yarning On program, as well as using a template (see Appendix 1), (completed by the Program Manager), which **summarised the major Yarning On documents/materials**, their origin and purpose, key people who were involved or consulted during development, and progress to date (as of February 2011).

The document analysis served to provide further background and context to the development of the Yarning On program, and verified the findings of the staff interviews. It was evident that the development of the curriculum and peer education handbook, as well as general consultation and information sessions with other agencies, schools and community groups were the main focus during from Jan 2010 to June 2011. The analysis also identified the key agencies and groups that were central in supporting the development of key documents specified above.

C) **Interview 2: "Partnerships"** - included a second round of in-depth interviews with program staff, carried out in July 2011, to focus directly on the experience of building 'partnerships' with both communities and government agencies involved in the initiative, and which are part of the context in which the 'Yarning On' initiative is developing.

## **INTERVIEW 1: “SETTING THE SCENE”**

The first round of interviews with ten SHine SA staff involved in the ‘Yarning On’ programs occurred in January 2011, and enabled each of them to ‘set the scene’ and describe their role in the program. They were asked to describe the ways in which they had been working with the different communities over the first year of the program (January 2010-January 2011). Of interest were the contexts and mechanisms which underpin how the initiative is being implemented. These interviews highlighted a range of important contexts relevant to implementing the first year of the initiative. These relate to:

- a) Program contexts;
- b) Sector contexts;
- c) Team & Organisational contexts, and
- d) Community contexts.

Each of these will now be discussed in turn.

### **A) PROGRAM CONTEXTS**

#### **How Yarning On came about and guiding principles:**

Funding for the program began in June 2010 and came under the National Indigenous Partnerships (NIP) agreement, between the Australian Commonwealth and individual States and Territories. SHine SA has a service agreement with SA Health, and has received two separate sources of funding: one is Closing the Gap NIP funding to improve Aboriginal sexual and reproductive health, the other is from the Indigenous Early Childhood Development NIP funding. In order to build the capacity of workers, school communities and communities to educate and support young Aboriginal people around respectful relationships and sexual health and their rights and responsibilities, two programs have been developed:

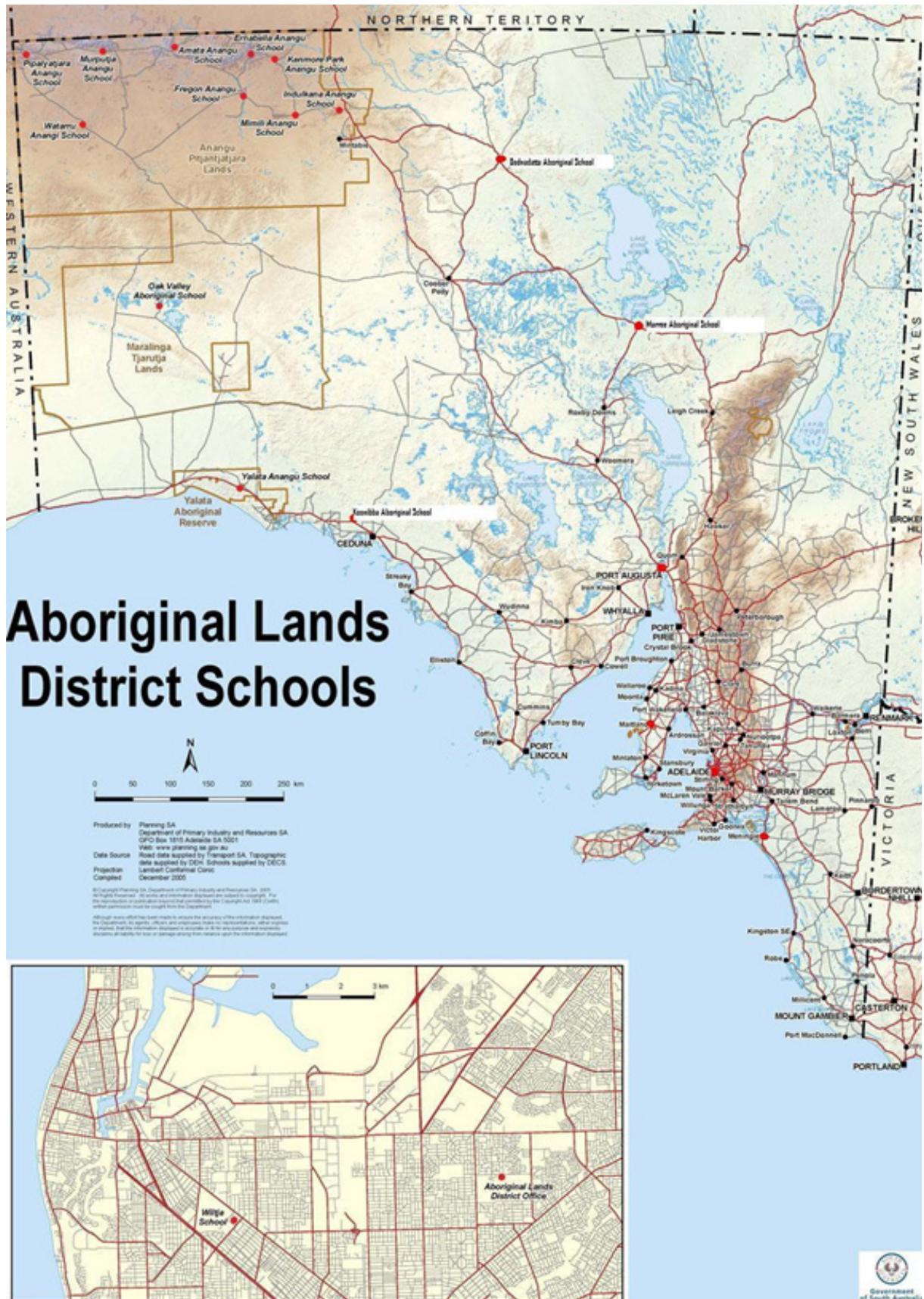
The Aboriginal Focus Schools Program - a school based relationships and sexual health education program for years 5-10 in Indigenous community schools, which is based on the current Focus Schools program currently delivered to year 8, 9 and 10 students in 103 SA state secondary schools. There are 17 Indigenous communities which are working with SHine SA, including 9 in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (APY) Lands.

The Investing in Aboriginal Youth program is a youth participation and peer education program which works with 12-24 year olds in Aboriginal communities, who are disengaged from education. The program aims to expand a current peer-education program (Investing in Aboriginal Youth) that SHine SA implemented in 2002.

Over and above the initial targets for numbers of schools and communities engaged in the Focus Schools Program and Investing in Aboriginal Youth, a number of additional communities

and schools have chosen to become involved. A map which illustrates the communities and schools involved is shown below:

**Schools engaged in the Aboriginal Focus Schools program:**



The name “Yarning On” reflects the content of both of these programs: sitting, listening and talking openly about improving Aboriginal sexual health. It avoids the somewhat stigmatised use of the word “sex”. What seems to be a most important guiding principle for SHine SA has been that the program be conducted in a culturally sensitive way in that all aspects of the community needed to be considered and involved:

*“It was also I think important that we really focus in on the community members, the parents and the workers etc.”*

*“Working in a participative and culturally sensitive way to get Anangu and other Aboriginal people involved in the program.”*

The way that SHine SA aims to work, and be seen to work, is with community, being engaged, and developing relationships. For example, when working in the APY Lands, where possible staff stay on the lands (often accommodated with local school staff or community members) and immerse themselves in community, rather than ‘flying in and flying out’, which they see happening with other agencies:

*“What I see happening with the various initiatives that have been put in by state government... they do fly in fly out a lot of the time, they don’t stay overnight... So what doesn’t actually happen is any engagement and I think that kind of service provision is totally ineffective and they might as well stop doing it. People don’t develop a relationship.”*

SHine SA also recognises that the program’s success hinges on a consultative, open approach:

*“It is about asking people, okay we’ve got this kind of an idea which is based on what we know about evidence, what we know about what has worked in the general community and our commitment to Aboriginal people having sexual and reproductive health outcomes that are equal to the best.”*

*“I think the way that we’ve started with the program is that we’ve made initial social visits to enter the communities and met with community members. So we’ve just gone there to talk about Closing the Gap and talk about the two programs that we’ve identified and why and who’s funding it, how long it’s for at this stage, and seek their advice as to how we might actually build on the initial concept that I developed.”*

SHine SA has carefully worked towards ensuring that the program has resonance with communities. Across a number of communities, workers have sat with people to develop an understanding of the purpose of the program and how it can help them and their children:

*“People know the issues that are going on in their communities, nothing escapes them and they’ve been worried for a long time... People know and they’ve been talking to us, women have been talking to us for a long time about ‘we don’t want our children to have children that end up being sick and then we have to look after them’.”*

A strength of the program to date, which has been taken to reflect or indicate that their approach has been successful, is the number of requests SHine SA have had from Aboriginal communities in addition to the 17 targeted schools/communities, who wish to join the program:

*"We've had other small Aboriginal communities who now want to come on board as well. They've heard about the program ...we're getting requests that 'we also want to work with you'. This is also important for us... I think that's a good indicator that it's had good reception out there and that people are saying it actually is important."*

In terms of the overall program being able to demonstrate measureable outcomes, the emphasis is on long term outcomes such as contributing to reduced teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates, but in the short term, and equally important is:

*"Aboriginal people and the kids being able to articulate that this has value for them, that it's changed things for them. I think also that thing about being able to demonstrate that the way that we work is respectful because people say that that's the case."*

Also deemed to be important is having Aboriginal people involved in the governance of the program, such as the Steering Group which has representation from several Aboriginal leaders and groups:

*"We identified the partners and we got the DECS, Aboriginal Education Unit, SA Health, somebody from the Aboriginal Health Unit there. We looked for community members and we were lucky enough to have (and elder) who's sitting on our steering group. We went to the Aboriginal Health Council so we have two Aboriginal workers from there."*

Underpinning the program is the hope that it will have application nationally, particularly in rural and remote Aboriginal communities. The goal is also that it be sustainable in the long-term within South Australia:

*"[We] want to do it properly because you want to make it appropriate, and self sufficient so that if the funding does stop, and we hope it doesn't, but we've done it so well that it will be able to maintain itself."*

### **Overcoming challenges within the program:**

At a managerial level, one of the significant challenges throughout the first year of developing the program was the time it took to actually get it up and running. Delays in securing the funds meant that SHine SA 'took a gamble' and got started on the program 6 months prior to receiving the funding

A further challenge consistently described by staff has been the fast-paced nature of the program during the development phase. Staff described having to "think on your feet", and utilised their communication skills to overcome this challenge through building relationships during early program development and implementation.

Related to this, is the shared perception that the team have been under pressure to develop and implement the program in, at-times, enormously challenging contexts. For example, staff recounted some instances whereby community business had impeded their access to a community, which was disheartening after travelling for a significant distance. Other examples described how community contexts or circumstances meant that it was not appropriate or productive for the team to be working with community at that time. The political and

social challenges are seen by team members as part of their job and part of the program's implementation. The challenges are embedded in the program delivery and drive the approach, style and foundations of staff and the program.

The complexities in working with remote Aboriginal communities, each with quite different and specific contexts was a strong theme to emerge from staff. However, the complexities were overwhelmingly framed as 'something to work with' rather than being significant barriers to achieving outcomes in the longer term.

More specifically, staff described the importance of understanding where a community and individuals are 'at' in terms of engagement with the program or particular aspects of the program, and the sometimes lengthy and carefully planned strategy to move forward. Identifying and understanding the dynamics of the community 'powerbrokers' was seen to be crucial to successful engagement and in overcoming any doubts held by community.

Staff conveyed the importance of communicating contextual dynamics to the funding agency, and in reporting in general, so that delays in rolling out the program are understood within these difficult contexts. Program staff believe that although delays in rolling out the program are frustrating, they are intrinsically linked to the process of working respectfully and productively in the longer term. Staff hope that funders appreciate and understand why timelines might not always be met, or tasks may take longer than anticipated:

*"So they're some of the unique dynamics... (they) have to be explained and they are in our reporting but they don't make sense in the white world when it comes to just a piece of paper going 'Oh well I couldn't get that work done this month'."*



## B) SECTOR CONTEXTS

### **Agency level partnerships: 1 + 1 = 3**

Working “out in the field”, particularly on the APY Lands, inevitably involves interactions with a range of other agencies from various sectors such as TAFE, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Carers Link, SAPOL, and church organisations. Such a “constant stream” of state-funded agencies which are coming into communities for issues of housing, water, roads, sewage, education, health, as well as Federal Government agencies, was recognised as potentially difficult in terms of “who is talking to who to bring it all together”. Opportunities for collaboration and synergy were also identified and seized. For Yarning On staff, it was emphasised that within this context of multiple agency overload, it had been important for them to identify synergies with other agencies, to lessen the burden on community, and to convey a consistent message:

*“So whoever the systems are that wrap around each (community), we’ll provide some interaction with (them) because there may be cross-over in some of the work that is being done, whether it be programs or meetings or the same workers, and just making sure that we don’t overlap and overtax the person, the individual.”*

*“CAMHS... (are) working with the children... so it’s a really important thing to work together, so that we’re using the same language, using the same words.”*

*“The PYEC (Pitjantjatjara Yankuntjatjara Education Committee)... their concern was that there were so many service organisations going to the Lands, and they were conscious of overloading staff ... So something that we’d already done was coordinate with RASA (Relationships Australia SA) and the Aboriginal Health Council and CAMHS and so we’re meeting with them on a regular basis and organising training together. So we’re building links with other organisations... making sure we’re giving the same messages, and we’re making it more efficient because we can travel with them, and the community’s not getting overloaded, but at the same time our program is recognisable... and that’s a great thing.”*

Staff clearly recognise that co-operating with other agencies, some that are also funded under the National Indigenous Partnership, and some who are funded under other mechanisms to work in Aboriginal communities (particularly the APY lands), is beneficial for the success of the program, and can assist staff on a practical level. This has included finding out which organisations are going to be on the Lands at the same time as them, and travelling with them or sharing accommodation. Shared service and program delivery has evolved:

*“So we’re lining up this training in this program to be able to meet competencies in the Cert III or diploma of Community Services. So hence the relationship with Relationships Australia who do the training for youth workers on the land, and they’re really keen to have the sexual health component and so they can incorporate that and it will be meaningful for their youth workers about their training”.*

Equally as important has been a more strategic approach whereby collaboration with other agencies can potentially enhance and provide leadership on the ways services/programs are delivered, meanwhile “value-adding” to the Yarning On programs:

*“One of the other things that I’ve tried to do... is (consider) how we actually play with all of the other players that are there to make sure that we don’t trample over each other but also that we demonstrate a partnership approach...”*

*“we’ve tried to look at what are some opportunities where we’re actually doing the ‘one plus one equals three’.”*

In addition, partnerships with other agencies were perceived as assisting in ‘spreading’ the word about the Yarning On program itself, and creating a critical mass of interest and activity which will ultimately contribute to sustainability of the program:

*“It’s actually about everyone knowing what we’re doing, understanding what we’re doing, a preparedness to kind of work with us because they see that if they work with us and we work with them we actually get a lot more out of that. It’s also about the more people know about what’s going on, the more people talk about what’s going on and it’s that getting the message across because people, Anangu and the white fella people that are working on the lands or visiting the lands are actually going to talk about it.”*

## **C) TEAM AND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS**

### **SHine SA organisational context**

Finding the ‘right’ team to work within the Yarning On initiative has been a particular focus to ensure development of a team that can effectively work within Aboriginal communities requiring a high level of ‘cultural consideration’ and sensitivity. To do this, SHine SA had been able to recruit internally as well as externally, including those SHine SA staff who had previously demonstrated an ability to engage well with Aboriginal communities:

*“They were really important factors which we took into account. So because we needed to be up and running as quickly as we could possibly be, we did look internally and feel lucky because we handpicked some good staff.”*

#### **• Administrative team**

Due to the very nature of the program, administrative support is of vital importance. The program requires a high level of logistical support due to travel considerations, paperwork etc. At the time of the first interview, the program had two administrative team members. Their work involved ensuring that appropriate systems were in place to book accommodation, and ensure program staff recognised that all paper-work requirements and practicalities such as satellite phones were in place before they went into community. Their work also involved administrative support around the training manuals and curriculum documents, and there was a sense that their roles “keep getting broader and broader”. Overall, the administrative staff talked about feeling highly valued and supported, which they credit to the managerial approach and the respectful team culture.

#### **• Yarning On program workers**

At least initially, the six program workers appear to have been separated into two ‘teams’: three who work on the Aboriginal Focus Schools program and three who work on the Investing in Aboriginal Youth program. At the same time, there has been some separation in terms of those

who work on the 'lower' (Oak Valley, Yalata, Koonibba, Kurna Plains, Carlton Primary School, Point Pierce/Maitland and Meningie/Raukkan) and 'upper' (APY Lands and including Marree and Oodnadatta) lands, although at the time of interview, they were aware that this division was soon to change and become more flexible. This geographic and role division had presented difficulties for some staff in terms of losing a sense of oversight over issues affecting the whole program:

*"It was a bit confusing actually because when we first all got together it was like, you three are Investing in Aboriginal Youth and you three are (Focus) School coordinators but don't listen to that because you'll be supporting each other".*

*"One of the huge challenges, because we'd done so much travelling last year, (at) lots of our team meetings, it wasn't the whole team so when you go to share what you've been doing to keep everyone informed, it didn't work."*

Each of the program workers recognised their specific role as, for example Aboriginal Focus School co-ordinators or Investing in Aboriginal Youth co-ordinators. One of the strengths of the workers on the program is the diversity in terms of male and female staff members, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal backgrounds. In particular, there was an understanding that gaining the trust and support of community members might mean ensuring the appropriate worker takes an active role:

- **Managerial team**

In terms of the role of the managerial team, and program manager in particular, staff mentioned that they appreciated the particular style of management and trust which had been placed in the program workers. They also appreciated that the program manager's role was to "keep them on track", but not to be "always looking over our shoulders". Furthermore, it was appreciated that the program manager had taken the time to travel with the workers:

*"It was good because she wanted to come and see the logistics and she understands... which I think is fantastic because a lot of managers wouldn't do that and they'd have no idea. Two days just to get to Marree!"*

Managers recognised the need to provide opportunities for staff development, due to the nature of the work that team members were required to undertake (e.g. travel to remote areas). Occupational health and safety, as well as cultural awareness training and 4-wheel drive training were some examples of training that have been undertaken by Yarning On staff. Providing opportunities for staff development and capacity building internally within the team was also evident, which aimed to strengthen not only the skills of individual workers, but also tie it in to broader programs within Yarning On:

*"[Admin officer] is also an Aboriginal woman... We're supporting her to do her Cert IV in Community Development. She's halfway through. She would like to become a service provider so she will be involved in the Wiltja program, a residential facility for kids from the APY Lands and we are going to run a weekly program there for 2011 with the youth workers there, around the positive relationships and sexual health... And we have of course employed [admin trainee] who is an Aboriginal woman who's got an apprenticeship... I think they've been two really positive things that have happened."*

## **Team achievements and feeling valued**

When asked to discuss the achievements of the program to date, many of the workers articulated the importance of recognising the amount of work undertaken in such a short time period. Moreover, staff expressed a **strong sense of pride and privilege** around being part of the Yarning On team and having made significant progress. Notably, this involves both inter-personal achievements (working as a team; being mutually supportive), intra-personal achievements (balancing the intensive nature of the work they do with their own family/study commitments) and most importantly from their point of view, the relationships forged with communities:

*"So for us to have actually done the volume of work we have in the first year, in context... and for the communities to have... said yes to us is an achievement, a huge achievement..."*

*"I've loved just the connections with communities... we went to a community disco and all the kids were grabbing me and trying to teach me their moves. You make real connections and they're so down to earth, they just take you in."*

*"You meet other people that are travelling, and they sort of say 'what are you doing up here?', because we've got our shirts on and so you'll just be explaining to people and promoting the program, and that is great because they say 'wow that's amazing, wow'. I think it's really enriching and it's challenging, but it's really enriching and the work we do is really important because nobody else is doing it, so it's a real privilege."*

There was a strong sense of feeling, at times, like the process of working with community, schools and parents could be very slow-going, yet on reflection, workers felt immensely proud of what they had been able to achieve. Staff talked about the fact that the work they are doing feels like small steps, but they understand that what they are working towards is 'generational change':

*"I think the involvement's been a wonderful experience... to be involved in a program right from the start and being able to help shape that."*

## **Travel and other job pressures**

The need for frequent and often long-distance travel to rural and remote communities was undoubtedly one of the main issues confronting staff. Travel had impacted them in terms of not only fatigue and 'burn-out', but also balancing travel with their personal lives. The strong theme of **flexibility** emerged as staff recognised that long-distance travel was at times met with unpredictable situations, such as travelling for a number of days only to have to return to Adelaide due to unforeseen family situations occurring for the team members. Some staff mentioned the cumulative pressure of travel, coupled with the difficult circumstances they are dealing with in community as taking a toll on them emotionally. It was emphasised that de-briefing sessions, which have taken place and form part of their usual work culture, were of utmost importance and need to be considered as vital to counteract these stressors. The availability or types of accommodation available to the team was also recognised as at times problematic:

*"There's virtually no accommodation in communities, there isn't a hotel just outside the community to go and stay in, which puts pressures on staff who may have to share rooms. They're living in each other's pockets."*

While mentioning the challenges associated with travel, it was evident that staff could see the positives, such as 'sharing laughs' and meeting 'interesting characters along the way'. So while the time spent together could be challenging, it was also recognised as a special or unique dimension of the job, and personally satisfying:

*"I love getting away... It fills my spirit up when I'm on the land."*

Extensive travel also has to be viewed in terms of the implications for staff needing to take leave that is accrued, including from non-work days (i.e weekends) in their travel to communities. This has flow-on effects for the organisation in terms of balancing the need to give staff days off in lieu, but also having people available to work:

*"They go away for two weeks, they've probably accrued at least a week's TOIL (time off in lieu) which means they have to be taken off when they come back so logistically it's quite challenging."*

*"How do you keep your staff topped up and passionate and wanting to go away? We've done some team building and went to Camp Coorong and had a team building day and we have fortnightly team meetings... But we also looked at what could be another acknowledgement? So (we) worked up the regime (based on) away from home weekend days... they'll actually get additional annual leave."*

Inevitably, in working under demanding conditions, team morale has at times been poor and conflict has been experienced. Staff noted however that this was probably fairly typical in the early stages of any new program, where team members are brought together and need to define their own roles and work out a 'hierarchy'. They talked, however, about the fact that areas of conflict had been addressed (or were currently being addressed) and recognised that they were probably 'teething issues' to do with early days of a new program and formation of a 'team':

*"But as a team, we've kind of worked on that - it's not our work, it's the team's work. And you can't be precious, you need to share."*



*"[We've] problems but we work it out... the good thing is we work it out."*

The need to be out in the field and spending a large portion of their work time travelling to community also puts pressure on the team when combined with a relatively heavy reporting burden. Staff explained difficulties in finding time to 'log' or keep a journal of meetings, contacts, nature of work activities etc:

*"Every person that's funded through (SA) Health has to report back how their time is used ... so if I make a phone call I'll just put in my diary: "Kurna Plains ten minutes" or if you visit, there's travel... I try to do it once a week but when we travel, I had to get them all in before Christmas and I spent two days solid doing four or five months (worth)."*

### **Cultural backgrounds of staff**

As mentioned previously, it is clear that one of the strengths of the team, which flows on to the success of the program as a whole, is the mix of workers involved, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures having very important roles to fulfil:

*"...people have worked hard, have worked well together, and have brought different experiences and different contacts which means we've been able to liaise with different groups."*

At the same time, different cultural backgrounds had at times been a source of disagreement, but again, this was something that the team were very aware of, and were keen to address. As mentioned in the following quote, the overriding feeling was that diversity in terms of Indigenous and non-Indigenous background was a strength of the team, and that the bigger issue was the need for mutual respect:

*"It's a respect for people, no matter what colour they are... Just have respect for each other. We work in a small team, and we all need to respect each other."*

Similarly, it was recognised that there were parallels between needing to 'listen' and take time to understand and "work the community way" with Indigenous communities, and working with and respecting Indigenous co-workers. "Being listened to, being heard, and having time to reflect" with communities and amongst co-workers was a principle which all staff recognised as a tension against the "speed of the project" – that is, the program has flexible but maximum timeframes to work to, regardless of community progress. Respecting the knowledge and cultural links of Aboriginal staff was highlighted as very important but also challenging when at odds with relatively set timeframes.

## **D) COMMUNITY CONTEXTS**

### **Working to understand and gain respect from communities**

It was acknowledged that the sort of work involved in implementing the Yarning On program requires a fine-grained understanding of and respect for each community within which staff were working:

*"It's extremely important to have some understanding or an ability to sit back and listen. We tend to do a lot of listening."*

A strong theme to emerge is the need take an 'exploratory' approach with communities, given that each community is very different. Staff have invested significant time in finding out how communities think the program might work best for them, and how to build on their strengths and address their concerns. Staff saw that this process, although challenging from a program implementation point of view, was paramount to working in respectful manner:

*"One of the challenges is every community you go to runs differently and so you've got to build those relationships and then find out how it works to then tap into those resources."*

*"...the communities have been open and inviting to us. There's been, as I said before, some tentative moments where we're getting to know each other. It's been exploratory. I find the process of exploring each other - when you're looking at community, when you're looking at individuals and getting to learn each other - amazing... I enjoy that. Nurturing, from both sides."*

Program staff recognised that the way the program is explained to community needs to resonate in order to overcome suspicion and gain trust as workers and trust in the content of the program:

*"I think it's very important to have a meeting with the women and a meeting with the men and let them know what's happening because when you say sexual health [they think] "Oh, no, no". But if you sit down and explain it, it's about [for example] relationships in Year 5, you know mum/dad relationships and... when they get older, go through puberty, get sexually active, attracted to other people, that's when we want them to be safe. So it's the way you actually put it across to them."*

Staff also discussed the importance of being patient, and recognised that communities, and in particular the 'power brokers', needed to scrutinise the program and the workers to at times 'test' their intentions. Staff reflected on this as sometimes being a 'very intense' and humbling process:

*"I think as people know us and can put faces to names... you've got to meet them, you've got to spend time with them and get to know people, and then when they know that you're sincere, you want to do it the right way, you don't want to just enforce something you've already prepared, you're open to negotiation."*

*"...we were made to wait outside [for the meeting] for five hours, maybe six hours. We just waited... it was purposeful for them because they were going "Well, let's see what they're like. Let's see if they'll wait. Let's see how they wait"... But we understood and we were okay... And [then] we were sitting with the power brokers."*

*"They want to know you care about them. So I did have that asked of me... "[Work aside], what are you here for?"... So we're always under scrutiny and probably the reasons are justifiable."*

As mentioned previously, a large part of community engagement was enabling the workers of Aboriginal background and the CEO of SHine SA to use their experience, cultural knowledge and pre-existing connections within community (particularly in the APY lands) and with agencies in community. This worked not only to ease the transition of the non-Indigenous team members into the community, but also to build up a broader sense of trust and recognition in the value of the program for Indigenous health and wellbeing:

*"I think making the links have been easier in some areas because of [staff member's] Aboriginality... and I think having the opportunity to see some of the white people and how they work with the Aboriginal people too... well, it's been an important thing for me."*

*"...those Aboriginal workers are so important in this team, because if we send a bunch of white workers out into an Aboriginal community, they will just think – oh, here we go again. Here's another load of white people coming to tell us what to do."*

Very importantly, all staff members were aware and comfortable with the length of time it takes to build a trusting relationship. This was seen as particularly vital in communities where there had been a history of distrust or tension with service providers in the past:

*"It's a slower process obviously in the APY lands because of the trust factor and first off they thought we were government. I said we're definitely not, we're not government... because of the intervention and all that."*

Other strategies for building trust and becoming recognised in community were discussed. These included staying overnight in community, wearing team shirts to stand out from other 'visitors', being transparent about the purpose of their work, and linking with community 'champions', as these quotes describe:

*"Our staff stay on the lands in the community, they don't live permanently in the community but what they've been able to negotiate is, predominantly with Aboriginal people in the communities, that they do like a bed and breakfast thing. We actually bring income to families but they're actually staying in the community, which means that after they finish doing the work, the business stuff, they actually are socialising with people. So people are now increasingly inviting them to be involved in things."*



*"I think our shirts have helped us to be identified in the community. Quite often Aboriginal people comment on our shirts, "I like your shirt"... it's an easy way to be identified and... I mean, initially it was thought as a silly thing, but it's been a real good thing, I think."*

*"...it's really hard to talk about sexual health to Aboriginal people on the Lands... I think finding a couple of champions in each community is really important... there's a leader of the football team... I think that might be a good link."*

Perhaps a key illustration of the need to be flexible and to understand different community needs involved recognising that resources being developed for the APY lands needed to be entirely different to that developed for other Aboriginal schools/communities:

*"Now we're having two lots of curriculum documents, we're developing eight stories for the APY Lands as an introduction to a topic which the AEW and the teacher or a grandparent can sit with kids and it's a cultural story set - we hope the setting is more appropriate, that they can relate to (them)... and then a list of discussion questions that they'll use to introduce some of the more difficult topics."*

Truly understanding the communities with whom they are working meant staff had to acknowledge the traditional notions of "women's business and men's business", and nuanced cultural understandings of 'shame', and balance these with the fundamental principle of the 'right to know'. It was recognised that these cultural beliefs could pose a barrier to engagement and, was something that needed to be understood and potentially challenged:

*"Knowing about respectful relationships is not men's and women's business. It's about essential knowledge that all children in Australia need to know as a part of them being a part of this community of Australians. It's a part of their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Why would we exclude that kind of information from one group of people?"*

*"... the shame factor put upon Aboriginal people very early with the European contact - it came about because Aboriginal people didn't wear crinoline dresses and bonnets... no covering of their breasts, and it was the early religious colonialists in South Australia that would say 'you cover yourself and you cover your shame'. So there's now shame. Aboriginal people have taken it on. We talk all the time about how we challenge shame."*

The implementation of Yarning On within these cultural understandings has had some practical challenges:

*"Well it [shame] came up when we were talking about having discussions, and because a lot of our lessons are activity based, and that means giving your opinion and having discussions and maybe role playing and doing all of these things which traditionally kids don't want to do, like they'll shrink back, they won't want to open up, they won't want to risk looking stupid".*

However, the oral tradition of Aboriginal cultures was seen as an opportunity for slowly spreading positive sexual and relationship health messages:

*"I think in the teacher training, where the take home messages are, that the kids will take those messages home to the carers and start yarning to them about it and they'll know and yarn back and get it out of the shame area so that it's a normal part of conversation. God knows how long that will take. That would be my dream."*

The gender dynamics within Aboriginal cultures and different communities, and understanding the ways in which Aboriginal men and women might operate differently, is reflected by these experiences where staff are aiming to be respectful within those dynamics:

*"I had a community member, (an Aboriginal man) saying to me "You know, what the Aboriginal men are doing?" "What we're doing, when you come to talk to us, we're actually sitting there and we're looking at our catalogue... you're telling us the topics that you're going to be talking about... and (men are) scared of this process because it's the first time that somebody's come in and said "hey, we're going to be talking about relationships and sexual health*

*"...some of the community women haven't met formally yet, so although [men are] ready to go, the women aren't... so in a couple of communities... waiting is a challenge because the men will get bored and move on to something else... so I'm hoping to get in and get this in their agenda..."*

While it was deemed important to recognise the differences between Aboriginal communities, it was also stressed that Aboriginal children were all potentially exposed to similar negative or destructive social media, whether they lived in traditional or semi-urban areas – and **all** deserved equal access to information about keeping themselves safe:

*"It's about equality. It's about sameness, it's not about difference - it's actually about sameness. The rights of all human beings (under)... the Convention of the Rights of the Child."*

In addition to the importance of building trustful relationships with community, building the capacity of communities themselves through Aboriginal workers was also recognised as important for the longevity of the program, but also to ensure cultural/community relevance:

*"So it's about building the capacity of AEWs (Anangu Education Workers) and ACEOs (Aboriginal Community Education Officers) - they will probably stay in their community for years and years and they will not only become competent in the school but they've got that knowledge in the community... (it's about) building the corporate knowledge of the school so that it's embedded so it's not gone with a change of staff. And the same with the Investing (program). It is about building the capacities of the communities there around relationships and sexual health. So this project is very much about capacity building and we don't lose sight of that."*

### **Working with the barriers to engagement**

It was evident that staff worked with a number of issues around engaging with community, which at times curtailed their abilities to work towards program implementation. Although many different examples were discussed, the high proportion of deaths in community and the need to navigate community 'gatekeepers' were the most prominent:

*"A lot of (community engagement) though is governed by the amount of deaths that happen in communities... so that puts things on the backburner. Or a visit has been planned and there's been sorry business occurring or there's men's business which can stop us going in. There has been some of those things which have hindered and not made it as easy."*

*"There were some frustrations initially with what I call white gatekeepers, particularly on the APY Lands and there's quite a lot of that that happens and it's not helpful, and I think sometimes I sort of see it as 'these are my black fellas' you know? That's so unhelpful because it's so undermining of self determination."*

As mentioned previously, the program staff overcome some of the barriers to working with communities by working in particular **ways**. Staff repeatedly highlighted respect, length of time, listening, and also 'being visible' in doing these things, as **ways of working** which lay the foundations for the program to succeed. Obtaining community permissions and observing community protocols were strategies which were also frequently discussed. The importance of understanding who the 'real' powerbrokers are was seen as crucial in navigating community dynamics, and most importantly, in being able to meaningfully communicate the purpose of Yarning On and build engagement.

A further example of a potential barrier to engaging with community, was where there might be misinformation, or lack of information, with regards to program aims, and concerns over the sensitivity of the material covered. One of the program workers described how she responded to these concerns:

*"Fellas in the community might say "No, no, they don't need to know that, no, no" and we need to say "They do need to know it because this is what's happening now" and what I usually say when I go to community is "All the main schools of South Australia - there's 90 of them that do this course - so that's all of these young people knowing about it except our kids, and they're getting to know more than us. I want to be able to teach you a lot of this too but in a good way."*

It was also felt that a perceived back-lash from parents could be a potential barrier preventing schools from adopting the Aboriginal Focus Schools program, for example:

*"I think in communities it's what they don't know that makes them [worried]... because schools are a bit "Oh, I don't know... if we teach this to the kids, we'll have parents coming in and ....."*

Working within schools to implement the Aboriginal Focus Schools program was also associated with a number of potential barriers including high turnover of class teachers and principals. This could mean that agreement might be reached with certain teachers or principals who then move on to another school. The need to work with teachers to plan where the program will fit within their heavy timetables was also highlighted, as well as stressing to teachers that the curriculum can be tailored to their, and their particular students', needs:

*"We say it's a curriculum and it is, but we like to say that it's a framework and it's very flexible to suit the students at other schools. So this is the curriculum, we've got it like that but this is not rigid, we can work with them."*

*"That's where it's good to have those relationships with the teachers where you say 'if you've got an area that you need help in you contact me', because we've got access to all the Focus School stuff... teachers on the ground, it's absolutely frantic... so if say texting or cyber stuff was an issue in their community, we've got access to lessons here that we can send."*

## E) SUMMARY FROM FIRST ROUND OF INTERVIEWS “SETTING THE SCENE”

The evaluation strategy which is being undertaken by the SA Community Health Research Unit to document the implementation of Yarning On, and ultimately its success, is importantly aiming to capture the contextual factors which might promote and impede sustainability across multiple, potentially very different sites. As previously mentioned, the evaluation strategy is concentrating on the questions: **what works, for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects and why?** Understanding these contexts and mechanisms will be important in assessing the potential adaptation of the initiative to other communities or settings, and sustainability over time.

The aim of the first round of interviews focused on understanding the program contexts, and enabled staff to describe their own involvement on the Yarning On initiative to date. Staff were asked to reflect on their work over the first year of the program (January 2010-January 2011), and of interest were the contexts and mechanisms which might underpin how the initiative is being implemented. We found there were four main areas which were important contexts when focusing on the initiative’s implementation, which presented both challenges and opportunities. It highlights how these different contexts and the ways in which staff are negotiating these different contexts is ensuring the success of the program. These contexts included the **program, sector, team/organisational, and community.**

When focusing on the **program contexts**, it has been important for SHine SA and the workers themselves to develop and promote a way of working which is participative and culturally sensitive, and to this end, the make-up of the Yarning On team has been vital (i.e. ensuring a mix of gender, Indigenous background and teaching/non-teaching backgrounds). In terms of the big picture, the team at SHine SA want the broader program to be endorsed by the communities and to do this they ensure appropriate representation on the Steering Committee, and aim for the benefits which could stem from the program, to truly resonate with all members of community.

In terms of **sector contexts**, staff discussed the need to act strategically to work with other organisations working within these communities, both on a practical level (such as sharing accommodation and travel) but also that the program might benefit from collaborating with other organisations.

Both the **team/organisational** and **community contexts** were perhaps the most salient in terms of discussing the challenges and opportunities for implementing the Yarning On program. Although the team had experienced a number of pressures in terms of the vast complexities involved in program implementation (including frequent travel, inter-personal relationships, community dynamics and ascertaining roles), the sense of achievement which accompanied the volume of work they had undertaken in the first year of the program was obvious. Equally clear was the intricate nature of engagement with community, which involved a delicate balance of meeting “the right people” in “the right sequence” but having to be absolutely flexible to account for the unanticipated barriers that could arise at any time (e.g. white gatekeepers, deaths in community, distrust, teacher/principal turnover etc).

Overall, these interviews highlighted that staff understand that the success of the Yarning On initiative depends not only on the two individual programs (Aboriginal Focus Schools and Investing in Aboriginal Youth) being implemented within the various schools and communities, but on the **relationship building** with other agencies, each other and with community which is vitally important to its sustainability. With this in mind, there was a dual sense of not wanting or being able to rush the process with key stakeholders such as schools/community members/parents, yet feeling under pressure to deliver a detailed, multi-site initiative to ensure that Aboriginal people have sexual and reproductive health outcomes that are equal to the best.



## INTERVIEW 2: “PARTNERSHIPS”

The second round of interviews, which occurred in July 2011, focused specifically on capturing in greater detail the theme of **Partnerships** with communities and government agencies. At the time of this second round of interviews, there had been some staff changes meaning that only 8 of the original 10 staff members who had participated at round one, were available at round two.

### CHANGES IN ROLES SINCE LAST INTERVIEW

Most changes in roles related to factors such as the need to take on new roles due to staff changes, or the need to become **more** involved (e.g administrative staff who had been trained up to assist with roles such as facilitating teacher training). Also staff were aware of the need to, at times, be flexible and think outside of what their normal role might entail, in order to ensure the program is getting implemented. An example of this is where, within the Focus Schools program, the idea of running a camp rather than the usual process of running teacher training came about:

*“So that’s how my role has changed rather than just thinking school setting and teachers and the training that we’ve set, I’m looking at alright, well what are we doing now, how do we have to modify this training to suit this community and their roles.”*

### ORGANISATIONAL/SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

#### How does Yarning On engage with other Closing The Gap initiatives?

While there was a sense of not always being aware of ‘who’ the other Closing the Gap (CTG) players were, the main CTG organisations or initiatives that Yarning On have partnered with are those who share their ‘target’ communities. The Aboriginal Health Council’s HERO (Health Education Respecting Others) team was noted as one of the major initiative partnerships for the team. As an example of a positive spill-over from this partnership, it was described how Yarning On staff were able to reciprocate the HERO team linking with a school in the work they were doing, using a combination of Yarning On’s networks and contacts with the specific school, and HERO’s links with Aboriginal Health.

*“There were lots of times that this HERO team would try and get into a school to let the senior school students know about this programme and the schools would say ‘no’ so we’re hoping that with my contacts with the school and their contacts with Aboriginal Health we can link school and health together a bit better. ... it’s pretty much going “You know what, they’re SHine but they’re okay”. Just opening those doors and we’re doing the same for them with the schools.”*

Relationships Australia SA (RASA) was also noted as an organisation where links have been developed, particularly in relation to the Investing in Aboriginal Youth program where there was some overlap in terms of relationship education. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have offered for Yarning On to share or use their accommodation and have

given feedback on resources. Importantly, the Yarning On team have consulted with CAHMS to ensure that the 'language' they (CAMHS) are adopting in their therapeutic interventions is consistent with what the team are using in both programs (Investing and Focus Schools), as a means of reinforcing a consistent message.

Staff also appreciate that it is less burden on community if they work together with other CTG initiatives, and they make sure they communicate to these initiative the work they are doing and where they are focusing their work. It was also seen as important that Yarning On has strong links with these other organisations so that they are seen by community as co-operating with each other, and are not 'in competition' with each other.

It was also pointed out that knowing who certain groups or organisations are funded by (such as CTG or other funding initiatives) was actually less important out in the field, and was not something that always naturally came up in conversation. In fact, it was felt that this could potentially hamper relationships by asking "who funds you?" or "are you funded by CTG?".

*"To get bogged down with the politics and funding discussions potentially stymies the establishment of a real genuine relationship, and community people want to know us as people first, and if you come in only asking work based questions you may come across to them as too official and too bureaucratic, so we tend not to do that speak in front of people with the community."*

There was acknowledgement that partnerships with other CTG initiatives were not always straight-forward and the need to compromise was recognised as vital:

*"Everyone's got their own agenda and so trying to find a middle ground where everyone's getting what they want and no one's having to compromise too much is often difficult."*

### **What is the role of other organisations in terms of Yarning On specifically?**

In terms of the consultation process, engaging with other organisations has been important. These organisations include the DECS Aboriginal Education Unit in Adelaide and the regional office in Port Augusta who have played a large role in curriculum development, acting as a focus group for checking suitability of resources for teachers etc. Each DECS region has an Aboriginal Inclusion Officer, so the Yarning On team have ensured that they know about the program and can support it getting into schools, and even delivering some lessons where appropriate. In terms of training (Focus Schools) on the APY Lands, the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee play a key role in approving access to the Lands and for this or any other program to be implemented in the Lands. An example of Yarning On having 'incidental' success in engaging with another agency is with the Stronger Smarter Foundation initiative, who recognised that Yarning On were working with schools involved with their initiative, and that they had shared goals:

*"There's a Smarter Stronger Foundation in Queensland and we get an actual certificate from them saying they've recognised that we're helping in their initiative. So we're going to try and get in contact with the [Foundation] because there are other schools that are involved with the initiative so we're going to see how we can benefit from that. [We are] trying to find out what it's about ..you sign on and they just support you with, they hold hub meetings so you can share successes and challenges and stuff like that and there's training and development money ..."*

Staff discussed the fact that the assistance of other organisations such as community councils, TAFE, community clinics, youth centres and schools were vital in order to obtain permission to be in the community, to speak to an individual or group within the community, offering accommodation, somewhere to conduct meetings and training, as well as key contacts who:

*"..tell us how it really is in the community i.e. politics, the tension, the sorry business that may occur etc."*

### **How has the program been linked with other sectors?**

It is clear that the program links and crosses over with a range of other sectors including DECS, DECS Aboriginal Unit, the Aboriginal Health Council, and each community governing council and health clinic, RASA, SAASTA (the South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy), CAMHS, Department of Families and Communities, Families SA Aboriginal Health Division (who run programs with families and parents), and TAFE and CDP. It has been important, in terms of enhancing the work undertaken with these sectors/organisations, and establishing a process for collaboration, to develop memoranda of understanding (MOU) and collaboration (MOC). For example, in relation to DECS this represents a 'tick of approval' from DECS which assists in how the team are received by the schools they are targeting, making them more willing to partake in discussions etc:



*"[We have a] memorandum of collaboration with DECS which is vital to validating our links with DECS schools, and very important when establishing a relationship, and working directly with the community schools, principals, teaching and non teaching staff, so that they know from a higher level that we've been approved."*

With CAMHS, for example, SHine SA is seen as a partner in terms of the training and development undertaken with community around respect and safety. SHine SA and CAMHS will, at times, work with the same community members together and separately, as well as discuss the work they are doing to see how they might collaborate, identify overlaps, discuss how they will work if they are in the communities together etc:

*"[It is] critical... for us walking into a community that's had maybe a little bit more of an interventionist approach, to know where we fit within where they [CAMHS] are at with that."*

A particularly innovative link is that which has been formed with SAASTA. If a particular target school is part of SAASTA, this has become a useful mechanism for getting the curriculum into these schools (even into other than original 'target' schools). SAASTA have been trained up to deliver the Focus Schools curriculum and welcomed the collaboration in that they wanted something more theoretical within their curriculum. In short, the partnering of different sectors has been identified as an important way of ensuring the programs uptake:

*"So what we've done in some communities the school have been apprehensive to take up the programme so I've sat in with some of the community members and said "How is this best going to be received with your community?" So for example at [the school], they were nervous about taking it on. So I met with the principal and the health nurse from the clinic and we said "How can this happen?" So we've organised to do a training up there with the Aboriginal health staff and some of the teachers for them to see what's in the programme and what the activities are like and then we're hopefully going to hold a camp. We're actually doing it with [a different school] as well and while they're not our target community they really wanted this and had the avenue so we're looking at a different approach ...by having the Aboriginal health workers come in and teach it with [the teachers]."*

*"They did say to me with the Investing [program] they'd like me to work with the police, even if we do it one day around sexual health so they know what we're doing."*

### **How are partnerships working overall?**

Overall, it was acknowledged that an underpinning principle, and the bulk of the work that Yarning On (and SHine SA in general) undertakes, is about strategic partnering with other organisations:

*"[establishing relationships] takes a lot of work and follow up to keep those links strong, that's probably the majority of our work is maintaining relationships.... we're sometimes reforging the same relationship but with new players within an organisation, and having to keep abreast of who's where when..."*

It was felt that these partnerships are generally working well, but communication and logistics of linking up are not always easy

*"They've got their agenda and we've got ours and often you'd go to a community and they'd be there and we'd be like "Oops, I forgot to email you" because the plan was when you're going on a trip let's let everyone know and then if we can travel together to save costs or to travel together to work together to show that we're working for the same outcome.."*

One staff member related an instance of where she was told by some community members at the recent 'Meet the Mob' conference (when HERO and Yarning On presented together) that the two organisations need to work together more/better. It was obvious that the community member saw synergies in their respective work but it wasn't apparent that they were in-fact co-ordinating.

SHine SA as an organisation is clear that they will partner with anyone who shares a common goal or where there is shared understanding around sexual health. It was described how all agencies should be working "on the same page", for the benefit of Aboriginal people, working for the right reasons, no superiority, but working together. However it was noted that at times it became necessary to dis-engage from an agency or individual if it was not deemed to be a positive strategic alliance:

*"Sometimes we may spend a considerable amount of time forging our relationship or link with an agency an organisation or an individual, and then as the process of doing that rolls out and our wider involvement with the community, we find that maybe that's not the best strategic alliance to have, and that there may be a more beneficial one for both us and also the community and the programs we want to run within that community, so sometimes we will respectfully thank them for their intimate connection, but may be less connected..."*

Staff also recognised the need to be persistent when working with other organisations, and recognising that they too are working under immense time pressure:

*"(The organisation) have got so much on their plate so we ring or email and say "We've got this really good thing" and we have to realise that we're this small on their priority list. It works though because when they don't call me back or write an email I don't take it personally, I know that they're busy so I just ring and go "Hi, have you got time for me? I'll ring again, tell me when's a good time" and I just tell them "I hope you don't mind me nagging" and they're like "I hope you don't mind I forgot to ring you" and I'm like "Don't you worry, I'll just keep nagging you until we find a good time".*

In practical terms it has been important to network and have discussions with other sectors in order to gain access or 'have a direct line' to an established group, for example using TAFE facilities for accommodation and running training programs from their campus etc. Also because SHine SA is a recognised training organisation, there is some cross-crediting of training courses between the two organisations:

*"We have a shared understanding of what courses are run from TAFE to the community, and what training we are providing, so they have an understanding of what and where we fit and where they fit with us, because there may be some work where they can access training of ours, or where we may be able to support some of their learning within the context of some of the programs they deliver, because there may be some modules or units or competencies within that which have similar outcomes."*

### **How could these partnerships impact on program outcomes? Can they impede or promote Yarning On?**

While staff talked about the importance of gaining the trust and respect of **community** as an utmost priority, it was also apparent that gaining the trust of **other organisations**, particularly Aboriginal community agencies, was equally as important. There was initial concern over who the team from SHine SA were, what they were hoping to achieve etc, and apprehension over not wanting to align with or support them until they knew more about what their aims were. The non-Aboriginal community agencies also could be unforthcoming about engaging with the team in the early stages, acting as “gate-keepers” who control the comings and goings of agencies into community:

*“Sometimes we’ve had a community that has said yes to us, but the non Aboriginal organisational gate keeper within that organisation is giving us a no, and it doesn’t matter whether or not the communities are supporting and accepting us that person still is still putting up the blocks.”*

When reflecting on the involvement of SASTA in the Yarning On program, it was felt that these ‘spontaneous’ or new partnerships were important to nurture. Even if they could potentially outstretch capacity and cause them ‘to run into the ground’, they were seen as important in enabling the program (and SHine SA in general) to have an even greater reach:

*“I think the more people getting information the better, the more people knowing about SHine and our services the better. I’m hoping that with SASTA, it will also link in with those health services so the communities that we haven’t been targeting so that they’ll get some resources and some information. I think it just puts sexual health on the agenda, people don’t know the stats, you don’t know what you don’t know so by doing the training you see do you know what, this is life skills, the kids need to know this.”*

As previously mentioned, on a logistical level, positive partnerships with other agencies were helping in terms of practical support such as provision of accommodation. For example, it was described how, with time and the gaining of respect, some organisations were now forthcoming in their offers of accommodation in community, which had not been the case in the early stages of the program. It was felt that this was associated with the agencies gaining a better sense of what the Yarning On program was about, and what the worker’s positions and roles were within the community more broadly:

*“[It was also] around individual looking after your individual, and being protective of the community or of the process if you were an agency within that community. But as people have learnt that we’re here to stay, and that we actually physically stay in community, not fly in and fly out, people are understanding that we are good for community.....The other agencies are starting to go okay these people we need to be involved with these people, we need to support and again eventually they will support our work.”*

### **Is Yarning On acceptable to other organisations?**

Overall, there was a sense that other organisations are very impressed with the ways in which Yarning On is being implemented and that the two aspects of the program are held in high regard. Speaking about the Focus Schools program one staff member commented:

*"I think the way we're going about it, the way we're talking to community first rather than going straight into schools whereas we're not putting the pressure on schools and the community aren't going "Hey, what's this programme, we don't know anything about it". Everyone is saying "Our kids definitely need to know this". We don't go for it straight away, we gently progress to the more sensitive subjects of condom use and STIs and stuff like that. We start off with the basics and the rights of yourself, respect yourself and communication and respectful relationships and then we go onto the intimate stuff... And when we presented at the Meet the Mob conference a health nurse from [community] said "I just want to let you know this programme is a credit to SHine SA, everything you've said in that presentation you're doing in our community. You're fantastic".*

It was noted that communities/teachers, and other agencies to some extent, might have had some initial concerns about the Focus Schools curriculum starting at Year 5, but in fact this had now been met with encouragement:

*"A lot of [communities have] said "Why only [years] 5 to 10?" and some teachers are saying "Why only [years] 5 to 10?" and even when we did community consultations they asked "What age are they at Year 5?" and we said "Ten years old", "Nah, give it to them younger" and the truth is because the average age of puberty now is 10, some as young as eight."*

It was evident that other organisations look to the Yarning On program to learn how to successfully engage with communities, because of the reputation which has developed for positive, respectful engagement. In some respects the Yarning On team are acting as 'mentors', sharing their skills and knowledge with other organisations about the 'right way' to work with community:

*"... by doing it the right way, sharing with other agencies and organisations why our way works, the success of our way, because we also have feedback from organisations that will say "We've heard about you, and we heard you're doing good work, how come you're doing it like that, like why is it working? We can't get this, we can't get that"... so sometimes we will share a little bit about our understanding of what our way looks like, and what we believe the right way is based on the feedback we get from community."*

### **How might these partnerships contribute to the sustainability of Yarning On?**

In relation to the Focus Schools program, support provided to teachers was seen as vital to sustainability of the program as a whole:

*"As a teacher, if you see a programme and you know it's good and you know it's needed and you like it and you're given the resources, you're going to keep teaching it whether the programme's in the school or not. Our programme is only as good as the people delivering it, so really by giving as much support as we can to the teachers that we're training is going to help with sustainability I think."*

In the short term, the importance of community partners or champions, keeping the program on the agenda in community when the team are not there was noted. In terms of long-term sustainability the Yarning On team see that they are passing on a 'skill set' and body of knowledge about relationship wellbeing and sexual health, that they hope will extend and reach out to communities into the future.

"So from the sustainability viewpoint if we're not funded past our project outline, we have left within each community an important skill set and knowledge set, of which they can choose to use, because they will have all of our resource materials, both within a school setting, and within a community setting, so they'll have the curriculum set out easily with all the resources from year five through to year ten. They will have a resource that teaches how to gather a group, train a group, and then that group deliver health and well being messages into the community through a peer education model perspective, and they'll have all of the resources, and program outlines in order to deliver a community program, of which they can deliver in so many different ways."

"Even if their choice is to move communities, chances are we are covering 19 communities in the initial program, that the movement of people will have somebody in a community."

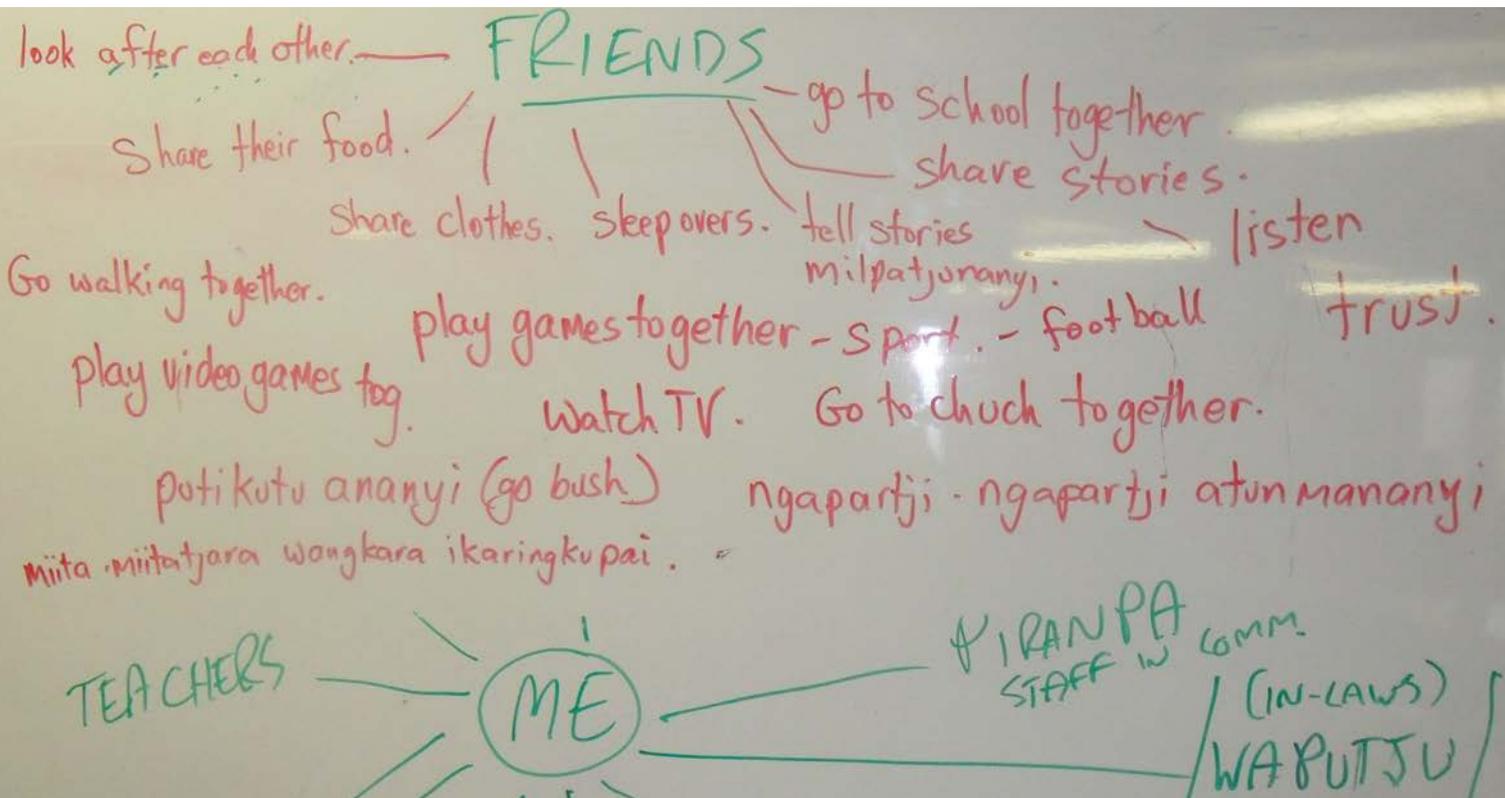
## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### Acceptability of YO to schools and communities

Overall, it was felt that the Yarning On program in general had been accepted by the diverse communities they were engaging with, largely due to the process of talking with the right people and using the right avenues:

"We are respected for our work, because community tell us we're doing it the right way, it doesn't matter which community we work with, each one reiterates this to us, we've taken time to establish the right connections in the right way, with the right people from the onset of the project."

Not being fly-in-fly-out also helps to solidify relationships, demonstrates genuine investment in and commitment to community, in that the team are happy to stay in "and hang around in" community. Another key aspect that was noted, was that the Yarning On program being run by SHine SA as a non-government agency, helped to distinguish them from 'the Northern Territory Intervention' which was associated with a degree of nervousness among community. Creating a noticeable identity (with uniforms) was also seen as important to this end.



It was also noted that a key factor (for some communities) was an understanding that the program can both respect the traditional customs or 'culture' (the practices that elders would do to teach young boys and girls about sexual health), and introduce new ways of learning:

*"They all want it, they love it. I'm really amazed with the school program. They were at first hesitant with that, but they're all there. Each community thought they were the only one being targeted and when they realised they weren't, they want an old way with new way still, old culture where the women will talk about their old way of doing stuff and they know it's got to be talked about now which is a big barrier breakdown..."*

One aspect of the program which might have pointed to a degree of community resistance was where, at one community presentation, it was pointed out by a parent that teaching of this sort of material was "a parent's job":

*"I said, "Yeah, ideally it is the parents' job, but it's not happening for a lot of kids. The system has broken down and they're not getting the information". I said, "Your kids might be getting the information, and that's great that you are, but a lot of kids aren't". He was, yeah, just quietly on the side then, because he could see that. I think it was a valid point and in an ideal world it is the parents that pass that knowledge on. But it's not happening."*

Providing support for teachers who will be responsible for teaching the Focus Schools curriculum was seen as very important, to ensure that schools are not "put-off" from teaching certain aspects of the curriculum that they may find uncomfortable:

*"We trained [the school] in May, I sat down with them before the end of term two and we planned their curriculum... they saw the lesson, they went "Right, well I'm not comfortable teaching that and that", so we're like "Alright, when are you going to be teaching that? Alright, we'll come out and teach that with you". So the support is there and they feel more confident that we're going to be there for them."*

Teachers are also reporting that the Focus Schools resources are user-friendly, unlike some previous resources:

*"Some of the feedback is that the resource is user-friendly. The resource we've done, it's user-friendly compared to say the DECS 'Keeping them Safe' curriculum, [which is] quite hard to use, it's not set out in an easy to use format so I think lots of the teachers are happy that it's easy to use so they're more likely to use it."*

In general, for the schools and communities, there was a sense that the Focus Schools curriculum was seen as relevant because it was about building "life skills" which had resonance with the schools and communities:

*"It's definitely supported by the schools and the communities that we've spoken to. It's because it's for the kids and it's life skills. I had a conversation with someone saying that what they're teaching kids in school these days, it's not going to be relevant in five years whereas this stuff is life skills, this is relationships, and relationships are the core of life really."*

Interestingly, the team reported that there were some instances where, even with community support, schools were not prepared to implement the Focus Schools program. In one instance, although the community was engaged with the Investing in Aboriginal Youth program, the

school did not take up the program because it was “all full up [with programs] this year”. There is an understanding amongst Yarning On staff that perhaps the teachers were uncomfortable with the program content and the complexities in dealing with conversations around relationships and sexual health.

The ways in which staff are responding to this resistance is by offering and reiterating the availability of support in teaching and answering questions about ‘sensitive’ material; being persistent and not being ‘put off’; reassuring schools that organisations such as SAASTA are integrating the curriculum into their program; and asking elders to lobby the school if and when they are clearly behind the program:

*“When we did training with the community, the five traditional men, one of them is going to be a mentor at the school and one of them is involved in SASTA and he said “Why isn’t this in the school?” and I said “I would love you to go talk to the school about that. We’re happy, you chase the school up for us”.*

Another important factor has been the investment which the Yarning On team have been able to demonstrate (as staff on the program, but also in terms of the material), in that they are not simply in a rush to deliver a ready-made program to community and then disappear, but are there for the long-term and focused on developing ties, consulting with community and re-shaping program material:

*“We’re not just saying, “Here’s the curriculum. Do it”. We’re saying, “This is what we’ve prepared. We know it’s not going to suit everybody and we welcome your input and we need your input. We’re going to be here for at least the next three years and we want your feedback. This is just a draft”. So, I think that has impressed people as well, that we ask, and it is the same people coming back... for me to be able to say, “I am your person and you can contact me by email, phone. It’s my job to support you to get this stuff up and running”.*

### **Community structures and individuals being partnered with**

When going into community, program staff recognised that it was firstly important to meet with community councils and school governing councils, and then find out who the key people and elders are and meet with them. In terms of the Focus Schools program specifically, the team had developed an accepted process or ‘protocol’ for engaging with schools, and involved key stakeholders from the principal to Aboriginal Health Workers:

*“It’s always been the Principal that we partner with first because they’re the main... Aboriginal schools are quite small so the Principal really is [key]... whereas in some larger schools you could get a teacher onside and then they could get other teachers onside and then work with the Principal. But no, it’s definitely the Principal first and then we talk to staff and check that the staff are willing to teach it but we say to them “We’re definitely going to talk to community before we train you”, so then we get a governing council or a parent meeting and get their okay, let them know about it. Once we’ve organised training I then contact the local health service and see if there’s any Aboriginal health workers that want to attend the training because we talk about the need for partnerships... between Education and Health.”*

Often parents **are** the governing council, but if the school doesn’t have a governing council the team will run a community barbeque to engage with parents and community. Even if the school is ‘on-board’ it is seen as vitally important that community are on-side as well, and schools are

very keen to ensure community endorsement, as are the Yarning On team (to avoid backlash, or harming reputation of SHine SA).

Other community structures with whom the team partner are men's groups and women's groups:

*"So a men's meeting or a women's meeting in the community is a valuable resource, because it gives you insight into their daily activity, what they do recreationally or socially, and the yarns, conversations tend to be more relaxed and more real, more open, a little bit more laughter and humour and fun, and it's where you get to know people, and where they get to know you, so at a grassroots level they're critical."*

### **Examples of ways of successfully working with community**

It was recognised that having Aboriginal elders (from Anangu Education Services) travel with the team to support presentations to community (especially in the APY Lands) by translating the many different languages, as well as simply sitting and discussing difficult or sensitive concepts with community, was a successful way of engaging.

As in the first round of interviews, it was re-iterated how important it was to have Aboriginal co-workers on the Yarning On team who can integrate their learnings and perspectives, in order to ensure that the process of engagement is respectful to community, or "done in the community



way". It was felt that not having this 'insider' knowledge could potentially alienate communities from the very outset.

*"It has been really stressed to us, it came up in several communities how they valued that we had the courtesy to negotiate when we would come, and us taking the food... They felt respected and this was the (school) staff as well as the community, because we'd made the effort to do that."*

*"As they said on the lands they like how SHine is respectful and they let them know when we're coming, but they'll just have agencies, the non-Aboriginal people rolling up and expect them to drop everything and just be attentive."*

Other factors that were seen as important were, as has been stated previously, the need to be flexible – adjusting timelines and making up the time. Also, ensuring that if the team know the community is 'community controlled' then to reiterate that this is a community directed program where all the community can participate in some way. As a way of engaging, it was also noted that it can be important the team are seen as 'real people' and the importance of sharing their own personal family background as a means of gaining trust:

*"[Community may be thinking] 'how do I know I can trust you?' How do I know I can respect you? How do I know that I can trust you to respect what I've shared with you? So what we tend to need to do is share about who we are as people, they want to know who we are, our family background, whether we have families personally or not, if we have, then who's in our family, what the structure looks like, how it operates."*

### **How the program could be working better with community**

Due to distance and time constraints, it was acknowledged that there was a need to use every avenue possible to keep in touch with people in remote communities, when the team were back in Adelaide. For example, one staff member described how important it was to engage with community members at a recent conference, to draw links with them:

*"[At the time of the conference] we had two of my co-workers [away] in one of the communities on the lands, and I'd been on the lands two or three week prior to them travelling up there, and I knew that... my co-workers were staying in this community at a community member's house, but that community member was in Adelaide at the same conference space, I went "hi what are you doing? How are you doing?" I said "my two co-workers are up in your community at the moment". Wherever we can make connection and keep that reality of our conversation and our relationship going we'll do that."*

Financial constraints were another reason why staff were sometimes not able to take the time they wanted to spend in community:

*"It would be good if we had more money for travel to spend more time in community... It would be great to be able to spend three days in the school to see how the lessons run and to see how the kids interact in the classroom and stuff like that."*

While language did pose a barrier initially in engaging with communities, particularly in the development of the written materials, SHine SA has engaged with communities to ensure that the material is not jargonistic or overly complex:

*“Academia, health and education white fellow way of [speaking] and written language is too busy, too much... so we’ve had to sit down and look at our white language written and spoken and simplify it... because we just use too many words, we use too big words, we use words that aren’t necessary within sentences, we just go on and on and on, and we’ll be told that by community. [They say] “why don’t you just say it this way?” So what we’ve said in six sentences could have been said in one.”*

**“With them, for them, at them”: How community perceive CTG initiatives**

The program staff noted that there is awareness among the communities that there are many initiatives occurring, many services coming and going and they are keen to distance themselves from this influx by arranging their schedules on a day where there are not other programs, particularly in the APY Lands. Staff noted that whether the agencies and programs were welcomed by community depends on the “hierarchy of need” in that particular community – for example if housing is a particular issue for that community, then if a housing agency visits they will be given a platform and a voice and be well received:

*“It’s about making sure the agency and the urgency match each other on the day.”*

*“Sometimes you see the agencies that come into community haven’t spoken to each other... and other times you can see that they have actually spoken and it works well, so I believe that communities are quite happy for the support from external agencies, it’s just how it happens within the community that either rubs it the right or wrong way.”*

## SUMMARY

### **“Doing it the right way”**

Overall, the interviews and document analysis have highlighted that the key aspects underpinning the successful roll-out of the Yarning On initiative to date are the time and effort spent on building partnerships and respectful relationships with community, other agencies, and each other. Particularly in engaging with communities, the sense of working the ‘right way’ - with respect, without rushing or being paternalistic - has emerged as the most important principle underpinning program implementation.

Implementing Yarning On with a genuine respect for culture has also been vitally important to its success to date. Particularly given the topics of relationships and sexual health, being able to blend new knowledge with cultural understandings has allowed communities to bring something to the program, and has created a sense of comfort for community that the cultural aspects will not be lost. Importantly, working with culture has not just been in terms of “getting in” to communities, but also continuing the work in the cultural way at every step, once communities are engaged. This is seen as critical to the success of the program:

*“Without the openness and willingness of each community to embrace and work with our program it would either fail or the positive impact would be diluted.”*

Respecting the cultural context is also vital because that context gives program staff a more intimate understanding of what community and its members are all about, how they might benefit from Yarning On, and what they aspire to:

*“The cultural context is paramount, because it’s another layer deeper in the conversations around the wellbeing of the person, and the sexual health which includes that holistic essence of the person, so we’re going down by layer and degree into very intimate conversations, and to do that culturally we need to be aware of the impact of each of those layers of conversation that we’re getting into, and if we get that wrong, especially as the intimacy of the relationship grows, and the content of the conversation deepens more so we would be asked to leave, so it’s always at the forefront of our minds - a cultural context.”*

### **Flexibility and innovation**

The need for flexibility and innovation were other key themes which are vitally important to the program’s success and sustainability. This was evident throughout all aspects of the program implementation, including the engagement process, developing curriculum, communications and in the practicalities of travel. Communities are changing constantly, as are service partners. Yarning On staff were very aware that investment into any one person or partnership would need constant attention and rejuvenation, particularly given relatively high rates of staff turnover in partner agencies. Furthermore, the types of partnerships were always changing to reflect the progress of Yarning On or the community:

*"[We are] always looking at our new links because community life is not static, and each time we go into community we meet new people."*

Being flexible with timelines was acknowledged as being crucial in engaging with communities and individuals. Yarning On staff have showed a dedication to both external reporting requirements and timelines, and the pace and needs of communities. This delicate balancing act has resulted in program implementation timelines which are fluid, yet 'on track'. This is a credit to the staff, and demonstrates that strong foundations (and constant nurturing) of respectful partnerships can overcome some of the other challenges. One such challenge has been around working with remote communities. The travel time to reach communities, the occasional inability to access community upon arrival, and the distance between community and staff when they are in Adelaide have all been addressed with an overwhelmingly positive attitude from Yarning On staff. Their attitude is clearly based in the belief that such challenges are just part of doing things 'the right way', with respect for community.

Flexibility has also been demonstrated in the ways that the program links with communities. Partnerships vary, the curriculum is adapted, and the engagement process differs with each community. Staff have made every effort to show themselves as 'real' people to communities, and to generate a rapport with individuals for the benefit of the program and community.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX 1

### Key Documents for Yarning On (As at February 2011)

Name of Document	Origin	Purpose	Who was involved	Who was consulted	Progress
Program Logic Model	Feb - Sept 2010	To guide the development of the program, direction and purpose. The aims and the outcomes are used to inform other agencies and funders of the purpose and long term vision and realistic goals for the life of the program.	Whole team including Kaisu Vartto	Initial meeting with SACHRU and Kaisu, then in Jan 2010 with Sue Arwen and then with 4 members of the team who had been appointed in Feb 2010. There were several meetings and it was presented to the Steering Group and SHine SA Council and asked for feedback. SA Health was also invited to provide feedback before the document was finalised.	There were 4 drafts. Final is now completed and will continue to be used to guide the purpose and evaluation.
Action Plan	Jan 2010	To guide development of program logic and steps of the program development. Requirement of HSA but to also provide direction and a logical planning process for program development and implementation.	Sue Arwen. Only manager and ASO3 had been employed by the time the HSA required the action plan.	Whiteboard, HSA. Asked SA Health for feedback amended and finalised.	2 drafts. Final updated August 2010 and in progress Dec/ Jan. Continue to be updated and will be amended if progress changes.
Close the Gap - Aboriginal Sexual Health Program, State Reference Committee (SRC) Terms of Reference	22 Jan 2010	To outline and guide what responsibilities and input each of the members on the committee will provide to the program. This includes: contributing to the development, implementation and evaluation of the Program by sharing knowledge, experience and ideas, actively promoting and supporting the	Program Manager, ASW and CEO. Committee is inclusive of representatives from SA Health, DECS representative/s from Curriculum and Aboriginal Education Unit, Aboriginal Health Council SA, two community representatives, Program Manager SHine SA and CEO SHine SA.	Identified essential agencies and community representatives for inclusion to SRC. Ensured agencies identified in Health Service Agreement are included. Invitations to be represented on SRC. Developed terms of reference, negotiated meetings and reporting structure.	Meets quarterly for 2 hours.

		Program, contribute to problem solving issues as they arise, comment on Program objectives and outcomes, advise on coordination with other related education, health and wellbeing projects and initiatives and advise on emerging issues relating to relationships and sexual health in targeted schools and communities.			
Communication Strategy	May 2010	In Health Service Agreement and action plan and also a way to promote the program, keep communities, agencies and funders updated. The Communication Strategy helps guide the Newsletter and keep on task. It also identifies a single key message which the program tries to convey.	Sue Arwen and Lesley Johns, SHine SA Medical Officer with input from team.	Lesley Johns provided examples, researched what was currently in place in SA and developed a draft. Commented on by Kaisu, Lesley and the team. Presented to Steering Group for feedback, then amended and finalised.	2 drafts. Now final. Will review in April/ May 2011 to ensure it is still relevant.
Program Information sheet/pamphlet/ Community council letter	Feb 2010	As an introduction to the project	Sue Arwen	Team members when going to new communities, schools, venues. Also sent to potential partnerships before being rung by one of the team.	Pamphlet is final and on display and used, letters are 'tweaked' to suit recipient and community and information sheet is also tweaked as needed. Ongoing but updated as used.
Newsletters	Aim is for every 3 months from June 2010. We produced 2 in 2010.	To keep communities, agencies and funders updated on program progress Promotion and accountability.	All team members and Lesley Johns	Team members wrote articles, ASW developed the newsletter, Lesley Johns fed back. Distributed via email and team members took to the communities on their visits. Permission to use photographs was gained for all those whose photos we used.	2 or 3 drafts each Continue quarterly

Community Journals	At commencement of project	To keep accurate records of each contact so any team member can communicate with confidence if picking up negotiations with community members. Also allows us to identify barriers and enablers. Continually used as a reference and to organise community visits and a record of engagement. Will be used in evaluation. Used in SA Health monthly activity reports.	ASW developed them based on the Focus School journals	Copy, insert key information and instruct all staff to use them	Ongoing use
School Journals	At commencement of project	To keep accurate records of each school contact. It helps with communication especially if the key contact is unavailable. Also allows us to identify barriers and enablers. Continually used as a reference and plot progress of engagement. Will be used in evaluation. Used in SA Health monthly activity reports.	ASW developed them based on the Focus School journals	Copy, insert key information and instruct all staff to use them	Ongoing use
Monthly Activity Reports	Monthly by 15th Month	Reporting requirement of SA Health	Sue Arwen and every team member	Team members are given a copy of the template for reporting. Each fills in their own report, I collate and finalise	Each month - ongoing
KPMG		Evaluation requirement			
Investing in Aboriginal Youth Peer Education Handbook	Feb 2010 - not completed yet	Training resource for Aboriginal youth workers, community educators and health workers to support them working with young people to improve their health and wellbeing in rural and remote SA.	Brad Hart, Rob Gerrie, Frances Rigney and Sue Arwen		Life of project

Aboriginal Focus School Program Curriculum 5-7	Ongoing till end of project	Basis of teaching. To provide a structure and content for teaching age appropriate sexual health and relationships education	Regional Schools coordinators, steering group, Aboriginal Education Unit	AEU was given the main stream focus school curriculum and asked to comment on its appropriateness for Aboriginal schools. Using this feedback and looking at any other educational programs concerning relationships and sexual health in Aboriginal school communities, a draft curriculum 5-7 and 8-10 was developed. Feedback from AEU, steering group, Nganampa Health, 2 consultations with members of PYEC and AES in 3rd draft	3rd draft Life of project
Aboriginal Focus School Program Curriculum 8-10	Ongoing till end of project	Basis of teaching. To provide a structure and content for teaching age appropriate sexual health and relationship education		AEU was given draft primary curriculum and asked to comment on its appropriateness for Aboriginal schools. Using this feedback and looking at any other educational programs concerning relationships and sexual health in Aboriginal school communities, a draft curriculum 5-7 and 8-10 was developed. Feedback from AEU, steering group, Nganampa Health, 2 consultations with members of PYEC and AES. Trialled at 2 schools. in 3rd draft	3rd draft Life of project
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement	Commenced 6th Jan 2010	To ensure appropriateness of program and that it meets guidelines	Program Manager	Using the SA Health document, prepared Aboriginal Health Impact Statement following consultations with communities.	Completion expected in Dec 2010
Health Literacy Literature Review	Jan 2010	Research base to inform program development. Looked at best practice in respectful relationships and sexual health			

		education and community capacity building in Aboriginal communities to be researched and reported on.	Program Manager and Program Staff	Involved utilising current share and focus schools research, referred to respectful relationships consulting Kimberley's, consultations with agencies and community, write up summary of findings.	Literature review completion scheduled for Oct 2010.
Aboriginal Focus School Course					
Focus School Teaching Resources		To develop relevant resources to support teachers, ACEO's, students and parents in the delivery of the Aboriginal Focus School Program			Final draft
Investing in Aboriginal Youth Program Resources	Feb 2010	Identify resources needed to implement training and to facilitate youth health promotion programs/projects involving Aboriginal Youth Workers, community educators and health workers, young people 12-24 years, parents and others as identified.	Investing in Aboriginal Youth program staff SRC, Health Literacy Expert, CEO, Program Manager and Designer	Consult with Aboriginal youth, health and community workers and parents on resources required. Taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified needs</li> <li>• Delivery mode</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul> Consult with health literacy expert, engage with relevant designer, develop to draft resources, gain relevant stakeholders feedback and SRC, finalise resources and develop distribution strategy.	Final draft Sept 2010
Evaluation Framework	Feb 2010	An Evaluation Framework aligning with the Health Service Agreement requirements and other outcomes as identified in Program Logic plan.	CEO Program Manager, staff, Focus Schools and Librarian	Worked with SACHRU to develop an Evaluation Framework and tools for the program. Explored engaging a university partner to further the evaluation.	End March 2010 Evaluation Framework completed. Next stage is to work with SACHRU/Flinders Uni to develop an Evaluation Framework and template to incorporate all reporting requirements.

Branding - Badging and visual imagery	Feb 2010	To develop an appropriate and identifiable image and name for communication and promotion of the program.	Program Manager, SHine SA Media Officer and CEO SHine SA	Worked with the Media Officer to develop name and visual imagery. Sought approval from SRC and launched the new name and imagery.	Program named 'Yarning On' Youth and Relationships Nurturing Indigenous Growth Onwards. Logo and image developed. SRC approved.
Communication Action Plan	Feb 2010	To develop an appropriate and identifiable image and name for communication and promotion of the Program.	Program Manager, SHine SA Media Officer and CEO SHine SA	Worked with the Media Officer to develop name and visual imagery. Sought approval from SRC and launched the new name and imagery.	Program named 'Yarning On' Youth and Relationships Nurturing Indigenous Growth Onwards. Logo and image developed. SRC approved.





# STAGE ONE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT