Alukura - An Aboriginal Women’s Community-Controlled Health And Birthing Centre

Lynnette Stuart, Acting Director (February 1995)

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Proceedings
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The Alukura is the first of its kind in Australia. The Centre was officially opened in October 1994.

“White people have never asked us where we want to have our babies. They’ve always said, You’ve got to go to the Hospital. This thing Congress is trying to do is really important. That’s why we gotta talk together as one, all black women, as all Aboriginal women. We got to talk together. Doesn’t matter that we’re from this country or that country”.

Women designed a unique model of indigenous women’s concepts of health and service delivery.

The basis of the Alukura is the reassertion of the Grandmothers’ Law.

Structure

Central Aboriginal Congress (Congress) is the umbrella organisation of the Alukura. The Alukura Council, a sub-committee of Congress, has a representative, advisory and decision-making role in relation to women’s law and practices.

The Alukura Model

Aboriginal women want to incorporate law, languages and culture into a women’s health and birthing service. Our plan is to have a place where we can have:

- self-help family accommodation
- bush communication network
- support for country births
- antenatal care/education
- normal births
- postnatal care/education
- women’s health and family planning
- cross-cultural health worker education
- mobile bush service
- orientation for non-Aboriginal staff
- liaison with all service providers
- infant health care
- nutrition program
The main activities of Alukura are:

- development of the Alukura primary health care model incorporating Women’s Law, culture and language;
- antenatal, birthing, postnatal care and education; women’s checks and information;
- Aboriginal Health Worker education;
- transport;
- limited bush service; and
- policy development.

Today, we are one of the most experienced organisations in the country in Aboriginal women’s health, a national leader in primary health care and a strong political voice for the health of our people.

Development of the Alukura

Ten years on our commitment to develop the Alukura model continues. We have organised locally, regionally and have been active in the national and international health arena. Alukura recently won a national Human Rights Award.

However we still do not have a political commitment to fund the Alukura model.

Submission-based funding, national women’s health programs, joint Northern Territory/Commonwealth programs, organ-specific programs and short-term project have not been flexible enough to either enable the on-going development of the Alukura model or address Aboriginal women’s specific health issues.

The Future

We believe the development of the Alukura model is the only way to address the health status of Aboriginal women living in Central Australia.

We are seeking a strategic and more co-ordinated approach to planning, development and implementation of the model. This includes:

- direct funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health;
- funding guidelines that enable development; and
- block funding.