



## What works with an Indigenous workforce: an evaluation of the remote AOD workforce

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The award-winning Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce was funded in 2006 through the Council of Australian Governments to enable the establishment of an alcohol and other drugs workforce tasked with delivering services to remote communities. This unique workforce currently operates from over twenty urban, regional, remote and very remote communities across the Territory in both Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Department of Health primary health care centres. The workforce seeks to address substance use through a direct client service delivery and community development framework. It is an Indigenous workforce comprising local people in their communities using their languages, cultural knowledge and kinship relationships to provide a culturally appropriate service. The workforce is well-supported by a Program Support Unit that provides clinical direction, guidance, supervision and support as well as advocacy, leadership, and professional development and two-way learning. The workers use culturally-adapted tools and resources that are developed collaboratively within the team for the Northern Territory.

A recent evaluation by 2013 by Menzies School of Health Research found the workers feel well-supported in their roles as part of a Territory-wide family. Qualitative feedback demonstrates that workers are satisfied by their roles as evidenced by a 40% retention rate since the program's inception in 2008. In 2013, the workforce received the Chief Minister Award for Excellence in Enhancing Health and Wellbeing.

**Conclusions:** Implementing and supporting an Indigenous workforce in the Northern Territory requires cultural consultation, adapted tools and resources, and extensive cultural awareness, knowledge and skills. It requires respect for Indigenous languages, knowledges, practices and flexibility in service and program delivery.

This presentation will be delivered together with Indigenous workers from the Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce.