



Urban responses to Aboriginal visitors to Darwin

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The NT has the nation's highest rate of homelessness and 17 times higher than anywhere else in Australia. With one-third of the NT population Aboriginal, we see a continual urban drift from remote communities resulting in high numbers of people sleeping rough in Darwin and a rapid deterioration of physical and mental health. Health determinants of poverty, racism, service gaps and policy limitations are magnified by a dire lack of affordable accommodation.

The profound impact of stigma on health outcomes is well documented, with homeless people living in the 'Long Grass' arguably the most stigmatised section of the Aboriginal population.

Against this backdrop and lethal combination of factors that Larrakia Nation has developed a suite of award-winning and innovative evidence-based programs to minimise the negative health impacts on First Nations people. Moreover, these programs are designed and delivered by Aboriginal staff and service providers, including former 'Long Grassers'.

Core deliverables include:

- access to primary health care and social engagement through our renowned 'Arts in the Grass' activities
- clinical care and case management to help 'close the gap' for the most marginal
- assisting thousands annually to return to communities like Wadeye, Galiwin'ku, Maningrida and Groote Eylandt
- interventions and diversionary activities for people on release from protective custody
- increasing community safety and reducing harm to people in the Long Grass with Larrakia Night Patrols unique urban based service
- sourcing housing through an 'Assistance, Care and Housing for the Aged' program, with many 'Long Grassers' in the aged and prematurely aged demographic.

The most recent addition is the Healing Centre Project, designed to reduce intergenerational trauma and address root causes, using holistic therapeutic support to local Larrakia people, and build capacity to assist Longgrass visitors.

The presentation will draw on evidence, unique challenges, successes and current policy context.