

The fourth edition of our IPS Jilya magazine takes us into an area which, whilst not purely mental health in its focus is nonetheless inextricably linked with health and mental health outcome for our people. We know for example that purely by completing Year 12, an Aboriginal young person's employment opportunities increase by 40%, however, with only 10% of Aboriginal children graduating from Year 12, we clearly have a long way to go in the creation of equal opportunities for our current generation.

Our third edition of Jilya extensively discussed racism, hopelessness and helplessness, remoteness and low socio economic status as key predictors of suicide and of course has also been implicated in mental health outcome. Education appears to offer a buffer to the development of mental ill health through the creation of more opportunities; however, the issues that create risk for suicide and mental ill health appear to mirror the barriers that exist for Aboriginal people to attaining quality education. These include a lack of cultural competence of teachers, limited Aboriginal teachers in the workplace, school curriculum that fails to incorporate Indigenous pedagogy, the failure to develop evidence based, Indigenous-specific teaching methodologies and a failure to incorporate community within service delivery. Of course there are some exceptions to this rule which have been highlighted in this edition of Jilya.

Of course, we cannot feature Aboriginal education without visiting the controversy surrounding the best teaching methods for Aboriginal kids. Jilya of course always applies best practice in the search for answers to these questions. In this edition our feature article

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has been 'handed' over to the large number of experts in Aboriginal education to attempt to find some answers. In addition we have attempted to identify those schools and programs who are doing great things in the desire to see educational outcomes improve. To this end, we have featured a number of schools and programs including the Stronger Smarter Institute which has a clear philosophy of the promotion of strong cultural identity as a core focus of its programs. The institute was developed by Professor Chris Sarra who first came to national acclaim as the first Aboriginal principal of Cherbourg State School. At Cherbourg Professor Sarra made such significant changes to the philosophy of teaching Aboriginal children that the Stronger Smarter Institute now assists other schools to implement. We so very pleased to have Professor Sarra provide our Opinion Piece and the Webinar for our IPS Members.

My personal interest in exploring education as a topic for the IPS membership was primarily due to my extensive background as a child/adolescent psychologist and having to have a fair bit to do with Aboriginal kids who were being failed by education systems. At an academic level I was also intrigued by the issues around the assessment of Intelligence in Aboriginal people and the consistent mismatch between test outcomes and the level of ability that was being demonstrated every day. As a university student I was inspired by the work of Judith Kearins who was the first cognitive psychologist to provide

