



# Aboriginal Health Network News

## Aboriginal Health Network:

<http://www.abhealth.net> - "an open forum that welcomes all people who work in Aboriginal health in South Australia, for the purposes of peer support, networking and education"

## Collective Trauma:

In March, psychiatrist, Prof David Ratnavale, was invited by Aboriginal Health Workers to talk with them about collective trauma ("a reaction to the shock of being separated from a stable community such that the bonds linking people which give them a sense of safety and security are broken")

His main points were as follows. Shared catastrophes of any kind represent collective traumas. When these catastrophes are deliberately rather than naturally caused, they give rise to large amounts of shared shame, helplessness, rage and suffering, leading to intense & prolonged mourning - painful reactions that are impossible to avoid. Indigenous peoples everywhere, refugees, and other oppressed minorities suffer from chronic collective trauma.

Unlike the effects of trauma and stress on individuals, there has been relatively little research on the collective psychologies of societies under stress or on appropriate strategies for healing collective trauma and restoring community stability, health and prosperity.

Whereas individuals affected by stress and trauma may develop conditions such as PTSD, anxiety or depression, the manifestations of collective trauma are somewhat different - mistrust of self, family and others, fear and anticipation of betrayal, shame and humiliation, loss of traditional values with desecration of land and institutions, violence against women, increased suicide rates and risk taking behaviour, unremitting grief, intergenerational conflict (*see over*)

## Key Adelaide Services:

**(1) Aboriginal Housing Unit**  
153 Wakefield St, City. Ph 82354333 FAX 82354399. Subsidized Aboriginal housing

**(2) Aboriginal Sobriety Group (ASG)**  
182 Wakefield St, City, Ph 82234204, Care and support for people with drug or alcohol problems and access to short term hostel accommodation

**(3) Mobile Assistance Patrol (MAP)**  
Transports intoxicated people (Indigenous & non) to safe shelters 24/7 50km radius of city, phone 0411474368 or 82234063 (pager)

**(4) Nunkuwarrin Yunti**  
182 Wakefield St, Adelaide. Daily medical clinics incl. free dental care and medical outreaches. Details 82235011

**(5) Nunga Miminis Women's Shelter**  
PO Box 121, Tynte St, North Adelaide Ph 83676474

**(6) Aboriginal Women's Outreach**  
Ph 82390790. Support and information for Aboriginal women in difficulties

**(7) Aboriginal Family Services**  
134 Waymouth St, Adelaide. Ph 82121112, FAX 82121123. Family difficulties and foster care issues

**(8) Aboriginal Home Care Program**  
2 Marion Rd, Brooklyn Park. Ph 82348373 FAX 822871580. Home support of elderly, frail/disabled Aboriginal people

**(9) Aboriginal Hostels**  
Ph 82674222 for short term accommodation throughout Australia

**(10) Legal Rights Movement**  
321 King William St, City. Ph 82118824. Free legal services for Indigenous people

**(11) Aboriginal Elders Village**  
Swallowcliffe Rd, Davoren Park. Hostel & nursing home accommodation for older people. Ph 82871454

**(12) Safe Gambling Program**  
Counselling, education & support for Indigenous problem gamblers, their families and friends. Phone Lisa on 82235217

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role diffusion, sexual abuse and other boundary violations, pathological dependency, leadership vacuum and a conspiracy of silence. The Aboriginal experience can best be described as collective psychological baggage passed from parents to children

along with the trauma and grief in each individual's life. *The hypothesis is that unresolved historic traumas and generational or unresolved grief is not only passed from generation to generation, it is continuously acted out and recreated in contemporary Aboriginal culture.* David finished with optimism & a prescription for action. Problems must continue to be articulated, Aboriginal culture and history explored, revived and developed thereby "providing a huge source of data and inspiration, bringing energy and even more meaning to Aboriginality. In this process empty spaces are being filled producing greater understanding and pride. What happened thousands of years ago will seem like it happened yesterday. Thousands of years are shrinking by this process of time collapse. One will be able to look back, feel back and be back thousands of years - a case of connecting and healing by time collapse." (Full talk <http://www.abhealth.net>)

**Urban Health Care Access:**

Aboriginal people in all areas - urban, rural, and remote - experience similarly poor health status. David Scrimgeour, at the May Aboriginal Health Network meeting, reviewed evidence on Aboriginal access. Barriers to health service access include availability, affordability, acceptability & appropriateness. The federal government, despite all available evidence to the contrary, is strongly pursuing "mainstreaming". Among other things, Indigenous people are known to use mainstream services at a much lower rate than non-Indigenous people. David explored various access barriers and highlighted health gradients by dwelling location using material from Glover et al. This shows striking several-fold differences in mortality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people irrespective of where they live. (Full talk <http://www.abhealth.net/>)

**MJA Special Indigenous Issue:**

The 21st May Medical Journal Of Australia is available free at <http://www.mja.com.au>

**Rural Contact List:**

- Amata Clinic..... Ph 0889562910  
FAX 0889567825
- Arabunna People's C'tee.....Ph&FAX 86758351  
c/-PO Marree SA 5733
- Ceduna/Koonibba Health.....Ph 86253699  
FAX 86252898 POB 314Ceduna 5690
- Cooper Pedy (Umoona Health).....Ph 86725255  
FAX 86723349 POB 166, Cooper Pedy 5723
- Ernabella (Pukatja) Clinic..... Ph 0889562946  
FAX 89567528
- Fregon Clinic..... Ph 0889562918  
FAX 0889567816
- Gerard Reserve Council.....Ph 85837304  
FAX 85837386 Via Winkie 5343
- Indulkana (Iwantja Clinic)..... Ph 0886707986  
FAX 0886707967
- Kalka Clinic..... Ph 0889567908  
FAX 0889567593
- Mimili Clinic..... Ph 0889562974  
FAX 0889567801
- Nepabunna Community.....Ph 86483764  
FAX86483742(manual) Via Copley SA 5732
- Nganampa Health Office(Umuwa).....Ph 0889549040  
FAX 0889567850 POB 2232 Alice Springs 0870
- Nyapari Clinic .....Ph&FAX 0889567441
- Oak Valley/Maralinga Health.....Ph 86252946  
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- Pika Wiya Health.....Ph 86429999  
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- Pipalatjara Clinic..... Ph 0889567503  
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- Point McLeay (Raukkan Council).....Ph 85740064  
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- Point Pearce (Goreta Community).....Ph 88367205  
FAX 88367298 Via Maitland 5573
- Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health.....Ph 86830162  
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- Watarru Clinic..... Ph 0889562852  
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- Yalata (Tullawon)Health.....Ph 86256237  
FAX 86256265 PMB 45 Ceduna 5690
- Yunyarinyi Clinic.....Ph&FAX 0889567721

**Aboriginal Health Infonet:**

Everything there is to know about Aboriginal health from one location, and including a free online magazine <http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au>

**Newsletter Contributions and Suggestions:** To "Aboriginal Newsletter, Port Adelaide Community Health Service, Church Street, Port Adelaide 5015" or by phone to 82409611 or FAX 82409605.

The Aboriginal Health Network's Website is at <http://www.abhealth.net>