



Geraldton Family and Domestic Violence Project A Reducing Aboriginal Imprisonment Strategy

Information for the community

What is the project about?

The project aims to reduce the number of Aboriginal people imprisoned due to family and domestic violence related convictions in Geraldton.

It is one of eight strategies being developed by the State Government to reduce Aboriginal imprisonment.

The departments of the Attorney General (DotAG) and Corrective Services (DCS), working in partnership with local Aboriginal people and organisations, have come up with a model that includes:

- alternative court processes
- offender programs
- support services for Geraldton Aboriginal families
- community education.

Some of these initiatives have already started operating.

What services have started?

A significant outcome of the project has been the development of the Barndimalgu Court, an alternative pre-sentencing court for Aboriginal people on family and domestic violence charges, which opened on 8 August 2007.

Respected members of the Aboriginal community are working

with the local magistrate to divert offenders to culturally appropriate Corrective Services programs which address their violent behaviour.

Why Geraldton?

Geraldton's Aboriginal community has expressed that violence is a serious problem for many local families and seeks support to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to violent behaviour.

Who's involved?

The project is a partnership between DCS, DotAG and the Geraldton Aboriginal community. It includes:

- Aboriginal organisations and individuals
- Geraldton Court
- Community Justice Services
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), Geraldton local group
- other Government departments
- non-government agencies.

How has the model been developed?

DotAG and DCS have worked with the local community to form an Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG).

The ARG discussed issues and looked at best practice examples to inform the development of new and more culturally and locally

appropriate ways to deal with family and domestic violence issues. The ARG presented its ideas to a working group for further discussion. The project's steering committee provides final endorsement for all ideas forwarded by the working group.

Who has been part of the ARG?

Foundation ARG members for the development phase were Ralph Dalgety (Chair), Amanda Biggs (vice-Chair), Greg Cross, Sandy Davies, Leza Radcliffe, Clarrie Cameron, Patrick Cameron and Priscilla Rodd.

Is the ARG still active?

No, the original ARG has completed its work and has ceased functioning.

How does the project keep in touch with the views and concerns of the local Aboriginal community?

The voice of local Aboriginal people is heard via the project's ongoing relationship with the AJA in Geraldton. A Geraldton Community Justice Services representative regularly attends AJA meetings to report on the project and to hear community feedback.

Who's on the project's working group and the steering committee?

The working group includes the Geraldton Magistrate, Geraldton Court and Tribunal Services and Community Justice Services. Senior DotAG and DCS officers comprise the steering committee.

How can community members contribute to this project?

Phone someone from the working group or the project team to talk through your ideas. For an up-to-date list of these people, call one of the contacts listed at the end of this page.

Is this project just for Geraldton?

Yes, it is tailor-made for Geraldton. However, this may be a model for similar projects to be created in other regional areas of WA.

Who can I contact?

Manager Geraldton CJS

Peter Stephenson – 9956 2000.

Office Manager Geraldton Court

Steve Ford – 9921 3722

Project officer, CJS Geraldton

Samantha Harring – 9956 2000