



Report on the
Stakeholder Evaluation
for
The Training Department
of the
**Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program
Services Inc.**

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March 2005

CAAPS Training Department



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1. Executive Summary

The Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services Inc. (CAAPS) sought to evaluate the performance of its Training department through stakeholder consultation and survey methodology. This department has been growing steadily for the past few years and is extending the range of services and courses that it offers. CAAPS enjoys support across many remote and regional aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory; however there are some areas where their presence has diminished over time. CAAPS training has worked hard to enhance its services during the past three years and this has been widely recognised by the whole cohort of stakeholders consulted.

CAAPS does not presently have extensive information relating to how others view its services in general and this evaluation could be used to pave the way for a wider assessment of all of its services.

The evaluation has shown that CAAPS Training Services have improved their overall performance during the past three years in the view of its various stakeholders. The appointment of the current general manager, Kim Gates and the more recent appointment of Judy McKay as training coordinator are seen as the strongest influences on this improvement. External stakeholders were unanimous in this view pointing out how professional the overall organisation has become with a subsequent lift in training services.

These views are echoed by the students and graduates of the training service and by staff across the whole of the organisation. The qualitative survey of all aspects of the training received very high ratings from all groups consulted and practically all shortcomings that were noted related to limitations imposed by restricted financial resources.

CAAPS training department staff members are now consistently successful supporting students to graduate from their various courses and for the students themselves, this is a source of pride and positive self-esteem.

One aspect of CAAPS services that was frequently commented upon was the lack of extension support for graduates once they returned to their communities. This appears to have its origins in resource limitations that almost totally prevent training staff members from working in communities with their clients. The most unfortunate consequence of this is that most graduates are unable to fully exploit their new found skills and knowledge as they need further coaching and support to have the confidence and capability to actively reach out to other community members outside of their own immediate family group. It appears that in many communities, the work done by graduates is a source of derision aimed at them personally which makes the lack of ongoing support an even more critical issue.

It is now suggested that a workshop for training staff be arranged with Iain Govan so that the results of the survey can be discussed and some action plans developed around the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of perceived strengths and opportunities to improve, follow in section 5 of this report (Findings) and the following recommendations are based upon that information.

1. Explore ways in which new funding sources can be accessed to support coaching and mentoring activities based in client communities with CAAPS graduates.
2. Establish a plan for building formal and informal collaboration with like-minded organisations through shared resources, cross agency skilling and support and exploring opportunities for CAAPS work to be extended more effectively into communities through these relationships.
3. Conduct a further survey of CAAPS trainees as to why they found it difficult to become students
4. Develop a promotional plan to raise the awareness of CAAPS training services both in communities and other organisations in the sector
5. Develop a marketing strategy to target new communities where CAAPS does not have a presence
6. Explore funding sources to assist in providing paid work for graduates in their communities in areas that support CAAPS outcomes
7. Conduct ideas and strategies forums to provide "tool kits" to graduates and seek grant funding to resource these. Also involve students in creating resource kits to take home with them
8. Explore standards of service provided by existing accommodation for students and timing of travel allowance payments
9. Explore opportunities for building numbers of students staying "in-house" at CAAPS hostel
10. Continue to diversify and expand training program particularly in the area of short courses
11. Ensure CAAPS training staff are given adequate time and support for professional development
12. Explore opportunities for CAAPS to be involved in the new arrangements under Shared Responsibility Agreements in client communities and support graduates to gain funding grants to support specific projects (eg. FACS regional activities and local Answers programs; NT Office of Women's policy programs)

2. Methodology

The process of gaining information from and involving key stakeholders' needs in the consultation process was undertaken in a number of ways and these included:

- Working with the training staff to identify the various stakeholder groups and building a picture of the criteria stakeholders would be likely to use to evaluate the training department and its services. See Attachment One
- Creating a standard questionnaire format based upon staff and stakeholder input and using the questionnaire as the basis for interviews. See Attachment Two
- Conducting a small number of qualitative interviews with relevant stakeholders in the near Darwin area and in those remote areas currently visited by the consultants on other projects.
- Visit to the Community of Port Keats to meet with ten graduates from the certificate II program
- Consulting more widely with some other remote stakeholders by phone where suitable, using standard questionnaire
- Conducting focus groups with relevant CAAPS staff members.

3. Stakeholder Groups

The stakeholders that were consulted included:

CAAPS Training staff

Clients

Community based students Port Keats 10 graduates

Community Coordinators Ramingining Joyce
Palumpa Hector
Maningrida Jessie

CAAPS trainee staff that have completed courses

External Collaborators HSTAC Barbara Pitman
Centacare Paul Woodward
DEET Rod Crier
DEST Veronica Williams

Internal Collaborators CAAPS Council member Kaye Gehan
CAAPS General Manager
Head of Hostels department
Head of Healthy Families & Outreach
Business manager

4. Assessment Criteria

Based on conversations with training staff and some other stakeholders, the following sets of criterion were established for the purpose of evaluation. Some additional information was also gathered where it was deemed to be important to the stakeholder concerned.

Students & Training Staff

Training Product
Training Services
Relationships
Other Topics
Ideas for improvement
Ideas to attract more students

External Collaborators

Professionalism
Regulatory compliance
Reputation
Continuous Improvement

Internal Collaborators including other CAAPS Departments

Quality of Training Services
Managing Relationships
Collaboration
Budgeting and management
Recruitment of students
Graduation success

5. Findings

Training Staff

The CAAPS training staff proved to be fairly objective in their self-assessment process. Although they provided higher overall ratings than their clients, they showed a good awareness of those areas in which their services could be improved and were keen to act on them.

Students

The students were very positive in their responses about the staff in the training department including the manager. There was a unanimous view about the degree to which staff members were very friendly and welcoming and sought to be of service to them. There was strong evidence that they were using their learnings in their own lives.

Community Contacts

The community contact people seemed to enjoy a special relationship with training staff and spoke fondly of their friendliness and support. Any issues raised related specifically to logistical matters rather than the training service itself. Their comments were mostly supportive of the work currently being done by the training department.

External Collaborators

All external collaborators spoke highly of the professionalism of the training services, their cooperative manner and the efficiency with which they carried out all regulatory and other requirements placed upon them. The overall consensus was of a department that was well on top of what it was doing.

Internal Collaborators

Internal collaborators also made comment about the strength of the relationships they enjoyed with the training department. The other department heads were optimistic about expanding the degree of cooperation that already exists between them. Members of the executive and council expressed a good deal of satisfaction with how the training department is performing.

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

OBSERVED STRENGTHS

Community – Based students

1. Staff cultural appropriateness in dealing with students
2. Providing flexibility
3. Courses being useful
4. Staff friendliness and making students feel welcome
5. Staff availability and responsiveness to student needs
6. Staff being reliable and consistent and providing personal support
7. Staff acting as role models
8. Knowledge of drug & alcohol abuse
9. Listening to student needs
10. The graduation ceremony

CAAPS staff trainees

1. Staff culturally appropriate
2. Courses being useful
3. Courses suiting their needs
4. Availability of staff and information
5. Staff friendliness
6. Supporting me as a client and with things other than training
7. Helping me gain employment

External Collaborators

1. Overall professionalism of the training department
2. Reliability in meeting all obligations
3. Capacity to attend to course accreditation matters including extension of scope etc.
4. Level of contribution of ideas and support to external partners
5. Timeliness of reporting and level of accountability

Internal Collaborators

1. Well managed department
2. Adherence to budget expectations and financial management
3. Capacity to attract greater numbers of quality students
4. Ability to produce a high proportion of graduates
5. Providing cooperative and friendly relationships within CAAPS
6. Reliable and consistent reporting
7. Establishing positive relationships with external agencies
8. Moving to diversify and broaden the range of programs available

OBSERVED STRENGTHS CONT.

Training Staff

1. All of those strengths listed under "Clients" above
2. Highest scores for:
 - Ease of becoming a students
 - Range of training
 - Responsiveness to students
 - Support for travelling
 - Friendliness

OBSERVED OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

Community – based students

1. Range of training
2. Training suiting people's needs
3. Using the training afterwards
4. Understanding student needs
5. Things running smoothly
6. Support for travelling
7. Promoting students in their communities
8. Helping to gain employment
9. Providing ideas to use in communities
10. Help with "how to" implement ideas

CAAPS Staff Trainees

1. Ease of becoming a student
2. Providing flexibility

External Collaborators

1. Ease of becoming a student
2. Range of training
3. Understanding student needs
4. helping to deal with being away from family
5. Helping to gain employment
6. Promoting graduates in their communities
7. Provide extension services in communities
8. Make time for out of town students to do their shopping and other business
9. Arrange for "Sunday" money so people get a meal before starting on Monday
10. CAAPS people to come to community and speak to leaders
11. Make more products available DVDs etc to help spread word on communities

OBSERVED OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE CONT.

Internal Collaborators

1. Put more focus on targeting new communities
2. Continue to build cooperation with other CAAPS departments aim for seamless services
3. Find additional ways for graduates to use skills
4. Find ways to build the standing of graduates in their communities including working with community councils
5. Explore availability of funds to build profile of training services

6. Stakeholder Ideas

The following list of ideas was compiled across the whole spectrum of stakeholders.

1. Explore different funding sources and programs to assist in expanding services
2. Encourage training staff to expand language skills
3. Take session that was conducted in the culture block out to communities
4. Work with local community organisations (night patrol, schools, etc.) to help extend CAAPS training and support
5. Create more opportunities for professional development of CAAPS training staff
6. explore support for creating course materials in language
7. Build resource kits for graduates to take back to communities
8. Explore ways in which graduates can perform work for CAAPS on their communities
9. Expand provision of new apprenticeship scheme into communities
10. Arrange more field trips for graduates to raise their awareness and effectiveness in their work
11. provide student access to computers and internet in new training centre
12. Give students time for other business when in town

7. Attachments

Attachment One Suggested stakeholder criteria

Attachment Two Training survey instrument

Attachment Three Summarised rating results