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EVALUATION

In this section VALS will discuss how VALS achieved its objectives in relation to the IWJF and the FVF participant feedback forms.

Objectives of the FVF

VALS established an IWJF Steering Committee (Steering Committee) which was made up of 14 people who attended meetings at different times. The Steering Committee met on 5 occasions from October 2004 to February 2005 and was made up of people whose work involves addressing family violence in the Indigenous Australian community at both a policy and grass roots level. The purpose of establishing the Steering Committee was to provide assistance to Greta Jubb, who unlike Melissa Morgan, is a non-Indigenous Australian. Ten Indigenous Australians were members of the Steering Committee.

VALS developed the following objectives of the FVF as an outcome of the Steering Committee meetings:

1 Information provision

- 1.1 Raise Indigenous Australian's and non Indigenous Australian's awareness about existing processes, policies and initiatives that attempt to address family violence.
- 1.2 Inform the Indigenous Australian community of their rights and responsibilities and services available to them.
- 1.3 Inform those involved in the different initiatives attempting to address family violence of the perspective of Indigenous Australians, especially mainstream service providers.
- 1.4 Avoid information overload for the participants of the FVF.

2. Communication

- 2.1 Encourage Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian men and women to discuss family violence in the Indigenous Australian community and related issues.
- 2.2 Encourage Indigenous Australian men and women to collaborate and work together to addressing family violence in the Indigenous Australian community and in addressing family violence in the Indigenous Australian community.
- 2.3 Have sufficient time set aside for discussion groups to conduct efficient discussions.
- 2.4 Develop an ongoing inter-agency communication strategy that ensures communication between those involved at the FVF continues.
- 2.5 Seek support for the continuation of the FVF.
- 2.6 Not simply discuss just criminal justice oriented approaches to family violence but restorative justice approaches.

3 Action

- 3.1 Avoid the FVF becoming a talk fest with no action.
- 3.2 Raise recommendations/motions that can be included in a Report about the FVF.
- 3.3 Feed information from the FVF to agencies who need the information so that they can move forward with the information and develop strategies for the future.

How the Objectives were Achieved

Presentations, Question Time, Discussion Groups and Recommendation Session

The presentations, question time, discussion groups and recommendation session enabled VALS to meet:

- Aims relating to information provision. The presentations contextualised and the various initiatives in the field of family violence. The presentation informed and provided a framework for the discussions that took place later in the discussion groups. In particular, the Mainstream Service Providers Discussion Group proved useful in informing mainstream service providers of the perspective of Indigenous Australians.
- Aims relating to communication. The FVF provided an opportunity for men and women together to discuss family violence and related issues, as an Indigenous family and community issue, rather than discuss it in isolation. The structure of the FVF opened the communication lines amongst and between men and women. There were separate men's and women's discussion groups which reported back to one another. Some women attended the men's groups and Indigenous Australians went in the mainstream services group. A safe environment was created as two counsellors were made available throughout the entire FVF. A victim of rape felt comfortable to talk about her challenges in front of the FVF. Communicated about To help ensure that a balance of measures are taken to reduce family Violence not just criminal justice oriented approaches. Restorative justice versus criminal justice approach etc. Could have been better.
- Aims relating to action. The structure of the FVF reflected an awareness of the importance of the FVF not just being a talk fest. Sufficient time was allocated for discussion groups and an environment was created were recommendations were encouraged.

Family Violence Initiatives Booklet

The Family Violence Initiatives Booklet (booklet) enabled VALS to meet:

- Aims relating to information provision. The booklet contained summary information by way of background on different agencies and the initiatives that they are involved in upfront in attempting to address family violence. This booklet served to:
 - Prevent information overload because it enabled participants to attend the FVF with an informed perspective as the participants received the booklet prior to the FVF.
 - Raise awareness.
 - Contextualise the FVF.

- Enable presentations to be deliberately kept short to enable sufficient time for discussion to occur.

Expo

The Expo enabled VALS to meet:

- Aims relating to information provision. Five organisations took up the opportunity to exhibit information about their service during lunch time in an Expo format.

FVF Report

The FVF Report enabled VALS to meet:

- Aims relating to information provision. The Report contains a detailed account of the discussions at the FVF.
- Aims relating to Action. The Report is a valuable resource in influencing future action, especially as a result of the recommendations contained within it. VALS owes an apology to the participants of the FVF for the delay in releasing the Report. One of the reasons for the delay is that VALS was preoccupied acting where action was needed in relation to the Family Violence Court Pilots.