



Challenge yourself. Change lives.

Stories from Country

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Background:

Stories from Country provides video community profiles using the voices of the traditional owners and elders of communities across the Northern Territory.

The project was developed from initial discussions with General Practitioners (GPs) at a Family Support Weekend in Alice Springs in February 2009. They expressed a need to have visual information about communities and their people and to hear what community people had to say about their health and their culture early in the recruitment process.

Objectives:

- To assist in the recruitment of General Practitioners to the Northern Territory
- To inform and support General Practitioners and their families living and working in remote communities
- To promulgate the community voice

Methods:

Filming locations are determined through team discussion and decisions are based on GP vacancies; 'difficult to recruit to' areas; existing relationships with traditional owners; possible impact of community activities on the project, and accessibility (i.e. travel to some communities during the wet season can be difficult).

Following extensive community consultation, filming takes place over a few days. Traditional owners and key community people are interviewed where possible.

Film footage is professionally edited, producing a 20 minute DVD, and two 7 minute web edits (a community focused story and a GP focused story).

The DVD's produced from filming are sent to health professionals who are interested in working in the Northern Territory. The web edits are available via the GPNNT website and on YouTube.

Findings:

To date, filming has occurred in 12 communities resulting in 12 DVDs and 22 web stories.

An evaluation of the first 6 DVDs elicited positive feedback from a variety of GPs, health services and non-government organizations and from YouTube.

There have been hits recorded on both the GPNNT website and YouTube, with over a 1,000 YouTube visits for each of the first two communities filmed. 40 DVDs have been provided to GPs, other health professionals, health services and non-government organisations.

Feedback has also indicated that the DVDs can be used for other purposes, e.g. incorporated into the early stages of clinical training; and as part of a cultural awareness program.

The initial evaluation confirms, through feedback, that the objectives of informing and supporting General Practitioners and their families and promulgating the community voice have been met.

A further evaluation of the entire project is being undertaken at present.

Conclusions:

Whilst much of the feedback to date is through testimonials, one in particular, from a GP and her family moving to Hermannsburg, outlines the importance to prospective health professionals of understanding the culture and community before you arrive.

The DVDs allows community members to provide information on their culture, traditional healing, how they would like health service employees to engage with them and their expectations of service delivery – a true community voice. The health professionals interviewed as part of the project provide real life examples of what it is like to live and work in a remote NT community, better preparing new GPs and their families before they arrive.

The DVDs, in conjunction with other recruitment strategies (such as site visits and community profile fact sheets) have improved prospective GPs knowledge of the NT and assisted in dealing with unrealistic expectations, before they arrive in a new position.