Working with the Aboriginal Community
Who am I

- Steve Ella
- Yuin Nation on the far South Coast of NSW
- Cultural links are in the Aboriginal community of La Perouse in Sydney.
- Live in the Darkinjung Community (Central Coast)
- Aboriginal D&A worker for past 15 years
- Currently- State Wide Coordinator Aboriginal Traineeship program in the Drug and Alcohol Field
Understanding

Many historical factors need to be acknowledged by anyone who works closely with Aboriginal people. Having a greater understanding of our background, puts you in a better position to appreciate both the current impacts these factors have on communities and how you can work with Aboriginal people in the future.

(Ref: Working with Aboriginal People and Communities. In developing .A Practice Resource. p2)
Is there Mistrust?

- The removal of Aboriginal children from their families was official government policy in Australia until 1969 which resulting in the Stolen Generation.

- This policy was the most devastating policy of settlement and for many Aboriginal people the impact of this practice is still felt today.
Past Policies

- Some e.g. of Past and present Government social policies on Aboriginal people
  
  - Control and Protectionism  (1788 -1930)
  
  - Assimilation and Integration,  (1934 to 1972)
  
  - Self-determination and Self-Management  (1972 - Present)
Reconciliation

- In 18 June 1997, former NSW Premier Bob Carr, issued a formal apology in response to *Bringing them home*.

- On February 13th 2008, the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal apology to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on behalf of current and successive Commonwealth Government/s:
Why was this Important?

- The Australian Government took responsibility
- Gave closure
- Allowed for Aboriginal family's to move forward.
Tips on how we can work with Indigenous families

- Research relevant local Aboriginal organisations, local Aboriginal Land Councils and other service providers in the area.

- Be aware and respectful of relevant extended family and kinship structures when working with Aboriginal people. Ensure that extended family is included in important meetings and in making important decisions.

- Where possible it is preferable for men to speak to men and for women to speak to women, especially in circumstances where you are not known by the person or community.
Tips on working with Aboriginal Families - con’t

- Respect is very important in structure in Aboriginal communities

- Respect, acknowledge, actively listen and respond to the needs of Aboriginal people

- Use clear, uncomplicated language. Do not use jargon.

- Sensitively offer assistance with reading and writing if it is required.

- Determine the family structures that are in place.

- Always be open, honest and respectful.

- Keep your word
Aboriginal People Refer to Each Other by their Boundary (State) Name

- **New South Wales**: Koori / Goorie / Koorie / Murri
- **Victoria**: Koorie
- **South Australia**: Nunga / Nyungar / Nyoongah
- **Western Australia**: Nyungar / Nyoongar
- **Northern Territory**: Yolngu (top end), Anangu (central)
- **Queensland**: Murri
- **Tasmania**: Palawa / Koori
Aboriginal people also refer to themselves and their mob by their nation name

- Bundjalung: Grafton, Yamba, Gold Coast
- Dunghutti / Thungutti: Kempsey
- Eora: Sydney, La Perouse
- Kamilaroi / Gamilaraay: Goondiwindi, Lighting Ridge, Tamworth
- Tharawal / Dharawal: Wollongong, Kiama
- Wiradjuri - Gilgandra, Dubbo, Wagga
- Yuin – Nowra, Batemans Bay, Eden, Bega
## Some Word Meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal English</th>
<th>Standard Australian English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Land, home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mob</td>
<td>Family, kin, group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lingo</td>
<td>Aboriginal language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry Business</td>
<td>Ceremony and rituals associated with death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grow [a child]</td>
<td>Up raise [a child]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growl</td>
<td>Scold, chastise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gammon</td>
<td>Pretending, kidding, joking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheeky</td>
<td>Mischievous, aggressive, dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deadly</td>
<td>Fantastic, great, awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Embarrass, humiliate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful Resources

- **Working with Aboriginal people and Communities**
  A Practice Resource
  
  Produced by Aboriginal Services Branch in consultation with the Aboriginal Reference Group
  NSW Department of Community Services, 4-6 Cavil Avenue, Ashfield NSW 2131. Phone (02) 9716 2222
  February 2009 ISBN 1 74190 097 2
  

- **Falls prevention for Aboriginal People**
  A tool for Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal communities
  
  Produced by the Government of Western Australia department of Health
  
Questions ???

Thank you