

Tex Skuthorpe, see page 18

Youth work ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE and ambivalence

David Palmer

The broad range of ways that Aboriginal youth are represented in Australian society creates challenges for non-Indigenous youth workers but also allows for flexibility in practice and for greater involvement of Aboriginal people in youth work practice with Aboriginal youth.

The post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1997, p.40) begins his essay, 'The other question', emphasising the importance of not assuming colonial stereotypes are always fixed or straightforward. He reminds us that, "the colonial stereotype is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive" (1997, p.40). Reformulating ideas about

ambivalence taken from psychoanalytical theory, Bhabha argues that colonial discourse is often in two minds about its treatment of the indigene, pushing away but pulling towards, simultaneously repulsed and attracted to its Other (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998, p.12). For Bhabha (1997, p.51) colonial discourse, with all its stereotypical images about the Black and distant Other, is "curiously mixed and split,

polymorphous and perverse, an articulation of multiple belief". As a consequence, there emerges a "peculiar intimacy" between the coloniser and the colonised (Suleri 1995, p.112).

This kind of post-colonial analysis may well be useful in understanding the practice of youth work with Aboriginal young people – work that often involves at one moment distancing Aboriginal young people while the

next featuring them as subjects to be concerned about. It might help us explain why at one minute “Aboriginal youth” can be both feared and secretly envied, hated but unconsciously loved, distanced but longingly sought after.

Using evidence from a series of ethnographic studies concerned with

Throughout its brief history, Aboriginalist discourse in Australia has been split so that non-Aborigines both revile and desire, find repugnant and fascinating, and conceive of as degenerate and dignified the wild Aboriginal Other.

the governance of “Aboriginal youth”, this paper examines how at one and the same time discourse on young Aborigines involves both spurning and yearning. It is argued that these inconsistent standards and ideas act in a rather menacing way – always present and regularly available to disrupt and challenge the lives and practices of non-Aboriginal youth workers and youth organisations. This, the paper demonstrates, can open up possibilities for Aboriginal people to play a rather significant part in the subtle transformation of youth work practice.

Youth work and Aboriginal young people

Those interested in the business of conceptualising youth have long mapped the range and diversity of ways of thinking about and governing young people (Wyn & White 1997; Tait 1993; Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998). For example, debate continues about the extent to which youth is biological in origin (resulting from hormonal, physical and chemical changes associated with puberty/sexual maturation) and how much it is shaped by social and cultural processes (Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998).

Other good work has tracked well-established discourses that associate youth with crime, delinquency and antisocial behaviour. Arguably this paves the way for important dividing practices that are critical to the constitution of “youth” as a distinct and separate population (Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998, p.11).

Likewise, there are long-standing romantic traditions that see youth represented as the golden age, those who possess the potential to revive an “aged and sclerosed society” (Aries 1962, p.30). Young people are seen as the harbingers of hope and conceptualised as the guardians of the future. Youth is often yearned for and seen as something to be preserved or sought after.

Other talk about youth and adolescence associates them with a psychological period of storm and stress, a period that sees youth as a time of volatility, instability and unpredictability (Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998, p.5). Those who subscribe to this line of thought might well get nervous about leaving young people unsupervised.

Another long-standing conception of youth associates them with an extension of the innocence and vulnerability of childhood (Muncie 1983, p.37). Youth here are those who are virtuous until spoiled by the cruel distortions of adults. The obligation of those responsible for the care of children and young people is then one of protection against the evil influences of adult life. Young people need to be restricted, not so much for the protection of adults but for their own good. One stream of this line of thinking imagines youth, particularly working class youth, as a group vulnerable to economic exploitation by capital (Gillis 1974, p.61).

At other times young people are celebrated as great achievers and the key to

the future. They have also featured as a national resource and, at different times since the 1960s, a potent political force (Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998, p.79). Youth have been, often at one and the same time, demonised, patronised and distanced while portrayed as vibrant, energetic and sexually attractive.

In a somewhat similar fashion, the category “Aborigine” has emerged as a multitude of things at different moments. On the one hand, the “Aborigine” has been regularly represented in the media, in popular Australian cinema, and in extreme political rhetoric as barbaric and savage. Yet they are also romanticised, exoticised and desired by sections of the art industry, new age spiritualists and some tourist marketers. The “Aborigine” in Australian colonial discourse has also symbolised rampant sexuality at the same time as standing for the innocence of a child (Langton 1993). In other instances the “Aborigine” is, to use Bhabha’s language, “mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces” (1997, p.51).

Throughout its brief history, Aboriginalist discourse in Australia has been split so that non-Aborigines both revile and desire, find repugnant and fascinating, and conceive of as degenerate and dignified the wild Aboriginal Other (Fielder 1996, p.87). As Fielder (p.13) has said, “Aboriginality is produced as degeneracy at the same time as it is idealised as a signifier of primitive cultural plenitude (in its pure form)”. This is because so often “ambivalent identifications of love and hate occupy the same psychic space; and paranoid projections ‘outwards’ return to haunt and split the place from which they are made” (Bhabha 1994, p.149). In other words, at one and the same time the Aboriginal Other is both repulsive-awful and necessary-desirable.

At different moments this has meant that individual actors and subcultural groups have waxed and waned in their treatment of Aboriginal young people, often torn between desire and disdain. For example, the historical record is rich with accounts of early colonial “explorers” who saw Aboriginal young people as both a menace and a source of expertise and labour (see Reynolds 1990). Bird-Rose (1997) claims that today many domestic Australian tourists find themselves torn between negatives ideas about Aboriginal young people and a longing to seek them out and emulate and consume their activities and cultural practices. Australian cinema has also long been unsettled in the way it represents Aboriginal young people, often distancing Aboriginal youth only to find them returning to disturb and haunt (for example, see Palmer & Gillard 2002).

Likewise, formal governmental interventions into the lives of Aboriginal young people have long reflected tensions between the will to remove, assimilate and control and the desire to care, protect and educate for “their own good” (see Haebich 1988, 2000). Since at least the 1980s and early 1990s, youth work has pulled in two or more directions, struggling with aspirations for Aboriginal young people that involve “social control” over “social change” (White 1990). Indeed Bessant, Sercombe and Watts (1998, p.311) imply that the very existence of youth work has arisen out of ambivalent aspirations for groups such as Aboriginal young people.

One consequence of this ambivalence is that much youth work with Aboriginal young people has been implicated in the fragmenting of Aboriginal families through the systematic removal and incarceration of Aboriginal young people. In recent times there has emerged outstanding scholarship that has documented this history (see Human Rights and Equal

Opportunity Commission 1997; Read 1999; Haebich 2000).

However, it is not necessarily the case that all colonial ambivalence has had totally oppressive effects on Aboriginal young people and their families. Indeed, following Bhabha (1994), we could say that some ambivalence has acted in a rather menacing way – always present and regularly available to disrupt and challenge taken for granted stories about Aboriginal young people. As O’Malley (1996, p.319) has demonstrated, some governmental work with Aboriginal young people has activated the conditions whereby new ironies begin to emerge in which non-Aborigines and their forms of government have to accept Aboriginal ideas, discourse and structures. The ambivalence of youth workers and others involved in work with Aboriginal young people has led to difficulties that produce a myriad of novel, creative, innovative and reformulated responses to the management and ordering of Aboriginal young people.

A study of youth work with Aboriginal young people

Since the early 1990s I have undertaken a number of ethnographic studies of non-Aboriginal youth workers who work with Aboriginal young people (Palmer 1995, 1999). Part of the research interest was to understand how youth workers talk about and deal with their charges. The study revealed just how central to youth work was talk that constituted Aboriginal youth negatively. Many workers I met used discursive devices that assume a necessary nexus between Aboriginal young people, economic marginalisation, disadvantage and criminal activities such as car stealing, theft and drug and alcohol use. For example, a Perth non-government organisation which, according to its own records, attracted extra

funding from government sources because it targeted “Aboriginal youth”, clearly treats “Aboriginal youth” as a social problem. The organisation’s documentation setting out program policy began by identifying groups of young people who were particularly “at risk”, “disadvantaged” and did not fit in to other programs. The organisation chose to target five distinct groups of young people. Four of these groups were identified by the places they frequented; the fifth group were identified by their “Aboriginality”. Throughout the organisation’s reports and promotional material the term Aboriginal was used synonymously with statistical problems and issues-based categories. In a section dealing with youth issues, Aboriginality featured along with categories such as homelessness, unemployment, juvenile justice, low incomes, drug use, domestic abuse and low self-esteem. Aboriginality was categorised in the same way as social, economic or personal problems facing young people. The implied message was that Aboriginality, in and of itself, was an issue or youth problem to be solved, along with homelessness, unemployment, income support, drug abuse and crime.

Like Augoustinos, Tuffin and Rapley’s (1999) research subjects, youth workers also often drew on discursive resources that rationalised the current “plight” of Aboriginal people. In addition, the language of youth workers was full of references to fear, guilt, romance for the “other”, the lure of the exotic and erotic, control, and the patronising urge to order Aboriginal young people’s lives. Many of the common themes in the language of those I heard speaking about “Aboriginal youth” were reminiscent of Pakeha “commonsense versions” of Maori/Pakeha relations that featured in McCreanor’s (1993) New Zealand study. Some of these included:

- 1 *Cultural impoverishment.* Contemporary Aboriginal young people suffer from a loss of culture.
- 2 *Crime and violence.* Aboriginal young people seek out and engage in disproportionately more violence and crime than others.
- 3 *Poor family influence.* Aboriginal young people suffer from poor parenting and have few role models.
- 4 *Urbanisation equals inauthenticity equals stirrers.* Aboriginal young people living in urban settings are not genuine Aborigines and are more likely to have a “chip on their shoulder”.
- 5 *Homogeneous identity.* Aboriginal young people are essentially the same.
- 6 *Rights and same treatment.* Equal rights and democracy is the panacea for Aboriginal youth problems. Answers lie in treating Aboriginal young people the same as others.
- 7 *Education/ignorance.* Racism is caused by ignorance and can therefore be eliminated by education.
- 8 *Backward traditions.* Aboriginal young people come from traditions that are not developed enough to prepare them for modern processes and the contemporary world.

However, the talk did not finish here. Many were also highly reflexive in relation to their practice. There was also space in youth work discourse for talk about the failure of governance and the unproductive interventions of professionals. Many were highly self-critical of their own desire, acknowledging that it was often driven by deeply internalised racism.

Examples of discursive devices that youth workers used when seeking to disavow racism included:

- 1 We (youth workers) carry with us the benefits of institutional racism.
- 2 I am often appalled when I think about some of the reasons we do this kind of work.

- 3 We can be so self-serving.
- 4 We have done the dispossessing, we should do the repatriation.
- 5 There is no level playing field.
- 6 Much of our history is shameful.

I also heard people talk with colleagues about “the dangerous effects of fear driven by racist baggage”. Others spoke about their “refusal to harbour guilt because it gets in the way of fair practice”. Some argued about the importance of “keeping in check their desire to contain others”. Another group of youth workers had a discussion about “fostering the care and concern without imposing Western ideals and objectives”.

Ambivalence, talk about “Aboriginal youth” and unsettling non-Aborigines

Often in my research I glimpsed the powerful presence of ambivalence in youth work. On the one hand, many employed old racist tropes and more liberal rhetorical arguments. This talk was often characterised by fear, disdain and hostility towards Aboriginal young people. Indeed there were moments when I was appalled to hear old and troublesome Aboriginalist discourse about “half-castes”, “the culturally deprived”, “backward and primitive types” and “smelly Abos”. In fact I heard language like this right where Indigenous people could hear it. On the other hand, youth work is, at least in the minds of many, an activity that demands of workers an ethic of concern for their charges and a critique of “the establishment”.

While some of this discursive work may have its negative effects in relation to the interests of Aboriginal young people, it is also the case that discourse on “Aboriginal youth” acts to disturb the language and practice of youth work. For example, some may argue that talk which constitutes Aborigines as the exotic, or discourse that romanti-

cises Aboriginal culture does not advance the interests of Aboriginal groups. However, romance for the exotic Other also appears to prompt some non-Aboriginal people to seek out engagements with Aboriginal groups. As a result such ideas and practices can be subject to challenge.

In a similar way, ideas about Aboriginal problems serve to legitimise the increased regulation of Aboriginal people, exerting tremendous pressure on the will to increase levels of policing, surveillance and governance in Aboriginal communities. One effect of problematising Aboriginal people’s experiences in the same way that social issues are problematised is that legitimate grounds are given for the lives of Aboriginal young people to be unnecessarily targeted for special governmental intervention under the guise of care (Mickler 1998).

On the other hand, talk about Aboriginal problems can and does throw up a number of challenges to the success and simple authority of governance. The fact that Aboriginal youth exist as a problem group becomes a problem in itself in that it contradicts governmental aspirations for a society politically administered according to principles of fairness and equality. This can and does create possibilities for the challenging of governmental instrumentalities by Aboriginal groups. Indeed, Mickler (1996, p.283) suggests that Aboriginal victimhood and pauperism are regularly and routinely used as a means of empowerment by Aboriginal leaders.

This creates possibilities for Aboriginal agency and challenges to youth work practice. Discursive ideas, such as the notion that all Aboriginal youth are in desperate crisis and need of attention, become available for Aboriginal people to utilise in arguing for increased expenditure, intervention and involvement in governance. This means that, ironically, the considerable

publicising of Aboriginal disadvantage, through problematising Aboriginal youth, contributes to Aboriginal people being better placed to challenge the very discursive relations that shape their disadvantage (Mickler 1996, p.298).

One youth mentoring program (similar to the Malba program cited by O'Malley 1996), serves as an example of how talk about Aboriginal problems opens up conditions that allow Aboriginal people to exert influence on governmental work. After a series of local newspaper stories about how educational institutions were failing to engage Aboriginal students, a mentor-

Many believed that non-Aboriginal teachers and support workers were largely ineffective in dealing with the range of social issues and educational needs of Aboriginal students.

ing initiative was piloted in a local high school. I shall call the program *Boordier* to maintain the anonymity of those involved. This initiative was designed to have local Indigenous community people manage Indigenous young people identified as “at risk”, “educational poor performers” and “in need of guidance”. According to those involved in the program’s design, including youth workers, local government workers, teachers and local Aboriginal people, there was a range of growing social problems emerging for many Indigenous young people in this particular community. Previous attempts at resolving these problems involved these young people being suspended, dealt with by the police and often removed from educational settings. Many were also removing themselves by not choosing educational options and pathways. Not surprisingly, many of those responsible for Aboriginal edu-

cation felt that traditional educational models and “mainstream” programs were inadequate. In addition, many believed that non-Aboriginal teachers and support workers were largely ineffective in dealing with the range of social issues and educational needs of Aboriginal students. In short, the existing colonial forms of liberal government were perceived to be failing. This prompted the programmers to seek out other (Aboriginal) intervention models.

Under the *Boordier* scheme, students were to be counselled by an Aboriginal educator, alerted to the effects of not participating in education

example of Aboriginal influence over non-Aboriginal practice because of the failure, or perceived failure, of government.

So one effect of this troubling talk about Aboriginal youth is that youth organisations, largely managed by non-Aboriginal youth workers, are forced to turn to Aboriginal groups and representatives for counsel. Indeed many of those with whom I spoke cited instances where organisational reviews were prompted by governmental failure in relation to the servicing of the needs of Aboriginal young people.

Those of us who have been around for as long as I have now know that just about all the old strategies (for working with Aboriginal groups) have been tried and found wanting. We've used training programs, locked them up, run self-development workshops, and offered counselling. None of these things have worked, so finally we have had to go back to Aboriginal people and ask them what we should do (male youth worker).

These reviews often resulted in a multitude of strategies being employed, many of which were heavily reliant on Aboriginal

and attached to an Aboriginal mentor who would spend time with them at least once a week during school hours. A crucial component of the program was a series of “cross-cultural” experiences for students where elders spent time introducing young people to Indigenous language, history and lore. One of the main sentiments of those involved was that social problems could only be managed if Aboriginal people took control. O'Malley (1996, p.318) might say that here is an

people’s expertise and input. One such review involved an organisation establishing a consultative group of Aboriginal people to offer advice on how to improve service delivery for Aboriginal young people. Such an initiative was thought to be necessary because the service was not “dealing with the enormity of Indigenous young people’s issues”. The Aboriginal consultative group recommended a program plan setting out how managers, staff and organisational



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processes would “improve” what the service offered to Aboriginal young people. There are a number of interesting things that emerged in the plan. The first was that the policy statement began by couching its rationale in the language of Aboriginal victimhood. The plan began by conceptualising Aboriginal people as those who had previously lost out and were neglected victims of social change.

Services to Aboriginal young people have been identified by (the organisation) as an area which requires improvement. In the provision of services, Aboriginal young people have been grossly neglected and, as a result, have little access to the service. This is of grave concern particularly in light of the social indicators on Aboriginal disadvantage and the increased incidence of Aboriginal youth suicide, substance abuse and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The second thing of interest is that every strategy employed became highly reliant on Aboriginal involvement in the government of the organisation. The policy document included the argument that:

For services designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal young people to be culturally sensitive and socially relevant they must incorporate Aboriginal representatives into their management and evaluation processes.

The third theme apparent in the plan is that calls are made for increased resources to be allocated to and controlled by Aboriginal people. What is particularly striking in this case is that Aboriginal people’s participation in governance is both built into each strategy and the very structure of the organisation. After outlining the advice of the consultative body, and framing a

set of principles as guides for policy implementation, the document establishes six strategies, all of which involve ongoing participation and

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advice by key Aboriginal people.

Another effect of this discursive to-ing and fro-ing, this uncertainty in talk about “Aboriginal youth”, is that many workers with young people can, and indeed do, find themselves considerably shaped by contact and dialogue with Aboriginal people. Indeed, one regular claim made was that youth workers often come away from their encounters richer and having benefited considerably more than those they were supposed to have served. One declared that she had been “taught far and away more than they had taught”.

As the following comment demonstrates, extended work and talk about Aboriginal youth often serves to constantly challenge and transform attitudes towards and intersubjective relationships with Aboriginal people.

Some begin by being romantic or naive. Some are driven by more patronising aspirations. Most of us carry with us subtle forms of racism. However, if you work close to or live with people in (Aboriginal) communities this tends to get brutally challenged. From my experience, (Aboriginal) people from the communities knock that out of you pretty fast (male youth worker).

Many also talked about how they had often been conceptually and intellectually inspired by Aboriginal knowledge systems. We need to be cautious and reflective when listening

to these accounts, and not overly romanticise knowledge exchange or ignore the history of contact between governmental authorities and Aboriginal people. However, many people talked at length about how much had been learned, how narrow provincialisms had been transcended, how tired old assumptions and prejudices had been challenged and how creative new thinking had been provoked as a consequence of intellectual exchanges between themselves and Aboriginal people (Clarke 1997, p.181).

On quite abstract levels I have benefited from my interaction with Aboriginal people. My world view and the ideas I now use to think about things are probably much richer. When you get lots of exposure to new cultures it does much for your cognitive and conceptual faculties (female youth worker).

Again this reflects how being unsettled can produce conditions which promote discourse and counter discourse and produce alignments and re-alignments (Gelder & Jacobs 1998, p.xvi). Working in a situation so full of uncertainty, ambivalence and crisis can force youth workers to confront and challenge otherwise taken for granted ideas and accepted wisdoms. Formulaic responses and prescriptive sets of ideas often fail to offer satisfactory insights to the worker confronted with complex and disturbing situations.

Conclusion

Post-colonial theorists such as Edward Said (1978) and Homi Bhabha (1997) argue that the object of colonial discourse is “to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish

systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha 1994, p.70). In other words, a feature of colonial discourse is the insistence of stereotypes, ideas and fabricated stories that represent colonised peoples in various derogatory ways. I think there is good evidence that much talk about Aboriginal young people is well described in such a way (see Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998; Sercombe 1996; Palmer & Collard 1993; Mickler 1998).

However, talk about “Aboriginal youth” is often very precarious, littered with instability and uncertain twists and turns that go to make the business of youth work far from tidy. Discourse on “Aboriginal youth” is often employed for a variety of ends to satisfy a wide range of interests. Talk by youth workers about their Aboriginal charges is then likewise never straightforward. It is regularly ambivalent, split and unstable, never quite able to secure the certainty of any one set of fixed values (McLeod 2000, p.24). Rather it involves youth workers talking in two contrary directions at the same time. As a consequence, the discourse of youth workers generates the possibilities of its own critique (McLeod 2000, pp.54-55). Bhabha (cited in McLeod 2000, p.62) might say that one of the effects of instances of ambivalence in talk about “Aboriginal youth” is that it constantly threatens to make youth work endorsement of the governance of Aboriginal young people unsteady.

Youth workers often stand in a contradictory and ambiguous position, particularly in their relationship to Aboriginal young people. Their talk about Aboriginal youth constantly drags them in a multitude of directions so that they are never entirely sure about their direction and never successful in their objectives. Bhabha (cited in Sharpe 1995, p.101) says this is extremely menacing and disruptive to the authority of “settler” life.

However, as Bessant, Sercombe &

Watts (1998, p.312) suggest, this may not be all bad news for workers. Indeed, Bhabha argues that the absence of closure produced by ambivalence in colonial discourse “allows for native intervention” and often produces conditions that turn discourse on its head (cited in Sharpe 1995, p.101). In other words, discourse around “Aboriginal youth”, unsettling as it is, can challenge some youth workers to reassess their ideas and practice. In addition, it may force resources to be directed towards initiatives aimed at improving the circumstances of Aboriginal young people. It might also open up space for youth workers to respond creatively, adopt novel approaches and imaginatively build new and innovative ways of engaging with the needs of Aboriginal young people. Finally, ambivalence in the language of youth work can allow youth workers, indeed force youth workers, to turn to Aboriginal families for guidance and direction. So, then, contestation and uncertainty in the way we speak about “Aboriginal youth” can bring about conditions that result in youth workers taking account of Aboriginal interests and Aboriginal rights to governance.

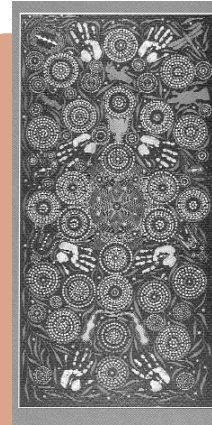
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XTRA

- *State of Denial: The neglect and abuse of Indigenous children in the Northern Territory*

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- *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (see references list under Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) is available on the Australasian Legal Information Institute web site at: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/>

- The book *Youth Subcultures: History, theory and the Australian experience*, which was edited by Rob White, and contains two references for this article (Tait; Palmer and Collard), is available from ACYS, email: ACYS@educ.utas.edu.au for \$30.80, which includes GST, postage and handling.

- The Indigenous Online Network is a web site (<http://www.ion.unisa.edu.au/>) that aims to 'provide a one-stop shop for Indigenous

Australians and other Australians who wish to know more about indigenous resources in the higher education sector'; 'improve Indigenous Australians access to and participation in higher education opportunities'; 'enhance and foster communications amongst indigenous academics, scholars and the general public'; and 'develop a network which improves on-line access to indigenous higher education informational bases'.

- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 'is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory authority devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. It is Australia's premier institution for information about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. The AIATSIS web site is at: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/index.htm>

- Message Stick – A portal to Indigenous Australian information on the web. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's web site Message Stick offers browsers the opportunity to access Indigenous sites, as well as important reference information on Indigenous

Australians. See: <http://www.abc.net.au/message/radar/default.htm>

- Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (<http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/>) The mission of the clearinghouse is to contribute to the health of Australia's Indigenous people by making relevant, high quality information easily accessible to policy-makers, health service providers, program managers, clinicians, researchers and the general community.

- *Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin* ISSN 1445-7253 – the electronic journal of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet. Its aim is: to facilitate access to information of relevance to Australian Indigenous health. Reflecting the wide range of users – policy makers, service providers, researchers, students and the general community – the *Health Bulletin* attempts to keep people informed of current events of relevance, as well as information about recent research. Research information is provided in two ways – the publication of original research and the presentation of abstracts of research published or presented elsewhere.