Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
By Davena Monro
History of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
Mission Statement

Our Mission is to:

To **equip** Indigenous people with knowledge and understanding of the Gospel through their cultures.

To **empower** Indigenous people to be leaders with faith, vision and skills, and

to be **effective** in building up their people, their church and their community.
The College is one of a few Indigenous institutions within Australia that delivers courses in an culturally appropriate way to ATSI People. Through our Indigenous contextual studies delivered by fully qualified Indigenous trainers supported by our College Committee. We are seeing our student numbers and geographical scope growing larger and extending further, having students coming to WBBC from every state of Australia to be trained.
**Meaning of Wontulp-Bi-Buya**

**Wontulp** - is the Wik Munkan name for Mount White on Cape York Peninsula.

*In the traditional story of the Cape Keerweer people at Aayka and Aurukun, say this mountain moved from Cape Keerweer to Coen.*

*This story remind us of the faith that can move mountains.*

**Bi** and **Buya** - each mean ‘light’ and come from the Torres Strait languages of Meriam Mer and Kala Lagaw Ya/Kalaw Kawaw Ya, respectively.

*These words remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world. Therefore the name “Wontulp-Bi-Buya” means “FAITH and LIGHT of CHRIST”*
Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
Purpose

Our training aims provide for:

- Leadership training in fields of community organising and community work, youth work, family health, home management, suicide prevention and other areas of community life.

- Biblical and theological training for Australian Indigenous church members.

- Expression of Australian Indigenous Christian Theologies
Wontulp’s Contribution to ‘Closing the Gap’

- Changing mind sets and social dysfunctional attitudes.
- Professional Development Training – Transitional Training.
- Develop and train ATSI people in appropriate strategies to overcome social and dysfunctional impacts of past historical traumas.
- Implementing positive strategies to establishing effective Educational Patterning.
- Giving ATSI people the right tools and understanding in developing effective life skills within their own community.
- Capturing a lost generation of students.
Educational Patterning

Negative Attributes
• Lack of Awareness
• Poor Parental Attitudes
• Poor Teaching
• Lack of Career Aspirations
• Low Self-Esteem

Positive Attributes
• Expectations
• Clear Pathways
• Time Management
• Organising Skills
Indigenous Secondary Education Statistics
(Australian Government ‘Bureau of Statistics’)

The available data on attendance and retention are limited, though there is evidence that:

School retention rate of the Indigenous Students
Year 8 to Year 12:
   1999   35%
   2009   45%

Compared to non-Indigenous students for the same period:
   2009   77%

Proportion of students attending school is 10% lower than non-Indigenous and this increases as the level of schooling goes up. This reflects the lower level of educational attainment of Indigenous students.
RetentionPolicy Strategies
(Bourke Rigby and Burden 2000)

• Professional & Leadership Development Training
• Raising awareness and being sensitive to history, culture and contemporary life style.
• Enduring characteristics of Indigenous students.
• Respect language, recognise that English is not the mother tongue of most Indigenous students, e.g. students who speak kriol.
• Focus on the needs of individuals e.g: hearing, eye sight, diabetes and health appointments.
• Safe environment and welcoming and no shaming.

These points are all part of the Wontulp-Bi-Buya College’s Philosophies and Experiences.
Sample Course: Enrolee Profiles

Drawing from ‘Train for Life’
(Anne Stevens 2015)

A research evaluation study was conducted on a WBBC course in Certificate IV Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention). On average students are over 45 years of age. Female is 47.4% and males 41.8%. The youngest student, female 24 and the oldest was a female who was 75 years old.

- Course enrolment total of 60 students in 2014 to 2015.
- 34 Students commenced in 2014 and 25 commenced in 2015.
- A total of 47 completed which is 78.3% of the cohort.
- WBBC’s goal was 80% of students graduating.
How is WBBC Filling the Gap

In the next two graphs highlights data which has been collected from student enrolment information on schooling level completions e.g:

- Graph 1 shows enrolled students, which are grouped into their secondary schooling levels reached and then broken up into years (2013 to 2016).
- Graph 2 indicated the total of enrolled students, which is divided into identified drop out rates, unspecified rates and year 12 completions rates.

As the majority of our students are between the ages of 35 to 55 years, it clearly indicated that the WBBC is capturing the lost generation of Students e.g. the 65% and 55% of drop out rates:

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<th>Year 8 to Year 12:</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>35%</th>
<th>65%</th>
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<td>2009</td>
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WBBC Student Secondary Schooling Levels
(Total Course Enrolment Data)
2013 – 2015
WBBC Students
Secondary Schooling Levels
(Total Course Enrolment Data)
2013 to 2016
Benefit of an Indigenous College

- Cultural appropriateness.
- Understanding and broad awareness of community and social issues.
- Transitional training to leadership and employment.
- Respect for language, knowledge and customs.
- Networking Opportunities.
WBBC took me all these years to find me. They helped me with all the hate I was carrying. I’d ask myself ‘why do I growl at people? Why do I talk nasty? And it’s because what I went through in life. I wanted someone to blame. But not anymore. I stand firm on that. WBBC taught me that. I had no one else to go to. Eddie and Rev Les opened up a lot of stuff for me.

We used to feel hurt and I’d be crying at night. I’d sit with Les or Eddie and I’d say ‘I don’t know’. I had so much anger. I was tormented by all the things in my life. But you have to stand up and fight and get to know yourself. I began to accept. Accept this and that and I realised I was getting softer inside me. And I had thought that this pain would never end. And now I’m at peace. Things are coming good. Family’s needs met. My job is good. I’m excited. And people say to me ‘you’re skilled now Aunty’. But if it weren’t for Eddie and Les, I wouldn’t have that.

The content is providing a closure to the way of understanding how to overcome Stolen Generation issues as well as a personal level. The teachers have always offered emotional support and I am comfortable to know I can turn to my teachers if I feel uncomfortable or upset with personal issues. My teachers have always showed compassion during class times as well as after class time.
WBBC’s Methodology

The methodology of the courses is based upon the learners’ own experiences, realities and context. The dialogical process which listening and sharing is the basis for a co-operative searching for issues, analysing and responses.

This allows customisation of the course to the contexts of Indigenous learners from different social and cultural backgrounds including remote and urban learners. Small group work allows the use of Indigenous languages to be expressed freely.
College Courses

Theological Studies

* Certificate III in Theology and Ministry
* Certificate IV in Theology and Ministry
* Diploma of Theology and Ministry

Community Development Studies

* Certificate III in Addictions Management and Community Development
* Entry Level into Community Development

Other Courses

* Certificate IV in Alcohol & Other Addictions Counseling.
* Certificate IV in Indigenous Mental Health

Mother and daughter creating positive educational patternings
Wontulp Pedagogy

* Culturally Appropriate

* Contextualized

* Laterally Designed

* Empathetic

* Effective and Direct
Risks for WBBC Operations

- Inappropriate Funding Frameworks.
- Delays in timing of funding releases.
- Time constraints for course delivery.
- Competing funding issues with other community organisations, such as Job network Agencies.
- Inadequate resources and funding.
- Pressure of frequent changes in reporting requirements.
Due to the changes in funding and reporting requirements in 2014 the drop in the completion rates are reflected within the 2015 completion rate, as WBBC was forced to deliver only three blocks rather then the normal four blocks due to limited funding.
Strategies in Moving Forward

• Building onto initiatives that are working.
• Revisit ‘Closing the Gap’ Principles and implementing where possible.
• Develop closer consultation between Government Departments and Indigenous RTO’s.