

# Talking Powerfully From the Heart

INTERVIEWS BY  
KEN LECHLEITNER

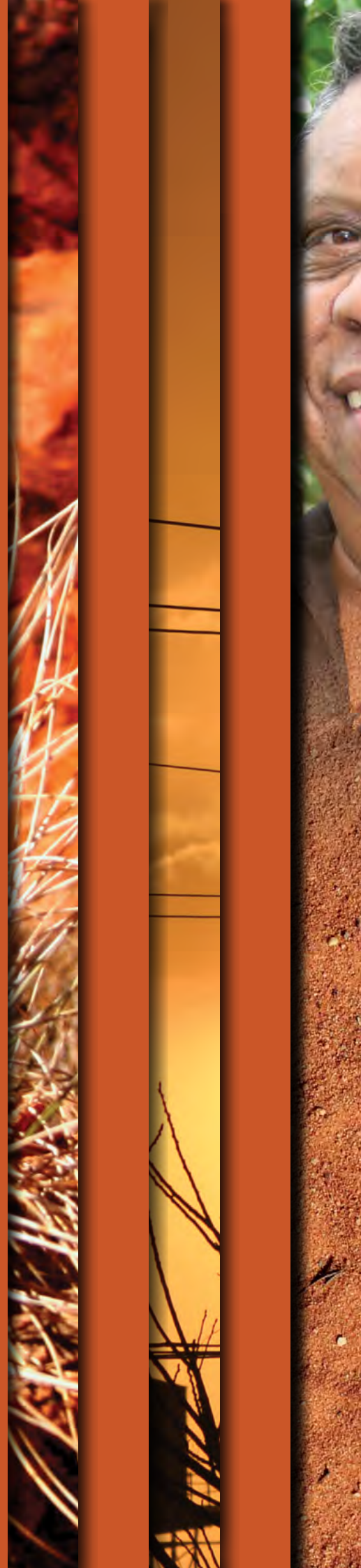
for the *Kurruna Mwarre Ingkintja*—

Good Spirit Men's Place

Research Project

*"Wurra apa artwuka pmara.*

Boy's and male's place"



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Good Spirit Men's Place Research Project

*"Wurra apa artwuka pmara. Boy's and male's place"*

*In partnership with CASSE and Congress looking at ways to develop  
a best practice Aboriginal good spirit male's place.*



'...and my dream is I'd like to see us all on that one level I was talking about... That ah, we can all come and then we can sit around the table and have a good talk and elaborate on the problem ahead of us and straighten out the ones behind us'

(KMI\_03)

## Foreword

Thank you for the opportunity. I think I'd just like to say this research has been a fantastic direction for all men's services to go in.

A lot of the men's services have not been able to work in one direction over many years. Perhaps this might be a way for these services to move on, once we look at the recommendations and hopefully there will be actions by people who are required to action.

There are lots and lots of issues that still need to be resolved, but I think we can all still work together and hopefully come up with a useful outcome for all men, to even encourage all ages to work together, where men can come together and look for common goals.

Hopefully we can encourage specially our young people; to see there are good things out there happening in regards to men's services.

We have to try and get the organisations and governments not to forget men, we are part of society also, we have to really make sure men aren't forgotten, but be included in all consultations that take place.

Johnny Liddle  
2017





Thank you goes to all the participants in this research and to the Congress and CASSE staff members, along with contracted consultants that guided the development of this research to fruition.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank three groups of males from Central Australia. One is all the Aboriginal males that responded to the invitation to participate in a Male Leadership Group. This group of males shaped the direction of where the research should go, not to the bookshelves to gather dust, but create an entity to ensure findings are implemented into becoming outcomes.

In thanking this second group of males were the ones in institutional custody participating in Breakthrough Violence Treatment program. These males gave another insight as to the changing of minds and saving lives program that when applying the contents in a culturally appropriate way, resulted with participants developing ownership of their problems, and setting plans to trend away from being violent towards loved ones.

Whereas the final group of males, I thank them for their time and willingness to participate in an interview. Their interviews brought to light and to life new found voices for males from Central Australia. These voices from Aboriginal and other Australian males are now coming out of the darkness into the light to share their stories and dreams of shaping what our world would look like and how it could function in providing a service in going forward towards developing males as sound citizens.

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# Editor's Note

The following fourteen interviews have been arranged in line with the approach of the principle researcher Ken Lechleitner where the interviews of the Aboriginal males and non-Aboriginal males have been separated into two chapters. The term 'other Australians' has been used throughout the report to describe men in the project who are not Aboriginal. This may be interchangeable with the term 'non-Aboriginal', which is used in many contexts. This decision was made in the spirit of the project, promoting inclusivity.

This presentation allows readers to easily distinguish between those voices of Aboriginal experience and those of other Australian males who have worked with Aboriginal males in the region. This collection is therefore presented in a consistent manner to the research findings. As well, this differentiation has been seen as helpful for many of the interview participants agreed to have their interview transcripts published, on the proviso, that they were not identified and readers may lose contextual understanding if this distinction wasn't evident.

Chapter interviews are ordered by date of interview.

The interviews are transcribed in the conversational manner, with interruptions, repetitions and hesitations retained. Where it was deemed necessary to maintain anonymity of participants, editing of names, places or events has occurred.

Interviews were conducted by Ken Lechleitner between 15 September 2016 and 9 February 2017.

# Background

In 2014, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) and Creating A Safe, Supportive Environment (CASSE) have undertaken and completed research on a Men's Shed project known as *Kurruna Mwarre-Ingkintja* (Good Spirit Male's Place). The project aimed to develop a unique Aboriginal Men's Shed Model, along cultural lines, to empower men to find their voices and live authentically. Men's Sheds variously refer to organisations which can improve the psycho-social health and emotional well-being of men and offer places of safety, healing, training, cultural revival and more. The project was determined at the community level and with participatory action from the community. The primary Researcher is an Anmatjere and Western Aranda man Ken Lechleitner Pangarte.

Qualitative research interviews with twenty three male participants living in Alice Springs have illuminated critical aspects of men's experiences. The Aboriginal males talked powerfully from the heart and strongly for the need for a place where they can talk, heal together, and live in two worlds – the traditional/Aboriginal and the post-colonial. They say they have all been victims, witnesses and become perpetrators. Their recognition of the degree to which they have unmet emotional and psychological was striking – an aspect of their experience that seemed unrecognised by the wider public. The men revealed that they hide their feelings that 'they hurt, they bleed, they have pain', 'all suffering', feel 'degraded and scorned', 'disempowered', 'lost', 'devalued' and 'unrecognised', seen as 'violent losers' and more. With regards to the Men's Shed, the participants valued having a safe place and space to talk together, where they can 'straighten up', explore, grow, 'get their minds back on recovery', 'give them a voice', 'share stories', 'support each other' and heal together. One man spoke of 'dashed hopes' and how important it is to talk about this dynamic in their lives! The men recognise the importance of

an Aboriginal identity first and foremost to secure confidence, 'strengthen the spirit', 'walk tall' and achieve psychological change. Many spoke of the barriers of racism, of two laws in the courts, of generational trauma, of no education, of not being able to read or write or even speak good English, let alone have skills to cope with life or trade skills enabling employment. They want to learn negotiating skills and skills of self-expression and assertion which will help them in explosive situations defuse domestic violence.

The men have initiated the development of Blokes on Track Aboriginal Corporation (BOTAC) and plan to develop a cultural and safe place for males. They are looking at sites which are out of town. They think this place can provide a cultural place for men who are perpetrators and/or victims of domestic violence, where the men can take refuge and rehabilitate. This Association both represents, and is the result of, the active participation of men in the Kurunna Mwarre project, their ownership of the research process, their increasing capacity empowerment. This is an important and unexpected outcome of the research.

Fourteen men have agreed to have their interviews on public record, most wishing to be de-identified but some wanting to be named.

This publication consists of the voices of these men. The voices are powerful. They need to be heard.

Pamela Nathan  
December 2017

‘...and we’ve got to progress, you know we’re all Aboriginal men and you know we all come with different powers and ability and experience and you know culture and education now can walk side by side...’

(KMI\_03)

## Chapter One: Aboriginal males talk powerfully from the heart

Interviewee KMI\_03

Date 4/10/2016

KL: and yep here we go. Well thank you very much, the first question's about, well have you heard about a men's shed?

**KMI\_03:** yeah I've heard about men's shed in general but not in you know, not specifically targeting indigenous

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** but there, there's many, many facets of men's sheds that have been broached and ah produced over the 10 years around Alice Springs

KL: so what would you think about an Aboriginal men's shed?

**KMI\_03:** like I said. I said in our previous discussion, I think it's critical we have a Indigenous men's shed as a way, you know networking and bringing people, our mob together and sit down and discuss things without and it's [inaudible] but also it gives an opportunity for our mob to talk and network in language and culture and kinship

KL: mm hm. Are you aware that we have a men's shed in the community of Alice Springs?

**KMI\_03:** like I said I've just heard of one being broadcast last year

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** but no I haven't. I even don't, I don't even know where it's located

KL: yeah okay no worries. Do you know that, okay sorry. So you don't know where it's located?

**KMI\_03:** no

KL: so if there was a men's shed

**KMI\_03:** yep

KL: what kind of programs would you envisage that the men's shed should run?

**KMI\_03:** Ah it's, critical I think is health and education, would be the main two and you know looking at confidence and team building like thing, you know like, you know a lot of them probably will have many issues you know and problems, so it's about getting them to work in a team but also getting them to, to open up and talk about their experiences and, and ah it's about support and direction

KL: yeah and so a, a, a men's shed would work in regards to people coming together and talking?

**KMI\_03:** yeah, that's what I'm saying yeah that ah, it's a connection point [inaudible] um, yeah you know, when you look at our men's mob and our men will go for a drink, they meet up in the pub and talk

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** but there's too many other influences that affect the positive discussions and you know there's social stuff, quickly turns, can turn into negative stuff

KL: yeah, mm

**KMI\_03:** so if you have a men's shed where our mob can come all ah, you know in the right frame of mind and sit down and talk over a cup of tea or, you know cold drink and you know have a yarn, you know in regards to soft drinks and whatever, it just, ah it creates a sort of harmonious place and creates a neutral place where, our mob can open up you know? Instead of only talking from grog perspective

KL: yeah

KMI\_03L You know?

KL: ]and the conversation you could have about is a common illness or a, likes of diabetes yeah?

**KMI\_03:** yeah, yeah like I said, my thing is when you look at the diabetes like being, being an ex-drinker but also ah not knowing about health and education and now in my journey I've started to realise that, got to look after oneself to be a role model in the community and this is where we need to be, is ensuring that we know about our health, know about our social background, know about how we can deal with that, but to do it in a team environment and doing it in a neutral place, as you're talking about – a men's shed - it would have benefits you know

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_03:** totally appropriate, talkin' to elders, talkin' to your mates, talkin' to your father, brother you know all that sort of connection

KL: yeah. So that nicely goes into the next question in regards to the empowerment of Aboriginal men. What do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_03:** well like I was saying you know, its self-belief within yourself, so it's about getting yourself right first as an Indigenous man

KL: mm

**KMI\_03:** and that's health and education and, and, and getting and we gotta get our place back in the community as a leader and as mentor for our younger ones coming through, because we have been disempowered through the government's policies over the years

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** and it's, it's how we need to re-address one's self and get belief back in our self

**KMI\_03:** and be confident to deal with our own issues before we actually move on and start being supportive in the community

KL: so there's a combination of points that you raise there, one of them would be like the barrier. What would be the barriers?

**KMI\_03:** Well like I said it's, it's opening up communication you know, like sometimes our mob shame job

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** they don't want to talk and it's how we get them to talk in a confident sort of place and support them and, and, and acknowledge, you know it's, it's the old adage of saying well, you know we've got to address, you know address the negatives but turn them into positives. So you know, someone can come there and they might talk from a point of negatives, but we've got to turn it around and be positive and say well you know hey, we all suffer that. It's like I said to you, you know I've been down a journey of my own and I've turned my life 'round but it's, it's about able to acknowledge some of your mistakes and move forwards and, and be prepared to make changes in your life so, you know? It takes courage

KL: mm

**KMI\_03:** and that's what we've got to do, we've got to find that in our self, self-confidence within ourselves

KL: mm. Now that also neatly sort of goes through to the next one, like some of the programs we might have to look at is one. How do we empower the men in a way that they develop this courage?

**KMI\_03:** yeah like I, yeah, education. Education is pretty broad

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** you know and I'm passionate about education and been, been in it for over 30 years now, across health and education and social issues for Aboriginal people, but when you're in that, education is pretty important and it's now the education of oneself. You know getting your beliefs back in, in yourself, ah educating the right from wrong that I keep talking, but also ensuring that you know we understand the changes in policies that we go through every day. So when you look at education it's empower, it empowers. If you get a bit a education it empowers you. Knowledge is power so, all start there and, and, and it's understanding the current environment we live in, so you know, you got, understanding policies, understanding changes in direction. This is what we need as men to understand. We have been disempowered but we've got to get that back you know?

KL: yeah. Wow, now um, it's been fantastic interview KMI\_03. It's um, ah, look, is there anything that you like to sorta kinda say or add to this interview that, that I haven't covered in these questions?

**KMI\_03:** well like I was saying if you look at a men's shed, just to, you know my added interest if you look at men's shed, our men you know, due to limited access of an education in the past, might, some might find it hard to, you know understand the information we're delivering, so it's got to be culturally appropriate. But also we need to have programs in there that's manual type you know like, hands on stuff. You know the basic woodworking or leatherworking, leatherwork you know and just in general, man love some good skills. Yeah so it's thinkin' about [inaudible], you know education gives them the key. But it gives them a lot of opportunities, so when you look at manual art and even the basic literacy and numeracy you know just bringing that back and it's empowering them, giving them back in the space of you know, they don't, they don't have to be outside of the [inaudible], they can be involved and progressing forward you know?

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_03:** and we've got to progress, you know we're all Aboriginal men and you know we all come with different powers and ability and experience and you know culture and education now can walk side by side, but it's empowering both of them, so you know>

KL: mm

**KMI\_03:** we need our, we need our Indigenous culture today, for our men, to continue that

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** because there's powers in our stories, kinship. That's education there but it's the mainstream education, walking that fine line

KL: mm

**KMI\_03:** but men, [inaudible], tend to help our mob get their confidence back in that field and then it's about addressing health yeah

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** and that's about getting in a good space

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** and hopefully through, you know, you would talk about those kinds of things - health and education and, and opportunities

KL: well, well KMI\_03 look that pretty much wraps up our kind of like structured questions

**KMI\_03:** yeah

KL: some of the questions you've you went into it, overlapped it and

**KMI\_03:** mm, mm

KL: so from that perspective you've covered all the points that I need to, sort of, that I can ask you one and also thank you for your additional information. So we'll, we'll sorta kinda wrap this up now

**KMI\_03:** Yep

KL: so thank you very much for your time and fantastic thank you

**KMI\_03:** thanks for that ay

KL: yeah

**KMI\_03:** no worries



Interviewee KMI\_04

Date 16/9/2016

KL: ...record, so \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>, so um thank you and I'll call you \_\_\_\_\_ because

**KMI\_04:** alright

KL: that's the respect that I have

**KMI\_04:** mm hm

KL: so \_\_\_\_\_ the first question is like this, ah a Aboriginal Men's Shed what do you think an Aboriginal Men's Shed should be? Or what do you think about it?

**KMI\_04:** I think it's the best idea that came to Alice Springs at this stage, being of course that we don't have any facilities. We have a men's health centre, but it's still not good enough to catch up to the women's program. Even in a court of law for one thing

KL: mm

**KMI\_04:** and simply just to get men's minds back on the right track of recovery

KL: yeah, mm hm. Now \_\_\_\_\_, do you know if there's any, any Men's Shed in this community at all? Are you aware of any?

**KMI\_04:** there are nothing here at all, for the last, in all of my 72 years, there's been nothing here in Alice Springs

KL: yeah yeah yeah, mm hm, um, so look \_\_\_\_\_ that sorta kinda takes us onto this um, next point then. So um, if there was a place like that, what kind of program do you think should run in it?

**KMI\_04:** well the first program of course is health

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** but that's already happening with our men's health centre and then rehabilitation for one thing

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** and psychiatric treatment

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** which is one of the foremost things that we men have got to go through

KL: yep

**KMI\_04:** yay or nay is a sickness that we hide, or main thing is with the law when we have a domestic

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** we got no one else to fall back on

KL: \_\_\_\_\_ can you just elaborate on the psychiatric problem? You see, what are the causes there?

**KMI\_04:** the psychiatric problem in my opinion is men hold back on a lot of things, we don't expose ourselves

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** on the problems. If we have a problem with a woman we go to court

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** right the court always believe in a woman's story and we men we can't stand up for ourselves and we don't know how to bring it out

KL: yep

**KMI\_04:** so we have to be taught on these things

KL: yeah so some of the program would be teaching men how to talk?

**KMI\_04:** absolutely

KL: how to express themselves?

**KMI\_04:** how to elaborate and to answer questions and basically form out their problems

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** is the foremost thing

<sup>1</sup> Name/ term removed to respect anonymity

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** we have to negotiate

KL: yes. So yeah it's that negotiation's really important. So \_\_\_\_\_ that, I just want to tease out the negotiation. What do we mean by negotiate?

**KMI\_04:** negotiation is something, when you want to get something out, information for one thing, ideas in your head, you have to find someone that you can talk to, to negotiate

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** and if you haven't got anybody that you can trust, like the program that we're trying to form now - Men's Shed - we got nowhere else to turn to. We all gonna be jail birds

KL: mm

**KMI\_04:** and I just with jealous minds and one things locked up in a cell, pleadin' guilty all the time

KL: yes, so that um, pleading guilty all the time, tend to just land our men's in prison all the time too?

**KMI\_04:** absolutely. But when you, when you plead guilty you commit yourself in so far as white man's law is concerned

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** you commit yourself and you're not innocent any more, once you plead guilty

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** even for something you haven't done

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** or you're half and half

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** with the other person

KL: so that's where like a, a robust program in understanding law

**KMI\_04:** understanding law, especially we have to leave in a white man's world now and it's the white man's law that locks us up

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** and punishes us

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** very seldom we break our own laws, our own tribal laws

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** because we understand the meaning of it, it's just one thing with Aboriginal law, you do the wrong thing you get killed for it

KL: yeah, so there's a real understanding of our own Aboriginal law can we just elaborate a bit more on that? how that sorta kinda guides people?

**KMI\_04:** well it's, we're, it's a conflict with white man's law

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** and that's where we have the big problem

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** We can't elaborate on our own tribal laws openly

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_04:** and white man don't understand it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** is their law that comes foremost for them in the courthouse

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** for one thing and ah, even when you talk to a medical officer somewhere, they can't elaborate on

KL: yes

**KMI\_04:** the Aboriginal sort of concept

KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** of the problem, to elaborate, get your hands across properly, or your sickness across

KL: yeah. So \_\_\_\_\_ with empowerment, what do you see as being the empowerment for Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_04:** well empowerment maybe the wrong word and what we need is equality

KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** we need equality where we can elaborate and  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_04:** contest anything that maybe we don't agree with  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_04:** and come away with a satisfied frame of mind. That's my view of it  
KL: yeah and um just um from your point of view again, is there any sorta like um, other sorta kinda disempowerment aspects that you see, that Aboriginal men suffer?  
**KMI\_04:** we suffer right across the board with everything. You can go and try and get a license there. You go over the police station, or wherever the hell you gotta go to get these things and they look at you with scorn straight away  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_04:** and same as if there's a minor problem in a, in your own domestic home  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_04:** well people or law enforcers, whoever they may, welfare people, they'll all come and look in scorn and at the man first  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** and we're degraded right from day one  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_04:** now unless you've got a good sound mind, possibly like mine, I'll try it on myself with this one  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** that ah, I'm one that can debate, but I'd like to see every man do it  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_04:** to construct something concrete for all of us and straighten our own, our own weaker men out  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_04:** help them  
KL: so this thing about men helping men, is with like programs that can actually empower men?  
**KMI\_04:** absolutely  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_04:** maybe not empower them too much, but bring them up to the equality  
KL: equality yeah  
**KMI\_04:** mm  
KL: yes so the equality aspects  
**KMI\_04:** yeah  
KL: so bringing the men up to equality is about informing them yeah?  
**KMI\_04:** informing them, coming up to an equal level  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** not be down talked all the time where people tell them what to do and they go and do it  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** we got to have that sound frame of mind where we can make our own minds up  
KL: well would some of the programs be like you know, like making things, to traditional toolmaking, to modern day making, you know wood, wood tables? Things like that would that be something ...  
**KMI\_04:** well that'd be something for trade, that'd be something for trade that ah, and ah work skill  
KL: yes, yes  
**KMI\_04:** so you know it's a good thing for younger people too, not so much the old men now but  
KL: yeah

**KMI\_04:** Younger people coming on, they gotta, like I said before, we gotta live in white man's world we gotta be up to their standard in infrastructure  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** workplace and I think it's a, a great thing to be on that level  
KL: with our elder men, how do our elder men in community feel like they, are they being heard at all? Or they feel like they're just being pushed aside?  
**KMI\_04:** well how old men the care takers our minders as we use to call them  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** we used to look at them in fright, we used to get 'fraid of them  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** we used to listen to them  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** but now they are getting pushed aside  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_04:** it's because of the change  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_04:** and the younger generation, they grow up in a different world to what we grew up in  
KL: yes, yeah  
**KMI\_04:** the simplicity of that, it's a time of change, and now with the introduction of the alcohol for one thing, we had alcohol problems in my time  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** but ah and now it's gone up to contraceptives, drugs and things like that  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_04:** something that we can't elaborate on or debate on  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** you know it's too far  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** even for me to  
KL: whole different understanding of this  
**KMI\_04:** absolutely  
KL: abuse or drugs and  
**KMI\_04:** and that's where I said earlier that we need that ah psychiatric assessment on things  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** that can bring us up to date with a lot of things. Maybe a medical one or even a psychiatrist one  
KL: yeah. So look \_\_\_\_\_ we're coming to a sorta kinda end to these questions now, is there anything that you like to actually share that I haven't covered in these questions? Is there anything in particular that you'd like to sorta kinda see how a Men's Shed should operate?  
**KMI\_04:** well I think we should all get together  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** and my dream is I'd like to see us all on that one level I was talking about a few bars back. That ah, we can all come and then we can sit around the table and have a good talk and elaborate on the problem ahead of us and straighten out the ones behind us  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_04:** I mean that is my dream  
KL: yeah okay. To make that happen, do you reckon that we should form a, a um males leadership group that maybe run out of Congress or something?  
**KMI\_04:** well it can be a good thing, but a man leadership group too, we can't just have one lot of, one party talkin' all the time  
KL: yes yes  
**KMI\_04:** we have to get the people from certain groups

KL: yeah all, all  
**KMI\_04:** where they can get a following  
KL: yes, yep  
**KMI\_04:** like you and I and couple of other politically minded fellas  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** the young people get sick of us  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_04:** and they mightn't be our family tree, you know they stay on one side  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** but that's the whole concept we have to look at  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**KMI\_04:** but I'd love to see it all get together  
KL: yeah. So even if someone could organise a get together, that'd be a start?  
**KMI\_04:** well I'm talking to the man now that can organise one  
KL: laughs. Ah yep ok  
**KMI\_04:** Young fellas like our boss down there Johnny Liddle  
KL: yep  
**KMI\_04:** you know he's got a good following Johnny  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_04:** so ah, don't say I mentioned his name  
KL: laughs  
**KMI\_04:** but he's got a good following that man I've always believed in  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** I always liked his leadership in certain places  
KL: yeah, mm  
**KMI\_04:** so we need men like that and, I'll leave it up to you  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** with our younger tribe, I'd love to see young men come up and  
KL: yep, no worries, yeah  
**KMI\_04:** drown us old people out  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** you know I'll, probably won't drown me out. People like me you know, we're here today, we might be gone tomorrow  
KL: yeah it's true  
**KMI\_04:** you know it's the truthful thing  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_04:** we have to look at. Like all our good men in the mean I grew up with  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_04:** well they're all gone now  
KL: all your peers yes  
**KMI\_04:** they're all lovely men that taught me a lot. Right from wrong, they were lovely men, good strong men  
KL: yeah. All right \_\_\_\_ look on that note, we will look into sorta kinda this gathering, and I'll certainly bring that back to the attention of our bosses and say 'hey look, let's call this gathering' and see where we go from there  
**KMI\_04:** and I'm giving open permission to, they can listen to this one, this interview if they want to  
KL: yes, ok, no worries. Alright thank you very much for your time  
**KMI\_04:** that's really good like that.

Interviewee KMI\_05

Date 11/10/2016

KL: Interview with \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> on the 11th of 10, 2016 and just for your sorta kinda voice reading and just introduce yourself  
**KMI\_05:** \_\_\_\_\_, um...  
KL: yep no worries. Well you're from which tribal groups?  
**KMI\_05:** Well I am part of three different tribal groups  
KL: that's right  
**KMI\_05:** that's a, a large family there  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_05:** All tied in there within the northwest of Alice Springs ...  
KL: oh look thank you very much for your time for this interview  
**KMI\_05:** you're welcome  
KL: um so the first question is, what do you think about a Men's Shed for Aboriginal men?  
**KMI\_05:** I think it's a, a great idea. I think in all the politics and all the issues in Aboriginal affairs, especially in Central Australia, there's never been a coming together of, of the men and being recognised as how do they fit into the family structures and I think there's been a lot of issues and problems where men feel left out and think in um in a non-Indigenous society, men have always been blamed for things, men are the ones that get incarcerated all the time, there's never been a voice for the men, there's never been a safe place for men and there's never been a place where men can talk about how they feel, you know if, if they're hurting and things like that, they never had the chance and even though in the eyes of most people you know men are tough and they, they're strong and things like that, they're not they're just like any, anyone else, they hurt, they bleed, they have pain and um a place that can make them strong and create friendships with other men and understanding and the thing that empowers that individual person to become stronger  
KL: yeah, do you know if there's a Men's Shed in the community?  
**KMI\_05:** no I don't  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_05:** I know, well Pioneers has got a shed, but it's called football club  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_05:** but I guess that would be like the initial Men's Shed  
KL: yeah yeah, mm, ok so we'll move on to Aboriginal empowerment. What do you, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?  
**KMI\_05:** I think in an Aboriginal community, ceremony, language and kinship and family and family's important in so many different ways and I think that's the keyword is the family, ah the man is the head of the family, ah the man is proud of his family in his creation of the family and he provides for the family and I think in, in European society they're the same things but for an Aboriginal person to grow up in European society, is quite difficult because their identity's seen in a different light and I think the family structure is the most important thing for him  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_05:** to have family around, not, not so much creating his own family but having his family around him and also creating his own family  
KL: when you look around the community, who are the men that's, that are empowered in your community?  
**KMI\_05:** I think, because I grew up and I, I live in a different, different world to my parents, I sit back and I look at my parent's side and I, I listen and I learn a lot of things but, looking in my own backyard in my own community, I think the people that are, are um different kind of leaders are the people like you know David Ross at Land

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

Council, the structure of the land council, what it is, what it instils and incorporates. People like Owen Cole at Yepereny

**KMI\_05:** and also for as a young fella watching them grow, watching them go away, do their studies then come back and understanding with people like, you know Tracker Tilmouth would explain a lot of things to me coming back into my community and, and seeing how he grew and how he lived and, and the people around him you know, Dougie Turner and people like that. So they, they were people I, I sort of looked up to and saw and they attached themselves to me

KL: mm

**KMI\_05:** it wasn't me going looking, because it's hard when you're young and you come back to community. You need people to actually come and grab you

KL: yeah

**KMI\_05:** so they were the that sort of came to me and other than Tracker and Dougie, the other people I've looked at from afar and watched

KL: yeah, thank you very much. The um, now talk about some of the barriers for empowerment you know what are some of the reasons why Aboriginal men are disempowered?

**KMI\_05:** If, if I talk at a lower level on the normal everyday living standard, I'd say employment, ah employment I guess in this society creates the barrier where if you're not working, you're not making money, if you don't have money you can't provide

KL: yeah

**KMI\_05:** so that's a, a very hard issue and if you come from an Aboriginal society where you've come from the bush, um that makes it harder for you because you, you don't know how to create employment, you don't understand the rules and the regulations in european society, so it's another thing you have to overcome. Not saying that Aboriginal men can't do that, a lot have had to learn, that they have to do that to live in the, in the two worlds so, it's quite special when you do see men rise to the occasion and, and become part of the two societies

KL: now in um, moving on to sort of the next question but I'll tease out the um, that aspects of you're not known. With types of programs that are available within sorta like helping men become empowered what would some of that be?

**KMI\_05:** I think that's an important, it's like as you grow up you, become the person you become because of the training that you've had and I think you know same as being a parent, you don't know how to be a parent, you have to learn on the job and being a man doesn't always mean that you know everything, you learn and you have people who teach you along the way and I think to have a course in, in leadership, or a course in how to behave in certain situations it, everything you do in life is a learned, learned behaviour. Um, you're taught how to do things and I think it's important when men get to a certain age, that they can go do courses and be around other men and, and learn

KL: yeah

**KMI\_05:** it's an important aspect of society in both Aboriginal and non, non-Indigenous society

KL: what do you think could be done to increase the access to programs to empower men?

**KMI\_05:** I think having a place that could nurture those, those sort of things, you know that's the, new thing now where they say the Men's Shed, a place where men can get away and be around other men. I think that it's not always healthy just to have a shed where you can go and, and just be involved in simple activities. I think it's important to, to grow and learn and maybe have places where you can go and they say, well there's going to be a special course on this or, or lessons in this and I think that's important too, it's a, cycle another cycle, cycle of life I s'pose that can incorporate those things where you can, it's not like you look in the paper and they advertise

whatever it's just a place where men can talk and say hey look they're gonna run this workshop, how about coming along?

KL: yeah. Ah we're pretty much moving closer to our conclusion, but out of this sorta kinda semi structured interview, is there anything that you'd like to sort of share in regards to where you'd like to see the Men's Shed go or that kinda set up go or anything that you'd like to sort of add personally?

**KMI\_05:** I think the hardest, hardest thing living in in the town which has a large population of Aboriginal people but also had a large population of non-Indigenous people and with the, the culture and the history which is applicable to Aboriginal people and ownership of, of the land and those sorts of things it's hard because you, you live in two worlds, you absolutely live in two worlds and I think to empower Aboriginal people to have a place and space that they can call their own, um I mean you've got clubs and that, that are here and that have structures and that and I think it's important that Aboriginal people can have a place where they can go and have somewhere that they can call their own and still incorporate the, the two phases of life

KL: mm

**KMI\_05:** life skills and things like that

KL: yeah

**KMI\_05:** I don't know if it, it's sorta hard to explain, it's a bit like you know Lhere Aterpe and the town council

KL: yeah

**KMI\_05:** you got two councils that don't work together, that butt heads but you've got traditional owners and then you've got governance I guess

KL: mm

**KMI\_05:** So if you had a place where Aboriginal men could go and it's like their place and there, the respect and even knowledge that can be taught to other men that they may not know and they might be adults now but they can learn

KL: yeah, mm alrighy um \_\_\_\_\_, um thank you very much for your time

**KMI\_05:** you're welcome and thank you very much

KL: thank you



Interviewee KMI_07	
Date	6/10/2016

KL: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> thank you for your time and participating in this interview or research for lookin' at a Aboriginal Men's Shed

**KMI\_07:** no worries Ken

KL: thank you. Now the first question is, what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_07:** Ah, an Aboriginal Men's Shed would be a, a great idea. It'd be a good place for fellas to go and hopefully talk about issues that affect them and as we know around here, right across Australia, there's so many issues that are affecting Aboriginal men

KL: yep. Um do you know that, do you know of any Men's Shed in the community?

**KMI\_07:** I know there is a, one for one white fellas

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** but I'm not, I've never been there so, I don't know too much about it

KL: yeah, okay. Um, alright that allows us to move onto the next question, which looks at sorta like, Aboriginal men's empowerment. Um, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_07:** um, their culture, where they stand in, or their standing in the community. Um, I suppose how they feel, I just look

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** what empowers you it, it's how we feel about ourselves

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_07:** if we feel bad, we think everything is against us

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** so we feel disempowered

KL: when you look around the community, um who are the empowered men that you see?

**KMI\_07:** ah ...

KL: or what does an empowered Aboriginal man look like, in the, in the community?

**KMI\_07:** oh, well that's, that's a, someone who's proud of their role, proud of their family. I can name a few that I, I've seen around and but, they're few and far between Ken

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** hey. You and I both ah, we got pretty solid families

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and we know what it is but not everyone has got that

KL: yeah. Okay we move on to, what are some of the actual barriers that, that you know disempowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_07:** I would say probably education

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** the mere fact, the colour

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** colour plays a very important part

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** in, because we're ah, a minority. Oh look I'm a very light skin

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** I'm probably classed as a white fella

KL: yeah yeah

**KMI\_07:** and I'm not gonna feel the same

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** when I walk into place

KL: yeah

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

**KMI\_07:** as someone a darker colour

KL: yeah, mm, yeah

**KMI\_07:** ah, in a lot of cases people will, they tend to focus on the white fella, more so

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** because it comes down, I think it comes down to, you know that the white fella's a lot better educated

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_07:** um

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** just go back to that question again Ken

KL: yeah, so what are the main reasons why Aboriginal men are disempowered?

**KMI\_07:** well it's, the media plays an important part

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** because it's always, it's always the black fella that's always in trouble

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and always the perpetrator, well not always but the majority of times he's the perpetrator

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** you just go back to history, the riots in America and all those sorts of things it's

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** if people are suppressed

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** they will get their backs against the walls and they will fight and if they can't fight, drugs, alcohol and all those other things are there to assist and they can forget who they are

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and then at the same time that just leads to their ah, their own self-esteem and how they feel you know amongst the majority of people, they just feel low

KL: thank you very much. We're now moving into the next sorta kinda question is about improving

KL: Aboriginal men's access to programmes that could empower men. Um what type of programmes would you think could be one to empower men or help empower men?

**KMI\_07:** I'm not gonna, I was with you, then all of a sudden I sort of flipped over to, 'cause my background's .

KL: yeah, mm hm

**KMI\_07:** yeah I just think of what we want to, well let's say Institution. What they want to deliver out to communities, it's all white fella driven

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** so we'll talk about our Cert I, Cert II, Cert III<sup>2</sup>, something I'm very passionate about is the, you're teaching people out there in communities second, english is their second, third, fourth language and ah, you're teaching them white fella way. And all of a sudden these guys are just bombarded by this, and they turn away from it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** all of a sudden you've lost potential people, officers

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** out in communities. But all we, all they really need is something to get their confidence going. You don't bombard them with a Cert III, or a Cert II. You give 'em something so they got confident in their role, whether you're talking football or basketball and then, then other little things so at any time they're caught out, they reach into their bag of tricks and say "okay that's not working", it's too hot outside or whatever, "we're going to do this"

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of Education, from the Vocational Education and Training sector

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** so they’ve got something, something they can just draw on and through that sort of stuff, it’s in getting them confidence to go on to the next step. You know if they all know three or four different languages

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** but and the white fella knows one, so he’s tryin’ to drum it into. You try and teach a white fella a language

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** nah, they’ll shy away from that, they’ll just think, oh hang on

KL: yeah. So, I s’pose the disempowerment is the, Is the compliance? So compliance to programmes that you want to engage people in but then you bring out the compliance to it

**KMI\_07:** mm hm

KL: and then that, could you elaborate on that in regards to how that deters people

**KMI\_07:** yep, yeah, yeah, yeah. You have to adhere to that sort, that programmes. But at the same time it’s really not what is needed, I s’pose. If people, you’ve got to go round

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** to get through

KL: so to increase that participation, we need to empower men by allowing them to, you know do it their way

**KMI\_07:** do it their way. Yeah exactly Ken, do it their way, you know? Then at the same time you walk alongside

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** it’s like teaching someone basketball

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** don’t just throw me up there with a, say “right you’ve got to umpire that game”. Walk alongside them while they’re umpiring

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and give ‘em tips. If they make mistakes, you were there too, work with ‘em. Not to put ‘em down and say “listen, you’re no good” and I found that it’s, it’s intimidating

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and if you’re intimidated or embarrassed, it’s like the thing where, get someone up in front

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and that can, that can go right across white fella, black fella. If you get someone up in front and they, they’re struggling, they’ll never go back to that

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_07:** and make, it’s, no one likes to feel

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** put down or ashamed

KL: yeah, yep, mm hm. Could a Aboriginal Men’s Shed programme might of, you know what would kind of like look like if ah, it was in town or outside of town, what do you think, you know, what it would look like?

**KMI\_07:** oh I, probably I would say it’s like a meeting place where guys can sit around, talk, under a tree, maybe have, a board there

KL: mm

**KMI\_07:** um, where they’re comfortable

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** as we know a lot of our mob smoke

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** don’t shove ‘em in the environment where they’re, they’re thinkin’ about where their next, gonna have their next smoke. I’m right against smoking, but

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** if someone’s comfortable, hey they can still be involved, have ‘em, direct away, move ‘em in a direction, in a place where the wind’s blowing the other way and not affecting

**KMI\_07:** you know but, um you know, comfortable environment where they can share, have their cups of teas and sit down and maybe something to eat

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** people are, it’s just like. I’m comfortable talking to you because I’ve known you for a long time

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_07:** if you’re comfortable

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** you will talk and you’ve gotta have that relationship. So it’s the sender and the receiver have got a relationship

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_07:** if I came in here and you asked me to talk

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and, and I thought urgh. We know we’re, where grown men

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** we can get over a lot of hurdles

KL: yep

**KMI\_07:** even if there’s issues, we’re not going to talk. If you don’t like someone you’re not going to talk to them

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_07:** until these sorts of issues are resolved

KL: yes, yes

**KMI\_07:** or you’re man enough to get over it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** but you’re your sitting in your environment where you’re comfortable and you’re made to feel comfortable

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and it’s, you don’t feel like you’re under pressure

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** you can have guest speakers come in, talk to the guys, sit down with the fellas and to talk. It’s not a, it’s not a simple language. It’s a language but without all that bullshit

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** yeah all that, as we say the high falutin words

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** it’s ah, I was in a, a bit of a presentation, a person did a presentation; it was about simple language that everyone can understand. A doctor, he could, If you mentioned it to him he’d understand it and vice versa, you should be able to communicate that back to them, you know simple terms. Not talking to kids or anything like that, um it’s easy to understand, we’ve got to be comfortable there

KL: yeah. So the next sorta like um question is more or less of a free-flowing one, where um, we’ve done away with our pretty much semi structured type questioning. Now I just wanna look, is there anything that you’d like to share, what a men’s, what an Aboriginal Men’s Shed would look like?

**KMI\_07:** look, I think it’s got to be decided by the people who are gonna be part of it. When I was down in \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> I, working with the Men’s Shed down there and they have, that was very similar I would imagine to a number of other white fellas, so they had a combination, they had you know white fella and black fella, Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal involved in it and it’s through, through that, just like they made people welcomed

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** they weren’t, it was just men and that’s what I enjoyed about the one down there it was just men coming and they’d have, woodwork benches over there. Just out the back they had a welding bay, where the guys could just do the welding, um okay they never, they are adhered to safety, safety was a, a priority and

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

gear had to be put back and you know there was, everyone, guys were trained in, it’s like, how to use a chain saw. Someone would come in, show them how to use a chainsaw and then out, then over here you might have someone on a lathe

KL: oh wow

**KMI\_07:** and then you’d have um, you know they could be just carving boomerangs

KL: yeah wow

**KMI\_07:** so there’s lots of different things and that’s going back a number of years now. I’m not sure if it still exists

KL: yeah yeah

**KMI\_07:** or if we’ve got people working together on that and things do change and that was, I thought that was a good model. I only went there 2 or 3 times

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** but it was predominantly set up for white fellas

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** but everyone could come and they were coming

KL: mm, wow

**KMI\_07:** there was probably two thirds white fella and one third

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** Aboriginal, but

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** at the time (inaudible)

KL: that’s fantastic

**KMI\_07:** and that’s what we would like to see

**KMI\_07:** that people can feel

KL: mm

**KMI\_07:** comfortable and sometimes I feel if you’ve got a mixture, it’s like knowing a mate

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** the old buddy system

KL: mm

KMI\_07: “here Ken, there’s a job going out here”

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** “it’s pouring petrol, at the servo”

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** “ok!” it’s just that word getting around. So sometimes it’s um, it, I’m always one to have it (inaudible) , but ah

**KMI\_07:** yeah there’s people who can learn from one another

KL: yep

**KMI\_07:** ‘cause there’s a lot of lonely men out there

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and they do need to, and

KL: mm

**KMI\_07:** it’s, go back to Clontarf. You know, Clontarf originally started off for Aboriginal boys to

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** go along. But what was happening, there was a lot of guys not coming to training because they were out with their mates

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and because their mates weren’t allowed to come along, ‘cause they were white kids

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** hence, there was not all the numbers that they wanted

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** “John, why didn’t you come to training?” “Oh I was out skating or riding with my mate”, “well bring him along”, “He’s not Aboriginal”

**KMI\_07:** Bring him along

KL: yes

**KMI\_07:** and I’ve got some great stories on that xxx really

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** one was so powerful that, um, we had one young kid who started coming and he was, he was a young fellow who was overweight

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** um, who was as white as white

KL: yep

CD: and all these black kids were there

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and yet stop and he put up with a lots of crap from these guys, but he rode the storm and he rode it for many years, till he was one of the leaders

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** and it was just, his mother, this guy was very withdrawn

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** but he developed, He was confident and then over a period of about five or six years

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** he drew into a really, he was, ended up working in a butcher shop

KL: yeah

**KMI\_07:** and I couldn’t believe when I first saw that young fella. So he was. He walked in

KL: both worlds

**KMI\_07:** both (inaudible), both worlds

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** yeah and that was a ah, a brilliant story and that was, it showed what can happen

KL: that’s the ultimate, it’s like kinda ah, I s’pose a goal that we need to look at is that we’ve got to work towards a framework where we can work together

**KMI\_07:** mm

KL: you know and, and it’s not about colour

**KMI\_07:** no

KL: it’s about the character of the man

**KMI\_07:** mm

KL: and, and then sorta like um, designing, developing our community, how we want to live

**KMI\_07:** yeah

KL: wow

**KMI\_07:** yeah

KL: alright, look um that’s pretty much concludes our um, structured, semi structured sort of interview and I, I’ll use this opportunity to say thank you very much

**KMI\_07:** okay

KL: for your time and ah, we’ll turn her off

**KMI\_07:** good, no worries

Interviewee KMI_08	
Date	10/11/2016

KL: thank you very much and thank you for participating in this interview

**KMI\_08:** thank you

KL: on this research

**KMI\_08:** you're welcome

KL: now the first question is what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_08:** I reckon it's a great idea. I like it. I think it has a lot of good, promising, you know well my, it catches my imagination, so I think it's a great idea yeah

KL: yeah are you aware that there's a here ah, um a Men's Shed in the community?

**KMI\_08:** not at the moment no not really. I know there's some little medical related men's thing at ah Congress there, at the back of the men's, but I don't know what, you know there's not much of a, it's more of a medical thing you know, which is I don't know what, it's not, should have, does, it doesn't sound like a social... addressing social issues

KL: yes, yep. So we're going to talk about, a bit about empowerment

**KMI\_08:** empowerment yeah

KL: what are the um, some of the things that empower Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_08:** identity, a sense of strong identity with bonds firmly extended community relationships, but meaningful productive outcomes you know and doing something towards their own sense of control or you know like, free choice and being able to you know develop their own self rely, ah you know personal empowerment that's directly related to self-reliance, self-sufficiency and you know, today with the way the money system works it can be a bit complex and problematic because. You're only allowed to develop so much in that way in terms of personal empowerment you know, because you if you do to, get away from the controlling model sort of society, through corporate government it can be a bit awkward because, but there's got to be a balance struck. I just believe in a balance between the two. Between more of a happy-go-lucky compromise or a happy medium between the, the corporate government and the individual, would be the ideal scenario to aim for

KL: alright so this leaves us onto the next question is that, what are some of the barriers to empowerment?

**KMI\_08:** barriers? Basically the present habits of thinking and habits of, you know of behaviour, well addictions, there's different forms of addiction, emotional, psychological, there's different you know like insecurity, financial, there's a whole ah, you know education, lack of understanding, knowledge, communication, there's ah, there's ah, drugs is a, is an issue, there's various forms of drugs, alcoholism and so on and so on and so forth. You know it's all to do with managing fear-based issues in life, because you know we got basically the polarities of love and fear and we just gotta try to manage the balance between ah, you know a healthy balance of sound mind, good heart between love and fear but and help those that are really suffering mental health issues, with managing their fear, insecurity and to personally empower them to conquer those, you know inner demons like you know, their inner fears

KL: now what would say some of the programs would look like in, that could empower men?

**KMI\_08:** I wouldn't be able to answer that question

KL: Yep that's fine

**KMI\_08:** because that's more of a professional thing to address, but yeah it's ah, that would have to come from...

KL: ok

**KMI\_08:** yeah

KL: alright so that

**KMI\_08:** nah what was that question again then sorry?

KL: so what are some of the programs that we, we might be able to run that could empower men?

**KMI\_08:** Oh, I personally, ah my little forte is a little bit eccentric or unusual or extraordinary in the sense that I, I see the solution as being energy based and my interpretation of energy is like spiritual energy based like you know you're talkin' about energy medicine and understanding the alternative forms of energy that can be addressed to manage the issues of you know, personal health and, and other extended, you know things that are to do with self-reliance and survival and growing food and producing and being productive and you know for, you know being a breadwinner, or you know a provider for the family, so that they'll get the skills and learn the skills to be able to go back to their families and you know produce like food and to be able, you know if they didn't have any money, well then at least they can have a feed you know, they're not starvin' like mongrel dog on the side of the street you know?

KL: Yeah, uh huh. So that concludes the structured type questions. Is there anything that you particularly think that you'd like to share, that could be important, that we could use in this research?

**KMI\_08:** my basic is to do with a concept called in earthing, being ah, spiritually connecting to the earth, mother earth and there, there is a form of technology available in earthing to do with, what they call biofeedback. It's a biofeedback in terms of the energy, you know the negative ions to come back into the body. Because we live in such a positive ion environment at the moment, it's acidic and it's a bit poisonous and you know it can cause a lot of illness and ill-health and even mental, you know including the mind, it can alter and affect the mind and cause ill-health, mental ill health. So you know, to look at the biofeedback essence of you know, essence in resonance and being able to reconnect into the negative ion, the moth, mother earth and you know, that's where you get the negative ions, so it's kind of like an electrical alternative, you know energy medicine situation and there's a lot of information available through history and Internet and everywhere in Australia to, about that such, but it's a very offbeat area that corporate government and corporate education don't go into and have basically outlawed for various reasons because of the 1920s they, they ah they censored and suppressed alternative energy medicine, electromagnetic medicine in the forms of residence Technologies that could heal certain kinds of illnesses and, in the body and, and particularly the inverse electromagnetic field called scale electromagnetics, it's not you know cause presently we just use the transverse you know external phase electromagnetics which is only 50% of the available electrical energy in nature, which is a bit of a shame. But yeah I just see feel as though we should be looking at you know, tuning into the mother Earth, because we're in an extinction event at the moment, if you look globally at human beings, the way it's all being run, it's a, there's a lot of imbalance everywhere and yeah, nah, we're living, reaching all levels of extremity and we need to you know, recognise we need to go back to the centre, to the balance, to find a, between, you know like, I'm not talking, I'm not an extremist, I try to look to compromise you know, in my thinking

KL: Mm

**KMI\_08:** but yeah that's how I look at it, but you know it's like a three in one deal you know, like the Trinity, three in one? You know you got like ah like the caduceus circuit or the kundalini circuit, you got the three in one and you go for the middle pillar and the middle pillar is called the tree of life and on the right's, opposite, on, no it's polarity, like everything's polarity and you look at the positive and the negative, in terms of the you know the tree of good and the tree of evil, they're just polarities you know and then in the middle one

is the, is the diametric or the diamagnetic you know, or you know, the balance point, or the central point you know and so that's a good place to be, if you can get there in life, you know because the rough-and-tumble and the, and the chaos that goes on in life, where you gotta try to balance and you know order, with disorder

KL: yeah

**KMI\_08:** so you know that's, you know, disease is related to disorder

KL: yeah

**KMI\_08:** at a energy level

KL: yeah

**KMI\_08:** so you know we get it back into order well, you know its part of the healing

KL: yeah, mm. Alrighty, look thank you very much for your time and

**KMI\_08:** you're welcome

KL: appreciate your contribution thank you

**KMI\_08:** you're welcome

KL: fantastic

Interviewee KMI_09	
Date	11/11/2016

KL: interview with \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>, an informant, as a young man, young Aboriginal man, with tribal connections .

**KMI\_09:** I am from this region.

KL: and you can elaborate if you, if you want

**KMI\_09:** yep, I'm the father of four young sons; I grew up in Alice Springs here. Family connections to within this region of Alice and currently I'm ah, I took on the employment position in town, I been here for job for over three years now.

KL: wow fantastic and look thank you very much for your time. So we'll start off with the first question is that, what do you think about the idea of an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_09:** I think it's a wonderful idea, I think it's, we've been waiting a long time for something like this. I think it's really, really powerful for a number of reasons. I think one of the main ones is because it will give us men a space to connect with each other to express our thoughts and feelings, to heal and as part of that I think it ah, I think it's important that, I think it will embed belief in our men that we as Aboriginal men can, can take control of the situation, the sort of the social dysfunction in town here and around the area and also I think it's important too because it shows non-Indigenous, the non-Indigenous community and government that hey, we as Aboriginal men know the best way to deal with our problems

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** so I think it's a really, really powerful idea and it's been a long time coming I think

KL: mm thank you. Then to the next question are you aware that if there's any Men's Shed in the, in the community?

**KMI\_09:** no I'm, I'm not aware of anything I've been seeing the ads on TV and that about Men's Shed ideas and that. I think it's sort of more about sort of non-Indigenous men because that's the faces who I've been seen on these ads apart from one old fella

KL: yep

**KMI\_09:** But um, you know I didn't really sort of connect with it because in that ad I seen, you know tools and things that weren't sort of Aboriginal or Indigenous, so I didn't really connect with that ad and that idea, but speaking with you over the last couple of days and you explaining this to me, I think it's yeah, really powerful idea

KL: yeah no worries thank you. That leads us nicely into this next question in regards to Aboriginal empowerment. What do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_09:** that's a big question. I think one of the main things that empowers Aboriginal men is obviously our culture. I think and, and cultural practice because I think, you know when we practice culture it seems to appear that all men have a role and a responsibility in that space, whereas in contemporary society we see that a lot of our men don't feel that they have a space and a integral part to play within the community, so I think, number one it's probably culture, on the, on a similar level is this thing about respect. People showing Aboriginal men respect and also I think when Aboriginal men are shown love and care from their families and other people around them, institutions, organisations. When people feel loved and cared, people, that can, that's a really powerful thing that because, um I was talking with somebody the other day and we were talking about emotions and how you know like, when we, when we sort of ah, have, have interactions and that with our old men, I've seen our old men weep and cry to other men and I think that's really, really special thing that and, but I think that's something that's missing, with younger generations is that we have this silly idea that if you cry or you show you're your emotions, that your week but with some of my work here at.

**KMI\_09:** with some old, old sort of footage and that, there's footage of men crying and showing emotions. I think when you're able to do that you can heal properly

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** it's sort of like we've got this brick wall around our tummies and where our emotions centre is and it's really hard to sort of penetrate that brick wall

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** but when I sit with, like um, my old grandfathers and that, they're the softest man that I know

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** they really, really soft men and they, and they just ah, care about everybody all their families and

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** everybody around them, so this concept of love is, sometimes it's really hard for Aboriginal men to even talk about it let alone, sort of express it and feel it back, but I think we really need to explore this concept of love, because it's something that I think is missing from a big percentage of our men at the moment. Not saying that we don't love

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** or love each other. Or love other people

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_09:** I just think that the expression of that love is a little bit muddled up at the moment

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** Yep

KL: right, no that is so true, young fella, that is so, so true

**KMI\_09:** mm

KL: just on the, the structured question again, what are the barriers that disempower Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_09:** I, I think there's a lot out there, I think things like racism it's just rife in our community and that's a definite barrier. I think that we actually create barriers in ourselves with a sort of victim mentality approach

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_09:** that's a huge barrier. That's sort of like locking your mind up in jail

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** and you sort of got no release or no freedom. I think sometimes you know our, our community is and, and our lives have sorts of involved to a point where, we're our own worst enemies and I think that's something that creates barriers as well because people always sort of worried about their welfare and you know

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

their protection around their own people and I think that, that's a shame that we've gotten to this point, but I totally understand why we're at this point in time

KL: yeah, mm

**KMI\_09:** and I think that Aboriginal men taking control of this, of this whole process and this vision of Ken's, of yours, I think is a, is a major step forward because

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** once we start believing as Aboriginal men that we can influence our own lives and our family's lives, well we can start moving forward in a positive way. But that victim mentality in us creates the biggest barriers for Aboriginal men, which then creates barriers for all our families and our family members and our children and everybody that's around us. As soon as we can start believing that we have power and that we can access love and respect, well then we can move forward in ways that people have never ever seen before

KL: yeah, well thank you very much

**KMI\_09:** the other thing too, just quickly

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** I think that government systems and western systems, don't allow us to be able to move forward in the ways that we do, so what I think that, although I've talked about Aboriginal men and how we sort of sit within ourselves, I think that western systems have a really, really big responsibility to start respecting Aboriginal people and start to be a bit more flexible and bit more sort of acknowledging of our ideas and our solutions on how to move forward, because too many places I go to, it's always this top down approach where white man ways are always sitting on top of Aboriginal ways of being and I think that's wrong and I think it's disrespectful and, it's sort of like we both have roles in this. Aboriginal men have a role in this to free ourselves, but the system also has to be flexible enough and giving enough to give us space and room to come up with solutions from our own selves

KL: Yeah, mm, yep so that was the next question, look is there anything that you feel that you want to add because that sort of completes our structured questions

**KMI\_09:** mm hm

KL: so is there anything that you know, that you see from a, you know an Aboriginal man's perspective that you want to add to this sorta kinda or any comments that you want to make a final comment?

**KMI\_09:** yes sort of what I guess my comment sort of feed into the last point that I made about western systems

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** always controlling Aboriginal ways of being and I'll just, I'll just say something that all of us Aboriginal men have experienced and we've witnessed and this is to do with Aboriginal culture. Now when we go into a cultural context for a cultural setting, everything flows beautifully because there's, there's strong governance around it and the simple fact is the reason why it flows so naturally and beautifully and it's a really caring environment is because there's no white man input. It is totally controlled by our Aboriginal senior men and women

KL: yep

**KMI\_09:** and I've observed this many times

KL: yep

**KMI\_09:** where we can be in a setting or a context or an environment where, it's sort of clouded by western thinking and western sort of top-down approaches. But when we go into environments where Aboriginal people are in full control, it's just a total situ, it, it's a total different situation

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** and you know it's, it's, it's really, really clear to me that the, the common denominator in all of that is, people taking control of their own well-being

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** and it's not controlled by outsiders

KL: yeah, mm

**KMI\_09:** yep, so I think this vision of yours is a really, really powerful one and I hope that people can get behind it and support it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_09:** and because I think that it's been a long time coming and something that's controlled by Aboriginal men for Aboriginal men is a really, really special vision and we all sort of need to get behind it

KL: mm. On that note look thank you very much young fella for your time. Thank you appreciate it

**KMI\_09:** thank you

KL: all right ta

Interviewee Tyson Carmody	
Date	21/9/2016

KL: it's 21 September 2016. I'm here with the interview with Tyson Carmody from \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> school. Ah thank you very much for participating in this interview Joseph

**TC:** you're right, you're welcome

KL: sorry Tyson laughs

**TC:** Tyson laughs

KL: sorry Tyson

**TC:** you're right

KL: now the first question is, is this, in regards to what do you think about a Men's Shed for Aboriginal men?

**TC:** I think it's a good thing to have, yeah it's, it's something that's to provide a space for the Aboriginal men to go to and to feel safe so

KL: are you aware of any men's share in the community at all?

**TC:** yeah so I've utilised the one at Congress

KL: yes

**TC:** um, personally and also through work with taking young people there

KL: yep, mm hm

**TC:** Um, on a regular basis so

KL: so what can you tell us about that?

**TC:** Um we just try to engage our young people in, into the service there so they can learn about what services are there, what's available for them. So that if they need to, they feel comfortable to go there, um and they've met and know the people working there

KL: mm

**TC:** so they've got a relationship and it, so that you know, they don't have to rely on me as a staff member, or other people. They know, I can go there, get this help for this issue, this health issue or

KL: yeah

**TC:** I can just go there and use the weights, use the gym to do some fitness stuff so

KL: wow, so um, you've used the ah Men's Shed

**TC:** mm hm

KL: how many times have you used it?

**TC:** Ah recently not a lot, that previously we would go once a week

KL: wow

**TC:** Um with our young people so

KL: wow

**TC:** on a set day we'd aim to meet

KL: wow

**TC:** and to do different activities, so

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

KL: um, just asking on the programme. Do you think that programme's running the right way? For um, advocate of men, or for the community?

**TC:** um, I guess, you know there's always room for improvement

KL: mm

**TC:** and that's why I look at, the thing, anything I do, or anything that I see around me, you know like there's um, yeah so there's definitely room for improvement in terms of maybe, I'm not too sure like there's, when I talk too, especially the younger people

KL: mm

**TC:** they don't really know about it too much

KL: yeah yeah

**TC:** well they know about it but they don't feel like it's a place for them, it's for older men

KL: yeah

**TC:** yeah so um, that's part, part of the reason why we try and take them there too

KL: can we just tease out to that aspects of old, you know it's only a place for, it's been seen as a, only a place for an older man

**TC:** mm

KL: how could we, how could that place be made to be used for younger men?

**TC:** um, yeah I'm not too sure like I guess, um, you know with, with our school we try and go there to try and break that down a bit

KL: yeah

**TC:** but then like um, it's, it's hard because they just have that section and when we go there, there is always just older men there

KL: yeah okay

**TC:** utilising the services there

KL: mm hm

**TC:** which is, you know. So um, I don't know whether we have, if there's capacity to have a separate place for younger fellas to do things as they often do, when we do walk in sometimes they do feel shame that there's older men there

KL: mm hm

**TC:** all that kind of stuff and, and maybe the older men feel the same if there's young blokes walking through I'm not too sure

KL: yeah

**TC:** um, but maybe a, yeah possibly a separate place then, um something that can bridge the two as well

KL: yeah

**TC:** so that it's not just always young, old and we need to be able to bridge that gap

KL: mm

**TC:** particularly in this day and age

KL: and it's also the unknown aspects of, you know

**TC:** mm hm

KL: *thampartey*<sup>3</sup> you know, like there's *thampartey* over there so we can't really go there or

**TC:** yeah, yep

KL: you know. Um, so I guess um, that's why um, looking at you know how we can sorta like improve the programme would be listening to these kind of information that you're just sharing

**TC:** mm hm yes

KL: now what are the best parts of the Men's Sheds? Is it the place or the programme?

**TC:** um, I think it's, for me personally it's a mixture of both like

KL: yeah

**TC:** I, I know I can go there and get what I need support with, um for my health or what, however I'm feeling you know?

<sup>3</sup> A person with a cultural avoidance relationship

KL: mm

**TC:** um, and I'm, I'm comfortable with that and I understand all of that sort of stuff so, um...

**TC:** in terms of, yeah like, I guess, tryin', in terms of the space, it's always for me like, I think if we can try and, and I know it's only a small space there, but try and open it up a bit

KL: mm hm

**TC:** and so that's really a good outdoor area, so that you know, there are places for a fire pit, all that kinda stuff that

KL: yeah, mm hm

**TC:** just simple things like that. The actual layout of the place

KL: yep

**TC:** help the feel of it and

KL: yes yes

**TC:** I think at the moment it feels very clinical

KL: yes, mm hm

**TC:** for me anyway so

KL: yeah. No, that's, that's the whole idea

**TC:** yeah

KL: of getting you know

**TC:** yeah

KL: your side of the story as your, as the informant. What are some of the things that you didn't like about it?

**TC:** um, I guess there's, not so much that I didn't like but I, mainly what I, like what I was just saying yeah just the layout

KL: yeah

**TC:** the clinical feel, like yes alright you're going to see a doctor and it needs to be, that sort of standard of um hygiene and all that kind of stuff there

KL: yeah

**TC:** to be um ...

KL: so you highlighted you know, the improvement should be more spacious

**TC:** mm

KL: Um, more open

**TC:** mm hm

KL: and um, you know, less clinical

**TC:** yeah, yeah

KL: or the feel of you know being clinical

**TC:** yeah yeah, yep

KL: mm. Um, is there um, anything else you want, sorta might want to comment on that area with regards to...?

**TC:** Um maybe, another thing I just thought of too was about accessing sort of, I'm not sure if

KL: building yeah

**TC:** yeah the access but also, like bush medicine and traditional healers through that avenue like

KL: yep

**TC:** I'm not sure if you're able to do that through there or ... I think if that's not happening it would be a good thing to happen. That'll, that'll go a long way to helping people feel comfortable

KL: that's right, yep

**TC:** and feel belonging there so

KL: oh fantastic

**TC:** yeah

KL: now with the term Aboriginal empowerment

**TC:** mm hm

KL: you know, what's um, what comes to your mind when you think about empower, what Aborig, what empowers Aboriginal men? What do you think?

**TC:** I think when the feeling valued

KL: yeah  
**TC:** um, and you know think there's a, there's a saying you know, 'a person who feels valued will go above and beyond'  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** 'what is expected of them' and so um, yeah if, if that, four empowerment of Aboriginal men or for any person really, if you're feeling valued about who you are and what you have, what you know, your skills, regardless of where you've come from  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** that's really, along, goes a long way to empowering that person, that group or whatever you know, so and really like truly valuing, despite um, there might be some challenging or difficult behaviours of that particular individual. But if we focus on what, a few good things about that person, really highlight that stuff, they can focus on those good things about themselves too. Rather than "alright I'm no good because I'm a drunk".  
KL: mm  
**TC:** or "I'm no good because I bash my wife" or whatever  
KL: yeah yeah  
**TC:** um, well actually no you can teach, you're really good at teaching young fellas about language and stuff  
KL: mm  
**TC:** that's really good and we'll work on that and  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** when they're feeling good about that, they're in a better space to actually address these other issues  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um, well that's what I think about it  
KL: no that's fantastic so um, just an elaboration on that is um, what would an empowered person look like? You know in the community, what do you see as empowered men in the community?  
**TC:** um, someone who is empowered I guess is, you know really proud about who they are, what, where they come from. The knowledge that they hold and um, I guess having a clear sight of where they're going  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** or even if they don't have a clear sight they're sort of, they're strong enough in themselves, oh no regardless of what happens ahead  
KL: mm hm  
**TC:** um, I can handle that situation  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** so they're feeling, and almost that sort of chest out sort of thing so  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um, yeah and and confident in themselves and knowing what they do, but also um understanding, you know alright I made a mistake there, but I can learn from that  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** that sort of thing so yeah  
KL: okay. What are the um, some of the things that disempowers Aboriginal men?  
**TC:** I guess that's the opposite of being valued is being devalued and having, and being perceived, you know having that own perception of themselves and say "oh I'm not valued because I'm, can't access this, or I can't get to that, or I'm told I'm no good, or I'm told I'm a drunk" or whatever it may be. Ah and for, for our young people they're told they're no good because either they've been kicked out of school or they've been kicked out of the house so they're not feeling valued from those sorts of things  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um, and yeah so when it, you know someone is not feeling valued, it's, they don't value themselves really  
KL: yeah, mm hm

**TC:** and it's hard for them to look at themselves in any good light, because everyone around them they feel is not looking at them in that same light  
KL: mm  
**TC:** so, yeah  
KL: oh thank you very much  
**TC:** mm hm  
KL: now with um, Aboriginal mens access to programs that could empower men  
**TC:** mm hm  
KL: what would you sorta kinda see as some of the programmes or um, or a suggestion that you would have to, that would empower Aboriginal men?  
**TC:** I think for me, less is more  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** and sometimes I know in the school setting we try and offer lots of things, you know fun activities and different things and the young people don't know what to choose, you know?  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um and then there's too much to choose from and it's overwhelming and then it, "nah I don't want to do any of that"  
KL: mm  
**TC:** but if there's small easy steps that are reachable goals and then they tick something off and they're feeling good, oh alright I've just done something  
KL: mm  
**TC:** you know to the next step. So for me, the programmes um, I guess it's not really, it depends on what you know, I guess, for me it's not about what the programme is about, it's about how the programme is delivered and  
KL: mm  
**TC:** in a way that the person that were meant to be delivering it to can understand it in their own mind, in their own language, in their own words  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um perception. So it's not about, "oh I understand it this way so it should be easy for you"  
KL: mm  
**TC:** no no, it's about, well let that person contemplate what the information is, what the programme is about and when they understand it, then they'll get something out of it  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** 'cause they can nod their head and go yeah, yeah, no worries and then, they walk out the gate it's all gone  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** left then inside, you know like they would have been, we want programmes that men, young fellas, anyone. Take information away with them and hold it and use it to you know  
KL: mm  
**TC:** um and that's why I think the smaller, less is more sort of stuff and easier, reachable goals  
KL: so with then Aboriginal Men's Shed, what would sorta kinda programmes and what would that look like in, in your, your mind?  
**TC:** um, for me in my mind I guess there'd be, there'd be a balance between having a set structure, but also having sort of flexibility. So it's being able to bend and work with the people who are coming  
KL: mm  
**TC:** and you know, all, all Aboriginal men are different in every, in a lot of different ways and there are some similarities but we all have different life experiences so we look at, we could be looking at the same thing differently you know so  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** we need to be able to work with that

KL: yes  
**TC:** um and be flexible and be understanding and patient with that  
KL: yep  
**TC:** Um and I guess patience for me is really important to because, you know if you get a bloke who's 25 years old, he's lived his whole life a certain way and then we got a programme here to try and change his thinking  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** it's not gonna happen over two weeks, one year. It's gonna take a long time you know  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** for him to, one, comprehend what you're tryin' to do, but also to actually change his way of thinking  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** because yeah it, you know if you've lived your whole life one, a certain way, so I guess yeah being, having a set structure there, but also being flexible  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** maybe I, I, for the next half an hour, we're doing this sort of work  
KL: mm hm  
**TC:** and then after that we'll have a bit of a break and then we'll have you know half, for me half an hour is like  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** good timing for, for, for young fellas particularly so, yeah. I guess for me it's not so much about what the content is, it's about how it is  
KL: yeah. What, where would be the best place for an Aboriginal Men's Shed to be developed?  
**TC:** um, that's a tricky one because, you know the location where it is now is pretty good because it's easily accessible  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** for a lot of blokes in town. But I sort of like the feel of being out of town bit too so you can have that sense of, oh this is, we're secure here  
KL: mm  
**TC:** away from other people who maybe  
**TC:** you know people walking past the gates can't hear what you talking about  
KL: mm  
**TC:** and all, all that kind of stuff. There's that balance of, do you have it where it's easily accessible in town or do you have it just out of town and... or maybe a bit of both so that  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** but for me, in terms of, like my experiences working in the school here, whenever we try and do activities or programmes around our, the well-being of young people at the school, it just doesn't work  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** as soon as we go somewhere else, it's so much easier. Out bush or out of town or another place  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um it just, it's a better, the young people are more settled and they're like, a captured audience  
KL: mm hm  
**TC:** so they can listen and they'll, they'll talk and they'll all that kind stuff. But when they're here at the school, it's a lot more distracting for them  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** and they don't feel comfortable talking about whatever they're feeling  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** with other kids around or whatever  
KL: yep, yep  
**TC:** and maybe that could be happening at the current location

KL: that's right. Look we're pretty much gonna come to the end in here  
**TC:** mm hm  
KL: but um, um, is there sorta kinda anything that, that um you'd like to say that we may have sort of left out in the, you know in this sort of structured question? Is there anything that you know, you want to share, that um we might need to think about in the future if we're going down the path of developing an Aboriginal Men's Shed.  
**TC:** I think there needs to be a strong connection with the schools in town  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** um, I just see that's really important for like, for both the young people but also for the Men's Shed, but also, the old, you know like, we often hear about older mob saying "oh we need young people to stand up and take the baton on and take,  
KL: mm  
**TC:** take that next step. And then young people sorta saying at the other end, old people don't trust us with that stuff and  
KL: mm  
**TC:** and so how do we bridge that so that there is that sort of  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** two-way stuff because it, you know there is that thing with modern technology and everything, it's a different world now  
KL: yes  
**TC:** compared to when that older mob were younger  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** and um I think there's that sort of misunderstanding of, you know, perception "oh you young people don't respect anything because all you want to worry about..." and then Young people thought of saying "well you mob don't..."  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** and so there's this back and forth sort of stuff  
KL: so there's a lot of miscommunication between  
**TC:** yeah, yeah, yeah. We all want the same thing but where sort of, yeah  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** and young people, well they are young people who want to step up  
KL: mm  
**TC:** but not quite sure how to and feeling maybe if they try to step up they'll get shot down  
KL: mm  
**TC:** and older people saying "you mob need to step up but you mob need to do it this way" and then young people say "nah nah that doesn't work for us"  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** yeah um, so I think with the Men's Shed, if there was a good strong connection with the schools  
KL: yep  
**TC:** and programs for positive engagement with young people and elders and  
KL: yep  
**TC:** ah we try and do that with our school our self with family and stuff, but I think if we can do it in a, more of the community sense  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** that'll go a long way to bridging that sort of generational gap  
KL: yeah  
**TC:** because  
KL: I think that's, that's it, it's a, we've got to identify that generational gap  
**TC:** mm hm  
KL: and then actually really work at it from both sides  
**TC:** yeah exactly, yeah and respectfully and safely too  
KL: exactly, yeah

**TC:** and that's, men's places is a place (inaudible)  
**KL:** no one is losing anything  
**TC:** no  
**KL:** everyone's gaining something  
**TC:** yeah but if we don't get that right, then that Next Generation aren't going to get up properly  
**KL:** that's right  
**TC:** and then we'll lose the generation after that  
**KL:** yep  
**TC:** um and that culture will lose that next step  
**KL:** yeah  
**TC:** you know which is ...  
**KL:** oh fantastic  
**TC:** well that's the way I see it anyway  
**KL:** yeah, nah that's great  
**TC:** mm  
**KL:** look um, ah Tyson, thank you very much for your time  
**TC:** ah thank you  
**KL:** and really appreciate you honest answers to all response to the questions, fantastic  
**TC:** no worries  
**KL:** um so we'll um finish up the interview now, thank you very much  
**TC:** thank you  
**KL:** yeah ta  
**TC:** hopefully we'll see some good things come out of this  
**KL:** yes yes



Interviewee KMI_21	
Date	15/09/2016

**KL:** thank you very much for your time  
**KMI\_21:** no problem  
**KL:** yeah if I could just run through a couple of questions in regards to this Men's Shed idea?  
**KMI\_21:** yep  
**KL:** and um, so the first question goes like this, is um what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?  
**KMI\_21:** I think it's very important for our men in Central Australia and especially in Alice Springs because they are limited facilities for men. For men not only to be a group of men, but to do things in a group, a collective. Or a few blokes together maybe doin' things you know? Whether it's woodwork or anything, just sittin' down or doin' exercise or whatever. Things like that. they need to be able to have a safe place to come to and it's a form of shelter for our men  
**KL:** yeah, mm. Now, is there a Men's Shed in the community at all that you know of? Or ...?  
**KMI\_21:** I think there's a Men's Shed for the general community, the non-Aboriginal community you could say. Ah, that's only started recently in the last 12 months or so, so I think that some of the blokes that come to us might feel a bit intimidated by going to that facility and using it, but the, mainly because of um, I don't know if you can say some of our mob are scared of white people or don't want to mix at that level with white people  
**KL:** yeah, yep  
**KMI\_21:** maybe they're scared of them, maybe they don't like white people, I don't know  
**KL:** I, I think you're, you're right there  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
**KL:** because it's, it's, it's, it's a communication issue  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** different languages, different culture, different attitudes, different standards  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and our mob are, well I know even my mother nowadays, she still thinks of white people like the old police  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** she's a little bit scared a white fellas  
**KL:** mm  
**KMI\_21:** and I'm sure some of these fellas have still got that sort of attitude you know? That white people are the  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** the bad people, ha, I shouldn't say that but ...  
**KL:** yeah, no but um ...  
**KMI\_21:** they scared of 'em  
**KL:** well seeing this is where the relationship hasn't really blossomed  
**KMI\_21:** mm  
**KL:** as much as we'd like to think it has  
**KMI\_21:** mm, mm  
**KL:** so with this other facility have you been there all or ...?  
**KMI\_21:** no I haven't but it's been on my list of things to do but quite honestly I was a bit scared about going there myself  
**KL:** yeah, yeah  
**KMI\_21:** um, I don't know if there is the word but  
**KL:** hesitant  
**KMI\_21:** yeah. I don't wanna be the only black fella there  
**KL:** yeah. Yeah true yes  
**KMI\_21:** so I've been trying to get other blokes to come with me, but

they say "oh yeah next time we'll go, next time", but  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and I think I know some of them blokes that go to that, the non-Aboriginal fellas you know?  
**KL:** yes, yes, yep  
**KMI\_21:** I can't say they're my friends but I know them and you know it might be good if we did just to remind them  
**KL:** yeah, mm  
**KMI\_21:** that there's another mob in this town  
**KL:** mm. now was that, do you, are you aware that the, what kind of programs they run there or ...?  
**KMI\_21:** I think they've been set up and I'm only just guessing and from what people have told me that they do the normal Men's Shed type activities which is you know maybe fix a car, do some woodwork, maybe stand around, maybe have a few beers and have a talk and a laugh. Which is how most Men's Sheds that I know of around  
**KL:** yeah, mm hm  
**KMI\_21:** the rest of Australia are set up. It's to try and get blokes to go and you know tell people about their troubles, or to show other blokes that they've got skills that they want to pass on  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** whether that might be a mechanic, or carpenter or something like that  
**KL:** yeah. So that would be sorta kinda one of the best parts of actually sharing  
**KMI\_21:** mm  
**KL:** skills  
**KMI\_21:** mm  
**KL:** in that kind of  
**KMI\_21:** mm  
**KL:** environment  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** so um, our fellas, they got different skills of course  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and you know that could be like language and culture, um lot of the old blokes have got skills in, you know making leather belts and that sort of stuff, but because of the way our mob are going they're, it's a dying art now. So we need to harness the knowledge that these older fellas of ours have got. Whether it's making boomerang or even fixing cars, you know there's not many cars that a home mechanic can fix now  
**KL:** yes  
**KMI\_21:** it's all computerised  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** but you know we've all seen our mob fix them computerised cars, I've seen them out bush  
**KL:** yes, yes  
**KMI\_21:** I can't do it but I've seen them mob do it  
**KL:** so something along that line would be a good program?  
**KMI\_21:** yeah. But there's not a, you know we can do things with, say like the school groups, with some of our  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** our elders, if you wanna call them that. Blokes of stature  
**KL:** yes, yeah  
**KMI\_21:** because a lot of these school kids are lost in regards to their Aboriginality  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** they don't really know who their families are. They know their immediate family but they don't really know who they are related to in this town  
**KL:** yeah

**KMI\_21:** and I think it's due to the families, they don't know  
**KL:** yeah. So I s'pose then, going onto a kinda, just elaborating a bit more on the power or the empowerment  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
**KL:** what do you think would empower an Aboriginal person or an Aboriginal man?  
**KMI\_21:** I think a bit of recognition of what they got to offer  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** because most Aboriginal men have been told that, or experienced, I think you can call it, forms of racism. But it's, be very hard to actually identify but things like, 'all Aboriginal men are perpetrators of violence'  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** of all things are bad and they have nothing useful to offer. Um, I think we've all got it, some of that baggage if you want to call it that, in our hearts that we've been indoctrinated by the system, where you open up a newspaper, you listen to the news and it's always Aboriginal men who do these bad things around town. Whether it's drinkin' in or smashin' people's houses or fighting and that sort of stuff. But, you know there's a lot of good men out there  
**KL:** yep  
**KMI\_21:** but we never hear or see  
**KL:** yeah, so with the men that are out there, how do we actually identify and empower the men that's doing well? How do we ...?  
**KMI\_21:** that's a good question and I'm not sure that we can, I'm sure we all can put out names of people  
**KL:** mm hm  
**KMI\_21:** we do like a, I don't know if you could call it a poll. But I'm sure all of us could sit down in a group and say "look, find some good men and I'm sure we can all name people  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and bring them along  
**KL:** yes yes  
**KMI\_21:** and you know there's young, old, in between in that group. You know there's, they might be sports people, they might be hard workers, they might be stock men, they might be a truck driver or something like that. Or they might be unemployed  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** so they're, there's, they're out there but we never hear about these mob  
**KL:** yeah so they, they're a  
**KMI\_21:** we only hear the bad stuff  
**KL:** silent majority  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
**KL:** because they're not getting into trouble  
**KMI\_21:** true, true  
**KL:** yeah and yet there are good men out there who are empowered  
**KMI\_21:** yeah and they all, from all the different language groups, different communities, they all there. They silent achievers if you like  
**KL:** yes, yes  
**KMI\_21:** and lot of these mob from bush are like that. They are leaders in their community, they're leaders of community, they're leaders of ceremony, they, they bosses  
**KL:** yeah. Yes  
**KMI\_21:** but when you look at 'em you think, oh yeah he's just a man  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** but they very important people  
**KL:** yes, yes  
**KMI\_21:** we gotta harness them  
**KL:** yeah  
**KMI\_21:** recognise 'em, give 'em support, give 'em encouragement

KL: yes. Now um, this leads onto what are some of the barriers I s'pose that men, men men encounter, being empowered?

**KMI\_21:** I think, this is not an excuse but this is just my view. I think the system is against Aboriginal men, because all of, any funding, any programs, any organisations that are set up, many organisations that are set up, are set up to deal with women and children

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_21:** that excludes men

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** because of that

**KMI\_21:** men participate from afar

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but even when the families are together, the men are sometimes encouraged not to participate or excluded on that basis, where a lot of the programs are aimed at women and children

KL: yeah. You're right

**KMI\_21:** very important they are, very important, but you gotta remember the man. He's an important part of the family

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** I think I might have heard you say once years ago, that the man's role has changed

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** where he was the hunter, the provider. Now he provides from the supermarket

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** gets that kangaroo tail out of the freezer

KL: yeah, that's right

**KMI\_21:** so you know the most important thing of being that warrior and the provider has been taken away from a lot of the men

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** and they, it's got that, I think most men have got that inbuilt feeling about being the warrior the provider, the, the head of the household

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but with things like The Intervention<sup>4</sup> over the last 10 years or whatever it was, it took away a lot of the responsibility and the power of men

KL: mm

**KMI\_21:** because of that and men have sort of been, more subdued. They've had to pull their head in really

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_21:** and just take a backward step, plus try and support their families in whichever way they can but there's limited job opportunities for our men and a lot of men just don't have the skills to work

KL: yeah. We, we, with the job obviously, the industry has changed you reckon?

**KMI\_21:** oh yeah, um if you look at the education levels and you gotta have a little bit of education nowadays you know reading writing skills. We found here that the reading and writing skills of the blokes, when they come here and they write their name down they can barely do that

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but if you ask a woman or a young girl to do the same they can, they can write their name quite easily. They can read and write much better than the men

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** and I think that's due to the way the school system has been set up, um where men and young blokes are not encouraged to stay in school

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** if they get outta line they get kicked out or told not to come back

KL: yeah and then there's no industry to actually employ 'em

**KMI\_21:** yeah

KL: there's no, where like um, cattle industry was the only

**KMI\_21:** yep

KL: place to go

**KMI\_21:** yep

KL: and people were able to

**KMI\_21:** yep that's true

KL: going a useful and productive employment

**KMI\_21:** yep

KL: but also had a certain level of prestige

**KMI\_21:** yes, yes. Prestige it was, it was, people were very proud, the families were proud, the individual was proud, the communities were proud. These blokes you know, that had those skills, they were specialists, they were tradesmen

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but now, what role do these fellas have now? They might get a job on the shire, you know drivin' a tractor, pickin' up rubbish 'n' stuff

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_21:** you know that's, it's not, like good luck to 'em, but there's no prestige in that

KL: yes, yeah

**KMI\_21:** you know we see 'em all with the high vis clothes on but

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** you know it's ...

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** it might be, the high vis might be the equivalent of the cowboy hats years ago

KL: yeah. Yeah

**KMI\_21:** when we was kids, all the old cowboys

KL: yeah, but in, in, in your comparison, is there a, how would you compare that?

**KMI\_21:** I don't reckon this is good

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** because it was a highly skilled industry

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** and the white fellas that employed our mob, they were tough with our mob

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** they give 'em a hiding, they kicked 'em up the arse, all this sorta stuff

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** belted 'em, treated 'em bad most of them. But some treated 'em like their brothers

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but nowadays with the advent of the shires and you know community councils have gone now but when you're working round the community doing you know, general community maintenance, it's, it's not the same I reckon

KL: yep. So there's [inaudible] sorta kinda re programmes, that are

like um, could empower men, is there some programmes that you know, we should think about?

**KMI\_21:** I think there's many opportunities even getting men to be able to use a computer for instance

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** it's a skill that everyone, simple things like the ATM it is

KL: yeah, mm hm

**KMI\_21:** and a telephone. Most men have got a telephone now, whether you're from bush or here in town. You gotta know

**KMI\_21:** which button to press

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** you gotta know how to put your code in, all of that sort of stuff

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** but it'd be good to read, well everyone knows about text messages, causes a lot of conflict in communities but you know you've gotta know how to read and write english nowadays. You gotta know how to speak a reasonable english language also

KL: now could that um, like reading and writing aspects be something that a Men's Shed could run?

**KMI\_21:** I reckon. For sure. Definitely computer skills, I'm sure it could be done. Get a bank of computers, they don't have to be new. They could be second hand that someone could donate. Get people to do simple, we've talked about this before but we've never been able to get it up and running is, get blokes who come in to write up their resumé, themselves

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** Get 'em to type it out, put their name in, their age, their experience. You could have a template there that they just work off, but they do it themselves and that'll give them a little bit of pride and ownership of what they do

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** then send it off in an email form

KL: yep

**KMI\_21:** or even print it off and take it with them and go to the, I don't know Tangentyere job shop or something like that

KL: yes and um, I s'pose this leads to a question outside the square, when you look at jobs being advertised you actually got to have internet access

**KMI\_21:** yep

KL: you've got to apply online

**KMI\_21:** yep, yep

KL: so how do you reckon that pans out with some ...

**KMI\_21:** It'd be very difficult and I was one of the ones that complained, within Congress about that because I said that will exclude our men

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** because I see a lot of the men that come here and say they want a job, I'll say "look, you have to, you can't just go there and write your name on a piece of paper any more

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** you gotta put it in in this electronic form. People will help you up at the HR section but you've got to display that you've got those skills nowadays

KL: yeah, yep

**KMI\_21:** whether it's a bus driver or

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** an ALO, you know which most of our men would be wanting to do. You know they, they got their skills, they got the language, they got the culture, they got the networks, they know where the families live all this sorta stuff. But they don't have that electronic skills

KL: electronic skills yeah

**KMI\_21:** with the computer. And you know in an organisation like Congress even to clock on, you, you've got to have those sorts of skills

KL: yes, yep

**KMI\_21:** so it's ...

KL: Um, just starting to sort of wrap up these questions, um what, where would be the best place to have an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_21:** I think there's a number of places um, we've gotta be careful about stepping into areas where people don't want to go. Whether that's seen by the general community that it's own, didn't quite [inaudible]

KL: Yes

**KMI\_21:** families or certain tribal groups

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** or it could be too close to sacred areas. All that sort of stuff, we've got to be careful about that

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** Um, one of the things about Alice Springs is that it's, there's not much spare land anywhere

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** a lot of it is taken up by development over the years but, you know I'm sure there's places around that can be, be found but um, you know it'll take a bit of negotiation but I'm sure there's a place out there somewhere

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** that would be acceptable by everyone and is um, what's the word? Impartial

KL: yes, yep

**KMI\_21:** to everyone, so that everyone will feel free to visit it and ah, no one will say "hey that's my place, or you mob are too close to a sacred site"

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** or something like that

KL: mm

**KMI\_21:** you know there's, there's things like that

KL: that's the reality of actually you know, living in a, a society that's sort of living next to an ancient society

**KMI\_21:** yeah, yep. Like you know the town was developed before Aboriginal people got those sort of rights

KL: yes

**KMI\_21:** then white, white man's way

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** they always had it Aboriginal way but when you try and do a place like that, then someone comes along and says "you in the wrong place", you know it'd just shatter people who put it altogether. So lot of negotiations I reckon

KL: yeah, yeah

**KMI\_21:** I'm sure it can be done but

KL: mm, now is, just in, in coming to the sort of closing, is there anything that you may feel you'd like to share, that I may not have covered in this lot of questions? Is there anything that you know

**KMI\_21:** yeah

KL: you think that I may have overlooked?

**KMI\_21:** I think Ingkintja is a very important place for all men and that includes male men, initiated, young blokes old blokes, in between. It's a very important place for men, all men

KL: yeah

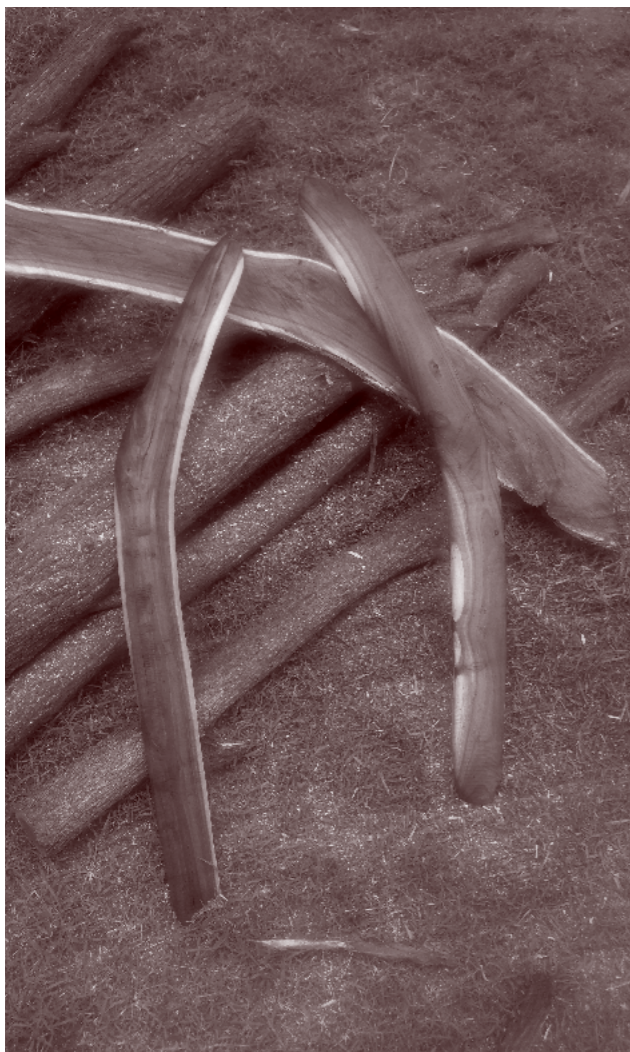
**KMI\_21:** it is a safe place for men, there's, it's a male only place. There's no females, even allowed as cleaners

KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** to come in on this place

KL: so that allows for male cleaners?

<sup>4</sup> In 2007 the Commonwealth Government announced the NT Emergency Response (known as the Intervention) as a response to The Little Children Are Sacred Report [Anderson and Wild, 2007] into the state of Aboriginal child abuse. Critics of the Intervention argued that it was a rushed and ill thought set of proposals that reflected more a conservative government agenda of mainstreaming Aboriginal services including dismantling aspects of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and introducing income management over the payment of government benefits to Aboriginal people than actually addressing the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children.



**KMI\_21:** yeah, yeah and that's not a job that most of our fellas take up  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** but um, you know we got one of the, our cleaner, he's one of the, from one of the biggest families in town, you know and  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** we're so proud that he is doin' that job  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** So um, but there's things like, it's ah all, or most Aboriginal women know that once their block comes in here, they can't follow him in or get cheeky to him,  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**KMI\_21:** so it's a safe haven  
KL: a safe place yeah  
**KMI\_21:** it's a, it's almost a refuge for men  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and were constantly getting told by women out the front of our place, "tell my husband to come out because he's taking too long"  
KL: laughs  
**KMI\_21:** I think they think that the men are seeing another woman here but  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** you know its all men  
KL: yes and look what are some of your regular visitors ah to Ingkintja, like you know what are some of the comments then?  
**KMI\_21:** look I get told all the time and this is from blokes from all tribal groups in Central Australia  
KL: yeah

**KMI\_21:** they say "this is a good place for men, we need this place here." Because there's a safe place, they can come here, they can talk about men's things whether that's  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** important secret and sacred or, just havin' a joke about some of the things. They can talk about football, they can talk about  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** the pretty girls they're looking at. All  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**KMI\_21:** of that sort of stuff. I can talk about cars They can talk about riding horses and a lot of them do that you know they, they talk about all these things that, that they've done in their lives or they want to do in their lives  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_21:** So they talk about so many different things and they can have a laugh without lookin' over their shoulder and someone tellin' 'em "hey, you can't do that here"  
KL: yeah true  
**KMI\_21:** yeah so  
KL: so  
**KMI\_21:** we try and get 'em to feel at home here  
KL: it's an empowerment of men's capacity to think  
**KMI\_21:** yeah and I even get told by Aboriginal women, "that is a good thing you do there for those men"  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** they've got somewhere safe to go. A lot of men come here just to have a sleep, because they can't sleep at home  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** there's too much noise  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** there's too much confusion, there's humbug, there's emotions, there's cars driving 'round  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_21:** so they either got to participate in what's happening at home  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** in all of that confusion and humbug and drinking and all, or they try and find somewhere, "geez, I just need to get away from 'em"  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** a chill out place  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and then none of them won't get humbugged  
KL: so you touched on a really important point there in regards to some men come here just to have a lay down  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: so um  
**KMI\_21:** when I first saw it I thought what's wrong with these fellas, they, is something wrong? Are they sick? And I've talked to a few of them and I said "are you alright?" And they said "nah, couldn't sleep last night, too many. Family come from bush, they're all drinkin' ..."  
KL: oh wow  
**KMI\_21:** " ... makin' trouble, noise, doors bangin', dogs, cars roarin' 'round, dogs barkin'". So, we've had blokes  
**KMI\_21:** geez, do we gotta get an ambulance for this bloke? He's ...  
KL: yeah, yeah, yeah  
**KMI\_21:** nah, he's just havin' a sleep  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** [inaudible]  
KL: yeah that's important  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: it's important to have, and a sleep  
**KMI\_21:** yeah

KL: and so when I actually see, ah you know countrymen say sleepin' in the lawns, it's like hang on they're just  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: enjoying  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: enjoying that space  
**KMI\_21:** yeah. No I, the first couple of times I thought, Jesus I'm worried that something is wrong with this bloke, we gotta get him in the hospital  
KL: wow  
**KMI\_21:** but he was just worn out from the night before  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** too many family, too many drunks, too many cars roarin' round, dogs barkin', doors slammin'  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_21:** all this sort of stuff  
KL: could that be something that um, as part of a, like a set up to allow for men to have a little  
**KMI\_21:** I reckon once or twice a week I get asked, "you mob got a men's shelter?"  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** that's what they say to me, a lot of these blokes  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** we need somewhere  
**KMI\_21:** for men to have a safe place to put their head down  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** where you know they can chill out, they can have a shower, wash their clothes, play music  
KL: wow  
**KMI\_21:** without being at risk  
KL: yes, yes  
**KMI\_21:** or participating in risky  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** behaviour  
KL: and I noticed that um, you know when you do sort of come here you have men, you know washing their clothes and they just got their, sittin' around in a towel  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: which is really, you know that, that is showin' that they're comfortable, you know amongst men  
**KMI\_21:** when, when they first started that service we used to provide sorta like, spare clothes. But a lot of the fellas didn't like that  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_21:** they just wanna have the  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** have the towel  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_21:** they're, they're proud to sit around and talk to one another  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** like talk and laugh and tease one another  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** all this sort of, which is great. It's a, like a family atmosphere, well a family that  
KL: while the clothes are being washed  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: while they're washing their clothes. Yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and you can see that you know there might be conflicts between different communities and tribal groups. But when, when they're here we never have any trouble here  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** it's a safe place for men

KL: mm, so even with that, with their like avoidance relationships  
**KMI\_21:** yep  
KL: you know  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: They, they've managed themselves in this space  
**KMI\_21:** yes, they do and it's, the space is not designed for what we use it for. It's just a jumble of buildings  
KL: yes  
**KMI\_21:** but they, they work all that out, yeah  
KL: wow, that is fantastic  
**KMI\_21:** without any, they know, these fellas. They know how to do it  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_21:** we don't intervene with that, they, they just do it themselves  
KL: laughs yeah wow, so  
**KMI\_21:** and no one ever says to me, you know this is rubbish place. It's only a ramshackle building  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** and stuff we got but, no one ever says, you know "it's no good". They all say, just about every day someone says "that's a good place for me"  
KL: wow  
**KMI\_21:** we love coming here  
KL: that's fantastic  
**KMI\_21:** yeah  
KL: wow  
**KMI\_21:** so with things like that it makes you feel good, you know that we're doing somethin' good for these blokes  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** but we're also tryin' to get young teenage blokes to come here also  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_21:** so they know when they get to a certain age they can continue to come here  
KL: yes, yes  
**KMI\_21:** and use the facilities  
KL: fantastic  
**KMI\_21:** mm  
KL: alright look I'll I thank you very much for your time, so we'll wrap it up and um  
**KMI\_21:** my pleasure  
KL: I, I thank you for your time  
**KMI\_21:** yeah good on ya and I appreciate you talkin' to me  
KL: no worries thank you  
**KMI\_21:** good on ya Ken  
KL: ta

‘...I think one of the main things that empowers Aboriginal men is obviously our ... cultural practice...when we practice culture it seems to appear that all men have a role and a responsibility in that space...’

(KMI\_09)

## Chapter Two: Other Australian males share their views

Interviewee KMI\_01

Date 6/10/2016

KL: ah take two. Ok the first question and, and thank you very much \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>, is that okay if I call you that?

**KMI\_01:** that's fine

KL: \_\_\_\_\_ fine okay thank you. First question, what do you think about a Men's Shed for Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_01:** yeah well the, the whole concept of having a Men's Shed empowers I suppose individuals within that framework so they've got a support system in place. So, you know I think Men's Shed's a proven successful program, certainly having a specific Indigenous Men's Shed, I think would break down some of the barriers that the Indigenous men may find themselves going to a broad Men's Shed. Alice Springs has established a Men's Shed here in Alice Springs

KL: Mm hm

**KMI\_01:** I'm not familiar of you know how many Indigenous people have taken up the opportunity to engage in the, in that Men's Shed there and certainly that would be something for you to look at, but ah I think it's a proven concept, it's a great opportunity, certainly for Indigenous males to, I suppose seek some support, comfort, direction and certainly assist them in any sort of endeavour that seems to trouble them

KL: Yeah and I suppose um, well you mentioned the one that we already have and, and the difficulties of probably accessing that

**KMI\_01:** Yep

KL: and I suppose the programs would have to be different, so what, what, would be your suggestion in regards to kind of programs that we could run in the, the Indigenous Men's Shed?

**KMI\_01:** Yep, well certainly from my understanding of the Men's Shed is geared up in you regards to mental health

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_01:** for, for ah, obviously it's the self being, self-worth type entity there so, I think particularly if you're looking at the Indigenous Men's Shed, you'd be looking at a place where men can seek some supports, some seek some direction if they're feeling troubled, you know if there's any sort of area of concern, I think certainly if you, if you look at issues affecting Indigenous men, in and around Central Australia

KL: Mm hm

**KMI\_01:** domestic violence features quite prominently, you know certainly in the criminal space that I sort of operate in, I know it's an area where we look at in regards to developing programs

KL: yeah

**KMI\_01:** for men in regards to, you know change behavioural programs, that sort of stuff. I think there's also any sort of programs you need there, need to you know, pick people up, you know provide them with a sense of direction, a sense of worth, a sense of belonging

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_01:** you know they, they need to be aligned to skills

KL: Yes

**KMI\_01:** But you know skills that they can take back to the, you know to the family environment, so coping mechanism skills

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_01:** But also skills which lead to you know, full time employment or part-time employment

KL: yeah

**KMI\_01:** so you're looking at I suppose, skills that they can develop internally

KL: Mm, yeah

**KMI\_01:** to make them feel stronger

KL: Mm hm

**KMI\_01:** in areas where they perhaps ah don't feel as strong, but also programs in regards to, you know a set of skills, or skill areas where they can, as I said

KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** lead to long term employment, part-time employment or areas of interest and the like

KL: so I suppose there's no kind of like real cultural orientation for Aboriginal men to come into mainstream culture so would, would a program somethin', you know along that line maybe useful to actually culturally orientate Aboriginal people into the mainstream? Because there's nothing like that happening

**KMI\_01:** okay. To my knowledge I'm not sure

KL: Oh

**KMI\_01:** so it certainly enlightens me in that regards but, certainly I think there's a, there's an, an area of you know cultural orientation for, for all manners of

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_01:** you know, different cultures so certainly cultural awareness

KL: Yeah. Just that, there's cultural awareness being conducted for people that go out and work in remote communities

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

**KMI\_01:** Yep  
KL: there's nothing for them when they come into town  
**KMI\_01:** Yep  
KL: Cause do you know like, I think, you know, something maybe we could explore?  
**KMI\_01:** Yep. I suppose the only comment I have is what would that look like?  
KL: yeah, yeah , mm  
**KMI\_01:** so there, 'cause I means it's a, it's are very broad brush  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** in regards to um you know cultural awareness in that regard  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** certainly you're right, the other side of the house about particularly non-Indigenous people working in remote  
**KMI\_01:** communities and that but  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** yeah Indigenous men working in a Australian society  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** I'm not sure what that would look like to be honest with you Ken  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** but I, I, I think, you know certainly programs which, you know, self-worth  
KL: Yep  
**KMI\_01:** Um I think are very key  
KL: yep  
**KMI\_01:** you know programs in which identify areas that individuals and men feel that they're, they're not coping with so, you know coping strategies  
KL: Yeah, mm  
**KMI\_01:** areas where they feel that they would like to, you know develop skills in, so you know be that in you know, a particular job skill or  
KL: Mm  
**KMI\_01:** a coping mechanisms skill or a family life skill, you know, those sorts of things I think is quite  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** quite crucial  
KL: I suppose with these structured type questions so that comes up to empowerment so like  
**KMI\_01:** yeah  
KL: the question is that well how, how would you see empowerment in, in this aspect?  
**KMI\_01:** I suppose it depend, empowerment can come through obviously providing a number of opportunities, information to the individuals. But the empowerment obviously comes from within but you need to get the, the self-worth to, to drive that empowerment  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** So that could come through a course program  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** that could come through having a group of participants you know working together so you know it's, it's a collegial thing with those individuals together, it's, it's sharing stories, sharing experiences, um, so it's, it's evidence based in that regard so it's, it's not a, not a textbook that's  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** so you'd be looking at role modelling, you're looking at mentoring, you're looking at a range of programs and that sort of came from there

KL: Oh fantastic. Yeah so I suppose when you look at the positive side of things what wouldn't be the actual disempowering aspects of Indigenous man going forward I suppose  
**KMI\_01:** what is disempowering?  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** I suppose the putting down  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** you know marginalising, not listening  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so you know it's not taking their, their opinions  
KL: Yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** it's not validating their experiences  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** it's not, so it's really just not listening to individuals  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** it's not respecting individuals  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so it's the complete opposite  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** of all that so, it's actually giving them a voice  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** you don't want to take away their voice too and you know sometimes that voice may seem, you know to you or me or other individuals it may seem out of kilter but  
KL: yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** that voice is based on their experience  
KL: Yes yes  
**KMI\_01:** and their knowledge, you know and their involvement so it, it is valid, in their mind  
KL: Yes  
**KMI\_01:** so it's about, I s'pose, if it's ha, I shouldn't say it's a wrong point of view to have but if it's out of sync with broader society, it's out of sync with what's occurring in reality  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** it's their reality  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** so you need to provide them information, provide them skills, provide them knowledge, provide them support, to show them what the reality is  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so  
KL: and I suppose what's our shared reality too  
**KMI\_01:** it is, it is, that's not my reality, it's not your reality, you know it is, it's that shared reality it's that shared position there so it's, yeah  
KL: Wow. Oh look KMI\_01 you're going through these questions so well  
**KMI\_01:** Oh  
KL: it's all rolling in too and I don't want to sorta kinda stop it and change it, but look with this semi-formal structure questioning  
**KMI\_01:** Yep  
KL: is there anything that you know you'd wanna sorta kinda share freely that you know you think that you know I may have missed out on this little formal questions?  
**KMI\_01:** Um ...  
KL: or something that you may think, hey look maybe a Men's Shed could benefit with this kind of program, or this kind, you know like what would you ...?  
**KMI\_01:** Yep. As I said the Men's Shed yeah should be a safe environment  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** it's a, it's a safe environment it's probably better if it's an environment where you're not court bound to go if that makes sense

KL: Yeah mm hm yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so you've got people willing to attend there. Certainly you need to create both an environment for support you know and I, I think you need to tick off areas of mental well-being  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** because I, I think in, when you create an environment like a Men's Shed  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** I think you're bringing together a lot of people that, you know perhaps have a lot of issues which need to be dealt with themselves, you know so you need to provide appropriate referral pathways for those individuals, so have that mental health support there. I think you need to make it constructive  
**KMI\_01:** for the individuals concerned so, you know they feel like they're going there and they're enjoying themselves  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** and they feel self-worth in doing it  
KL: Mm  
**KMI\_01:** they feel that they're inverted commas stronger  
KL: Yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** they feel empowered  
KL: mm hmm  
**KMI\_01:** they feel when they leave the Men's Shed that you know they're standing taller  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** so that's why I think it needs to provide both a, an internal thing for the individual  
KL: yeah yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** on the mental health side of the house  
KL: Yep  
**KMI\_01:** but also on the external you know it provides them opportunities to develop in, you know different employment pathways  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** volunteer pathways  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** you know, a lot of employment you get into through volunteering  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so you know whether or not you know, you're gonna have a pathway you know, volunteering you know for the Cancer Council  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** volunteering for Red Cross, volunteering  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** for Greening Australia those sort of programs  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** just getting involved. There's lots of existing programs  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** of volunteers  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** so even if you now as a, as a group of Men's Shed attendees  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** that you go alright, today we're going to go and give a hand with Greening Australia and we're gonna go and plant some trees  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** in there or, we're gonna go to a weeding area of this or gonna go repair a pathway so it's  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** it's that physical activity, assisting other people  
KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** you know go to the, going to the women's shelter  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** and assisting them with an activity  
KL: yeah yeah yeah  
**KMI\_01:** all those sorts of things, so it's, yeah engaging a lot of different volunteers  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** and I think that sort of thing will build upon  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** permanent employment, build upon  
KL: Community well-being  
**KMI\_01:** Community well-being  
KL: across the board  
**KMI\_01:** build upon the mental health well-being  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** I think you also need to examine, and if you're looking particularly for the centralian region or Alice Springs, you need to look at what issues are really affecting Indigenous men  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so and you really need to capitalise on how you can assist those Indigenous men  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** in dealing with those issues  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** you know and certainly alcohol is a very key factor  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** in a whole range of different things for, in community safety. Domestic violence is a huge thing. Not just for the, the men themselves, but the men know men that  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** the men know that, you know there sons, their uncles, their cousins so  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** you're not labelling your individuals attending the Men's Shed, you're providing them an opportunity to, for information, for coping so they can create that amongst  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** their fellow men  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so and it's, it's, you, you put it in the context of an awareness of community safety issues  
KL: mm hm  
**KMI\_01:** an awareness of issues affecting not just men, but women  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** and Central Australia so  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** so it's, you're not actually saying, you know you are responsible for this and all that sort of stuff, 'cause that, I think that's, that's self-defeating and then it's not accurate and you know, you're not actually building people up. But you say, these are some significant issues affecting Central Australia  
KL: mm  
**KMI\_01:** you, me, everybody around us, it affects in some means. You know you're either a witness to it, you're a victim to it, you're, you know in the past you may have been an offender  
KL: yeah  
**KMI\_01:** but all this collectively is hurting our people as a whole community. And so here's some things to think about. So you need to also make sure you tap into  
KL: Yeah  
**KMI\_01:** those major issues, so people get a self, well an idea of self-awareness

KL: yes, yeah

**KMI\_01:** but also on, you know what not to do, or, or you know if you, if you see you know how you can, you know limit that, stop doing you know sort of as well so

KL: yeah I like the idea of tapping into existing sorta kinda network as well, because it's just only going to help

**KMI\_01:** yeah

KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** You know there's a, as I said there's a lot of organisations not (inaudible) organisations, groups you know in the community that, you know you get a, a group, it's like the Lions Club

KL: yeah

**KMI\_01:** the Rotary Club, like you know they go and do community stuff. You can just go and work or do a, a project with the Lions Club, for a, for a

KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** day or project with the Rotary a day, project with you know, with Parks and Wildlife for a day so it's, it's connecting with existing groups

KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** who what you can also do, you know those men involved with the Men's Shed might actually say, I really like that aspect of that work

KL: mm

**KMI\_01:** I really enjoyed that, and they might branch of themselves

KL: yeah

**KMI\_01:** and develop and grow and find something they really like and do so, yeah

KL: Oh fantastic. Look \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>, look, thank you very much for your time, because that's sort of like pretty much concludes the structure sort of questions and you're, you're input has been fantastic. It certainly will give us a scope to look at all these other things to hopefully

**KMI\_01:** yeah

KL: include into existing ones as well

**KMI\_01:** yep, yep. And no as I said, yeah I suppose yourself and Michael before, I think your Cope for Life thing is a fantastic program that you run it's certainly good to be involved

KL: so we'll just finish off this one, I'll turn off the tape

**KMI\_01:** oh okay yeah

KL: yeah alright no worries thank you very much

**KMI\_01:** no worries



Interviewee KMI_02	
Date	27/10/2016

KL: 27th of October 2016, Interview with \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> in regards to Aboriginal males, Men's Shed. \_\_\_\_\_ look thank you very much for your time and the opportunity for me to interview you

**KMI\_02:** no worries, you're welcome

KL: thank you. Oh look the first question and there's a semi structured is that what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_02:** I think, two things, well a number of things. I think it's a fantastic idea. I've been running Men's Shed workshops in the bush across the central desert, western desert for 10 years and a controlled workshop environment has, in my experience, been something that men in the bush respond very positively to. Structured, some, some structured activity perhaps, not necessarily all, but ah, but yeah a level of, a place where people can share a meal together, have a coffee together, do a little bit of work together and more importantly be together as men and be a part of the conversation

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** about what does it mean to be men, that's assuming and perhaps I'm

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** jumping the gun, but that's assume, that's what I'm talking about a level of structure. If there was a level of intent, which I would encourage, ah a level of, some level of intent where conversations about what it means to be men and how do we get better at listening to each other, what does it mean to be vulnerable, is it, is it, is it a strength or a weakness to show your vulnerability, how do we go at naming what's going on for us? Yeah, I think it's, it's, I'm, I'm 1000% behind it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** I would, I would um, I would signal that I would be cautious to head down the path whereby it becomes exclusively for Aboriginal people because I think that's a, there's a risk attached to that

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** I think that's a, there's a risk where we continue to have you know Indigenous and non-Indigenous people operating and working and learning in separate spaces and

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** I think that would be unfortunate, however I would certainly say that the, firstly it's about being men, secondly it's about, you know about being, yeah well I mean the only way we can learn I think, to be respectful towards each other is to actually be working together and work some of the stuff out

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** when it goes south, you know it and if somebody's got a different way of seeing things to me then, you know is there a, some level of structure, structured support perhaps, to assist people in having conversations?

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** but that's really why I think it's

KL: yeah, mm hm

**KMI\_02:** you know. My background as you know Kenny is construction

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** as well as the social services, so I am a big believer

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** in having an opportunity for people to come together around a task

KL: yeah

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

**KMI\_02:** whereby we are not required to necessarily have direct eye contact with each other

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** we're just gibbering on as a bunch of blokes as you do

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** it just so happens that you increase social capital considerably while that process is happening, by, just buy osmosis. We're not actually

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** doin' anything, other than bein' a part of something. But, it, it does need to be, probably need to be organised, but I, you know, well. But I think it's got, oh potential through the roof

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** for sure, no question

KL: so on, on that note, are you aware that there's any Men's Shed in the community?

**KMI\_02:** I thought Tangentyere was running one. I thought Tangentyere was running one, perhaps they still are, um I'm not sure, ah, for local fellas? I know, that's, that's, that's, I'm not sure, I know that there was a Men's Shed operating in the middle of town, that I read in the paper not that long ago that I think it was ... yeah so I saw, I saw a Men's Shed advertised or an article about it in the paper, but that wasn't with Tangentyere, that was just a Men's Shed in Alice Springs. I believe I saw an article about that in the paper

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** but apart from that I can't be, I can't be sure

KL: no worries, no that's fine

**KMI\_02:** and I haven't gone hunting them down, I mean I love the idea, as you know I'm keen to see it happen

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** on a big scale

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** but unless there's a level of intent, which is where your research is coming from

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** that something that I could see would be very valuable to get behind. The way that you guys are going about, you know identifying a need, and having medical research behind it, social and emotional well-being research behind it, goin' out and talking to obviously Indigenous and non-Indigenous, 'cause you're interviewin' me

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** then that gives me a great level of confidence that you guys know what you're doing

KL: yeah. Nah thanks. Now, just on another question is that, talk a little bit about Aboriginal empowerment. So in just talking about it, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_02:** ah well, I need to do a, I needed to read the questions first probably before I started answering, oh just give me the heads up so I can get my head around it. What do I think empowers Aboriginal men? Off the cuff, my, my, my gut and instinct tells me and my experience tells me that um, men in particular, Aboriginal men what to work together as brothers or uncle or family. That's pretty key, so, which is interesting when it comes to employability of a person, you know to fit an Indigenous person into a white fella, you know employment option, means that that person might need to be removed from their family you know, clan I suppose or, or unit and that's often I think being a problem. Any bush community, you know everybody's workin' in gangs, you know?

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** gangs of people lookin' after the grounds or

KL: so we'll tackle this question in two ways, so like what's the empowerment aspect and what's the barriers for empowerment?

**KMI\_02:** well I think

KL: maybe that'll make it easier

**KMI\_02:** well I think empowering people means giving people the opportunity, you know as a mate of ours would say, play to your strengths

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** now the reason why that mate of ours is so ridiculously successful is because that's what he does. He's made a career out of playing to his strengths and helping other people do the same and so is it is, if, if, if the strength amongst traditional mob is about working together, then why would we not create an environment where that can happen in the work space? That would be empowering, we create opportunities for people to work, you know, in, in families. Now I'll give you an example of what that might look like. Instead of having for example one 40-hour job, we could, an alternative model would be we have 40 one hour tasks and different family members can take up five of those one-hour tasks, All 10 of those one-hour tasks etc, etc. But somebody could take up 40. Somebody could say "no, I just want a 40-hour job". A 40 hour a week job. But the point is that there's different models that we could explore that would create space and opportunity for people to fly. Our systems, when I say 'our', I'm talking about white, the tradition, the western you know ah employment model, the western economic model for participation, has, in my opinion, is exclusive for traditional people. And even, and you and I have talked about it a lot, you know the, the fundamentally

**KMI\_02:** if we're talkin' about reciprocity, the reciprocity economy and the cash currency economy and the reciprocity model which is born on the back off fundamentals such as distribution and circulation, it is completely opposite to a cash currency economy which is about capturing, storing, you know put it away for a rainy day. Whether it be putting grain in a silo, whether it be putting sun in a battery, whether it be putting ah, you know, money into superannuation. They're different, fundamentally different models and unless we understand that our end game is different, then we're, we can have as many Men's Shed as we want but we're not gonna empower people. Fundamentally

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** our end games are different and that's okay, but we've gotta celebrate our differences instead of you know knockin' each other on the head for it

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** in my opinion

KL: so

**KMI\_02:** so how do we

KL: so that leads on nicely to the next question in regards to well, what are some of the programmes that you see that could potentially be sorta kinda run out of these Men's Sheds to empower people or just get people with a leg up in anything?

**KMI\_02:** well I think there is, I think there's a simplicity to it. I think number one, it's about, like in my opinion if somebody said to me "can you, you know give us a hand to set up a Men's Shed?" This is what I would be throwin' out there in the first instance. I'd say hospitality is key, it's gotta be, it's gotta be a safe environment. It doesn't need to be you know like, you know forensically cleaned every morning, you know so that, you know like, it's, it's not a hospital space

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** it's a Men's Shed

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** but it's gotta be hospitable, it's gotta be safe. It does need to be clean

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** every day

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_02:** it's gotta be a controlled work environment from a, from a, from a, purely, you know my, my, my history runnin' workshops in the bush over the years, I've got three things that I, I have in the forefront of my mind. You gotta have the tools, they gotta be sharp or you know available –there's no point havin' a drill if you've got no drill bits, no point havin' a saw if it's blunt, no point, you know havin' a, havin' equipment if it can't be operated

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** So, so, so, tools and equipment, plant and equipment, so tools. Materials

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_02:** they've gotta be there in advance. There's no point, there's no point you know runnin' a project, even if there's scrap materials

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** there's no point running it and then you know 10 people turn up and go, and then we say "oh we just gotta go out and get some bits and pieces you know, 'cause we got, we got all this cabinetry to put together but we got no glue and nails"

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** the whole thing starts to, so you end up startin' to chase your tail. So tools, materials and a very clearly and effectively designed, I'm gonna say designed product or project. So, not heaps and heaps of numbers, not heaps and heaps of words, which is gonna potentially (inaudible) people who are gonna struggle with reading and writing

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** and, and, and numbers

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** this. this is where the design comes in. The design, you know even flat packing for example and how do you design the flat pack? Again there's, there's, that's as you know, that's what I do, so, so I've spent a lot of time getting the design right because if we get the design right it means that people are going to be able to access opportunities, Even if it comes to simply assembling a product. Not necessarily fabricating the whole thing, maybe fabricating parts of it, ah and one of the things that I have noticed Kenny which is pretty interesting, is that what people really love and what the fellas in the bush really love is the finishing. So once it's put together and there's drill holes or through it and you know there's, there's sharp edges, you know putting a router blade, putting a router bit over a sharp edge to make it a nice smooth round edge, or bogging holes and sanding it up, you know with a bit of putty, you know because the stuff that we've, I've done in the past with the guys in the bush furniture wise, there's a lot of that to be done. There's a lot of finishing and dressing and final kind of, yeah you know, prep before it leaves the workshop

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** so, so, and, and, and guys love, you know guys in the bush have demonstrated to me that you know, you get a bunch of guys and they'll sit there for hours you know, patchin' up holes and you know and, and, and sandin' em back and you know getting a bit of undercoat on and then getting' another undercoat, or maybe a topcoat or whatever. Love it, absolutely love it, so the assembly is only one part of it. Finishing it is a big deal as well

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** um, ah, oh I can't even remember what the question was Kenny

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:**[inaudible]

KL: yeah [inaudible] no well this then lead us to the next one now that it's um, look we've pretty much concluded a lot of the semi structured type questions. Now it's an opportunity for like, is there anything that you'd like to share that's not so much' in the, in the, in the structured questions? About what a Men's Shed should look like, or what it can do, or you know ...?

**KMI\_02:** I would, I would, I would, I would, I would um, again this is, you know this, this is how I operate any way Kenny but you know well one of the things that I think is really important and I think has been a failure of our, a whole series of systems, whether it be the education system, the employment system, the health, housing or justice system, so on and I'd probably you know the Men's Shed kind of falls somewhere potentially in between you know social and emotional well-being, so health and you know perhaps employment pathways you know? I would, I would be, I would, I would suggest that it would be important to, from the very beginning to be intentional about integrating whatever the model might look like, into a whole system which includes kids, or young people who, who are wanna be able to access a Men's Shed perhaps if they're, you know strugglin' a little bit. Young people as they leave school, you know or you know kids that we're workin' with in res care houses you know? They're 17, once they turn 18 bang, they're out of home, they're out of care. Now they're floatin' around

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** and they haven't often got anything to do, but if there some introduction going forward for the young person with really the last 6 to 12 months of their time, for example in res care, so now you've got housing, which is intentionally working with the health sector

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** to, for these young people to transition and then intentionally on the other side of that, transitioning out the other side of the Men's Shed or maybe you know if, if you know if there's, if, if its right for somebody to move on

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** if that, you know like, like, but supported into a new career path or whatever it might be

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** like it's gonna be part of the system. Education, employment, health and ultimately you know from my, you know from what I've been rabbiting on about is container houses and that sort of stuff. All that stuff, you know, you know, you know Congress could be punchin' out you know, housing

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** you know, which, which, which from a health point of view is designed to be functional, fast, affordable, etc. etc. etc. transportable, is just what people in the bush are just gonna light up about

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** but ah, it's gotta be, like I would suggest that it needs to be, be a part of a, a larger vision. I mean I've been runnin' workshops in the bush as you know for 10 years mate and at the end of the day, it doesn't like. It's, a workshop's a workshop's a workshop

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** but it falls over

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** and it remains in isolation to all

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** everything else that's goin' on. That's where, you know that so that's, if there was one thing that I'd put out there

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** from the outset, get, so it's not just the design of projects that people might be doing in the workshop, but, but it's also the design of the service model

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** that's, that's really key in, in my opinion

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** you know and, and so like having, having you know people who are trained in, in

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** in um, in the health services for example like a social worker, or are a couple of men's

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** social workers who're going to be able to talk with people or invite the opportunity, create the opportunity, invite people to go, look you know let's just, let's talk about why we ah, why we spend our time beating our chests and we, and we failed at kinda care for ourselves

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** and then subsequently we fail to care about our partners and wives and kids. What's going on there? That's a, that's a big conversation and, and it needs to be sort of done in a, it needs to be managed or facilitated by people who know what they're doing

KL: yeah

**KMI\_02:** you can't just, I mean I can't just go and crack that conversation open

KL: mm

**KMI\_02:** you know

KL: wow. Look um, thank you very much for your insight and your time KMI\_02. So that sort of like pretty much wraps up the interview and I'd like to use this opportunity to thank you very much for your time

**KMI\_02:** no worries Kenny

KL: thanks for that

**KMI\_02:** cheers mate

KL: yeah thanks man



Interviewee KMI_06	
Date	11/10/2016

KL: interview with \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> on the 11th of the 10th, 2016. And look thank you very much for your time

**KMI\_06:** thank you

KL: and we'll get straight into

**KMI\_06:** I feel quite honoured to be asked you know so thank you

KL: Oh no yeah look thank you too, yes, fantastic. No look, I see you as being part of this community and, being part of this community you know you also could, you know share a lot of your culture as well, that we just need to listen and take notice and make, make things happen more. Yeah so that's why I chose you

**KMI\_06:** thank you

KL: no worries so quest, first question is, what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**KMI\_06:** I think an Aboriginal Men's Shed is, is important because it, it, isn't, not just about sharing at one level it's about cultural, spiritual needs and, and that there is medicine for all

KL: yeah fantastic. Now do you know that we've got a, a, an Aboriginal, or a, we got a Men's Shed in the community?

**KMI\_06:** yes I do

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** I know that in fact the Men's Shed projects have been, have been always fraught with, not a lot of support in the past

KL: Mm

**KMI\_06:** you know? And, and now, you know it, it really is a need in the community for men

KL: yeah, yeah. Have you been to any one of them?

**KMI\_06:** yes I've, I used to, well I, in Ingkintja in the way of going their men's stuff but also to Tangentyere

KL: yep

**KMI\_06:** when they had their shed there, um I don't know if that's still active

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** but yes I've been along there and of course I've been to quite a few men's gatherings out into, out, out bush and out community where I've been honoured to be part and asked to be part of it

KL: Yeah what was did you get to have a look at some of the programs?

**KMI\_06:** I looked at some of those, some of those programs but you know they, it seemed like that the Men's Sheds that have always been fighting for resources or acceptance or, and that, and that ah delivery of services was always the last thing because they were trying to survive and keep the doors open you know and I find some of those services have picked them up and picking up men and allowing a space for them to have conversation

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** that they feel that they could be it's, it's a trust one, respectful place, um and also I think that the, the Men's Shed themselves, allowing just men to go there is important and draws, draws to them a wide area of the community whether they're black or white

KL: thank you. Just talking about like empowerment now of Aboriginal men, what do you think empowers Aboriginal men?

**KMI\_06:** I think to be valued

KL: Yep

**KMI\_06:** respected

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_06:** those things are core. To have, um, ah to know who they are

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** and you might think that that's, that that's a common thing

<sup>1</sup> Name/term removed to respect anonymity

when it comes to Indigenous men, well no because you have a look in the past, it's very much been a dictator and a downtrodden sort of process by non-Indigenous people whereas they ah, they didn't take the time to understand what culture was about, the, the um connection to land, ah history, ah to be that person, that, that man in that family environment. They always associated with a non-Indigenous

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** family structure

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** there's a big difference in all of this

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** Indigenous men, when, when they know, ah, this brother knows what I mean

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** he says something I understand it straight away, I don't have to explain it all

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** because I can't explain it all, it's a knowing

KL: yes, mm oh wow, thank you. Um and then I s'ppose the opposite is that, you know what are the barriers of- to empowerment? What are the, so many of the reasons that Aboriginal people are disempowered?

**KMI\_06:** I think ah, well disempowerment comes in many forms, the most obvious can be the law

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** as well, ah, ah the, where you, ah you are, again going back to not being valued, respected, it can be ah, the community tribal structure where you would have a lot of elders that have passed on and, and so

**KMI\_06:** they have no one to go to talk to about certain things

KL: Yeah, mm hm

**KMI\_06:** and that's the same as when, if your grandparents die or your father died

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** it's the same sort of process, you don't have that one you seek out someone else and sometimes you seek out someone else that has totally different agenda

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** And when it comes to, and when it comes to understanding that way with non-Indigenous or government entities, those dots are not connected they cause there's, there's not enough understanding

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** of how deeply entrenched

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** men's, ah men's place in society is

KL: Yeah, mm could that be sorta kinda just teasing that out a bit more in regards to the empowerment, could that be a program in regards to the empowerment? What are some of the programs that, you know, that come to your mind?

G: Oh I think the, the program first of all is the, is what the Men's Shed, Men's Sheds and gatherings do, is they listen

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** they allow someone to tell a story

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** without being judged

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** that's a powerful thing in itself, then you feel as though, you feel confident

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** you no longer just looking at the earth, you looking at people's faces that tell you that story

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** suddenly you've gone from being downtrodden to have pride

KL: yes

**KMI\_06:** And in that pride is recognition and in that pride is empowerment so that whole process and it that does not happen just over one meeting

KL: No

**KMI\_06:** Because what you're doing is that you're sensing and feeling ah the kinship that you're building with those around you to be able to speak

KL: yeah, fantastic. Look this sorta kinda is coming to pretty much the end of the questions now, like from the semi structured sorta kinda questions. Is there anything that you'd like to share or would like to, you know say that we could take into consideration in regards to possibly setting up a Men's Shed? Is there something that, that you know that you might think we should a need to focus on?

**KMI\_06:** you know people can go back a long way you know to colonisation and that, you don't need to go back. You go back to what's been triggers and just the recent history. Recent history tells you that the Intervention had a major influence and was disastrous for men, men spiritually, economically, they were devalued they weren't respected, they were labelled.

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** All those things happened all in twelve months and in a very short time

KL: yeah yeah

**KMI\_06:** and spread throughout the Territory and the country. Other men became afraid.

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** When we have a fear of doing something which is natural to mankind, whether it's like a hug or a cuddle, ah to be that person who is ah who is that ah, that protector

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** not just of your family, of that community

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** and suddenly you're afraid

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** and what happens outta that? You become shame. Shame for no reason, except the fact that you're Indigenous, you're labelled and people are judging you in a totally different way, in a destructive

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** negative way, than what you were 6 months earlier

KL: yeah yeah

**KMI\_06:** so when you look at that whole process you say ok, we need to, what we need to do is look at what's taken place and undo that

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** and undo that by first all, again by listening, respecting having that, that place which is, which is safe

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_06:** you know is safe and um and that they, they feel that they're able to, are comfortable enough to say, 'I was a victim, I was hurt, I was punished for something that wasn't even in my makeup I was, it was just because I was an Aboriginal man'

KL: mm

**KMI\_06:** that these things happened to me

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** and I was labelled unfairly. Out of that you listen, you say 'we understand'

KL: mm hm

**KMI\_06:** So what would you like us to do? You ask, what does that person want?

KL: Yeah mm hm

GS: When you empower them by saying 'well I don't have the, all the answers but what, what would you like to get?'

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** 'What, what can we do to make you complete and strong?'

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** And proud man

KL: Yes, yes

**KMI\_06:** And it's not about clean clothes, it's not about anything like that

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** It's about sometimes the simple things, going back to that environment that they come from

KL: Yes

**KMI\_06:** Or, or that they've been removed from

KL: Yes yes mm

**KMI\_06:** and allowing them to tell the story of their country

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** To sit there and sometimes sitting there is silence, which is the most powerful thing and not always words

KL: Yeah

**KMI\_06:** Indigenous men feel and sense with the spirit

KL: Yes

**KMI\_06:** and out of that comes the voice and the song

KL: yes

**KMI\_06:** and when you connect to a country and your land everything then is what gives you that strength to stand up and be heard

KL: yes, yeah well on that note I'd like to thank you very much for the opportunity to interview you in regards to part of this research, thank you very much

**KMI\_06:** It's a pleasure, it's a pleasure

KL: yeah

**KMI\_06:** I feel really honoured to be asked

KL: thank you



Interviewee Russell Goldflam	
Date	15/11/2016

KL: okay interview with Russell on 8th of the 11th 2016. Looks thank you very much for volunteering to be one of my subjects

**RG:** sure

KL: so there's only like a semi structured sorta question and then there's a free, free flow sorta questions after that. What do you think about, well this is the first question, what do you think about an Aboriginal Men's Shed?

**RG:** I don't really know much about it. I'm generally familiar with the Men's Shed concept in mainstream Australia, but I've never heard of an Aboriginal Men's Shed

KL: yeah

**RG:** and I don't know what it would entail so I haven't really got an opinion yet

KL: yeah, yep, mm hm. Right that's good thank you, so you know there's a Men's Shed in the community and so that's a mainstream Men's Shed community. Have you been to one?

**RG:** no

KL: no, ok. So that then automatically leads us onto the next question. Some of the things in regards to the Aboriginal Men's Shed is looking at, what do you see that empowers Aboriginal men?

**RG:** What do I see that empowers Aboriginal men?

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** well the term Aboriginal men is a very broad term

KL: yeah

**RG:** because if you're talking about men who come from a background of participating in traditional business and ceremonies and having been through business, been initiated, although I don't know anything about what that involves

KL: yeah

**RG:** my understanding, very shallow though it is, is that participating in the ceremony and in particular going through business and becoming inducted into non-public forms of knowledge and so on is an empowering experience and that having the status of being a man in a traditional sense is very empowering. Being acknowledged as having that status within a family and kinship setting gives power to men and playing the role of that's assigned under the kinship system through social life within the family and community, I would think that's empowering. So that's one

KL: mm hm

**RG:** domain of empowerment that

KL: yeah

**RG:** I can see. Another domain of empowerment is becoming successful in the mainstream world by making good money by getting a high status job

KL: yeah

**RG:** by getting qualifications through a recognised educational institution, through being given recognition through the bestowal of you know, awards for sport

KL: yeah

**RG:** or for public service or

KL: yep, mm hm

**RG:** for heroism or whatever

KL: yeah

**RG:** serving in the military

KL: yeah

**RG:** those sorts of, those sorts of things I think are empowering. I think one more personal level that it's empowering to Aboriginal men to become parents and take on the responsibility of fatherhood. I

think it's also empowering but in a negative sense, for men to wield violence against other people

KL: mm

**RG:** that that they are able to victimise

KL: yes, mm hm

**RG:** I think that the use of violence within families is an empowering experience

KL: yeah, mm hm

**RG:** and that they often express their dominance over other people, particularly women

KL: mm hm

**RG:** by using violence and that that is an empowering experience for them

KL: yes, mm hm

**RG:** I think that's my answer to those questions

KL: yeah thank you very much. This then leads on to the other question, which is what's the barriers of empowerment?

**RG:** well just to use the same categorisation that I did

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** with the previous question, that is dividing up the categories of traditional power structures and mainstream power structures

KL: yeah

**RG:** and I should've, I s'pose I should say in brackets that, it's not as though you're either a member of the traditional power structure or a member of a mainstream power structure. I doubt that there's any Aboriginal men in Australia who have a foot in only the camp of traditional power structure

KL: yeah

**RG:** because any Aboriginal man in Australia is also part of mainstream society

KL: yes that's right

**RG:** to a greater or lesser extent. There may be some Aboriginal men in Australia, there are, many Aboriginal men in Australia who don't connect to the traditional world

KL: mm

**RG:** and so they are living in, only in the mainstream world. That doesn't mean they haven't got a rich Aboriginal cultural life

KL: yeah

**RG:** but not in the sense that I was talking about it before perhaps. I think everybody has to some extent got a foot in the white camp to put it crudely. But anyway in answer to your question about barriers

KL: yeah

**RG:** looking at the first category that I delineated previously, that is the traditional cultural context

KL: yeah

**RG:** I mean one obvious barrier is that only a relatively small part of the Aboriginal male population in Australia have the opportunity to be, to participate in traditional lawmaking and traditional business. Because most, in most parts of Australia that structure has been wiped away

KL: yeah

**RG:** and even in Central Australia where it's stronger than anywhere else I suspect, there are very significant barriers

KL: mm

**RG:** one barrier is again, just that people just don't have the opportunity because they may be Aboriginal men but they may not have the right, they may be from some other part of Australia and they've come to live here so they aren't connected in the way that permits them to participate

KL: yeah

**RG:** so that's one of barrier. Another way is that they may not want to participate

KL: yeah

**RG:** because participating in, as I understand it participating in that traditional ceremonial life carries with it great costs, great responsibilities, great duties, great burdens and great risks

KL: yeah, mm hm

**RG:** so there'd be some men would choose not to go down that path at all

KL: yes, yes

**RG:** in fact, the famous, famous example is Charlie Perkins who as I understand it, started going to business when he was

KL: later in life

**RG:** you know in his 60s or something

KL: yeah, mm hm

**RG:** as a, as a mature man

KL: yep

**RG:** with a whole life

KL: yeah

**RG:** in another world

KL: yes

**RG:** so presumably he could have made a choice to participate earlier but he chose not to

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** so that's a barrier. Another barrier is that there is a stigma, hostility and to some extent legal prohibition against participating in ceremony. It's frowned on as being primitive

KL: yeah

**RG:** and savage and a secret so it's feared by the mainstream

KL: yeah

**RG:** and it's regarded as being a system which supports violence, particularly violence against women and children indirectly, so for that reason it's regarding in many parts of Australia as being something that needs to be stamped out. That's a very significant issue and it's a significant barrier I would think for a young Aboriginal man growing up in Alice Springs, but exposed to these messages all the time

KL: mm

**RG:** that they need to turn their back on the, the old ways because they're uncivilised and they need to direct themselves towards modern, more civilised life. I think it's a really serious issue and I think that it's a, it's a barrier which is, I'm sure that for you know young people say, in their early 20s or late teens, that have grown up in Central Australia and have been, had a foot firmly planted in mainstream society by going to school and so on. I think for them at times, that must be an excruciatingly difficult problem to have to face. As far as barriers to success in the mainstream world, in a way is just the other side of the same coin, in that Aboriginal men, perhaps more than just about any other identifiable group, possibly with the exception of young visibly Islamic men, who are stigmatised now very strongly, are subject to fear and hatred in the strongest form but in a less strong form suspicion and

KL: mm

**RG:** low expectations by the mainstream, because it's notorious that Aboriginal men are far more likely to commit offences and be incarcerated than anybody else. Notorious that Aboriginal women are far more likely to be bashed up than anybody else and they generally get bashed up by Aboriginal men

KL: yeah

**RG:** so being Aboriginal man in Central Australia in particular about Australia in general, ah means that you are stereotyped by people who you don't know, but who see you when you walk down the street as being a loser and quite possibly as being a violent loser.

KL: yeah

**RG:** and that must have a profoundly demoralising effect

KL: yeah

**RG:** on a lot of men

KL: mm

**RG:** and there are, that's a sort of a cultural and psychological barrier, but there are very significant structural barriers as well. Because

KL: yeah

**RG:** maybe Aboriginal men as boys grew up in households which were chaotic, violent, poor, overcrowded and unhealthy and as a result, their childhood experiences were stunted and plagued by ill health and dysfunction and learning difficulties and a host of other factors which contributed to them not being able to perform well at school when they went to school or perhaps not even going to school very much

KL: mm

**RG:** that in turn means that their opportunities to become powerful in the mainstream world

KL: yeah

**RG:** are grossly impaired. This is a really serious problem too because it means that the barriers that young man's face a result of things that happen to them when they were babies and infants and toddlers

KL: mm hm

**RG:** and that the die has sort of been cast by the time they even get to kindergarten

KL: yeah, yep

**RG:** and they're stuck with that and not to mention, well I will mention it as well as is what I should have said the barriers that come from the history of coming from generations of family who have got stories of dispossession and disempowerment and victimisation and incarceration and poverty, which are handed down so you grow up as a child who is taught

KL: mm

**RG:** that the family you come from are people who have been unable to get a fair go

KL: yeah

**RG:** so you're grown up to believe that that's going to be your lot as well

KL: yes

**RG:** I'm, I'm, obviously I'm generalising. I'm not saying that that's

KL: yeah

**RG:** a complete picture of what life is for young Aboriginal men, but I'm answering a question about

KL: yeah

**RG:** barriers, well these are the barriers

KL: yeah that's right, exactly

**RG:** um, I think to that there's an additional sort of structural barrier and that is when young Aboriginal men get into education, or higher education and training and employment

KL: yeah

**RG:** they're usually working in, or studying or training in institutions which are not particularly geared to the specific needs of people from the Aboriginal community

KL: yeah

**RG:** so for example if people have got responsibilities to leave their place of study or work to attend some sort of family commitment, you know funeral or something like that, the workplace or training institution may not be able to accommodate that

KL: yes, mm

**RG:** they're a mainstream institution and they just don't have that sort of flexibility. Yeah, so that's another layer of barrier which adds to the other ones that I've been talking about. And finally, this is sort of ironic, there's the barrier that young Aboriginal men often face, not just men but Aboriginal people in general, often face when they do find themselves in a position of power, because they've, despite the odds, got themselves the, the good job, the high status position or a professional qualification, so much fuss is made of them as being the heroes who triumphed over all the barriers

KL: yeah

**RG:** that it's not uncommon for those people to then be immediately saddled with the burden of unrealistically high expectations

KL: mm

**RG:** and on many occasions being parachuted into positions of responsibility, which they just haven't got the experience and skills to be able to successfully discharge

KL: mm hm

**RG:** which in turn leads to them failing and that only reinforces the stereotype that they were losers all along, in the first place

KL: yeah, yeah

**RG:** this happens in offices like the ones you and I have worked in, but it also happened on the sporting field, it happens everywhere. Because everybody really loves to see a successful Aboriginal person triumph against the odds and when they do so, look what happened to Adam Goodes, Australian of the year

KL: yeah

**RG:** you know, a classic if rather extreme example of how the pressures, and Buddy Franklin another great footballer

KL: mm

**RG:** and like, star. The pressures to succeed can be absolutely overwhelming

KL: yes, yes

**RG:** and the abuse that comes with it

KL: yeah

**RG:** and part of the abuse that comes with it sadly is often from within the very community that that person came. They seem to be flash

KL: yeah

**RG:** they seem to have ah, turned their backs on their people,

KL: yeah

**RG:** because they got successful

KL: mm hm

**RG:** you know, being successful in a demoralised community means staying down in that community, mired in the problems and poverty and violence of that community and if you get out of it, you're a traitor. So I've seen many people who have been vilified by their own families and communities simply because they have managed to claw their way to a more successful

KL: yeah

**RG:** position and that perhaps hurts more than any of the other sorts of vilification

KL: yes, yeah

**RG:** that they're exposed to. So there's some pretty significant barriers to empowerment

KL: mm hm. Oh look Russ thank you very much for that. Now this looks at sorta, kinda, you know, some of those things are tied to this next question, which was like programmes, what kind of programmes, you know where this Men's Shed could hopefully develop or design, that could help these Aboriginal men? In regards to transitioning into this modern world or, or you know this whole new process really. Is there like any, any little program that come to mind that you might want to share? Where um, I have sorta sessions with men and that and then what sorta kinda comes to sorta kinda, ah evidence is that men will say hey I want to learn how to read

**RG:** mm

KL: I want to learn how to speak English. There's no real place or process where they can actually in their comfort, learn how to actually speak English or learn how to even read English

**RG:** I'm very good at analysing problems and identifying challenges and barriers and I, when I first came to Alice Springs, which was 35 years ago I used to think that I was pretty good at identifying solutions

KL: yeah

**RG:** I'm not so good at that any more. Because I've seen so many well-intentioned, carefully designed programs falter and fail

KL: mm hm

**RG:** but I've kind of lost the confidence to be able to say, this works, this is what we should do

KL: yeah, yep

**RG:** for example, you're saying people want to learn english and read and write. Well I worked in an organisation for 10 years where that's what we were doing laughs

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** I can't say that we ah, really, can't say that from that I can identify a model that can work well

KL: yeah

**RG:** which is a terrible admission of failure but there you go. So I'm not, not really able to give much of an answer that's going to be of assistance

KL: yeah

**RG:** to that question. I've seen a lot of things that didn't work

KL: yeah, yeah, yeah

**RG:** but I don't know what um, what the key elements of a successful program to empower men would be. I mean obviously it has to, on the one hand include a strong valorisation of the worth of the people who are participating in the program

KL: mm

**RG:** so it's all very well to have a program that says, okay we'll teach you to read and write, hey many programs that teach people to read and write start by stigmatising the participants as illiterates

KL: yeah

**RG:** and identifying that there's a gap that has to be bridged, that there's a problem that they've got that needs to be solved, so you're starting from

KL: yes, yes

**RG:** approaching people as being somehow defective

KL: yes

**RG:** so I think an important part of any program is that you find the aspects of the participants which are worth celebrating and validating and valorising and I suppose another aspect of a program which I think is important is that you identify what, the things that are getting in the way, or that you anticipate might get in the way, of people being able to participate successfully and focus on minimising those problem areas. Now that's all very vague and general but I don't really think I can be more specific than that at this stage

KL: yeah. Look at that, that comment's actually you know it's really, it's a true reflective of where we at, at the moment too and, and I thank you for that. Look that sorta kinda pretty much ends our semi-formal structure of the interview

**RG:** mm

KL: is there anything else that you'd like to share that I may not have covered in this little structured questions?

**RG:** well I don't, I might be able to contribute more if I had some idea of what an Aboriginal Men's Shed program might look like

KL: yeah, yep, mm hm

**RG:** so what, what do you, it's, what ...?

KL: mm

**RG:** what's the image that you've got at this stage?

KL: well with the Men's Shed, it's not only sorta kinda men coming with problems, that men being able to come where they're enhancing their skills, like someone's a mechanic, or even like a bush mechanic. Well then we have like a bay there, that you could fix up your own cars, but at the same time you have a conversation, well you know what? You know, this is how the rest of the world operates, you know that you've got a skill set there, that skill set, you know if you, if that's your passion, you know you, we get, you know, transform that into this space here when you can really apply kind of like a job. So actually lining people up with their skill sets that they

actually have, or if they, like, like an example that I use with one of the sessions is this. I say, "you're in a community and you decide you want to drink, okay? You say to your next sorta brother or cousin, 'hey we should go into town for drinking', or for a drink

KL: and then he's going 'yes, yeah we should', 'okay well I've got some money but we don't have a car.' Okay well we go and ask so and so and we borrow his car and we'll do a run into town.' And then so on the way into town, they can sorta like, ring up when they get into mobile reception, 'hey we ring up so and so if we, and so and so can then, you know then by the grog for us, 'cause he's got a residential address. 'okay yeah, oh not that person, we go this way.'" Then I say "you know what you've actually done? You've actually planned this whole process with an objective to actually have a drink, that's the main goal. But you had a conversation you expanded on an idea, then you expanded on resources and pooling your money together, and then you sorta like said okay well it's gonna cost us either way. It costs us to hire this car, fuel and then actually when we get to town, who's gonna buy it for us? We're gonna then take a percentage of money for that as well." So I said "what you've actually done is planned business 101. Group consultation, meeting sorta kinda setting goals and meeting that goal and putting resources attached to it, so you did mainstream business." so I just put a label on it and they go "oh" and I said "this is what you have, you already have the skill set, it's just seemed different. But what you gotta realise, that is a good skill set if you ever want to get into business and do a real life business. Like being a butcher, baker, candlestick maker in your remote community." And they go "oh". I said "you've already got it, it's just that you were gonna put a different, different label on it" and that's when they realise "oh that's what we should be doing" or "that's how we could actually get engaged in the western world". I said "yes!"

**RG:** work with that first example you were giving of the picture of the way a shed would work with mechanic's bays and people use their natural aptitudes and talents to fix up cars or whatever and then assuming that could lead in to employment. Ah, that last little bit 'and that could lead to employment', I think is a huge part of what I imagine a successful Aboriginal Men's Shed model might be

KL: yeah

**RG:** it reminds me off, it's, it's problematic though. It reminds me of something that Mr Bray who I used to work with and he just died a couple of weeks ago

KL: yeah yeah

**RG:** he always used to say, and he always used to refer to himself ironically as ah, 'this little black duck' he'd call himself

KL: yeah

**RG:** so this little black duck has been a trainee all his life

KL: yeah

**RG:** and he was sick and tired of always being a trainee

KL: yeah

**RG:** and there was a lot of truth in what he had to say, that there is this tendency to set up programmes where people are given pretend jobs to do, but they know, everybody knows, it's not really a job and they don't of course get real money either

KL: yeah

**RG:** and I think a real trap for an Aboriginal Men's Shed would it be that it's yet another variation on the 'little black duck' trainee

KL: yeah, yeah, yeah

**RG:** things that Mr Bray used to complain about 30 years ago when I was working with him

KL: yeah, yeah. Mm hm

**RG:** because unless there really is a real job at Peter Kittles

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** at the end of six months then why would they bother coming to the shed

KL: yeah

**RG:** to fix up cars, when they can just do in their own backyard?

KL: yeah

**RG:** and it's yet again you know reinforcing that, that negative model that

KL: yeah

**RG:** you're not quite ready to do anything important, but if you keep on hanging around with us, one day you never know

KL: mm

**RG:** you might be ready

KL: yeah

**RG:** and I think that's a profound challenge, I really do

KL: yeah

**RG:** and it's alright in the mainstream Men's Shed world, because there's no expectation, promise or anything, of a job at the end of it

KL: yeah, no

**RG:** the idea is the people come, as I understand it, the people come along to do

KL: yeah

**RG:** the workshop stuff because they like doing workshop stuff

KL: yeah

**RG:** and it, and while they're doing it, they can relax, chill out, open up

KL: they're at the end of their career you know

**RG:** they might be at the end of their career

KL: they're volunteering, or they're retired, they retired

**RG:** and while they're in their safe space of using their tools, that's when they can start to open up and explore their personal

KL: yeah

**RG:** problems and share with each other and stuff comes up

KL: yeah

**RG:** and then they can process their psychological issues. I hope I'm not misrepresenting what, how a Men's Shed works but that's what I understand it's...

KL: no no that's right is that, that's, that's that same line we wanna sorta kinda get into as well

**RG:** what makes, a crucial element of that is that the playing around with the tools in the shed, in the workshop, is and end in itself. It's not a stepping stone to a job

KL: yeah

**RG:** and I think it's important is that we don't, that we don't set up an Aboriginal Men's Shed with a false expectation

KL: yeah

**RG:** that somehow it's going to create jobs for people

KL: yeah, yep

**RG:** unless it really is, I mean you could, you could

KL: yeah

**RG:** have a collaboration with Peter Kittles which meant that Peter Kittles was saying "we guarantee we will offer 6 apprenticeships..."

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** "... to 6 men every 6 months", or something

KL: yeah

**RG:** and if they did, fine

KL: mm

**RG:** but otherwise, it's, it could risk that problem that I was talking about

KL: yeah, there's nowhere else to go

**RG:** and even, and the second example you used, which is a very nice example if I may so say, of use, you know running a workshop. I also worry about the, giving people unrealistic expectations that, starting up a small business or an enterprise on community is no more difficult than organising a grog run into town. Now I know you weren't saying that

KL: yeah, mm

**RG:** but there is this risk, similar to the risk I've identified with the, the shed. That you're, in the process of making people feel good about what they've got and, and giving them the idea that they do have the potential to be successful, is absolutely critically important. But in the process you give them false hope and naïve optimism about just how difficult it is to make a go. I mean most small businesses in Australia fail. So there's no ...

KL: yeah

**RG:** shouldn't have stars in their eyes

KL: yeah

**RG:** because we're setting them up for more disappointments

KL: mm

**RG:** so in a way it's the same problem I've identified with both of those things, which needs to be addressed right from the beginning of the planning process. Because the last thing we want is to set up yet another you know, dashed hopes activity

KL: mm

**RG:** for people to engage in

KL: yeah. So as far as the realisation when that sorta little scenario was used

**RG:** mm

KL: is that "wow, we actually do that and we actually go through that process and we've done it. We've done it numerous times." So what I've sorta kinda drawn it as "look, this is a, a something that you're already doin', right but it's in, if you were to sorta, kinda seriously take that kind of level of group dynamics, group planning into another sort kinda set that actually can be beneficial for everyone else, you can actually make it".

**RG:** yep. Oh yeah I agree, I agree because that's a really useful thing for people to realise

KL: yeah

**RG:** that they're already using a high level of organisation and skills, to just achieve things that they're already achieving in their lives

KL: yeah

**RG:** yeah. What's (inaudible)

KL: so then you're sorta kinda saying "well don't just go through it with blinkers on, look at it sorta kinda, providing something for the community," "Cause that's what it's gotta take, it's gotta take community to stimulate their own economy, in a sense that it then actually generates wealth. But at the moment you're not doing anything, any resources that go there, automatically just go straight out of that community. It doesn't get to circulate in that community at all

**RG:** mm

KL: but all the services are even from outside, not internal. So it's kind of set up in a way that it's, it's just a, a money pit, but nothing really sort of grows there, unless they change that formula. So it's I suppose, Men's Shed, Aboriginal Men's Shed is looking at sort of well, how is the hunting and gathering in this world and how was it in this world? And what, what are the actual parallel lines that we can draw? So you can have those conversations, where you just can't have that anywhere else because you know it's like, nobody would come to a meeting if you were trying to, trying to say "hey we're gonna talk about business here" or "we're gonna talk about this". Where at least if you have a place where people can grow and they look at, "ooh what are the actual options that I have?" I feel like going listening over here, all I feel like doing this, or I don't feel like doing anything at all".

**RG:** mm

KL: so it's not about a, sorta kinda forcing people, it's just saying "hey look, have a look at these options. What options are, appeals to you more and then you take hold of that and we will then get behind you and make that work for you." So, with, on, on that note there's another group that are actually looking at, so this is sort of, we'll finish this off

**RG:** mm  
KL: is looking at goin’ sorta beyond sorta kinda just a Men’s Shed, so maybe we’ll, we’ll stop this and we, we can continue this conversation  
**RG:** ok  
KL: yeah?  
**RG:** sure  
KL: otherwise Russell thank you very much for your time  
**RG:** thanks Ken  
KL: fantastic

Interviewee Brian Haynes	
Date	27/09/2016

KL: interview with Brian Haynes from Alice Springs on 27 September 2016. Thank you very much for taking your time out to have a little chat to me  
**BH:** no worries  
KL: about this Aboriginal Men’s Shed. Now on that note just a first question I’ll fire away is that, what do you think about a Men’s Shed for Aboriginal men?  
**BH:** I think it’s a wonderful idea, the idea that you know, men need their own spaces has been bandied around for a while, and I do think that men do need their own space and I do think specifically Indigenous men, would benefit from something like that. I suppose it’ll depend on the model that is used  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** you know and I have some thoughts on the general model, but you know I’ll give my two cents worth rather than saying what I think the model should be  
KL: yep, yes, yep, yep, no worries  
**BH:** but you know it’s definitely needed  
KL: yep, so that leads onto the next question, is there a Men’s Shed in this community?  
**BH:** there is a Men’s Shed recently been set up as far as I know. I think that’s been a recent event. It’s quite interesting actually that you’ve mentioned it because I’ve been talking for years to other people, I said “you know what we need here? We need a Men’s Shed”.  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** there’s some other things I think we lack here that other communities have like neighbourhood houses  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** which, me being from Victoria, they’re everywhere  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** every suburb’s got a neighbourhood house. We don’t have one  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** here, so I think you know, it might all depend that on the way you want to set the model up of the Men’s Shed  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** it could be quite similar to the way a neighbourhood house is set up, and then I think a lot of what you decide to run from there, quite often doesn’t, you don’t decide to label and you’ve had the men in there that will participate in what they think  
KL: yes, yeah  
**BH:** is the best stuff, we can all come up with ideas which is great. So okay how about we run this, how about we do that ...  
KL: yes  
**BH:** but then I think there’s got to be mechanisms in place so as that the participants then decide to go on further what you run. You might say well hey that was a good idea but that, we don’t think that’s really what we want now. We decided we want to maybe can you do part of it where we can work on cars, or learn some skills or,

do you want it as just a place where men can go and talk or do you want, want it where men can go and learn some skills? So, I think that’s something that develops  
KL: yes  
**BH:** as you go along. Some of that stuff you sorta gotta probably put down, to have a bit of an idea of what you’re going to do. But then I think it’s important to have the mechanisms in place that once you get your participants in, it’ll be the men deciding going forward. Okay, what are we going to do? What, what are the options we want to run?  
KL: wow that sounds fantastic. Can I just tease out the mechanism of fixing cars? Or the ...  
**BH:** yeah  
KL: that aspect, could you just ...  
**BH:** the reason I was mentioning that is, I don’t know if you’re aware but in the past has been involved in a programme called ‘Deadly Treadlies’, which was for young men, kids  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and it was fixing bikes. So what you find is as they get a bit older, they’re all interested in cars. I don’t know if you’ve, did you ever watch that series ‘Bush Mechanics’  
KL: yes, yes  
**BH:** fantastic  
KL: yes laughs  
**BH:** just brilliant show. So old too  
KL: yeah yeah  
**BH:** that was made 30 years ago  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I could not believe that was made like 30 years ago and from our experience with young men, they’re all interested in cars  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** absolutely all interested in cars. Men fix motor, I don’t - I’m talking other men, not me!  
KL: yeah, yeah, yeah, mm  
**BH:** I get, I get you know men that are interested in cars to fix mine. It’s just an example that I know that if you have a shed, so if you have your Men’s Shed, dependent on the facility there, it may be you’ve got garage space where you can get some tools donated and you get, you know men workin’ on cars and stuff. Now not all men are going to be into working on cars  
KL: mm  
**BH:** but that’s a, you know that’s one idea. But I think you’ll find that a lot, almost all men at some stage will be tinkerin’ with cars  
KL: yeah, that’s right  
**BH:** so you’re looking at a bit of both and that also becomes such a great social gathering because you’re still talking, you’re still doing all the other stuff. Some of the blokes’ll sit and have a cuppa tea, watchin’ the people working on the cars  
KL: yes, that’s right, yes  
**BH:** others’ll get into it  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know and then you can have a, as we all know, servicing vehicles, repairing the vehicles is all very expensive  
KL: wow, yeah  
**BH:** we also have the issue of course with, you know people not being able to drive their cars because they become unroadworthy or whatever. So why not train people on how to fix that sort of thing?  
**BH:** and have that where you know, you could eventually have it where they could bring their own cars in and everyone’s workin’ on their own card to fix up. Again, just, you know it’ll depend on the interest of the people you end up attracting  
KL: yes

**BH:** whether they’re into that, but yeah I mean I think that’s one idea that could operate from there  
KL: so yep, fantastic. Look, you’ve certainly answered a lotta sorta questions in regards to just what you’re sharing as your story, It’s fantastic. So what are some of the actual programmes that you, you know you’d kind of like, like a man’s shed to do?  
**BH:** I, I think it’s, as I was saying I do think, I think there’s a couple of key programmes it could run, from a Men’s Shed and then as I say, and I think it’s important to have the mechanism where, when you get a certain group of participants will then decide, well hey they’ll come up with the idea, “hey why don’t we do this?” or whatever  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I think one of the ones we do, I suppose it depends on age. I mean with we do mostly with young men  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** up to about 25, I’m not sure  
KL: yeah right  
**BH:** I’m not sure whether there’s gonna be an age target or  
KL: all men  
**BH:** I assume it’s open to all men  
KL: yeah, all men  
**BH:** yeah so you’ll get a mixture. The other issue we had with young men for example is licenses and learners permits, the books. You know get the books in there  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** build up a resource library  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** so young men can come in and think, “oh look I’ve gotta get my learner permit, is there somebody who can give me a hand with that?” I know that they do some of the stuff online now, so you can do a bit of, you can do a lot of your research online. So you know, it’d be good to have access to the Internet there  
KL: mm  
**BH:** I’m assuming these are the things that’ll probably be looked at  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I, I think that the benefit of the Men’s Shed could also be a men’s resource  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** centre so to speak  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** so, away from the concept of socialising, other men to talk to. I think the world is your oyster as far as what you could offer from there  
KL: yeah, mm  
**BH:** and I know that we’ve been talkin’ recently about settin’ up a learner permit programme for young kids. So we’re talkin’  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** 15, 16-year-old kids, for learner permit. The older ones you might find, it could be someone that doesn’t have their license any more, but wants to get it. Maybe they keep getting’  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** in trouble with the cops because they’re driving  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** with no license  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** so, you know a resource centre so you just have a little kit, that if anyone come in and said “oh, you know I’d love to get my license back”, or whatever. All the info’s there. Alright well this is what you’ve gotta do. I don’t know you link in with other organisations that do that  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** the experts in that

KL: mm hm  
**BH:** you know they may come and say “oh okay we’ll come and run a Thursday afternoon group for you”  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** for anyone interested in learner permit license stuff  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** come to this one-hour group or whatever  
KL: wow  
**BH:** you know so I think, I think that sort of thing would be handy. It’s a bit like what I was saying to you as well, I think one of the things that I’ll be exploring further  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** next year  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** too much happening at the moment, is the lack of resources within Alice Springs that many other communities have got  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** like the neighbourhood, every suburb in other towns have got neighbourhood houses  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** now in those neighbourhood houses you offer things like, you know you might have, it’ll go from young people to old people. So you might run the odd literacy course, They’ll come in and do a literacy programme, Tuesday afternoon  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** or whatever. As I mentioned the, you might say “well yeah we’re running Thursday afternoon basic motor mechanics”  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** for people interested in that. Wednesday afternoon we’re gonna do a ‘Deadly Treadlies’ thing  
KL: mm  
**BH:** so you bring your kids in with their bikes and we’ll get some people in that know how to repair bikes. So a community centre, the concept of a community centre is very similar to  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** a Men’s Shed except that a community centre is aimed at all  
KL: yes  
**BH:** members, whereas the Men’s Shed’s you know specifically for men to have their space  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**BH:** so it doesn’t mean though that you can’t run some of the same concepts that you would run from a community centre  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that would, you know that men would be interested in doing so ... I just think the, it’s so exciting  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I just think the opportunities that you could do  
KL: mm, oh fantastic. Look will move onto this couple more questions  
**BH:** yep  
KL: in regards to Aboriginal men’s empowerment, I just like to know sorta idea, what do you sorta kinda see as um, or link um empowerment of Aboriginal men? What do you, what do you see as the  
**BH:** well look I, you know I can only speak a white fella’s perspective  
KL: yeah, yep, mm hm  
**BH:** a lot of the Aboriginal young people that we deal with  
**BH:** and a lot of the young people, they wanted tell their stories  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** our young people get so excited when I sit there and they’re tellin’ me and their whole face lights up  
KL: wow  
**BH:** and they’re telling me about where they’re from

KL: yeah  
**BH:** their homeland and they talk about you know, All the stuff that I just do not understand  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I think the stronger depth of that  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** within, where they're in a space where they can openly talk about that  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** I know that within our organisation, kids are reluctant to just come out with it  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that got to be asked the question  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know and from my point of view too, I've got to be, try to be knowledgeable as to not ask the wrong questions or say ...  
KL: yes, yes, yes  
**BH:** or say "hey if you wanna tell me a story I'd love to hear it"  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** so I think also a lot of that's got to come from them  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**BH:** one of the things that we try to do with the resource centre that we just set up for example. We're not an Indigenous specific organisation  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** but you know, 80+ percent of our clients are Indigenous  
KL: yeah, mm  
**BH:** so um, I think they can tell their story, they can share their story. Other people within there are gonna understand  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** now me as a white fella does, don't automatically understand  
KL: yes, yes  
**BH:** whereas if you've got other Indigenous people there they do, they get it  
KL: yes  
**BH:** you know it doesn't have to be explained to them  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** Whereas with me it's gotta be explained deeper  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** for them but, you know the opportunity, and again most of my experience has been with young  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** young men, young Indigenous men and they just wanna tell the story and they wanna know more about  
KL: oh wow  
**BH:** you know the history of that sort of thing  
KL: yes  
**BH:** so you know again, you know it may be a resource centre based around their stories you know  
KL: yes  
**BH:** do they wanna be the ones that build that story for their community? Rather than it being there already  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know parts could be, "oh okay where you from"  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know yeah so and I always find that really fascinating because, a lot of our kids you just see the whole, how their face lights up  
KL: wow, yep  
**BH:** this'll be a kid you've got almost nothing from, and you'll just say "do you want something to eat?" "yeah"  
KL: yeah

**BH:** but then you say you know "tell me your story" what, they've got to trust you though  
KL: laughs yeah  
**BH:** they don't just blurt it out  
KL: yes, yes  
**BH:** but once you've built that rapport,  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and I know, you know recently I've learnt a lot, from young, young kids, tellin' me you know, things about where they're from, where their mum's from  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** how that connects, the language  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and how, you know things about skin and all that  
KL: yes  
**BH:** and I had no concept of any of that stuff  
KL: ah yeah  
**BH:** yeah so you know, to a white fella they've gotta explain it a lot more in-depth  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** before we start understanding, whereas you know, I think they do like to tell their story  
KL: but I suppose we started to actually unpack that within, within your sort of storytelling, is um, the barriers as well so it's all within that  
**BH:** yeah  
KL: it's just opening up the opportunity  
**BH:** mm  
KL: to ...  
**BH:** yeah. I think a big part of its gonna be Kenny as I say  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know of course to set it up, you've gotta make some preconceptions, like  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you gotta think, well okay, this is what we think  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** I think there's gotta be a mechanism within their so, once you, and we did the same similar to the resource centre and we do it with our youth refuge, you know we open it up. Well what do you want to see here? What, what do you, what would you benefit from?  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and I think that's really important in ownership as well you know, that they own it  
KL: yeah, so um, just teasing out the ownership, what would you kind of like see as some of the things that they'd bring to the table  
**BH:** I think you would, and again you know, I mean I've never directly opened a Men's Shed  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I've had, I've had no real experience of Men's Shed other than what I've read and  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that I've spoken to people about, participated in Men's Sheds  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** in other areas and I think what you find is different ones have got different themes  
KL: yes  
**BH:** because it's based on what that community wants  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** so for example if you got a Men's Shed out in a rural area  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** a lot of it is around rural, farming  
KL: yeah

**BH:** stuff. If you're in, you know if you've got a Men's Shed maybe in the inner city  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** the stuff they talk about is quite different  
KL: yes  
**BH:** from what the rural men might be talkin' about  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and there's a lotta stuff that go right across all men, you know there's certain issues that all men talk about  
KL: yeah, yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** whether you're Aboriginal man or white fella  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**BH:** from rural, from city. There's core groups around health and that sort of thing  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that you know, you'll all talk about. But I think what comes out of it is based on the group of men that are using it at the time and it may roll, so in other words, if you've got a group of 20, 30 men that are regularly using it  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** what they want, maybe different in a year, if you get a rotate where you get a new group of men  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that are like "oh no I want ..."  
KL: well that's the empowerment  
**BH:** yep  
KL: aspect isn't it  
**BH:** yep  
KL: as well  
**BH:** yeah  
KL: wow. Okay look, we're doin' really, really fine here. Now in sorta like comin' to the conclusion, is that um, is there sorta like anything else that you can, well you know, would like to share that or, or think, that'd be valuable for ah, lookin' at Men's Sheds aspects?  
**BH:** that can be dangerous sometimes Kenny askin' me  
KL: yeah okay  
**BH:** my thoughts  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** because we could be here in three hours, I have thoughts on everything laughs  
KL: laughs  
**BH:** but no, look the only thing I would add is that I just think it's a wonderful idea  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and as I mentioned, I mentioned years ago  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** that we need multiple Men's Sheds  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** necessarily just one and I do think one specifically for Indigenous men's, a really, really good idea. The thing I think, the key aspects that I think you might want to look at from my perspective are gonna be location  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** what sort of facility do you want, because you've gotta think of summers and things. People won't come if it's a hot  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** literally a shed, you know stuck in the middle of somewhere  
KL: yeah, true, true  
**BH:** it's gotta be a comfortable place, so I think there should be, you know I think a bit, a lot of thought put into where is going to be fairly central for men to get  
KL: yeah

**BH:** in and out of  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** comfortable to have outside spaces. As you know with the Indigenous men  
KL: yeah, yeah, yeah  
**BH:** very important. I think that's quite different to white fellas. The white fellas would look at a building  
KL: yep  
**BH:** we wouldn't necessarily look at the sitting areas outside  
KL: yeah, true, true  
**BH:** we look at where you have the barbecue  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** and that's it  
KL: mm hm  
**BH:** as far as outside of the building goes  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** I think with the Indigenous men that I've dealt with, the outside  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** is just as important  
KL: yes  
**BH:** as the inside facility  
KL: oh yeah laughs  
**BH:** and again, again from a white fella's perspective, I hate heat  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you know  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** so in summer I wouldn't go  
KL: yes  
**BH:** I'd be like "oh God no, that's too hot. I'm not going there"  
KL: yes me too  
**BH:** so I think making sure that, that there is a place that is a bit of a sanctuary for men too. That they can come in and during the summer there's a nice cool area inside  
KL: yeah, mm hm  
**BH:** they can sit and have a drink of water or a cuppa tea  
KL: yes  
**BH:** and that there's also a bit of an outdoor area they can go out, so. Cause the other thing I think you'll find to Kenny is that as it develops, you're not gonna get, like one great big Group of men  
KL: mm  
**BH:** that are just talkin' that whole time  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you're gonna get, you might get a great group of men, some of'em will be sittin' outside in their little group  
KL: yes  
**BH:** talkin', doin' somethin'  
KL: mm  
**BH:** while the others sitting inside in the cool, having a cuppa tea with that group  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** you might have multiple little groups goin' on  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** at the same time. I think it's gotta be careful not to have the concept that every single man that comes in are gonna form one great big  
KL: yes that's right  
**BH:** group and that's what's happening  
KL: yeah  
**BH:** no, they'll all be  
KL: no

**BH:** I think you'll find there'll be multiple little things happening and everyone'll be gettin' along

KL: yes, yes

**BH:** but yeah you might have three or four groups throughout the building so I think you need

KL: yeah

**BH:** multiple areas that people can gather in

KL: and you gotta have that flexibility or otherwise you try to structure it too much, yeah it's not gonna happen

**BH:** I think what they're gonna want from that, I think it, I think we can't take away the importance of their space

KL: yes

**BH:** that we set that up as their space

KL: mm

**BH:** I think the other thing that's really important to is to not put any mandatory stuff on, like "oh if you're comin' here you have to participate in this group we have every Thursday"

KL: yeah

**BH:** it's "no", it's "hey, mate if you want to, this is on. If you don't ..."

KL: yeah

**BH:** "you go grab yourself a cuppa tea"

KL: yeah

**BH:** "and stay, that's no drama" and I think that'd be really important

KL: yes

**BH:** because people do try to enforce what they want people to do once they're there

KL: yes

**BH:** so I think it's gonna be really important to have the flexibility, the participants choose when they come. Do I wanna go in and help with that motor mechanic thing that's happening there?

KL: yeah

**BH:** or do I just wanna sit here on the computer with a cuppa tea?

KL: yeah

**BH:** and you can choose, so I think that's the other really important aspect

KL: mm

**BH:** and again we try to do that at our youth centre

KL: yeah

**BH:** so we have structured stuff

KL: mm

**BH:** but if a client comes in, they don't have to participate in that and we don't say well you have to leave

KL: mm

**BH:** you know we say "oh well that's all right, it's your space go and do whatever"

KL: yeah

**BH:** so I think that's quite important. People can come in and be involved as little or as much

KL: yeah

**BH:** as they feel they wanna be. Um, the other issue I think too and again I'm not sure how you're gonna do that is how, how you set that up so as that they do have control in a lot of that stuff

KL: yeah

**BH:** like ah, you gotta maybe think about the ideas as to whether you're gonna have a reference group, a local board

KL: mm hm

**BH:** as in participant group, you know I think all that's important as well

KL: yeah

**BH:** so I'm not sure

KL: yeah

**BH:** what your thoughts are, and I know that you're in the early stages and

KL: yeah

**BH:** discussion so, yeah so ways that they can participate and feel that they're actually involved in, in helping run the place, sort of thing

KL: yeah

**BH:** and once they get ownership of that, I think you'll find a lot more of a connection to it

KL: yeah, yes that's right. Oh look Brian I'd like to use this opportunity to thank you very much for your time and it's been fantastic

**BH:** my pleasure

KL: and thank you

**BH:** no worries mate good luck with it

KL: yeah ta

Interviewee Clive Rosewarne	
Date	27/10/2016

KL: Ah, testing, um interview with Clive Rosewarne now Clive ...

**CR:** um

KL: Ah look ah Clive thank you very much for the opportunity to you know sit down and have a talk

**CR:** mm hm

KL: about this Indigenous Aboriginal Men's Shed. So the first question is what do you think about an Aboriginal?

**CR:** I think it's a good idea, um, for somewhere for men to be able to drop in, for blokes to come and, and be together. But the design of it, I'm not, I don't think you can take it sort of an off-the-shelf sort of one

KL: yeah

**CR:** from the sort of same Men's Shed broad movement

KL: No

**CR:** Um, because there's elements I think, of that ethos of what a Men's Shed is— that can be done in a variety of different ways and I mentioned before that *Ingkintja*, with the drop-in approach: and the ah, the ah washing machines and they used to have um, people come in and to do talks on Mondays in the backyard there. To me that's sort of the ethos of the Men's Shed

KL: yeah

CR it doesn't necessarily have to have some lathes sitting in a corner or you know that sort of thing or workout equipment or [inaudible]

KL: yeah

**CR:** it, it can have all that

KL: now on, on that note, is there another Men's Shed that you may be aware of in the community?

**CR:** I know that there is a man's, there is a Men's Shed

KL: mm

**CR:** ah, I haven't actually gone onto it myself

KL: yep

**CR:** but I do know that there's one and I think it's probably more the sort of classic, come do some work

KL: yes

**CR:** tinker on a car or something

KL: yeah

**CR:** and there's been sort of, you know this, this sort of process as a way of engaging with guys has been done a few times in Alice Springs and certainly for Aboriginal blokes as well

KL: yeah

**CR:** it was down at um, the old Little Sisters. Yeah it was when IAD was down there at some stage

KL: yeah

**CR:** there was a Men's Shed down there, which was basically pulling cars apart

KL: wow

**CR:** and young guys could drop in you know and unfortunately it got, I think they got a bit annoyed eventually because there were too many car wrecks laughs and not, not that many cars

KL: yeah right

**CR:** but it gave guys something to do

KL: so that's programme itself was quite, quite attractive

**CR:** what can I get immediately? I can get this I can contact the other blokes, um show off my skills, 'cause a lot of those guys, you know, we know they're very clever

KL: yes we do

**CR:** um, but sometimes if you are putting everything into a training programme they're not getting to look clever

KL: yeah

**CR:** so it's sort of, that sort of, strength based stuff, I think

KL: yeah

**CR:** could work well

KL: yeah, mm

**CR:** for an Aboriginal designed Men's Shed, is having people come in from a strengths base

KL: yeah, yeah, mm hm

**CR:** rather than just a drop in base

KL: oh look thank you very much. So just movin' on to the next question, um we're looking at sorts of an Aboriginal men's empowerment. Now what do you think empowers an Aboriginal man?

**CR:** I'd say from, from an outside perspective, it is men who feel strong in their culture. Who, that cultural strength though is a reciprocal one where they, where they know that they're going to, they're getting other men, who, who are there around them as well and that they are, you know it's part of that ongoing process of being a cultural man. Rather than maybe what some young men, when they first come into culture

KL: yeah, yeah

**CR:** feel, 'I know it now'

KL: yeah. Yeah

**CR:** and certainly the men I know, the old men, It's, they know they're part of a learning, a bigger learning process. So I'd say cultural strength

KL: yeah

**CR:** um, and family

KL: yeah

**CR:** which is part of that, they're not, they're hard to separate but that connection to land, connection to family, that sense of reciprocal responsibility

KL: yeah, mm hm

**CR:** and being able to enact that

KL: yeah

**CR:** gives purpose gives I think people a strong position

KL: fantastic. What would be some of the barriers for empowerment of Aboriginal men?

**CR:** Oh, I think there's a lot of structural barriers in our society I mean just straightforward racism

KL: yeah

**CR:** the characterisation and the disempowerment of colonialism that's occurred for Aboriginal people

**CR:** in general. Um, men being marginalised in the social and economic system

KL: yeah

**CR:** often are the first, can be the easy sort of casualties. Um, those ones and then there's, you know then there's the sort of ongoing issue ones like grog

KL: yeah

**CR:** the grog circle. Ah being dragged back down

KL: mm

**CR:** um, the issues of violence that people have and nowhere to go with that, um how do they deal with that?

KL: yeah

**CR:** um, so there's, there's multiple levels I think of barriers. Some of them are big picture ones where, when we think about how the, The Intervention for example

KL: yeah, yeah

**CR:** um, when, when that occurred, I know many men who just said, they just felt the ground got pulled from underneath their feet

KL: yeah, mm hm

**CR:** and yet The Intervention was supposedly based on the 'Little Children' report which said 'Aboriginal men shouldn't, are not to be blamed'

KL: yeah

**CR:** and it had in it, interestingly, because I did a project for Congress

KL: yeah

**CR:** for that, the summit, where we went through the 'Little Children Are Sacred' report and identified probably 40 different occupations for men that could have been created, if the recommendations had've been implemented

KL: wow

**CR:** what did the Intervention do? Came along and immediately took away a lot of the jobs that men had, through CDEP

KL: mm

**CR:** then opened up communities for any Tom, Dick and Harry to come into

KL: yeah

**CR:** and then the NT Government came along and destroyed the rest of the jobs

KL: wow, yeah

**CR:** so, out of what was obviously a, a fraught and potentially upsetting process, the, the report, getting 'Little Children Are Sacred' report

KL: mm hm

**CR:** done. It could have actually though, developed a positive programme for men

KL: mm

**CR:** a positive role for men, in

KL: yeah

**CR:** in implementing its outcomes, instead you have a government so, I think that's an example of the sort of barriers

KL: mm

**CR:** that's we're often dealing with, that aren't that historical

KL: yeah

**CR:** um, we know that historical barriers of colonialism

KL: mm hm

**CR:** and the stolen generation and so on, but what we're seeing now is a modern day implementation of that same policy

KL: yeah

**CR:** to come along and, almost look and ask "who we gotta hit over the head?"

KL: yeah

**CR:** To look good, "oh there's some black blokes, we can hit them over the head and

KL: yeah, yeah

**CR:** We'll position women as the victims

KL: yeah

**CR:** so we'll look good. So we disempower the women as well

KL: yeah, yeah

**CR:** 'cause they're just characterised as victims

KL: yeah

**CR:** and they're perpetrators  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and I'm, not part of this. I'm white, I'm back over here  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**CR:** in Canberra or even in Alice Springs"  
KL: wow, yeah  
**CR:** you know, they're the sort of barriers I think  
KL: mm  
**CR:** which are really hard because it also attempts to, it doesn't understand Aboriginal family values  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** it actually tries to separate the men and women  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** which is not my understanding of what anybody wants here  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** um, so those sorts of barriers need to be called out and then protective programmes need to be put in  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** to help break some of the other barriers so  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** when you've got family breakdowns happened because of these pressures  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and men feel they're gonna blow up  
KL: yes, yes  
**CR:** where do they go?  
KL: true  
**CR:** one of the things we found when we did the Ingkintja study, and it had been a long-standing demand of men right back to the 1980s  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** right back I think it might even be in that, those early works  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**CR:** with your dad and Pam, I think we managed to reference it in there. People said they wanted a men's shelter, for want of a better word  
KL: yeah, mm  
**CR:** and it wasn't that, "oh you know they're taking the Mickey and the men are getting' beaten up oh poor things",  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** some men are, getting beaten up. But it was like that, where to go when you're about to explode  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** somewhere that's open 24 hours  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** that a bloke can go to, instead of going out on the street and doing something wrong, whatever it is, going with a woman, smashing something  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** drug, whatever  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** slipping back into getting drunk because possibly they've stopped. You need somewhere they can go where there's Aboriginal blokes who can help. Cool 'em down, have some time out. Tell the family they're safe  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** "no he's not with someone else", laughs "he's here with us"  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** you know  
KL: "he's not at the pub"  
**CR:** "he's not at the pub, he's not with another woman"  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** "there's no further stuff gonna happen" you know, "he's here"

KL: mm  
**CR:** " and he'll stay with us until he's ....". Now I don't know if you'd call that a Men's Shed  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** but it's certainly an extension of the idea of somewhere for men to go  
KL: well that's sorta kinda teasing the idea out in regards to some of the programmes that we'd  
**CR:** mm  
KL: you know like um, probably think about, you know that we need to look at. Like what are the programmes that we need? Well exactly some of the things that you highlighted  
**CR:** yeah and that's why I think in terms of an Aboriginal Men's Shed  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** we may be looking at something different than the white fella  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** old retiree  
  
**CR:** he wants to go and, he's at home in his nice quiet house and  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** probably his wife's died and he's lonely  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** or he's kicked out of work, been sitting at home  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** I think we've got maybe some different models  
KL: mm  
**CR:** we shouldn't, that's why I don't think the, the  
KL: mm  
**CR:** mainstream one necessarily would fit  
KL: oh fantastic laughs. Um look that sorta kinda pretty much yeah concludes the structured type questions, but is there anything that you'd like to share that we have, I may not have covered in this little semi structured questions? That ah, you'd like to share?  
**CR:** um, no look I think, yeah I just sort of think it's really important that we don't get caught in a structure  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** that is um, may work fine elsewhere  
KL: yes  
**CR:** um, and I'm sure even in the mainstream there's different versions of Men's Sheds  
KL: mm  
**CR:** between old blokes and young blokes and unemployed and everybody doing something different. But here, I think you know people joke about that, you know there's, that, that term 'social capital'  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** you know? And they talk about how sort of a lot of people you know, don't have much social capital and that is like the poor old fella  
KL: yeah yeah  
**CR:** who's home by himself and yeah I've had Aboriginal people say to me, "I'm fairly rich with social capital" laughs. No shortage of people  
KL: yeah yeah yeah  
**CR:** contacts. I'm not lonely  
KL: yeah yeah yeah  
**CR:** but where do I go to get away from them maybe  
KL: yeah, true  
**CR:** is what I want and maybe we look at what are the, what are the assumptions behind why someone would want to use a Men's Shed  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** need to be addressed. Because if we just think it's 'cause these guys are lonely

KL: mm  
**CR:** or they've got nowhere to go  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** I think we might be missing  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** that actually they're not lonely. They are lonely internally  
KL: yeah, yeah  
**CR:** they're not lonely in terms of lack of contact  
KL: yeah yeah  
**CR:** ah they do have plenty of places to go  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and some of those places aren't good places for them to go to  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** um, so maybe we're looking at, they need, this is more a place they can get away  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and how do we create that and protect that, in a way where it's safe for them to get away?  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and they're, they're not gonna have someone  
KL: yeah that's true  
**CR:** coming after them. So if it's a male only place, that'll be respected  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** with whatever format we've got  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** um, but yeah the thinking behind why, who's the audience?  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and, and what do they want?  
KL: mm  
**CR:** why would they want to come to somewhere?  
KL: yes, yeah  
**CR:** I'm not only what they might tell you they want, but what you can interpret from what they want and you know, certainly the guys who are using Ingkintja on a Monday and Tuesday sessions when they used to come in there, there was a certain sort of self-serving part of it  
KL: mm hm  
**CR:** um, they got to deal with their clothes  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** they got a feed. But while they were there they also got engaged in talks  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and the talks ranged from everything. Like there was a huge range the police came in some weeks to talk to them about how the court system works. The court people came in. Someone came in and teach them how to cook on a wok  
KL: mm  
**CR:** someone else, I went and did some talks about the um, Angela Pamela Uranium deposit  
KL: oh yeah  
**CR:** that was hot at the time. Um, you know you can get anybody to come and talk to a group of people who want and, and that I think is the other thing that I, I think a Men's Shed should then to try and do is a way of being a referral centre on. 'Cause when the Men's Shed was being setup at the back of Congress, one of the things I, I mentioned was, "well don't try and have everything in it"  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** if some guy comes in and says he wants to do welding  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** get someone else to bring a welding set over, show him how to do it and then try and enrol him in a welding course  
KL: yeah

**CR:** over at CDU  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** like don't set up everything here  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** be a referral. Have your contacts where you can go "yeah, you want to do that". You bring someone in, or you take them there and you stay with them for the day  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** while they're getting they're feet and feeling comfortable  
KL: wow  
**CR:** help them to clean themselves up if that's necessary before they go  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** to help them feel confident. That sort of, you know it's very labour intensive  
KL: yes  
**CR:** but um, I think you, we're at the stage with a lot of men that that's, you know we need that intensive support  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** not just for men, for families. We know it, you know that intensive programs work  
KL: yes, yeah  
**CR:** and we can't just go "oh we're just gonna worry about the little kids"  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** you know because that's like saying, "well you're all, writing off all you old blokes"  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** "you're a failure, your life's shot"  
KL: mm  
**CR:** "and we'll take the children", again  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** it has a bit of that  
KL: yeah yeah yeah  
**CR:** even though we're not taking them from the house, we're taking them away from your world. If we bring them up thinking  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** well being able to read and write and have all these skills and you don't  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** that's a bit, that's pretty disempowering  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** and I think that's one of the things, we go back to that issue about what makes strong men  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** is, is that family connection and you don't want to disconnect that by  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** bringing up smart arsed teenagers laughs  
KL: yeah  
**CR:** who've got no respect, for the circumstances of their dads and mums  
KL: wow, oh look Clive thank you very much for your time and um, we'll sorta kinda conclude on that  
**CR:** alright  
KL: and ah, that gives us a lot of things to think about. Thank you very much  
**CR:** thank you for thinking of coming and talking to me  
KL: yeah



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