**Stage 2 Aboriginal Studies – 2015**

**External Assessment Cover Sheet**

Assessment Type 4: Investigation

**SACE Registration Number:**

**Topic / Issue** Why is consultation with Indigenous communities so important?

**word count** 1692

This **investigation** is assessed using the following specific features:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge and Understanding** |  | **Analysis and Evaluation** | **Communication** |
| **KU1\*** |  | **AE2** | **C1** |
| **KU2\*** | **√** |  | **C2** |
| **KU3\*** | **√** |  |  |

\* Teachers must include at least one of KU1, KU2, and KU3. Please tick as appropriate.

**Why is consultation with Indigenous communities so important?**

In 2008 former Labour Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered his “Sorry” speech, the first formal apology to Australia’s Indigenous people. This speech was meant to *“honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history”* (Rudd, 2008) and *“reflect on their past mistreatment”* (Rudd, 2008). Rudd promised to *“turn a new page in Australia’s history by righting the wrongs of the past”* (Rudd, 2008). However, despite this promise the Australian government, state governments and organisations continue to make mistakes when interacting with Indigenous people, often on matters which the government or organization believe will improve the lives of Indigenous people. The main issue seems to be that governments and organisations do not consult with the Indigenous people they are trying to help or do not consult enough, so whatever program is implemented is ineffective and offers limited improvement to the lives of Indigenous people it was introduced to help. The aim of this essay is to look at ways in which consultation with Indigenous communities can be improved. I will do this by examining the Northern Territory Intervention and also housing. I will gather evidence by reading reports and searching the Internet.

Analysis and Evaluation

Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. **AE2**

The Northern Territory Intervention was introduced by the Liberal government of former Prime Minster John Howard in 2007. It was a response to the *Little Children are Sacred* report which detailed the sexual abuse of children in Northern Territory communities. In the foreword of the report it says

“*There is nothing new or extraordinary in the allegations of sexual abuse of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory. What is new, perhaps, is the publicity given to them and the raising of awareness of the wider community of the issue.”*

(Anderson & Wild, 2007).

The report also made it clear that the sexual abuse of children was not perpetrated just in these Northern Territory communities or by Indigenous Australians, that it is one of those terrible things that is not confined to any one geographical location or ethnic group, that it can happen anywhere and be perpetrated by anyone. However, when the report was released and the Northern Territory Intervention was introduced, a media storm followed and negative publicity was directed at Indigenous Australians by most if not all mainstream media outlets. It generated the view held by ignorant people that sexual abuse of children was an issue perpetrated by Indigenous Australians and was how most people in these communities treated children. This distracted people from the fact that the government had largely mishandled how to deal with the issue of child sexual abuse. The report’s first recommendation is clear

Knowledge and Understanding

Well-considered knowledge of forms of racism.

**KU3**

“*we have specifically referred to the critical importance of governments of governments committing to genuine consultation with Aboriginal people in designing initiatives for Aboriginal communities, whether these be in remote, regional or urban settings. We have been conscious throughout our enquiries of the need for that consultation and for Aboriginal people to be involved.”*

(Anderson & Wild, 2007).

The government partially ignored the recommendations of the report and did not engage in genuine consultation with the Indigenous peoples who were living in the communities affected by the Intervention, such as the elders or community representatives, as well as health workers and others working in the community. Current Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin acknowledged the negative effects of this in the June 2011 *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* discussion paper, saying that the manner in which the Northern Territory Intervention was introduced *“has caused ongoing anger, fear and distrust among Indigenous people and communities.”* (Macklin, 2011). Macklin states the obvious when she says “*I believe that we must work in partnership with Aboriginal people, leaders and communities as we develop directions and policies for our future work in the Northern Territory.”* (Macklin, 2011).

Communication

Perceptive and appropriate use of evidence.

**C2**

Knowledge and Understanding

Well-considered knowledge of the effects of racism.

**KU3**

The current government must look back at past mistakes and learn from them to offer the best possible futures for Indigenous communities through genuine consultation. Macklin says that she has been told by people in Northern Territory communities that *“they and their families feels safer, their children are better fed and clothed and less money is being spent on alcohol and gambling.”* (Macklin, 2011). Therefore, she seems to be implying that the Northern Territory Intervention was a positive thing for Indigenous communities and improved the lives of people living in those communities, which for some it may have, but from the way she words her comments she seems to be implying that it improved the lives of most Indigenous people, which is in contradiction to her other comments. Although Macklin says the words many Indigenous Australians want to hear, her words seem to have an air of insincerity and superficiality, and her talk of consultation and “stronger futures” carry a sense of over-lordship and talking down to Indigenous people. Macklin reports two vastly different results of the intervention saying that the intervention “*has caused ongoing anger, fear and distrust among Indigenous people and communities”* (Macklin, 2011) but that it has also made “*families feels safer”* (Macklin, 2011). This only further serves to highlight the importance of genuine consultation as it shows that what works for one community or family may not necessarily work for another, and that consultation is needed to assess what assistance or measures will work to best serve the communities and families.

Analysis and Evaluation

Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people.

**AE2**

Communication

Well-considered and mostly clear and structured communication of informed ideas.

**C1**

Internet action site [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au) says that through the intervention “*A small number of abuse and neglect cases have been picked up, but it is not clear if these cases would not have been picked up under the past systems.”* (reconciliation, 2008). A statement was released on the 7th of February, 2011 by seven Northern Territory Aboriginal elders concerning the Northern Territory Intervention. It did not deny abuse or that when there is abuse, action must be taken, it simply said that the elders did not agree with the manner in which the intervention was carried out. One concern was that *“Through harsh changes, we have had removed from us all control over our communities and our lives.”* (Kunoth-Monks, et al., 2011). Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) released a series of documents including reports and posters showing a) that the Northern Territory Intervention was discriminatory, and b) that there are Aboriginal communities that successfully have control over their own lives and that bring up happy and healthy individuals. One ANTaR poster expressed concern over the methods with which the Northern Territory Intervention was carried out: “*Welfare payments are quarantined on the basis of race, essential services are inadequate, and Aboriginal languages and cultures are under attack… There is a better way.”* (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR), 2009).

Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge of effects of racism.

**KU3**

Knowledge and Understanding

Comprehensive knowledge and well-informed understanding of Aboriginal viewpoints on land and preferred futures.

**KU2**

Housing is an area where consultation is absolutely necessary for the benefit of Indigenous people. Overcrowding has long been stated by successive governments as an issue with Indigenous housing. However, in communities where living arrangements of dwelling in family groups is the norm and have been for generations, or in situations where it is necessary for people to live together, what white governments consider as overcrowding may be considered as normal or necessary family living arrangements. Therefore this issue of overcrowding is very important for consultation so that houses suitable for family size needs are accommodated for adequately and not in accommodation that is insufficient and cannot support a larger family. Research institute AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute) has worked with Indigenous communities to improve housing opportunities, and states in their August 2005 Research & Policy bulletin that

Knowledge and Understanding

Comprehensive knowledge and well-informed understanding of Aboriginal viewpoints.

**KU2**

Analysis and Evaluation

Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of importance to Aboriginal people.

**AE2**

“*Consultation in remote Indigenous communities that seek to improve ‘housing’ outcomes fail due to a disregard for cultural and domestic issues, a lack of coordination between service providers, and the absence of uniform national, state and local government guidelines. Protocols for cross-cultural and cross disciplinary consultation, project management for coordination and a database to provide common information are required.”*

(Lee & Morris, 2005).

This particular AHURI document uses examples from Ngaanyatjarra Lands and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands of Western Australia and South Australia. AHURI acknowledged that consultations with Indigenous communities “*are usually limited by budget and time restrictions and are often based on methodologies and timeframes suited for conventional rather than cross-cultural consultation.”* (Lee & Morris, Effective consultation for improving built environment outcomes for remote indigenous communities, 2005). AHURI also acknowledged that for consultation to work a series of principles must be established; engagement, communication, reciprocation and feedback, also giving guidelines on how to establish these principles, and stated the need for ongoing communication. In their Final Report on the matter, AHURI said that although there were always barriers in undertaking such a project which involved cross-cultural negotiation on an often large or unprecedented scope, they experienced successes. AHURI states that to their knowledge the best outcomes are where there is *“a project based upon a combination of the knowledge of the designer and of the community and client.”* (Lee & Morris, 2005).

Analysis and Evaluation

Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people.

**AE2**

Through my research I have found that a genuine consultation process is needed when engaging with Indigenous communities if any program or project aimed for the benefit of the Indigenous communities in question if the program or project is to succeed. This means that there needs to be improvement in consultation methods used when consulting with Indigenous communities. From the Northern Territory we have learnt that what may work for some communities will not work for all or the majority, so consultation must be improved by consulting with as many people as possible who are living in the communities affected if measures of this scope are ever undertaken again. In terms of housing, AHURI’s propositions for consultation on housing are very promising. They acknowledge the reasons why housing initiatives fail in Indigenous communities, saying “*’housing’ outcomes fail due to a disregard for cultural and domestic issues, a lack of coordination between service providers”* (Lee & Morris, 2005) AHURI also advise that the principles of engagement, communication and reciprocation and feedback must be established, and also state that there must be ongoing communication for success to last. With this knowledge and AHURI’s proposed principles, consultation in the future can be a successful process that can truly benefit Indigenous people and communities.

Analysis and Evaluation

Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people.

**AE2**

Word count: 1692

**Bibliography**

Communication

Perceptive and appropriate use of evidence and detailed acknowledgement of a range of sources.

**C2**

Anderson, P., & Wild, R. (2007). *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle – “Little Children are Sacred”*. Darwin: Northern Territory Government.

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR). (2009, October 26). Right now, in the Northern Territory.

Kunoth-Monks, R., Gondarra, R. D., Nelson, H., Ungunmerr-Baumann, M.R., Mununggirritj, D., Gurruwiwi, D., et al. (2011, February 11). Statement by NT Elders – To the People of Australia.

Lee, G., & Morris, D. (2005). *AHURI Final Report.* Melbourne: AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute).

Lee, G., & Morris, D. (2005). *Effective consultation for improving built environment outcomes for remote indigenous communities.* Melbourne: AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute).

Macklin, J. (2011). *Stronger Futuresin the Northern Territory.* Canberra: Australian Government.

Rreconciliation. (2008, June 29). *Aboriginal child abuse and the NT intervention.* Retrieved September 14, 2011, from reconciliation: <http://reconciliation.org.au/nsw/recent-issues/aboriginal-child-abuse-and-the-nt-intervention/>

Rudd, K. (2008, February 13). *Kevin Rudd’s sorry speech.* Retrieved August 30, 2011, from The Sydney Morning Herald: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/02/13/1202760379056.html>

**Additional comments**

* The overall grade for the Investigation is a **B+ (24)**
* The student looks at this issue from a range of perspectives and includes viewpoints from Aboriginal elders and commentators.
* The student has incorporated knowledge of the forms and effects of racism throughout the investigation.
* The student has clearly identified, and critically analysed, an issue of critical importance to Aboriginal people. While the student has drawn conclusions from their research materials, use of the full word count may have allowed a deeper analysis of the issue.
* The student fluently incorporates quotes as evidence and perceptively analyses them in the context of the discussion. They have referenced appropriately and included an extensive reference list in their bibliography.
* While the student’s communication is mostly clear and well-structured, occasionally sentences are overly long.

| - | Knowledge and Understanding | Analysis and Evaluation | Reflection | Communication |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | Comprehensive knowledge and well-informed understanding of Aboriginal histories and achievements.  Comprehensive knowledge and well-informed understanding of a range of Aboriginal viewpoints on culture, land, identity, and/or preferred futures.  Perceptive knowledge of forms and effects of, and/or ways to counter, racism. | Insightful and well-informed analysis and evaluation of social and political points of view presented through Aboriginal arts and/or literature.  Perceptive and critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. | Insightful and thorough reflection on the student’s own learning about intercultural communication and understanding from a range of sources. | Insightful, focused, and structured communication of informed ideas for different purposes.  Perceptive and appropriate use of evidence and detailed acknowledgment of a range of sources. |
| B | Detailed knowledge and well-informed understanding of Aboriginal histories and achievements.  Well-considered knowledge and informed understanding of a range of Aboriginal viewpoints on culture, land, identity, and/or preferred futures.  Well-considered knowledge of forms and effects of, and/or ways to counter, racism. | Well-informed analysis and evaluation of social and political points of view presented through Aboriginal arts and/or literature.  Critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. | Well-considered reflection on the student’s own learning about intercultural communication and understanding from different sources. | Well-considered and mostly clear and structured communication of informed ideas for different purposes.  Detailed and appropriate use of evidence and acknowledgment of different sources. |
| C | Appropriate knowledge and informed understanding of Aboriginal histories and achievements.  Appropriate knowledge and informed understanding of different Aboriginal viewpoints on culture, land, identity, and/or preferred futures.  Generally considered knowledge of forms and effects of, and/or ways to counter, racism. | Informed analysis and evaluation of social and political points of view presented through Aboriginal arts and/or literature, tending towards description.  Some critical analysis of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. | Some considered reflection on the student’s own learning about intercultural communication and understanding from different sources. | Appropriate and generally clear and structured communication of informed ideas for different purposes.  Generally clear and appropriate use of evidence and acknowledgment of different sources. |
| D | Superficial knowledge and some consideration of Aboriginal histories and achievements.  Identification and some recognition of one or more Aboriginal viewpoints on culture, land, identity, and/or preferred futures.  Awareness and some basic knowledge of one or more forms and/or effects of racism. | Some consideration and description of one or more social or political points of view presented through Aboriginal arts and/or literature.  Description, with an element of attempted analysis, of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. | Some consideration of the student’s own learning about intercultural communication and understanding from one or more sources. | Some communication of ideas.  Some reference to evidence and acknowledgment of sources. |
| E | Emerging awareness of Aboriginal histories and achievements.  Emerging awareness of one or more Aboriginal viewpoints on culture, land, identity, and/or preferred futures.  Identification of a form or effect of racism. | Identification of one or more social or political points of view presented through Aboriginal arts or literature.  Identification of a contemporary issue of significance to Aboriginal people. | Attempted description of the student’s own learning about an aspect of intercultural communication and understanding from one source. | Attempted communication of one or more ideas.  Limited use of any evidence or acknowledgment of sources. |