

# **Actions to mean a difference**

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# Why am I here?

Background through "Australian Assistance Plan"

Pharmacy project on Tiwi Islands - desire to evaluate

Ask "is anyone any better because of pharmacy" – "is anyone getting any better"

What to do? ... ask more questions

Where are we at? -Where are we going? - How do we get there?

Children at risk?

Where should we be heading? - How do we get there?

How do we do it? – What resources are needed?

Conclusion

# Where are we at?

***“Our society today is clearly unsuccessful”***

***“Some of the signs our society is not functioning successfully...(1)***

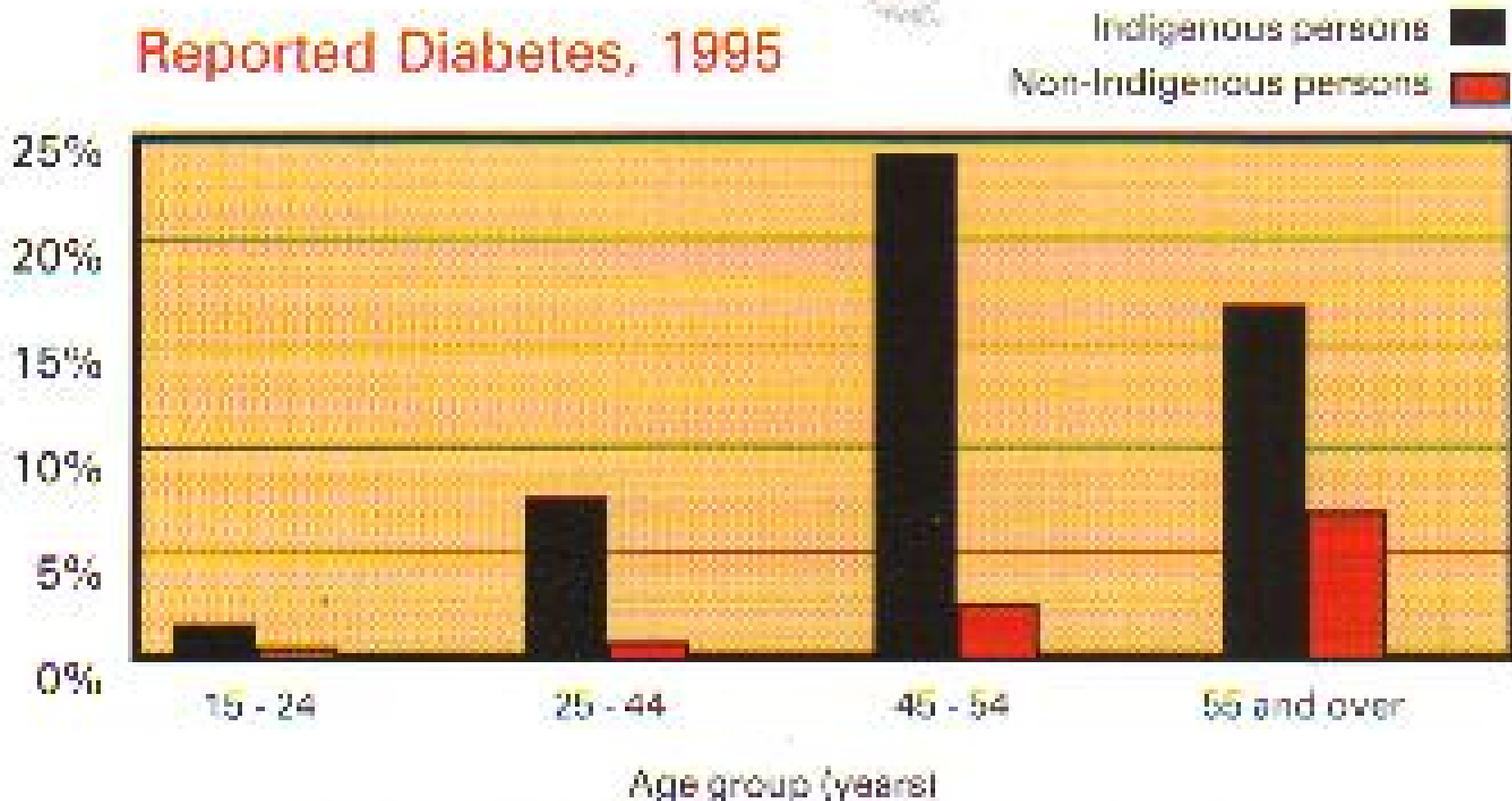
- Our people die more than 20 years earlier, on average, than other Australians
- health is by far the worst of any group in the Australian community
- suffer from diseases that other Australians simply do not have
- most vulnerable to new health threats, like HIV
- children do not participate in the education system anywhere near as successfully as other Australian children
- more violence amongst our people than in other communities in Australia.”

**(1) Noel Pearson – “Our right to take responsibility”**

# Lifestyle diseases

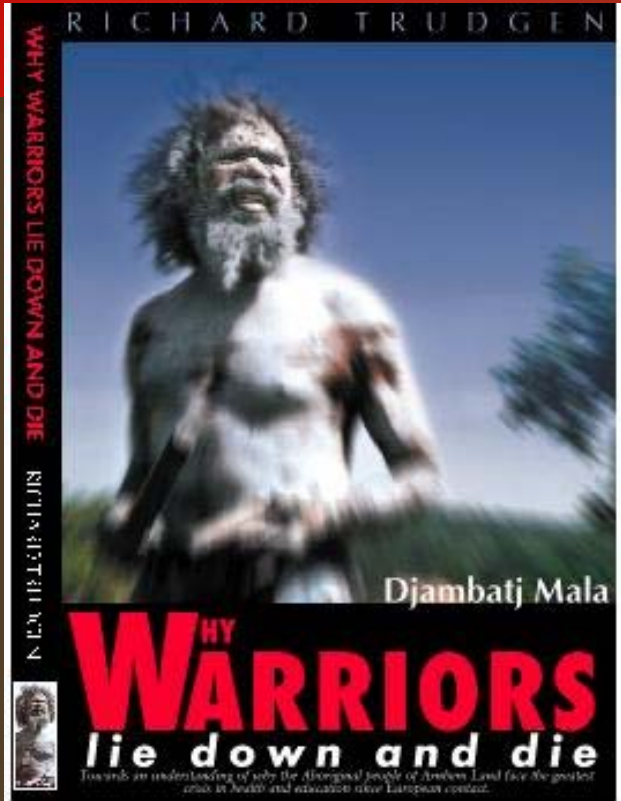
*"...there were 10-15 times more hospital separations for Type 2 diabetes..."*

## Reported Diabetes, 1995



1995 National Health Survey (excludes data from people in remote areas)

# Where are we at?

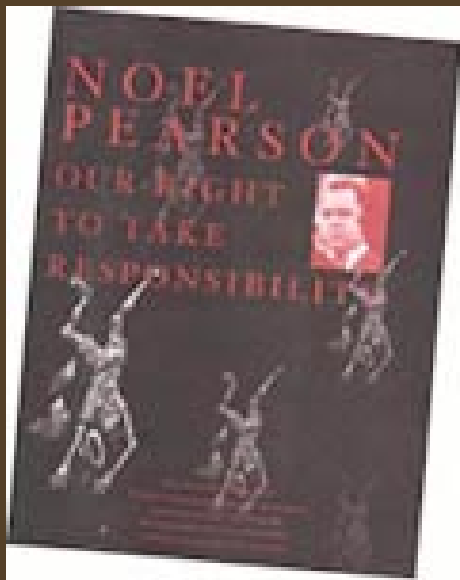


- “in 1983, ninety-five per cent of the work on communities was carried out effectively by the people themselves....in 1992.... only a few... remained involved in meaningful work. “

Richard Trudgen

# Where are we at?

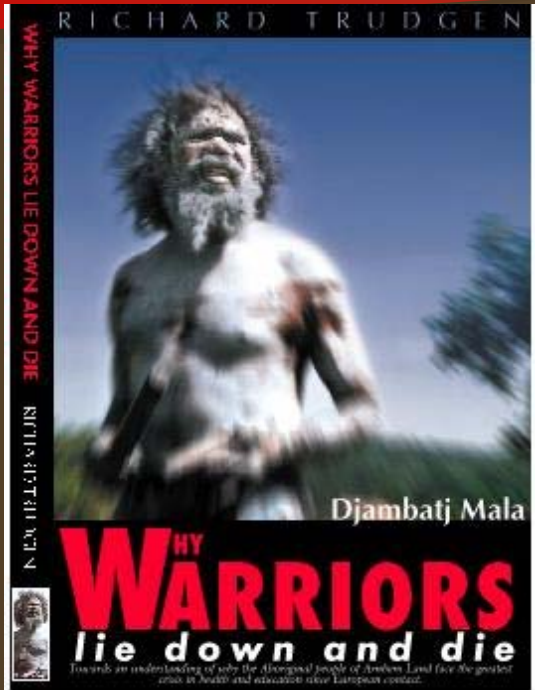
- The provision of money through **welfare handouts** has resulted in spending towards a lifestyle which acts against good health.



- *“There is no responsibility and reciprocity built into our present artificial economy, which is based on passive welfare (money for nothing).”*

*Noel Pearson*

# Where are we at?



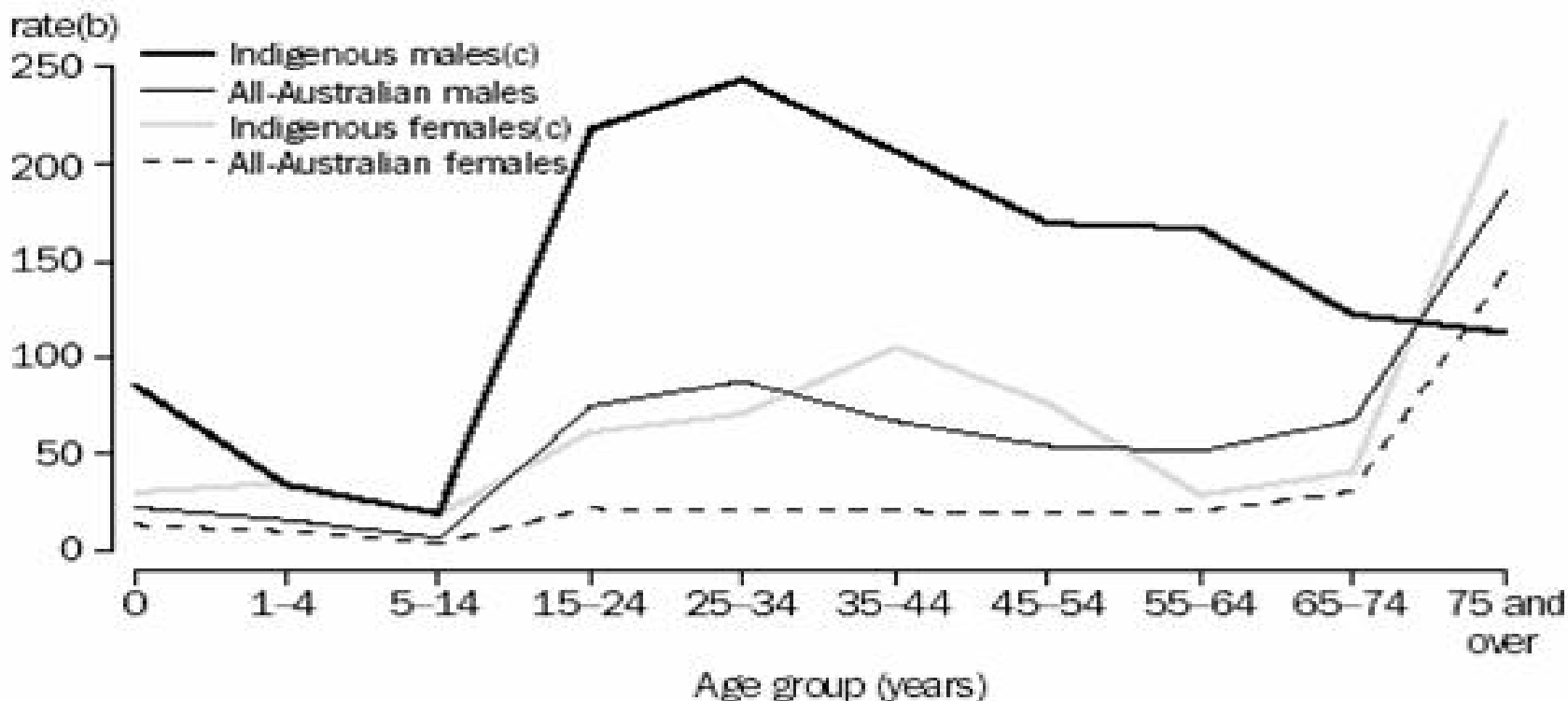
- “Welfare leads to a level of dependence that is crippling and creates loss of roles, loss of mastery and, above all, hopelessness. And hopelessness in turn translates into destructive social behaviour - neglect of responsibility, drug abuse, violence, self-abuse, homicide, incest and suicide.”

Richard Trudgen

## Social disharmony...

*"Self-harm and assault may be indicators of social and emotional distress..."*

### 8.9 AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATES—EXTERNAL CAUSES(a)



(a) Data are for the year 1997-99 combined, based on year of registration.

(b) Per 100,000.

(c) Indigenous data are for usual residents of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory combined.

Source: Data available on request, ABS Deaths Registration Database.

# Where are we going?

Dr Gary Robinson – Centre for Social Research – NT University

- The social determinants to health go deeper than previously considered.
- Improvement of health in Aboriginal people has concentrated too much on fixing a tired system with money, and measuring the reasons for poor health in terms of limited access and poverty.
- More money is not the solution... rather an examination of the social structure surrounding Aboriginal people.

# Where are we going?

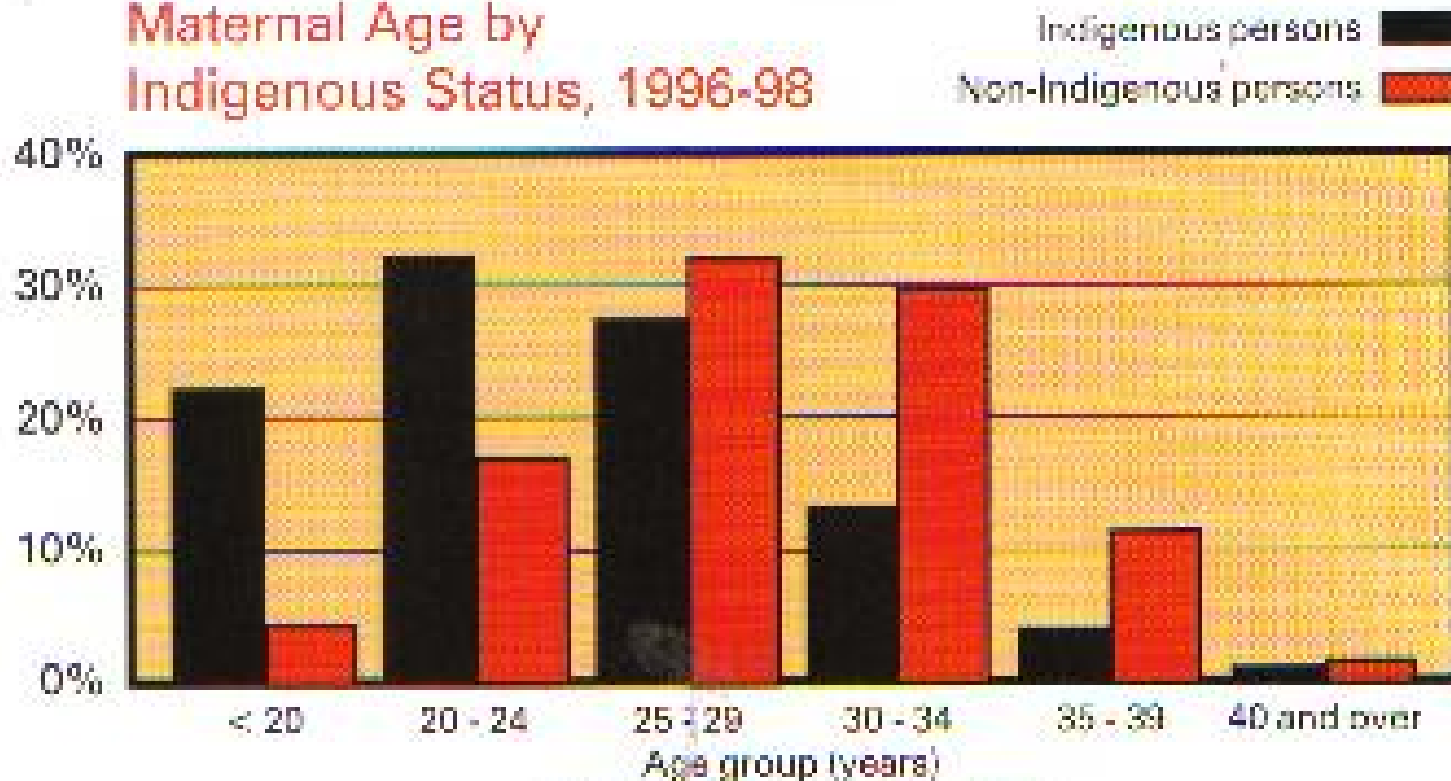
Dr Gary Robinson – Centre for Social Research – NT University

- This (social structure) will not improve, and with it health, until
  - health professionals cease to be driven by policy determined on past practices.
  - Recognise that children are subject to high level risks in their developmental years.
  - health professionals acknowledge the need for improved social circumstance from within the community structure...
  - ...not from just providing larger services which have already been shown to be ineffective.

Paper presented at Menzies School of Health Research 2002

# Children at risk?

Maternal Age by  
Indigenous Status, 1996-98



AIHW National Perinatal Collection 2001

# Outcome of a fragile social structure

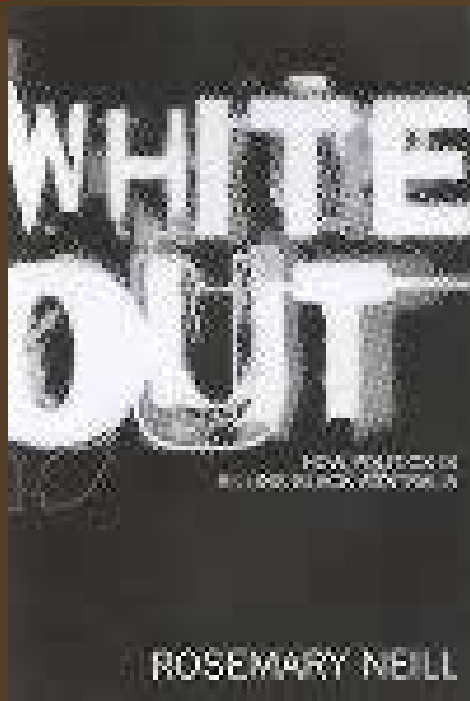
## Early intervention program for children "at risk"

- Majority experience multiple sources of difficulty
- Current family violence
- Conflict between parents
- Sibling conflict
- Recent deaths including suicide in close family
- Separations and fostering

# Outcome of a fragile social structure

- Child living apart from parents with tenuous relationship with carer
  - Lead to cognitive and emotional development
  - Withdrawn behavior
  - Communication and learning difficulty
- Parents have limited capacity to change circumstances affecting children

# How do we get there?

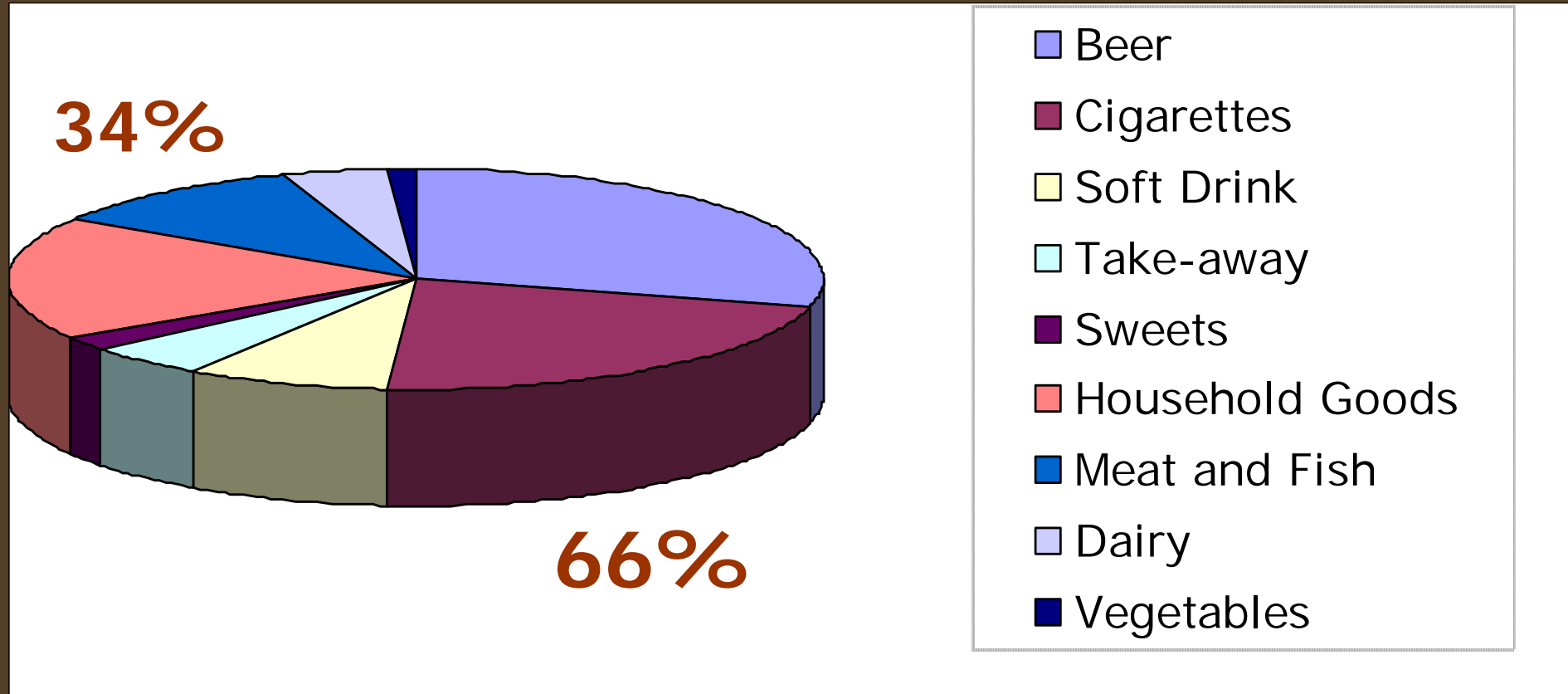


*“What we desperately need is a National debate about why white- and indigenous-run institutions are failing.....in the face of steadily more progressive social attitudes and substantial increases in government expenditure.”*

*Rosemary Neill*

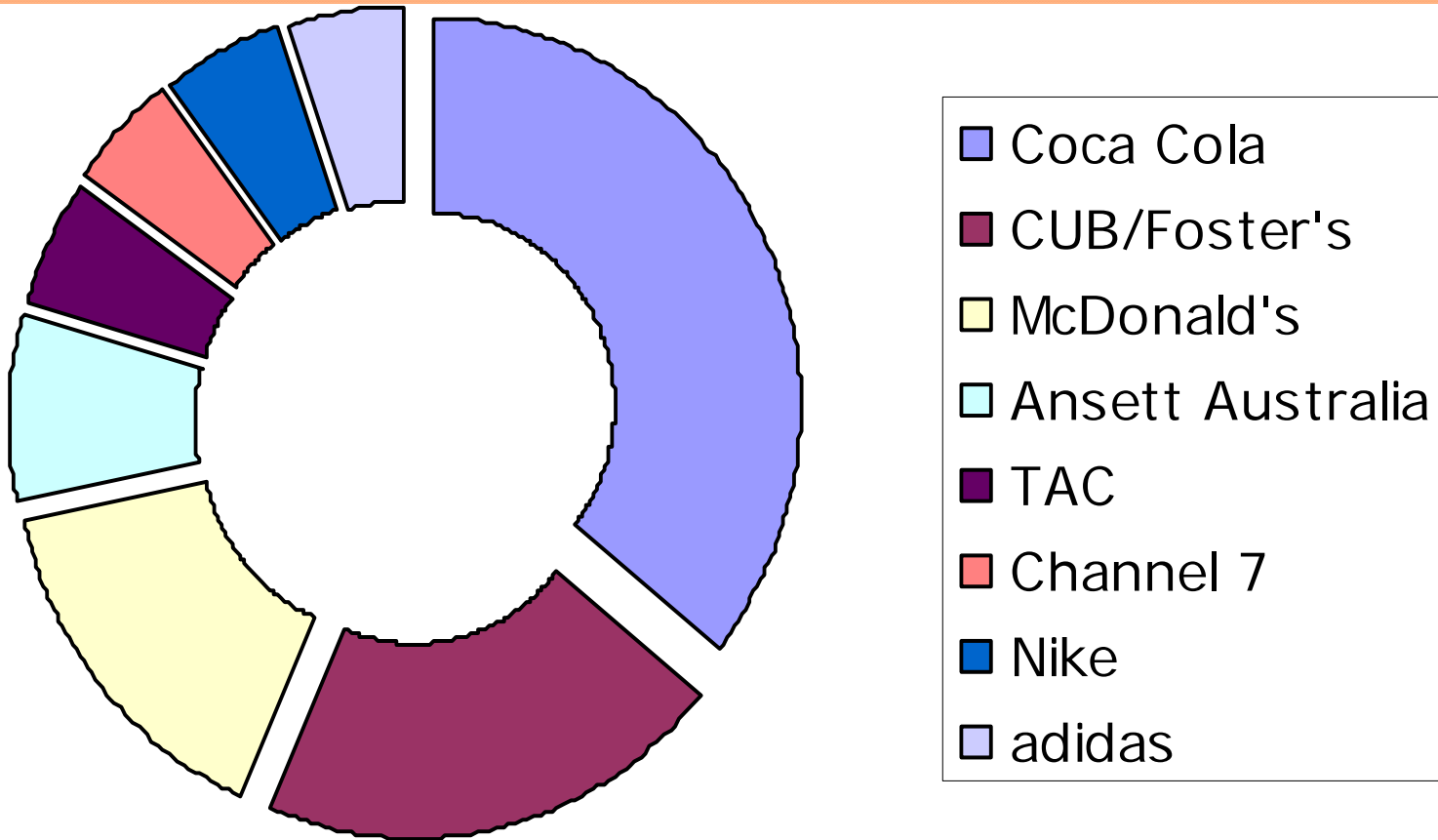
# What is the challenge?

Personal expenditure at Nguiu store, takeaway and club



# AFL SPONSOR AWARENESS

% of population aware of sponsor



Source: Sweeney Sports Report Winter 2001

8/7/2005

good health promo

16

# How do we get there?

**Social  
planning  
means**

**□ build and  
strengthen  
communities**

**Examine**

- the social impact on
  - individuals
  - families and
  - communities

**Of the**

- larger social
- economic
- political and
- cultural forces

# How do we get there?

**Social  
planning  
means**

□ **coordination  
between  
agencies**

**Develop**

single body which  
brings together

- community
- local government
- State/Territory
- Federal Government
- non government  
organisations

# How do we get there?

## **Social planning means**

□ the setting of  
community  
goals and  
priorities.

## **Discuss**

- What the community will look like?
- What will the people be doing?
- How will they relate to each other?

# How do we get there?

## Social planning means

□ implementation of programs to achieve these goals

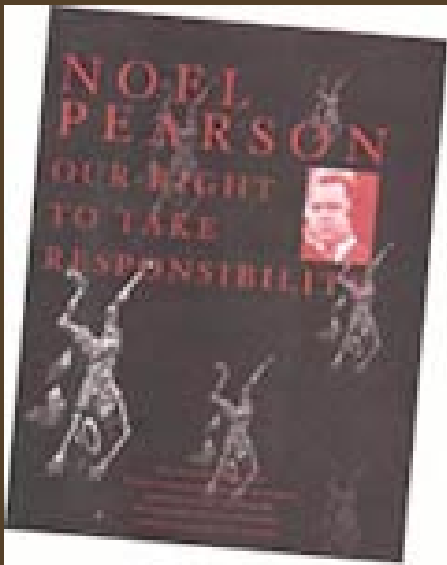
## Plan

the pooling of resources to build

- a better community
- a happier community
- a healthier community
- a wiser community

# “With rights come responsibility”

## Noel Pearson again...



“Education, employment and self improvement among Aboriginal people will occur

when **social goals** are in place with self determined priorities.”

# Where should we be heading?



## Wisdom Interviews

– Fiona Stanley (1)

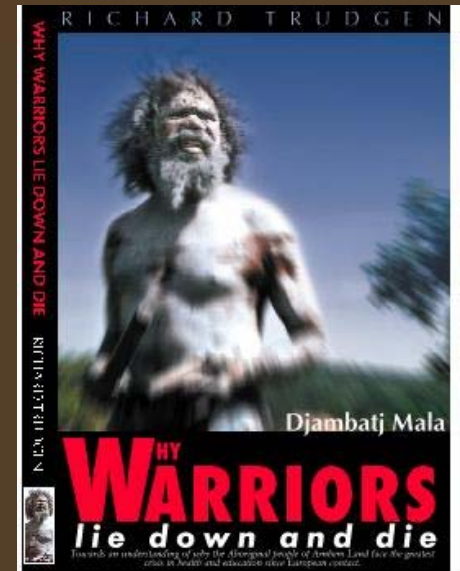
- We place too much emphasis on hospitals and prisons and downstream things
- Let's look at the whole of society, the whole of the problem and maybe we can start to fix things earlier
  - where it's going to be more effective
  - where it's going to make a more profound and sustainable difference

**(1) ABC Radio interview with Peter Thompson 4 August 2002**

# How do we get there?

## Richard Trudgen again...

- Take the people's language seriously
- Train dominant culture personnel
- Approach education and training in a different way
- Replace existing programs with programs that truly empower the people
- Deal with some basic legal issues



# What to do?

A process for social development

- ✓ Stimulate interest in the future
- ✓ Encourage formation of social development group
- ✓ Establish a vision for community in (say) five years
- ✓ Set goals for development and prioritise goals
- ✓ Plan and implement tasks for achieving goals
- ✓ Review activity
- ✓ Consider new goals and priorities

# Resources?

- Committed government
- Establishment funds
  - 100% to local community people
  - Project funding guidelines
  - Well resourced administration
- Leaders support
- “council” for social development
- Communication lines to people.

# Conclusion

- Ill health is caused by **social circumstance** which brings on disease factors.
- The **social infrastructure** of communities needs to be understood before the promotion of “good health” will succeed.
- **Social planning** in communities is needed
- Government **department for social planning** established
- Create **indigenous assistance plan**
- **Devolve spending** to local community level
- Provide **training for indigenous facilitators**
- **Promote “good health”**