



Aboriginal People Travelling Well Project

The Aboriginal People Travelling Well (APTW) Project aims to identify barriers preventing Aboriginal people from travelling safely in South Australia and to identify solutions and key organisations in positions to facilitate action for change. The project began with a Flinders University grant in 2005 that enabled Flinders researchers Kim O'Donnell, Inge Kowanko, Yvonne Helps, James Harrison and Charlotte de Crespigny to conduct forums with key representatives from Aboriginal community organisations, service providers and other agencies. Eleven key themes emerged around limited access to safe and reliable transport and ways this impacts on the health & wellbeing (spirit) of Aboriginal people. The forums also provided an opportunity for people to network and build working relationships with Aboriginal community representatives, and representatives from state-wide and local agencies. These relationships continue to develop.

In July, 2006, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) commissioned the APTW project team to: describe the nature, extent and impact of limited access to safe, reliable, timely transport for Aboriginal people in urban, rural and remote areas within South Australia; identify strategies to improve transport safety that work well; provide evidence (literature review, case studies) to inform policy and action in localised situations and state-wide; make recommendations for safer transport developed in partnership with state-wide and local agencies and Aboriginal groups, develop working partnerships with Aboriginal communities and service providers to implement and evaluate local, sustainable strategies for safer transport options.

Kim O'Donnell and Yvonne Helps are the people who are conducting the focus groups and personal interviews, and recording personal stories as case studies. They are recruiting participants for interviews from Elders to youth's views and are conducting this project in several locations, including Adelaide suburban areas and more remote locations such as the Far West Coast. While the work may not have an immediate impact on conditions, the results of the project will provide a comprehensive understanding of transport issues for Aboriginal people in South Australia, and may inform decision making and policy development in departments and agencies that provide services leading to solutions actioned by communities and supported by the service providers, whether in urban, rural or remote locations.

The project is supported by the Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee SA, Yunggoendi First Nation Centre at Flinders University and the Flinders University Social & Behavioural Research Ethics Committee.