

UWANKARA PALYANYKU KANYINTJAKU (UPK): A STRATEGY FOR WELLBEING

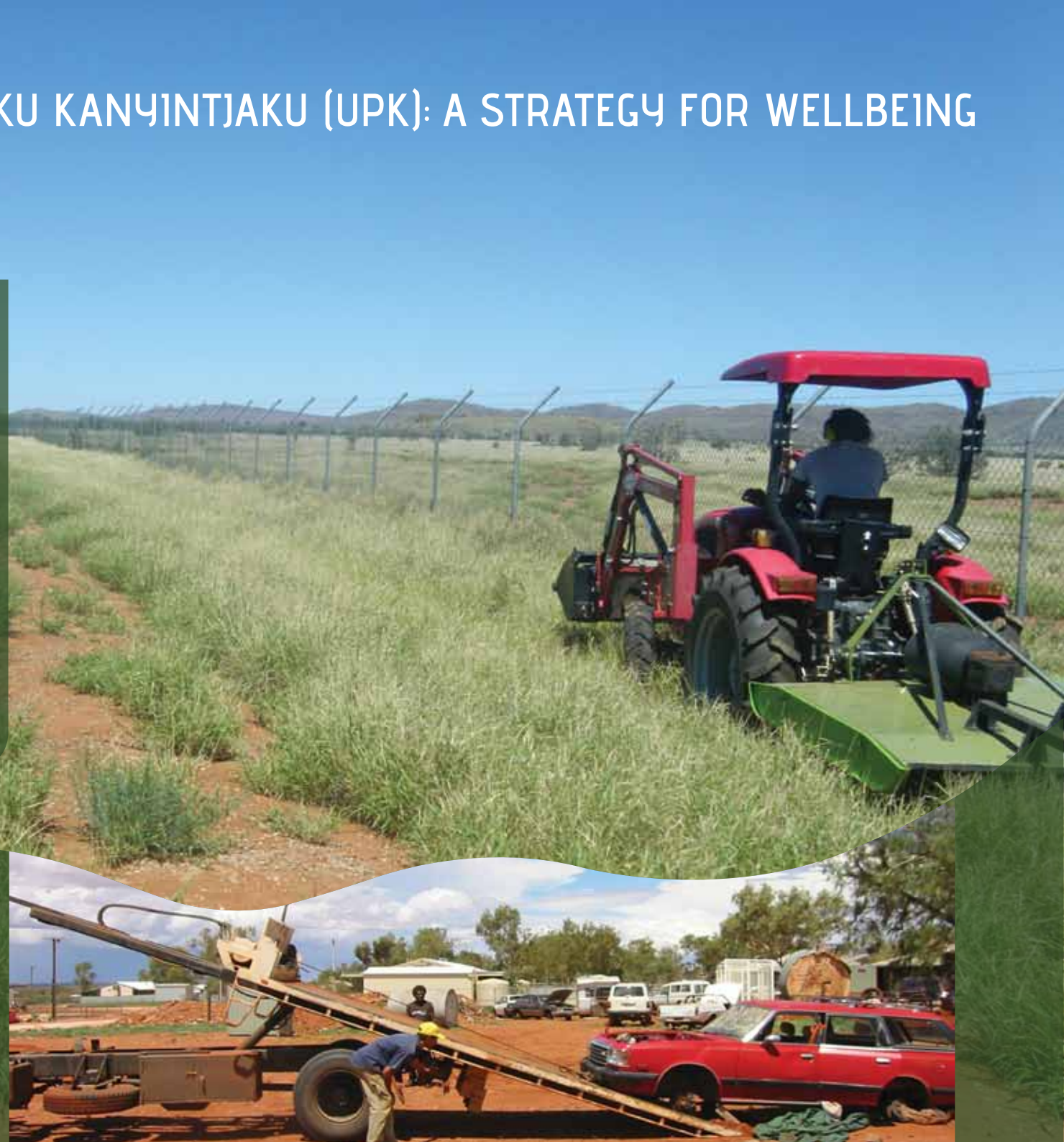
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OVERVIEW

This Program operates within the UPK environmental health policy framework. This can be viewed at www.nganampahealth.com.au.

The key objective of the Program is to ensure that householders can be safe in their home and can carry out the 9 healthy living practices [9HLPs] as detailed in the 3rd edition of the National Indigenous Housing Guide.

Of course there are many other relevant environmental health issues that impact on people's well being and capacity to participate in and contribute to healthy communities. The UPK Program works closely with government agencies and regulatory authorities to monitor and improve the wider living environment.



THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKER (EHW) TEAMS

The 9HLPs fall into two broad categories of safety and health.

A major safety related activity has been fire management through ongoing fuel reduction around houses and other buildings and infrastructure. This has been the result of high rainfall from cyclone Yasi and the consequent virile growth of buffel grass, an introduced and highly invasive grass.

The effectiveness of slashing and grading a firebreak was dramatically demonstrated on one homeland where a bushfire went through and would have destroyed two houses if it had not been for this work undertaken by the EHWs.

The EHWs are organised into two teams - one covering the Eastern side and one the Western side of the APY Lands. Each team has different skill sets and this is reflected in their work activities. Their work is responsive to local concerns and as such is locally driven. The role of the Public Health Officer is to provide all necessary support so that the teams can efficiently carry out the work required. Attention has been paid to ensuring the teams have a range of tools, equipment, vehicles and machinery to do the jobs required. Due to high use the machinery used to slash the grass has resulted in higher than expected recurrent costs for fuel, repairs and maintenance. There is also a need to ensure that EHWs have access to the relevant training, equipment and support to meet current Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare requirements and ensure that their workplace is safe.

The team in the east comprises a self-managing Anangu crew. The west side crew work with a non-Anangu works supervisor. One of the attractive elements of the work program for both teams is the variety of tasks that can be undertaken and the fact that the program operates outside of any sharply defined or agency driven demarcations. Flexibility and responsiveness to local issues mean that the health impacts of the work undertaken can be significant.

Both fire management [slashing] and hard waste removal imperatives have dominated EHW activities this year. If other agencies were able to slash and remove hard waste from inside the yard then the EHWs could concentrate on those tasks that enable the householder to carry out the other HLPs. It should be noted that the slashing of yards and removal of the hard waste helps to reduce functional crowding as it makes the yard more available for people to use.

EHW WESTERN TEAM

This team of four men operates in the five communities of Nyapari, Kanpi, Kalka, Pipalyatjara and Watarru. The team leader is a non-Anangu man with a long history of working as an Essential Services Officer in these communities. He has also participated in informing the development of the Housing for Health methodology and has been on the team for Housing for Health projects. His technical knowledge of the essential services and houses together with his rapport with the people has enabled this team to engage in a wide variety of activities.

EHW WESTERN TEAM ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN 2011-2012

540 house related jobs were attended to in total, including jobs that related to the 9HLPs as follows:

Safety [including lighting]	40
1 Ability to wash people	29
2 Ability to wash clothes and bedding	17
3 Ability to remove waste water safely	49
4 Ability to store prepare and cook food	45
5 Ability to reduce the negative effects of crowding	95
6 Ability to reduce the negative contacts between people and animals	50
7 Cockroach treatment	11
7 Dust control	2
8 Temperature control	82
9 Reduce trauma	120

This team attended to 20 jobs for the Pipalyatjara store, 41 jobs for the clinic, removed 17 vehicles from yards, repaired 10 fences and pressure cleaned 23 houses. They carried out work on playgrounds, childcare centres, youth centres and art centres. There were 143 fire management tasks and 90 door repair tasks completed. Finally they attended to jobs 37 times at sorry camps and assisted in the preparation and completion of graves 11 times.

EHW EASTERN TEAM

This team of up to four men cover the communities from Railway Bore to Cave Hill including all the major communities of Iwantja, Mimili, Kaltjiti, Pukatja and Amata. Overall they worked in 21 communities and homelands. This is an extensive area. The team leader also needs to drive up to 100km a day to pick up some EHWs for work. Both these factors impact on work outputs. Consequently this team does not have as broad a range of work activities as the team in the west. Their focus has been on a few key areas. They have completed 84 jobs related to fire management, 57 to do with dog health, 38 concerning hard waste removal and 16 related to house washing. In addition, they participated in a stormwater control project at the Pukatja Aged Care Centre that involved learning how to use a laser level and how to cut and lay pavers and install rainwater tank overflow piping.

They now also have the equipment and materials to repair gates and fences in order to help contain dogs, engage in cockroach control and repair door furniture and other minor house/ yard items. Recently they have been establishing a base in a shed at Watinuma community where the machinery and equipment can be safely stored.

Dogs are routinely treated with the parasitic control agent in between the visits from the Vet. These treatments are administered across all communities from Iwantja to Amata. The EHWs also accompany the Vet during his visits and were involved in the production of a dog health DVD. One of the EHWs and his band contributed two songs to the latest UPK music CD.

DOG HEALTH

The dog health program, one of the longest continuous programs of its kind in remote Australia, continues to profit from high levels of Anangu acceptance and participation. Dr Robert Irving continues to visit six times a year and is supported in his work, and between his visits, by the EHWs.

Over the past twelve months 3013 parasitic control doses have been administered to dogs, 616 fertility control injections administered and 374 dogs have been euthanased. The program is funded by FaHCSIA as is an Animal Management Education project, contracted out by the Health Council to Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities. Resources will be developed with input from community members and school children.

UPK5

Since 1989 the Health Council has been supporting musicians from the APY Lands to produce health and wellbeing promotion songs and albums. UPK5 is the fifth CD in the UPK series. Recorded at Katji Kuta the CD was funded by DoHA and can be viewed at www.upk5.com

The theme for this production was Fight Against Disease.



Nqanampa Health Council purchased a blokart in order to provide Anangu youth with an opportunity to experience this new and unique recreational activity. Blokart racing is fast developing internationally as a recognised and skilful sport and recreation. As a collaborative venture, the Health Council and the NPY Women's Council jointly manage the blokart. Offering an alternative recreational activity to young people on the APY Lands, the blokart works best in open flat areas including clay pans, salt pans and football ovals - wherever the wind blows!!

