Handout 4: Working With Special Needs Groups

Working with ATSI Groups
To ensure CPCC is accessible to people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds:

- The service should try and employ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff need to work with all staff involving Aboriginal or Torres Islander clients.
- Staff should use language which is appropriate and understood by the client.
- Consider the benefits of meeting in relaxing surroundings outside the office.
- All staff require appropriate training, including cultural awareness, communication skills and knowledge of kinship systems.
- Workers need to be aware of the client's positions within the family, and the responsibilities and obligations that entails. The client may need to fulfil their family obligations before attending to their own needs. They may need support to do this.
- Make contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and key people within the community; let them know what service you provide and find out how they work. Establish a Directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services.
- Always obtain the client's permission before contacting other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their behalf. They may not want to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks or there may be particular people they do not want to have involved.
- If the client agrees, involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers from other services in the coordination of services.
- Do not overload the client with too much information, or talk too much. Go slowly, giving the client plenty of time to think.
- Find out who the support people are within the client's own network. Take these into account when developing a support plan.
- Always ensure the client is involved in support planning and their priorities and needs are being addressed, rather than those of the service.
- Do not pressure the client to carry out these tasks. Be patient and/or offer assistance.

Appropriate Cultural Considerations and Case Management

- The case management process must identify and respect the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of clients. This involves linking the client with
ethno-specific services where this serves the client’s interests and meets their wishes.

• The services must be accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

• CPCC needs to analyse demographic statistical data to monitor the changing population in New Cedar and the Macintosh Shire and be aware of the main cultural/language groups residing in the area.

• When staff/committee vacancies occur, CPCC will try and recruit staff/committee members to ensure that the main cultural and language groups of New Cedar are represented.

• It is important to actively network with ethno-specific health and welfare services in the area and the Migrant Resource Centre, to develop strong working relationships with those services and workers.

• All staff need to be trained in cross-cultural awareness and communication.

• Staff training should include the use of interpreters and the Telephone Interpreter Service. Staff should be confident in the use of these services.

• Where possible, a client should be matched with a worker with the same language, or will co-work with a relevant worker from another service (if the client wishes). If this is not possible an interpreter service will be used for all client and resident meetings.