

Developing Images and Identifying Values Surrounding Fatherhood in Seven Indigenous Communities

Craig Hammond

I was asked to help put together some posters showing positive images of Indigenous men with their kids. It's really important that Indigenous men are portrayed in a positive way in the community because too often we only get portrayed in a negative way. What we want is to see Indigenous men as fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins who care for their kids and for each other. We thought the posters would create a sense that what we (as men) do, is good.

For this project, we involved male and female Aboriginal workers from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, as well as Aboriginal people from the community. These people were keen to make the project work once they knew the full story behind it. Once I started talking about the project and why we were doing it, they took it on board to stay connected to the project and be part of it. We also asked the kids "What are the real things you like to do with your Dad?" We used their answers from the kids to decide what words and images we would use on the posters.

This project had to be done over a considerable period of time because there were lots of things we had to sort through, and it was something that hadn't been much talked about in the community. Some of the things we had to take our time with were involving the right people, and that everyone was informed of what we were doing. We also had to think about what types of images were going to be used, and the wording and the main messages the posters were giving. We had to involve the community and all the organisations right from the beginning in order for it to be successful.

First we started contacting people who we thought might be interested and we talked to them about the project. We had a couple of meetings before we got to a group who were committed. This was the 'advisory group'. Some members of the advisory group had had bad experiences with men, so we had to take a softly, softly approach. We kept reminding ourselves, and each other, that the aim of these posters was to focus on positive things about Aboriginal men and their kids. We didn't want to ignore that negative stuff was happening, but we didn't want the negative stuff to get in the way of what we set out to do. We had a couple more meetings to make sure everyone was comfortable with how we were progressing. We kept the advisory group in touch with what we were doing the whole time.

We organised a Fathers and Child photo session where the dads brought along their kids for a BBQ lunch in the park. We had a few photographers walking around with a list of shots to take of the dads and their kids in the different settings in the park. The dads signed permission notes allowing us to put their photos on the posters. After the shots were taken, about five of us sat down to choose which images we were going to use. It took us about two and a half months to select appropriate images that connected with the words we had chosen for the posters. We then went to Newcastle High School with the draft copy of the posters. We spoke with kids at the school about what they liked their dads to say and do. The students also did some artwork, which we then used on the border for the posters. All through this process we worked with a graphic designer.

What I learned from this project is that if you're going to do it properly, then you've got to give it lots of time. You've got to give it time and space to filter out there to the community so that we know if there are positive vibes, and if there are, we can move

to the next step. We needed the community to accept that what we were doing was a good thing. It takes a while for people to take it in, talk about it amongst themselves, and decide whether or not it is worthwhile. In this case, it was accepted by the community, and once they accepted it, they stayed committed and supported the project all the way.

The posters below were developed with the Aboriginal community in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. They can be ordered through the Family Action Centre website at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/publications-resources/index.html>. The fathers posters from communities in NT, QLD, TAS, NSW, VIC and SA can be ordered through the Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care <http://www.snaicc.asn.au>

OUR KIDS NEED DADS WHO ...

take an interest

'cause
i care



in
us



any
time

in things
they like



Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services

Wandjari WANDJARI

—Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Incorporation

Black on Track

—Aboriginal Men's Program

Aboriginal Youth Service

Aboriginal Disability Service

Aboriginal Experience Music Project

For father information contact

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Border artwork by Nenealla

High School Indigenous students

Photography by Edward Cross

Poster Design by Stephanie Casson

The Engaging Fathers



Bernard van Leer Foundation



OUR KIDS NEED DADS WHO ..

(l i s t e n)
to how they are
feeling any time



when
they are
happy



in their schoolwork



Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services



Wandiyah

—Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Incorporation

Black on Track

—Aboriginal Men's Program

Awabakal Youth Service

Awabakal Disability Service

Awabakal Experience Hands Project



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Binder artwork by Newcastle High School

Indigenous students

Photography by Edward Cross

Poster Design by Stephanie Cannon

Engaging Fathers



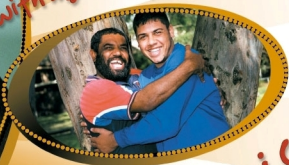
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OUR KIDS NEED DADS WHO ..

smile

having fun
with my family



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Border artwork by Newcastle High School
Indigenous students
Photography by Edward Cross
Poster Design by Stephanie Cannon

Engaging Fathers



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Wentworth Aboriginal Children's Services

Wandjari: WANDJARI
— Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Incorporation

Black on Track
— Aboriginal Men's Program

Aboriginal Youth Service
Aboriginal Disability Service
Aboriginal Experience Hands Project

OUR KIDS NEED DADS WHO ...

in heart



in spirit

stay
STRONG
in mind

when we are sad

Wentworth Aboriginal Children's Services

Mandiyall: **MANDIYALL**
—Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Incorporation

Black on Track
—Aboriginal Men's Program

Awabakal Youth Service
Awabakal Disability Service
Awabakal Experience Hands Project



for myself

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Border artwork by Newcastle High School

Indigenous students

Photography by Edward Cross

Poster Design by Stephanie Carson

Engaging Fathers



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OUR KIDS NEED DADS WHO ...



ARE THERE FOR US

JUST TO BE WITH

'CAUSE YOU CARE

FOR THEM

TO HELP

Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services
Wandiyall
—Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Incorporation

Black on Track
—Aboriginal Men's Program

Aboriginal Youth Service
Aboriginal Disability Service
Aboriginal Experience Hands Project

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Reader artwork by Newcastle High School
Indigenous students
Photography by Edward Cross
Poster Design by Stephanie Cannon

The Engaging Fathers



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