



Aboriginal men unite (above) in opposing violence against women and children and the apology they signed (below) to those women and children.

The men's apology

"We, the Aboriginal males from Central Australia, and our visitor brothers from around Australia, gathered at Inteyerrkwe in July 2008 to develop strategies to ensure our future roles as grandfathers, fathers, uncles, nephews, brothers, grandsons, and sons in caring for our children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.

"We acknowledge and say sorry for the hurt, pain and suffering caused by Aboriginal males to our wives, to our children, to our mothers, to our grandmothers, to our granddaughters, to our aunts, to our nieces, and to our sisters.

"We also acknowledge that we need the love and support for our Aboriginal women to help us move forward."

Aboriginal men say sorry for the violence

About 400 Aboriginal men have given an historic apology to Aboriginal women for the pain, hurt and suffering caused by Aboriginal men.

The apology was given at the end of an Aboriginal male health summit, held over three days at Ross River, outside of Alice Springs.

The summit also allowed Aboriginal men to respond collectively to the effects of the federal intervention into Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress male health manager John Little said one of the effects of the Federal Intervention had been the perception that all Aboriginal men were violent abusers.

"We need to acknowledge the hurt and pain that has been caused by violence, which has shamed many Indigenous males who are not violent," Mr Little said.

"More importantly, we want to come up with solutions that will bring about safe, healthy environments for our children and families."

Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin, intervention administrators Sue Gordon and Major-General David Chalmers and members of the intervention review team attended the final day to witness the apology and accept recommendations that came out of three days of workshops.

Recommendations included the establishment of community-based violence prevention programs specific to Aboriginal men, creating healing places for Aboriginal men such as men's shelters, providing tax-free status for professionals working in Aboriginal communities, incentives to employ Aboriginal people in similar positions and better support for Aboriginal-controlled businesses to tap into the minerals boom.

Bush tucker and medicine garden at Desert Park

A specialised garden has been created by the Alice Springs Desert Park (ASDP) that will provide bush tucker and bush medicine to chronic renal patients.

ASDP Nursery Manager Tim Collins said the park is proud to be involved with the project as it supports and promotes Indigenous health and culture as well as the use of Central Australian plants.

"The garden was created for the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (WDNWPT), a local charity that supports renal patients from remote communities who have had to relocate to Alice Springs for lifelong dialysis treatment," Mr Collins said.

"The ASDP developed a plan to create a bush food and bush medicine garden so that resources are more readily available for the patients and visitors to use, as well as having a beautiful garden to improve the aesthetics of the house.

"The bush onion (Yalka) and Quandong (Pmwerlpe) are some of the plants to be used for bush tucker.

"Some of the plants being used for bush medicines include *Stemodia viscosa* (Pintye-pintye) used as a compress to relieve colds and flu, *Eremophila freelingii* (Arrethe) used as a skin wash to treat scabies, and *Cymbopogon ambiguous* (Ilintjii) used as a drinking medicine or rubbing medicine for colds and flu."

WDNWPT Manager Sarah Brown said the organisation was extremely grateful to everyone involved in creating the garden and they were overwhelmed by how magnificent it looks.

"When we first walked out into the garden it felt like 'Backyard



L-R Tim Collins, Marina Alice, Norah Nelson and Gary Dinham.

Blitz' Desert Park style; the transformation was truly amazing and brought tears to our eyes," Ms Brown said.

"It means a lot to WDNWPT to have received such tremendous support towards the project and that the garden will help our patients and their families.

"WDNWPT, whose name means 'keeping all our families well', was formed from the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal, which raised over \$1 million dollars in 2000 when Indigenous painters from the Western Desert painted pictures

and auctioned them off at the Art Gallery of NSW," Ms Brown said.

"The aim of the Appeal was to support patients in town and set up dialysis out bush, with the money raised used to help WDNWPT buy a house in Alice Springs, which now has two dialysis machines and acts as a meeting place for patients and their families."

The Australian Government youth initiative Green Corps, Alice Springs Town Council and pharmaceutical company Amgen also contributed towards the project.