

A decade of the development of a dog program in a remote Aboriginal community

*G Morales*¹

*D Bell*²

¹Warlukurlangu Artist's Aboriginal Corporation, Yuendumu, N.T.

²Centre for Remote Health, Alice Springs, N.T.

Concern about the health and welfare issues for dogs in a remote Aboriginal community and its impact on the well being of residents led to the development of a unique dog program, where the positive impacts are obvious and continuing. This paper will focus on the organic growth of a ten-year dog program.

Statistical records shown a substantial reduction of dogs in the community, with clear improve overall health. The number of dogs requiring de-sexing as well as euthanasia has radically declined.

The paper will discuss key factors towards the establishment of a successful dog program, these include;

- flexibility, consultation, education, community collaboration, and trust-based relationships.
- Veterinary methods that have the most effective impact on the reproductive cycle as well as the removal of unwanted dogs from the community and interstate re-homing.
- And the provision of funding.

A dog program should be sustainable, appropriate and community owned.