

0090

**Tjitji-Tjutatjara Kunpu Kulintjaku (listening up strong for little kids) – Innovative evaluation in remote Indigenous communities**

C Vockins<sup>1</sup>, C Armstrong<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Adelaide, South Australia, -, <sup>2</sup>Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, -*

Participatory or empowerment evaluation is an innovative and responsive approach to evaluating and understanding complex community projects. The Anangu (Aboriginal) Children's Project in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in the far north west of South Australia is one such project. The project aims to establish culturally safe and inclusive early childhood environments built on Anangu concepts of quality child care. The project design, values and recognises traditional cultural knowledge as critical to developing a strong cultural identity in Anangu children, and this is now being recognised in the literature as a key indicator of positive health and well-being outcomes for Indigenous children (Priest, 2005). Traditional Anangu women from central Australia set the direction for the project and the process of evaluation involves the women interpreting and giving meaning to their work.

The project design uses a partnership approach based on the internationally recognised work in central Australia known as Warrki Jarrinjaku Jintangkamanu Purananjaku (Warrki Jarrinjaku) Warlpiri for 'working together everyone and listening'. This approach supports the growing call for Indigenous participation in evaluation and research (e.g. Kowal, Anderson & Bailie, 2005). This presentation will explore the process of participatory evaluation and partnership by which Anangu together with non-government and government stakeholders share responsibility for achieving project outcomes and building the evidence base for working together. A logic model (or theory of practice) will be used to examine project implementation and the outcomes achieved so far.

The Anangu Children's Project is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). It is a dynamic and evolving project that will inform the Australian Government policy agendas of shared responsibility with Indigenous communities and the inclusion of all Australian children, into early childhood services.