Phil’s story 1

Coz I know that Aboriginals, most of them in town, wouldn’t go there. That would be their last resort, going to the hospital.

It’s a shame factor. That’s why a lot of them don’t go to the hospital, coz they’re ashamed and frightened what the doctor or nurse gonna say to them. Then they tend to talk them down too, because they, you know, don’t understand some of the Aboriginal lifestyle or the predicament the Aboriginal people live in.

The ones who’ll go there and tell the doctor firmly what they need. And then there’s other ones, that go there with their heads down and, you know, just haven’t got the confidence... And shame factor, because they just got belted over the head with something, you know? All that sort of pressure they’ve got in their lives. It’s just understanding the background of a lot of the Aboriginal people up in the bush here.

I guess the most important thing for doctors and that, is to be understanding and show a little bit of compassion for Aboriginal clients when they come through. And that might be a way of turning things around, in terms of getting them to come to hospital. Encourage them and that. And also, when they do come to hospital, don’t send them home with a Panadol, really assess them, you know. Check out what their sickness is, instead of just giving them a Panadol.

I mean, even in mainstream hospitals they just looking at the front of the sick person instead of, you know, saying, ‘Okay, this guy’s got fever, maybe we should be looking for meningitis or something.’ That’s really the baddest thing, or double pneumonia or something... Instead of just giving them Panadol, instead of checking for the serious illness of the patients I think, then work their way down instead of... ‘Oh look, it’s just a common cold,’ and nodded off. And it turns out to be a double pneumonia and the person goes home and all his lungs and liver collapse and they got to fly him to Perth. And that individual end up dying, which has happened on a couple of occasions.

And compassion, I think. Respect for the Aboriginal clients when they come in. If they sick, they should be seriously looked at, not just brushed off. Give them the opportunity to express themselves too.

Respect, tolerance, a bit of compassion. I’m not talking about hugs and cuddles and things just, you know, they’re sick.
Even though there’s quite a bit of antisocial behaviour amongst the Aboriginals amongst themselves in town… They’re still sick, they come to the hospital, and they should be looked at accordingly, you know?

You got a job to do. You made an oath, I think, so look after everyone the same as you would want someone to look after your mum, dad, and brother and sister.

I think it’s about tolerance and really understanding the Aboriginal problems at home, you know, the underlining issues.

A lot of the families within these small country towns, they’ve got some form of oppressed lifestyle. So they’re gonna be verbally loud and abusive and that. And there’s other families that doesn’t have that problem, you know. There’s all different up bringing in society in general and majority of the Aboriginal people do have problems and it’s always down the bottom of the scale in the community in terms of wealth and jobs and all the things that bring an oppressed lifestyle.

So the understanding for the young nurses and doctors… Whoever come through here to be medical, to understand that there’s a lot of oppressed lifestyle that Aboriginal people live out here… And in cities as well, I guess. Not only out the bush here, but… And they are gonna say things and be verbal, because they have always been pushed in the corner and got their back against the wall, so to speak. And they wouldn’t go to the hospital. I know that if… I understand that a lot of them wouldn’t go to the hospital unless they were sick at all, you know?

You can’t lump everyone in the same basket, that’s the problem. Especially on health term, if they come up there, good or bad, and they seek… Treat them accordingly. Do your duty of care for them. That’s all you can do.