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No More Victims

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And when people tell you, “You can’t get up, you’re a victim”, that’s when you know that it is the devil you’re hearing, no one else.¹

Whilst history has no doubt dealt Indigenous people a questionable hand, there is no need to wallow in it such that it cripples us from acting and creating better present and futures for our communities ... It is time we moved beyond the victim, as indeed many have done so already.²

Getting ahead becomes elusive when you’re trained to think like a victim.³

Introduction

A significant source of the problems facing Aboriginal people today is the status-quo acceptance of the victim status of Aboriginal people. It is one of the elephants in the room. In this chapter I will explore the dynamics of victimhood and why it is so problematic for Aboriginal people.

There is endless debate about how much government can or should do to address health, education, and employment needs of Aboriginal people. However we need to bear in mind how much is already spent – and how effectively. More to the point, these are areas in which Aborigines can and should play a significant role. Focusing on what Aborigines themselves can do is in no way an attempt to absolve governments from their duties, or ‘blame the victim’. Rather, it is to empower Aboriginal people, and to achieve the best outcome. I believe that government can

¹ Cosby, B. & Poussaint, A. *Come on People* (2007), xv.

² Sarra, C. ‘Beyond the Victim’ (2010), 17.

³ Elder, L. *What’s Race Got to Do with It?* (2009).

only truly be effective when Aboriginal people begin to take greater responsibility for those areas in their lives over which they have direct control. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt as quoted by Noel Pearson: “There is nothing that government can do for you that you are unwilling to do for yourself”.⁴ As such, taking responsibility simply means one is ready to embrace a solution. To take responsibility for addressing one’s needs, to the degree to which one is capable, is true self-determination.

The Problem with Victimhood

Some Aboriginal leaders have led many Aboriginal people to believe that many (if not all) of their problems are due to colonisation⁵ and/or the white government.⁶ Following this view to its logical conclusion, it follows that Aboriginal people are victims, powerless to effect any change in their lives; hence they sit and wait (and die waiting) for the government to fix all their problems. In the words of Amy Wax when discussing race relations in the United States:

Focusing on the actions of others may sap the determination necessary to achieve difficult internal changes. Deemphasizing or abandoning the elusive quest for racial justice may in fact be a precondition for real progress ... The victim must realise that, although others have wronged him, his fate is in his own hands.⁷

In response, some may say something like, “Well, the government should be the ones to solve our problems as they are the ones who ...”. While it might be highly desirable that the government perform certain actions, the reality is people should not sit and wait for the government

⁴ Pearson, N. ‘Think Big but Start Small: Human Rights, Like Charity, Should be Nurtured in the Home’, *The Weekend Australian*, 20, 21 October 2012.

⁵ For example, see Smallwood, G. ‘Human Rights and First Australians’ Well-being’ (2011).

⁶ For example, see Shaw, W. ‘Indigenous ‘Solutions’ Just Disempower Us Further’, *ABC Drum* (2012).

⁷ Wax, A. *Race, Wrongs, and Remedies* (2009), 97, 114.

to ‘rescue’ them. Much like the pedestrian who is hit by a car and the driver drives off, never to return. Yes, the driver should have stopped. But sitting there with a sign saying “I want justice” is not going to help. Aboriginal people who believe they are victims need to ask themselves, “What can I personally do that will make a difference?”. Any message or action that focuses on the popular (and politically correct) idea of “What should others [such as the government] do that will make a difference?” is a serious impediment to advancing the well-being and self-determination of Aboriginal people.

Real Victims and Counterfeit Victims

I fully acknowledge those Aboriginal people in this country who live in environments that are so toxic and impoverished on most dimensions that it is very difficult for them to even survive without significant outside assistance, let alone fix problems. In some parts of Australia where there is little chance of meaningful employment, minimal access to basic services, minimal access to fresh and nutritious food, where alcohol abuse is prevalent, and people have known nothing different, then these people are victims of systems and mindsets that are fundamentally toxic. Some communities are victims of an ‘apartheid’ government policy: the Commonwealth refusal to allow leases on Aboriginal lands rules out private property and business enterprise and condemns these Aboriginal people to ‘welfare poison’.⁸

However, this chapter relates to Aborigines who, generally speaking, can access the same opportunities that most Australians take for granted. Many have learnt to see themselves as victims simply because they have Aboriginal ancestry. Some choose to see themselves as victims for reasons that I would consider relatively minor or trivial, such as failure to acknowledge country, or one’s Aboriginality being questioned on the grounds of having minimal ancestry, etc.. I believe these Aboriginal

⁸ Hughes, H. & Hughes, M. ‘The Denial of Private Property Rights to Aborigines’ (2012).

people are not victims of colonisation or White Australia, but rather victims of faulty and toxic thinking. Many will claim that they have inherited ancestral trauma (often called ‘trans-generational trauma’) or other historical baggage, and are therefore victims⁹ – more likely they have ‘inherited’ self-defeating thinking.

Victimology

Aboriginal people are portrayed as the victims of history (colonisation), racism, and government policies. Inequalities in health and well-being are cited as evidence for victimhood. But these factors alone cannot explain the high degree of dysfunction, disadvantage, and discontent of so many Aboriginal people. The best evidence that these factors are not the ineluctable forces they are made out to be is the Aboriginal people who are doing exceedingly well. This is an inconvenient truth to those who promote the Aboriginal victim syndrome – usually sidelined, or ignored outright, or actually suppressed.

Today’s Aboriginal people come from a race of people who adapted to environments which at any time could be very challenging. There can therefore be no doubt that Aboriginal people are very capable when faced with challenges. In contrast to those strong and resourceful Aboriginal people, many Aboriginal people today choose to be easily upset or offended, simply because someone disagrees with them. Apologists portray Aboriginal people now as being so fragile that they need to be showered with special services and programs under the banner of ‘cultural safety’. Clearly, people cannot choose their historical circumstances, but anyone can choose their response to their past history and present status. They do not need to be victims. As Spezzano (2001) states:

Most of us have had traumatic things happen to us. At the time of

⁹ See for example, Ranzijn, R. McConnochie, K. & Nolan, W. *Psychology and Indigenous Australians* (2009).

the trauma, we have a choice as to what the experience will become for us. Either we choose for this experience to become the thing that wounds us so mortally that it eventually kills us because we never get over it, or we choose for it to become the grain of sand around which we produce a great pearl.¹⁰

An important point here is that it is not always as simple as just choosing. Feelings of high self-esteem and self-worth are very important factors that influence our decisions. Those with a robust sense of self-worth (that is, those who value their opinion of themselves more than other people's opinion of them, and do not attach conditions to a positive self-evaluation) simply have no need to see themselves as victims. They cope with disasters, mishaps, and undesirable circumstances because they do not see themselves as victims. Take Nick Vujicic as an example. He is a great Aussie who makes his living as an author and speaker. Born with no limbs, he could have easily seen himself as a permanent victim. Yet he has led an amazing life, married a beautiful lady, and they are expecting their first child. He is grateful for what he has, not defeated by what he does not have. I highly recommend you look at Nick on Youtube and listen to what he has to say about life, opportunities, success, and happiness – or read his books.

Reasons for Adopting the Victim Role

If people can choose not to be victims, then why adopt the victim mindset? Why is it so seductive? What purpose does it serve? In addition to being the easier path to take, Black American author John McWhorter suggests that being a victim feels good.¹¹ That's right, it feels good. In brief, being a victim feels good because: (1) it enables one to feel special, (2) the victim no longer needs to feel responsible for themselves, and (3) adopting the victim status can be a means of gaining control or power over others.

¹⁰ Spezzano, C. *If it Hurts, it isn't Love* (2001), 229.

¹¹ McWhorter, J. *Losing the Race* (2001).

Feeling Special

Adopting the role of victim, or playing the ‘wounded’ or ‘downtrodden’, can enable a person to feel special – and that feels good. There is usually no shortage of people to rally around and give the ‘victim’ attention. But rewarding attention seeking by people who are perfectly capable of helping themselves is not helpful; and behaviour rewarded is behaviour reinforced, thus reinforcing them in their victim role. Although victimhood can become a badge of honour enabling a person to feel special, there is a downside to the pursuit of feeling special. This pursuit of being special necessitates seeing oneself as different from others, and consequently, separate from others.

The belief that people are separate beings is fundamentally flawed; as Shakespeare knew, no man is an island. Although each of us resides in a separate physical body (obviously), mystics, philosophers, and the spiritually-minded believe that beyond the consciously observable physical and social dimensions of our lives, all of life is interconnected. Many traditional Aboriginal people (and some other groups) do not see themselves as special, and hence different from others (in the spiritual sense), instead they see equality, oneness, and unity of life all originating from one spiritual source.¹² In the words of the Northern Territory’s Minister for Indigenous Advancement, Alison Anderson: “I see people. Not categories, divisions, or races”.¹³ When we see ourselves as spiritually separate from others, we become aware of the observable differences, which leads to comparisons with others, and eventually feelings of being threatened because someone else will always be perceived as better, bigger, stronger, or more deserving. It also leads to the ‘us vs. them’ mentality which is the basis for not only competition, success etc., but

¹² While many new age thinkers and philosophers have been active in promoting the teaching that we are all interconnected, such beliefs were always a part of the traditional Aboriginal belief system. For example, see Vicki Grieves’ 2009 discussion on Aboriginal spirituality.

¹³ See chapter by Anderson in this volume.

also racism, conflict, fear, and war. So instead of being seen as brothers and sisters, others are seen as opponents and enemies. This mentality, though embraced by activists who are obsessed with Aboriginal identity, as well as the racists (both black and white), who are prisoners of their own fear-driven flawed ethnocentric paradigm, is in stark contrast to the principle of oneness and interconnectedness once embraced by many traditional Aboriginal peoples around the world; a principle that is arguably the basis of what it means to be Aboriginal.

Abdicating Responsibility

Adopting the role of victim can also provide a ready-made excuse for all failures or any aspect of our lives we don't like – or anyone else mightn't like – and that feels good. According to Zur, "In claiming the status of victim and assigning all the blame to others, a person can achieve moral superiority while simultaneously disowning any responsibility for his or her behaviour and its outcome".¹⁴ Victims are able to tell themselves and others that since their tragic, life-changing event (which may have happened to them personally or even to their ancestors), they are 'emotionally wounded', and therefore can no longer partake in normal life like everyone else, and in fact cannot be expected to be actively involved in finding solutions to their problems. Because of their victim status, they cannot be censured, criticised, or even held responsible for any of their behaviours. Dineen sums it up this way:

There are many incentives for acquiring, and even for seeking, victim status and, in the short term, there are some pay-offs. The tragedies, the failures, the hardships, the health problems and the disappointments of life become explained, relieving people of at least three of life's natural burdens: dealing with complexity, facing things beyond their control, and accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions.¹⁵

¹⁴ Zur, O. *The Psychology of Victimhood* (2005), 49.

¹⁵ Dineen, T. *Manufacturing Victims* (2001), 21.

Cosby and Poussaint suggest, “Blaming white people can be a way for some black people to feel good about themselves, but it doesn’t pay the electricity bills”.¹⁶ Essentially, while blaming others may feel good, the problems continue and the temporary good feelings from blaming others prevent one from realising that problems require solutions to lead fulfilling lives. Even more importantly, the victim status confers a sense of moral innocence and entitlement,¹⁷ and with a sense of entitlement comes a belief that the victims should not have to earn an income, in order to “pay the electricity bills”. The victims feel owed and expect that someone else will pay the bills. Such ‘moral innocence’ and feeling of entitlement can justify any behaviour.

Similarly, in his book for Black Americans, *Man up! Nobody is Coming to Save us*, Black American author Steve Perry states:

When we blame them [White people], we are expunged of responsibility for the condition of Black people. This allows us to occupy the peculiar position of victim ... It is good for Black folks to know that there are flaws in the assumptions that the root of all Black problems is White people. It is downright freeing to know that we have a hand in perpetuating our current condition. That also means that we can fix it.¹⁸

I would add that it is ‘downright debilitating’ for Aboriginal people to deny that they have a hand in perpetuating their current condition. Some will likely interpret Perry’s ideas as ‘blaming the victim’ yet again. A key word here from Perry’s advice is ‘perpetuating’. We need to examine what perpetuates the problems amongst some Aboriginal people today. I say ‘some people’ because it is obvious that there are many Aboriginal people who, despite the history of dispossession and discrimination, are doing very well for themselves. Perhaps they have replaced the mindset

¹⁶ Cosby, B. & Poussaint, A. op. cit., 40.

¹⁷ Sykes, C. *A Nation of Victims* (1992).

¹⁸ Perry, S. *Man up! Nobody is Coming to Save us* (2005), 5.

of ‘The white man is to blame’ with ‘No more excuses. No more blame. What can I personally do to make a difference in my life?’.

Gaining Power

Being the victim, paradoxically, can place one in a position of power. Few are game to disagree with victims (or their supporters), or question motives, or challenge them in any way for fear of being seen as an uncaring bully. When Aboriginal identity and mandated ‘respect’ are factored in, questioning victim status will likely be seen as tantamount to racism. Therefore, adopting the victim role (feeling upset, offended, outraged, racially vilified, or whatever) can be a very effective and convenient way of silencing dissent, and inducing feelings of guilt in others. Silencing others provides the ‘offended’ victim with a sense of power over others – and that feels good. Victims remain unchallenged with their victim status intact and unassailable. Any open debate on the problems facing Aboriginal people is stifled.

Promoting and Reinforcing the Victim Status

The victim is not a solo performer. There are accomplices who encourage victims to take on the victim role so as they can play the part of helper or rescuer. David Pollard in his 1988 book *Give & Take: The Losing Partnership in Aboriginal Poverty*, suggested:

The interest of the political parties in maintaining an Aboriginal problem is compounded by the existence of a small group of Aboriginal activists whose vocation is confrontation, who generally derive their own income from governmental sources, either directly or indirectly and who must have poor Aborigines to point to in order to have a *raison d’être* themselves.¹⁹

More recently, Sutton, writing about Aboriginal disadvantage and suffering, argues that some people’s careers can depend on the

¹⁹ Pollard, D. *Give and Take* (1988), 10.

perpetuation of victimhood.²⁰ There are therefore, people with a vested interest in having Aboriginal people maintain a view of themselves as victims. This has led to the term ‘Aboriginal industry’ – describing the many positions as ‘cultural experts’, consultants, advisers, etc., devoted to addressing Aboriginal issues. People in these roles are reluctant to give them up. When trying to argue against those who have a vested interest in viewing Aboriginal people as victims, I am reminded of what Upton Sinclair once said – “It’s difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it”.²¹

When some Aboriginal opinion leaders and their non-Aboriginal acolytes continually speak on behalf of Aborigines, it should come as no surprise that self-reliance is eroded and replaced with dependence. Add to the equation a readily available welfare system (aptly described by Noel Pearson as ‘welfare poison’²²), and you have the perfect environment for self-doubt and reliance on others. Being the victim pays dividends – and those dividends can be very attractive when the alternatives are so much tougher. It is only natural that people will take ‘the path of least difficulty’ – even in the face of the fact that, in the long-term, such a path is very difficult indeed!

It is sad that some of the most prominent of those who promote the victim mentality amongst Aboriginal people themselves identify as Aboriginal. This does not seem uncommon within minority groups. In the introduction of *The Race Card*, the editors write in relation to Martin Luther King Jr:

But even as King was reaching the apex of his influence ... forces were at work that would undermine this movement of integration and equality. Some of the opposition came from irreconcilables in the white world who had trouble giving up the old ways. But this

²⁰ Sutton, P. *The Politics of Suffering* (2011).

²¹ http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Upton_Sinclair

²² For example, see Martin, D. ‘An Assessment of Noel Pearson’s Proposals for Aboriginal Welfare Reform’ (2011).

group was an ever shrinking minority ... A more serious challenge to King came from within the black community itself, where a radical fringe ... developed into a movement for black power – an ideology of separatism addicted to theories of white guilt and “institutional racism,” and to demands for reparation for black suffering.²³

I believe a similar situation is happening here in Australia. Accusing ‘whitefellas’ of oppressing Aboriginal people is very common, but I believe the most damaging messages for Aboriginal people come from other Aboriginal people, most damaging because these messages are seen as emanating from a trusted source – other Aboriginal people. When non-Aboriginal people are regularly portrayed as the enemy, it is then (wrongly) assumed that Aboriginal people must have the best interests of their people at heart.

Victims of Racism?

Australia is a great country to live in, but there are some who see it as a racist country. Aboriginal leader Professor Gracelyn Smallwood has stated, “whether we like it or not, Australia is a racist society”.²⁴ Ranzijn *et al.*, have stated, “At a day-to-day level, Indigenous Australians are constantly victims of racism and discrimination”.²⁵ Anthony Mundine has expressed his opinion that Australia is a racist country.²⁶ The problem with such claims is that the basic assumption of wide-spread racism is largely accepted without any real evaluation of what a ‘racist society’ means. While those who believe that Australia is a racist country may have personally experienced racism themselves, we need to ask, just how widespread is racism in Australia, and how severe is it?

²³ Collier, P. & Horowitz, D. ‘Introduction’ to *The Race Card* (1997), vii.

²⁴ Smallwood, G. ‘Townsville Professor Blasts Australia over Land Rights and Intervention at International Conference’ (2012).

²⁵ Ranzijn, R. *et al.*, op. cit., 136.

²⁶ As reported by Jackson, G. ‘Man’s Apology Turns into Assault on Racism’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 2012.

Claims of racism are backed up by subjective ‘self-report’ surveys. For example, in the summary of a survey on racism, Victorian Health state that their survey measures participants’ self-reported experiences of racism, yet their findings are worded as if actual verified experiences of racism took place.²⁷ Such surveys are more likely to be reporting people’s feelings that racism exists somewhere, rather than objectively quantifying clearly ‘race-based’ negative experiences to which they had been subjected. Such surveys are then quoted and used to prove the existence of racism. Little real evidence is proffered and as a result focus is diverted away from the far more serious problems that affect Aboriginal people – education, health, employment, etc.

I am not denying that racism exists in Australia;²⁸ it does – as it does in any country. Further, quite clearly, the White Australia policy – abolished only in 1972 – defined Australia as White, and was racist by definition.²⁹ In fact it is impossible to talk about White Australia without talking about racism in the same breath. Anyone born in Australia any time before 1972 grew up, to a greater or lesser extent, in White Australia with all its attitudes, assumptions, values, and prejudices. What I do question is the assertion that racism today is as widespread and as severe as some want to suggest. I further question the widely held assumption that overt racial prejudice is the major cause of the problems that some Aboriginal people experience. I believe it is more accurate to say, not only are most Australians not racist, but many other Australians are sometimes in such fear of being accused of racism that they overcompensate by making ever-increasing allowances for unacceptable Aboriginal behaviour. This naturally leads to an expectation of lower standards of behaviour for Aboriginal people, for example in child protection matters.³⁰ This, in an

²⁷ Victorian Health, ‘Mental Health Impacts of Racial Discrimination in Victorian Aboriginal Communities’ (2012).

²⁸ See Young, Markham, & Doran, in this volume.

²⁹ Parbury, N. *Survival* (2005).

³⁰ Sammut, J. ‘Is Preventing ‘Another Stolen Generation’ Racist?’ (2012)

anomalous kind of way, becomes racist itself. It's just as racist to expect less of someone on the basis of their race or ethnicity as it is to offer them less – and it is ultimately far more damaging.

Where overt racism exists, it needs to be weeded out and the perpetrators dealt with. However, one of the barriers to weeding out racism is the focus on confected racism. It has become far too easy to make claims of racism when a non-Aboriginal person disagrees with an Aboriginal person. Or a racist motive is assumed (never substantiated, just assumed) when a person of mixed heritage is questioned about why they choose to identify solely as Aboriginal. It is one thing to claim to be victims of racism, but another thing entirely to prove it.

I am not suggesting that overt racism against Aboriginal people has been totally eradicated, but in this century we should be able to look back on and be inspired by the many fine Aboriginal Australians who have tackled racism head on and demonstrated that it need not be a barrier. Rather than just complaining, I suggest it's better to adopt the approach of Aboriginal singer-songwriter Jimmy Little, who said, "Racism has never been a problem for me. I know who I am. If others don't, then that's their problem."

Why wasn't racism a problem for Jimmy? He likely valued his opinion of himself more than he valued some other people's opinions of him. Jimmy did not say he never experienced racism, he just said it has never been a problem for him. I am all for enforcing the law that prohibits individuals from racist acts, such as not hiring Aboriginal people for a job even when they are the best suited. However, for other expressions of racism, such as racial slurs (which, interestingly, some Aboriginal people accept as being okay when spoken by another Aboriginal person), I am suggesting that changing one's response to the slur will be far more empowering than trying to change the person speaking the slur. Rather than taking offence when such slurs are spoken (which is extremely disempowering), perhaps a better response is to laugh. Laughing is not endorsing such racial slurs, but simply communicates, 'I'm a bigger

person than you'. Much like when confronted by a flasher, a confident laugh is more likely to deter such behaviour.

Identity³¹

The previous discussion raises the question, 'Why do some people wish to sometimes see racism where it does not exist?' I offer two answers here, but before I do, consider the story where an Aboriginal Elder (Shane Mortimer) was seeking compensation because he felt offended when Don Aitkin, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra, said that Mortimer looked "about as Aboriginal as I do".^{32,33} Such statements are neither racist nor offensive, yet some people wish to make them so. So in response to my question on why do some people see racism where it does not exist: Firstly, Black American author Shelby Steele, talks about the belief held by some that the litmus test for being black is to accept racial victimisation not as an occasional event, but as an *ongoing identity*.³⁴ In other words, he is suggesting that many believe that being the target of frequent racism is necessary 'evidence' of being black. Secondly, Wax, when discussing race relations in the United States, suggests that using ongoing discrimination to explain the existing gaps between Black and White Americans is the "litmus test for dedication to the cause of racial equality";³⁵ and naturally, most people like to think of themselves as opposing racism and racial inequality, but in order to oppose something, you first need to believe it actually exists. Perhaps some believe that claiming to have experienced racism is proof of being Aboriginal. This is possibly true for those whose Aboriginal ancestry is so minimal that they seek other 'evidence' (such as, 'I'm a victim of racism') to support their claim of being Aboriginal.

³¹ The topic of Aboriginal identity is discussed at length by Pholi in this volume.

³² Aitkin, D. quoted by Hair, J. 'Not Fair: Indigenous Identity Back in Court', *The Australian*, 12 November 2012.

³³ In the *Weekend Australian Magazine* of *The Weekend Australian*, 9, 10 March 2012, it reports that "Mortimer had no inkling of his own aboriginality until early middle age", 5.

³⁴ Steele, S. *White Guilt* (2006).

³⁵ Wax, A. op. cit., 96.

While this nation takes some pride in including and celebrating Aboriginal culture, the obsession with Aboriginal identity by some (typically by those with the least Aboriginal ancestry) contributes to the divide between Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians, thus leading to a state of separatism. Separatism is the ideology that the interests of Aboriginal people are best served where Aboriginal people, as a collective, function separately from non-Aboriginal people, and hence are assumed to have greater freedom in deciding how they will live. When this happens, there is the potential for Aboriginal people to see themselves and others, primarily in terms of racial/cultural differences, rather than focusing on human commonalities, which far outweigh any differences. It is the human commonalities that unite us and make us one people – this realisation is a prerequisite for reconciliation.

Where To from Here?

The victim-oppressor relationship can only exist when an individual (or group) sees others as fundamentally different. Separatist views embraced by many people fuel the victim cycle. Abandon these false beliefs and you break the cycle.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people need to begin seeing each other as Australians with common needs and shared interests – not us-vs.-them. This would embrace the spiritual concept of the oneness and connectivity of all life that traditional Aboriginal Australians lived by. Seeing each other as equals in no way denies the past or appalling health and social inequalities. It simply recognises that all people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) have the same fundamental needs, sees oneness and interconnectedness rather than differences and divisions, and serves as a basis for working together.

Let's recognise that current mindsets and policies, which assume Aboriginal people are vastly different from other Australians, do not work. The time has come to re-examine how we deal with Aboriginal affairs if we are to see improvement in the lives of Aboriginal people. It

will mean making unpopular decisions, and not being so quick to ‘play the victim card’. I am gladdened by what could be our future if we can do away with political correctness and victimology.

Too many are ‘sickened to death’ because they see no hope. Maybe it is time to promote a new way of seeing to renew psychological and spiritual health as a solid foundation for physical and social health. It is important to continue programs that target physical health and well-being; however, such programs are more effective when they focus on both psychological and physical well-being. This is consistent with the holistic view of life that is both the wellspring of Aboriginality – mental, physical, spiritual, and cultural health seen as inter-related – and surely the key to healthy Aboriginal life in the present and for the future.