

STRATEGY – BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

Author: an original work by Bill Wright (no plagiarism) based on his extensive work with Aboriginal people (Antakarinja, Barngarla, Kokotha, Kuwani and to a lesser extent - Andyamathanha)

Ten “Quality of Life” Strengths of Traditional Culture

Where might these 10 strengths add value to individual and collective strategy?

- **Education** – to help establish identity, meaning and purpose for future life-success
- **Families** – to help develop time-honoured principles for functional family life
- **Communities** – to provide a rationale for rebuilding community governance
- **Employment** – to improve employment prospects by demonstrating self-determination
- **Businesses** – to help develop a competitive edge eg tourism and effective teamwork
- **Society** – help bridge cross-cultural differences
- **Government** – to see how Aboriginals can lay foundations for self-determination and empowerment
- **Leadership** – to help develop a new generation of vision-led Aboriginal leaders
- **Generally** – to help provide positive values to counter negative interpretations of traditional culture

1. Ancestral Identification

- Strong understanding of ancestral roots
- Strong respect for the need to preserve ancestral values, traditions and continuity

2. Respect for Law and Authority

- Strong respect for the role and authority of elders as custodians of ancestral traditions
- Strong understanding of individual roles, rights and responsibility
- Acceptance of the need for governance and legal constraints for the common good

3. Land Management

- Strong caring for country
- Strong land management knowledge and skills
- Strong relationship with and passion for the land
- Strong interdependence between the land, the people, the law and daily activity

4. Spiritual Awareness

- Understanding the spiritual significance of dreamtime stories about creation and origins
- Strong spiritual links to the land based on understanding the stories for key natural features and how those stories connect to dreamtime stories
- Strong heart-based belief as a guide for thinking, speaking and doing
- Strong sense of being, belonging and becoming

5. Expression

- Words ideally suited for functional daily living, education and communication
- Language forms for higher conceptual understanding of origins and values
- Strong interplay between spoken and visual expression
- Common use of visual aids for conceptual thinking and agreement
- Foundation for art and development of imagination

- Strong conversational skills and memory –use because of less reliance on the written word, which aids teamwork and thinking

6. **Kinship & Teamwork**

- Strong immediate family and extended family connections
- Strong sense of caring, sharing and respect for others
- Family-based teamwork

7. **Lifestyle**

- Healthy outdoor, energetic lifestyle
- Wholesome food natural remedies
- Non-materialistic lifestyle
- Focus on bartering and the provision for short-term needs
- Non-focus on wealth-creation and exploitation
- Active after-work cultural celebration (story-telling, art, dance and music)
- Resilience in the face of dispossession and suffering

8. **Technology & Innovation**

- Strong heritage as inventors and innovators in all aspects of land use and management
- Experts in survival and sustainable management of land, water, animals, birds, vegetation
- Strong tradition for handing down technology from one generation to the next
- Rights and protocols associated with usage of technology
- Efficient economic practice and low dependence on physical structures
- Tough, creative coping skills, born of experience

9. **Education & Training**

- Situational, experiential and relevant
- Family-based
- Responsibility on the child to learn
- Respect for authority

10. **Governance**

- Autonomous self-government
- Decentralised planning and decision-making
- Flexibility to suit the needs of the situation and fact-based authority
- Strong community commitment to the chosen directions

