Reviewer’s report

Title: Aboriginal health research in the remote Kimberley: An exploration of perceptions, attitudes and concerns of stakeholders

Version: 4 Date: 31 July 2014

Reviewer: Emma Kowal

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written paper that draws on data that is rarely the focus of research – correspondence from a committee involved in research review in Indigenous health, and researcher experiences of local review. It is important to record in the literature local concerns about health research. The paper brings out some important points, e.g. that national projects that appear to have excellent Indigenous governance and consultative processes may not appear that way from the perspective of local stakeholders. The paper should be published in BMC Health Services Research with some revisions.

I have some points of clarification that should be addressed in a revised version.

- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

To provide context for some of the data it should be mentioned that Perth is the capital of WA and is X km from the Kimberley.

P6 - more context with regards to the ethical review process is needed. Can the authors clarify the relationship between the KAHPF and ethics committees. The paper states the KAHPF is a research review panel not an ethics committee, but is KAHPF endorsement required by WAAHEC? Do all projects reviewed by KAHPF seek ethical approval from WAAHEC or are other ethics committees used? Do/can research projects operate in the Kimberley without KAHPF endorsement and/or WAAHEC approval? Also, did all subcommittee members comment on all projects? Was there a quorum whereby a certain number of subcommittee responses were required? And does KAHPF have majority-Indigenous membership? How many Indigenous members are there?

P7 – why was a review instigated by DA and JM? Can the authors give a basic outline of the reasons.

P8 – on what basis was exemption from ethical approval granted for this study? This is important given that the study is about research ethics and it could appear that data was collected from researchers without informed consent.

P9 – “the responses were often restricted to” – are the ‘responses’ referred to here email responses from subcommittee members? Please clarify.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests