Men battling stigma of STI

“MALE Safe Areas” may be the key to significantly improving the sexual health of remote indigenous communities.

A Charles Darwin University academic wrote in an international health journal that indigenous men often felt a sense of shame at the idea of being seen by women at a clinic.

Associate Professor Suzanne Belton from the university’s School of Health said this sense of shame contributed to high rates of sexually transmitted infections in remote communities.

“Some men do not seek testing for sexually transmitted infections because they cannot see a male clinician, which is particularly important in this type of clinical encounter,” Dr Belton said.

“Until culturally and gender appropriate approaches to sexual health services are implemented, sexually transmitted infection rates in indigenous Australians are likely to remain high.”

Dr Belton and co-authors Dr Junn-Yih Su and Dr Nathan Ryder posed the question ‘why are men less tested for sexually transmitted infections in remote Australian indigenous communities?’ in an article published this month in Culture, Health & Sexuality.

“To our knowledge, this is the first study in Australia to investigate the reasons for disparity in STI testing rates between men and women in remote indigenous communities,” Dr Belton said.

The study, which was conducted in a remote Northern Territory community, confirmed a low level of health literacy among some indigenous men.

Meeting to shed light on solar

THE Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) will host a community information night this Friday about the RePower Alice Springs campaign.

The RePower Alice Springs group formed in response to the recent $75 million investment into gas infrastructure by the NT Government, without any accompanying strategy for investment into renewable energy.

“With over 300 sunny days every year, RePower Alice Springs spokesman Lou Stanley said Alice Springs had some of the highest solar potential in the world.

“While all over the world communities are making the transition to renewables, the NT Government remains focused on fossil fuels, with no energy policy and no vision for a renewable energy future,” he said.

Arid Lands Environment Centre director Jimmy Cocking said when the announcement was made about the $75 million investment into fossil fuel infrastructure, a number of community members were “incredibly concerned over what the implications would be for future solar investment in Alice Springs.”

For more information about the event, contact 89522497 or info@alec.org.au

Students wrap up fulfilling assignment

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Roadhouse chef still follows mum’s best advice

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