

Talk-About

The official newsletter for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

April/May 2019

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*



Metro North Hospital and Health Service commits to Closing the Health Gap

Metro North Hospital and Health Service marked National Close the Gap Day (March 21, 2019) by unveiling a draft Close the Gap plan and signing a public statement of commitment to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

More than 100 community Elders, staff and patients gathered at the event held at Brighton Health Campus, to have input and share feedback to the draft Metro North Close the Gap Plan 2019-2022.

Chief Executive Shaun Drummond told guests that as the largest public health service in Australia, Metro North is committed to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

L-R Debra Devers, Administration Officer MNHHS, Paul Drahm, Acting Director A&TSIHU, Shaun Drummond CE, MNHHS, Jackie Hanson, Executive Director, Operations, Tami Photinos, Executive Director, Community and Oral Health and Caley Malezer, Project Officer, A&TSIHU

“While the latest statistics show us Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy was highest in Queensland 72 years for males, 76.4 years for females any gap is unacceptable.

“This plan will provide the framework to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing Metro North will receive high quality person centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.”

Story continues page 5



**Queensland
Government**



Give us feedback

Talk-About

We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events. Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Communications Manager Renee Simon at Renee.Simon@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3139 3231.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

If you have any feedback regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit services, programs and initiatives, you can contact the following:

Mail to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Building 26, Chermside Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermside QLD 4032.

Email to:

A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

Alternatively, call and ask for our Safety and Quality Officer on 3647 9531.

Contact information

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3646 7489
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3646 1696
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3646 7489
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3646 5612
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 07 3646 5612 / 0428 861 888
Team Leader	Ph: 07 3647 9535 / 0408 472 385

The Prince Charles Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3139 5165
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 07 3139 5062
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 07 3139 6429 / 0429 897 982

Redcliffe Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3049 6791
Team Leader	Ph: 07 3139 6300 / 0436 690 306

Caboolture Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 5433 8249 / 0438 518 912
Team Leader	Ph: 07 3139 6300 / 0436 690 982

After Hours Team

Friday and Monday 12noon to 8.30pm

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6:30pm	Ph: 07 5433 8249
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 07 3647 4183
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 0409 583 967

Indigenous Acute and Primary Care / Sexual Health Team

Team Leader: Tracy Grant	Ph: 07 3492 1851
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A word from the Director



Paul Drahm

Acting Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit



Thank you to our staff, patients and community members for attending the Metro North Close the Gap Day event. Over 100 people attended the gathering and provided their feedback regarding our draft Metro North Close the Gap Plan 2019-2022.

Board Chair Dr Robert Stable and Chief Executive Shaun Drummond signed the official Statement of Intent at the event. We also held yarning circle feedback workshops allowing our valued community members the opportunity to inform our plan.

The consultation period for the plan has now closed. Our next steps will be to review all the feedback, make any necessary changes and work with Metro North policy and planning to formalise the plan. The key points provided via the face to face consultation and online survey from staff, patients and community members included;

- 89% agree that Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol is highest area of need

- 75% believe services should be delivered closer to home
- 89% believe it's important to strengthen the Indigenous workforce
- More early intervention and suicide prevention for our mob
- Commence Elders groups to champion Indigenous health initiatives and provide cultural healing
- Patient navigation models implemented in cancer treatment services to assist patients
- Effective evaluation of programs to find what's working and what's not.

A lot of the initiatives highlighted in the plan are already underway, with a strong focus on cancer care screening. Our staff are currently working on establishing the pathways across Metro North for cervical, bowel and breast screening for our communities.

On Tuesday April 16, I had the opportunity to brief the Metro North Board regarding our Indigenous health initiatives and programs.

At this meeting I provided an update on achievements to date against the plan and heard from the Board representatives on their commitments to continue to prioritise the agenda and their input into the priority actions.

By the end of this financial year, our Indigenous Hospital and Cultural Capability services will be aligned under the hospital governance structures, mirroring other Indigenous led programs already operating across our HHS. We will also align our strategic response within the Office of the Executive Director Operations. This will include the Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit and strategic staff reporting directly to the Executive Director Operations. Our Acute and Primary Care team will now be known as the Indigenous Referral and Navigation service inclusive of an Indigenous Nurse Navigator role streamlining patient care pathways from hospital to community. A strategic team will also be formed to strengthen MNHHS strategic and facility level responses towards improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I would like to acknowledge Robyn Chilcott, Pamela Lenoy, Laurel Lincolne, William Campbell and Gene Blow who retired last month after many years working towards improving the health and wellbeing of our mob. Each of you played an important and valued role at Metro North assisting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and the wider community. Thank you for your dedication and commitment and we wish you all the very best in the future.

Finally, thank you to Robert Brown, the Cultural Capability Officers and Caboolture Hospital staff for hosting a mixed touch football match at Caboolture on April 6. The game was well attended and had great community support. Well done to everyone involved.

Relocation of the RBWH Indigenous Hospital Liaison Office commences during the end of April and into the first week of May with the staff being onsite in the new offices from Friday 3rd May 2019. Be sure to call into see the staff on Level 1, Ned Hanlon Building at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, right beside the Newsagency. This relocation will increase the visibility of our service and offer easier access for our patients. A seating area will also be located just outside the office area for patients, carers and community.

Our next event will be our annual NAIDOC Week event at Caboolture's St Columban's College on Tuesday July 9, 2019. The event, to be held from 9.30am – 2.30pm, is a Metro North wide celebration and is designed as a family fun day for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the north side and beyond. Our hospital and health staff will also be invited to attend, and key stakeholders will participate by holding a health promotion stall at the event. If you would like to find out more, visit our website - <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/events/naidoc-cab>

Paul Drahm

Acting Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

STATEMENT OF INTENT

PREAMBLE

Our challenge for the future is to embrace a new partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The core of this partnership for the future is closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on life expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities. This new partnership on closing the gap will set concrete targets for the future: within a decade to halve the widening gap in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous children, within a decade to halve the appalling gap in infant mortality rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and, within a generation, to close the equally appalling 17-year life gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous when it comes to overall life expectancy.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples', 13 February 2008

This is a statement of intent – between Metro North Hospital and Health Service and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples', supported by non-Indigenous Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous health organisations – to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' and non-Indigenous Australians by the year 2030.

We share a determination to close the fundamental divide between the health outcomes and life expectancy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' of Australia and non-Indigenous Australians.

We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' have equal life chances to all other Australians.

We are committed to working towards ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' have access to health services that are equal in standard to those enjoyed by other Australians, and enjoy living conditions that support their social, emotional and cultural well-being.

We recognise that specific measures are needed to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to health services. Crucial to ensuring equal access to health services is ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively involved in the design, delivery, and control of these services.

Metro North Hospital and Health Service commits to:

- Developing a *MNHHS Close the Gap Plan 2019–2022* to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing MNHHS will receive high quality person centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.
- Ensure the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices and their representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs.
- Strengthen a culturally capable workforce where Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander employees are supported and valued for their contribution.
- Enhancing visibility of outcomes to Close the Gap and the contributions and roles of the individual, the service, the health sector, and other social sectors.
- Providing integrated, culturally appropriate care that empowers people to achieve their health goals, improve their experience, and close the gap in health outcomes.
- Develop an Indigenous clinical service action plan focusing on four priority areas of; strong start to life, reducing the burden of disease, crisis and complex care and living well and living longer.
- Identified joint planning and strategies with our key stakeholders such as Brisbane North Primary Health Care Network, Institute of Urban Indigenous Health and other relevant organisations and agencies.
- Create individual hospital level Reconciliation Action Plans for The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, The Prince Charles Hospital, Redcliffe Hospital, Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospital and Community and Oral Health to strengthen relationships, respect and reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.



MR SHAUN DRUMMOND

Chief Executive
Metro North Hospital and Health Service
21 March 2019



DR ROBERT STABLE AM

Chair
Metro North Hospital and Health Board
21 March 2019

Continued from page 1

The plan will focus on four key priority areas of Leadership, Governance and Workforce; Engagement and Partnerships; Transparency, Reporting and Accountability; and Culturally Responsive, Safe and Connected Care. The priority areas will be supported by focus areas for clinical service delivery for a strong start to life, reducing the burden of disease, crisis and complex care and living well and living longer.

Mr Drummond said Metro North was proud to employ over 200 identified Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander staff and to be leading the way for key Close the Gap initiatives.

“Our Ngarrama maternity programs have successfully closed the gap on antenatal visits, with 99 per cent of mothers attending 5 or more antenatal visits; 80 per-cent breastfeeding before discharge and a 20 per cent reduction of smoking after 20 weeks.

“We have also welcomed 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-based trainees as part of our Deadly Start program to encourage a career path into health for the next generation.

“All of our hospitals are in the planning phases of their Reconciliation Action Plans building upon the success of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan May 2019 – May 2020 within the Community and Oral Health Directorate for stronger and more respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities,” Mr Drummond said.

Metro North senior medical staff and executives committed to the plan by taking part in a film showcased to community at the event.

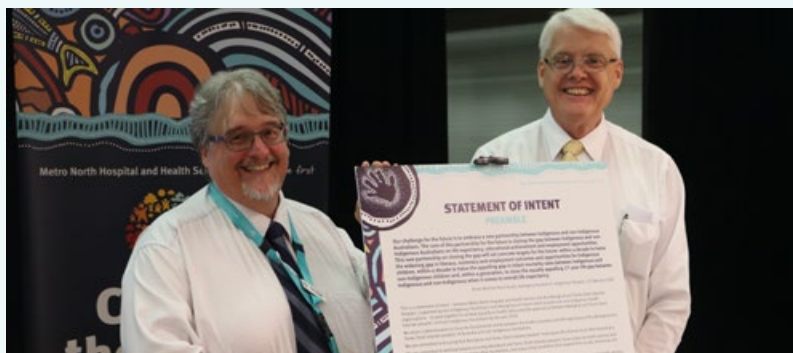
Indigenous Clinical Nurse Consultant at Caboolture Hospital, Megan Sinclair, said it was an exciting time for the community and she was optimistic of real change on the horizon to the Close the Gap Agenda.

Megan has been working with senior medical staff to establish a cultural reference group to encourage the community to feel safe to access services.

“Close the Gap to me is that I hope people feel safe, providing access to good health care, coming together as a community, making the youth feel like they are empowered about their health care,” Megan said.

OUT&ABOUT

Close the Gap Community Consultation Event, Thursday March 21, 2019



Metro North CE Shaun Drummond and Chair of Board Dr Robert Stable sign the Statement of Intent to Close the Gap



Mark Butterworth, Executive Director Allied Health MNHHS, Debra Devers, Administration Officer MNHHS and Dr Kim Forrester, Deputy Board Chair MNHHS



RBWH Ngarrama Maternity Team joined forces for the day.



Consumer Representatives Gary Power and Noel Muller

OUT&ABOUT



TPCH Physiotherapist Carl Francia and Caboolture Hospital Indigenous Liaison Officer Stella Laidlaw



Chris Clark and Janine Costelloe, Q Super delegates



Metro North Public Health Unit staff enjoying the atmosphere on the day

Below: Community break out groups discussing the themes within the draft Close the Gap Plan



Anu Manoharan and Ann Flatley, MNHHS Engagement Team members



Dr Mosh Shittu, SMO Emergency Department, Caboolture Hospital, Aunty Minnie Mace, Yvonne Williams, Indigenous Healthcare Worker, Caboolture Hospital and Elwyn Henaway, Cultural Capability Officer enjoying the event.



Deadly Start staff member Tamika Birch and Director Office of the Chief Executive Vivienne Hassed



Kiralee Groom and Janine Hockley, MNHHS Values in Action Team members.



Right: Natasha White, Manager, Indigenous Hospital Services, Shaun Drummond CE MNHHS and David Yohan, Cultural Diversity Coordinator, Metro North Allied Health



Yasmin Muller, Project Manager Biala Alcohol and Drug Service and Paul Drahm, Acting Director, A&TSIHU



Redcliffe Hospital creates a sea of hands

Redcliffe Hospital Auxiliary created hundreds of hands in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag colours in recognition of National Close the Gap Day.

Staff took part by planting a hand in the garden as part of the event to signify their commitment to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessing the hospital.

Emergency Department Touch Football Match Attracts Tough Competition

On Saturday 6 April, a touch football carnival was organised by the Caboolture Hospital Cultural Group and was attended by 130 people. Eight teams vied for the final spot and many games throughout the afternoon saw some very tough contests happen.

The Caboolture Hospital Culture Group was formed in July 2018 by the Emergency Department team to improve the health index of Indigenous patients by putting into practice measures that will help bridge the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations

The culture group is a representation of the hospital clinical staff (doctors, nurse and allied health staff) and the Indigenous health team (cultural capability officers and Indigenous health liaison officers) working together to promote and actively

pursue programmes that improves the health literacy and health index of our indigenous population in the Caboolture area.

The mixed touch football match was a key initiative of the group to build relationships within the local community to promote health awareness and gain trust.

Manager of Indigenous Hospital Services, Natasha White congratulated the organising team, Robert Brown, Stella Laidlaw and Elwyn Henaway and the Caboolture Hospital Cultural Group for organising a very successful event.

“The atmosphere was amazing; all games were very professional and competitive. It was awesome to see a total of 8 teams playing in the competition, considering this is the first event,” Natasha said.

“Congratulations to Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Robert Brown, as this event would not have been possible, without his



contribution, dedication and commitment to his Community.”

The winner of the inaugural trophy was Limits, with runners up One Walk playing a very tight game to the finish.

The barbecue was the place to be also, over 200 sausages were served to players and supporters during the afternoon.



Member for Longman Susan Lamb (centre) pictured with community Elders and representatives from the Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department Culture Group.



Caboolture Hospital Cultural Group pictured with Caboolture Police Liaison Officer Uncle Mick Douglas (far right).



Heart Foundation Lighthouse Project Officers from across the State with new TPCH Executive Director Michele Gardner

Lighthouse Project, The Prince Charles Hospital

On Tuesday 19th March 2019, Queensland Lighthouse Project Officers travelled from as far away as Cairns, Mount Isa and Townsville to celebrate The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) Lighthouse Journey.

Darsha Beetson, the TPCH Lighthouse Project Officer, welcomed staff and guests to the event which included Michele Gardner, Executive Director of TPCH, Stephen Vines and Reital Minogue from The Heart Foundation.

Aunty Maroochy performed Welcome to Country, followed by a very engaging performance by Yerongpan Aboriginal Dancers.

Reital Minogue, Project Officer from The Heart Foundation said, “National Close the Gap Day campaign week acknowledges the heart health inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gives the Heart Foundation an opportunity to reflect on work that we do, we call on the governments to continue to take measurable action to achieve Indigenous health equality by 2030 which is within a generation and a serious challenge.”



Hospital Executives and representatives from the Heart Foundation pictured with Turrbal Elder Aunty Maroochy Barambah and the Yerongpan Aboriginal Dance group.

“Despite the achievements of past ten years, there has not been a lot of improvement in Closing the Gap in life expectancy which still sits at ten years fewer than other Australians and the mortality rates are on a par with some of the worlds most improvised nations,” Reital said.

“The National Heart Foundation, through The Lighthouse Project, continues to support the initiative of hospitals partnering with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and community organisations, this, along with creation of the Murrumba, the Indigenous garden at TPCH where people can go for quiet time. A lot of work has gone into making this garden possible, a special thank you to the TPCH Executive also.”

Project officers were also thanked for their passion and dedication to the Lighthouse project, as were the Commonwealth Government for their continual support through the various stages of the Lighthouse project. Funding for a further phase is still under discussion.

Michele Gardner, Executive Director of The Prince Charles Hospital said, “The hospital is very proud to be part of the Lighthouse Project and being in phase three has fostered a very welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Michele acknowledged the beautiful healing and peaceful garden at The Prince Charles Hospital, stating during her initial week, one of the first things she noticed was the healing garden and it made her feel very welcome.

“Providing holistic care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people is of utmost importance to TPCH, the Lighthouse Project has really made staff aware and gives TPCH a platform to make sure we are culturally inclusive in the pathway of care.” Michele said.

Michele mentioned that delivery of tertiary cardiac care to indigenous clients who visit from rural and remote areas was an area of importance to TPCH. Michele has also cared for people in Woorabinda in Central Queensland.

2019 NAIDOC CELEBRATION

Caboolture Family Fun Day

Tuesday 9 July 2019
9.30am–2.30pm

St Columban's College
Auditorium and Grounds

Staff, patients and community members are invited to come together to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during NAIDOC Week (7-14 July 2019).

The 2019 theme – VOICE. TREATY. TRUTH – invites you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. The Indigenous voice of this country is over 65,000 plus years old. Let's work together for a shared future.

The family fun day, held at St Columban's College at Caboolture, will feature a Welcome to Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancing and singing, cultural workshops and plenty of health stallholders.



**VOICE
TREATY
TRUTH** 07 - 14
JULY 2019
Let's work together for a shared future.



For further information contact (07) 3139 3235
A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

PLUS

- A FREE SAUSAGE SIZZLE, FRUIT AND SALAD ROLLS
- HEALTH & COMMUNITY STALLHOLDERS
- ANIMAL FARM
- JUMPING CASTLE
- ROCK CLIMBING
- FACE PAINTING
- FOOD STALLS

The event is proudly supported by the MNHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit and St Columban's College.



OUT&ABOUT

Why are we not seen and embraced as the first peoples?

This is a personal account written by proud Aboriginal woman Simone Jackson.



We all know at an intellectual level that the obvious gift Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples give to non-Indigenous Australians is 60 thousand years of cultural knowledge, ancient lore with regards to the stories of creation, the management of land and sea. The sad truth is however First Nations people are not seen in this country, not really. What Australians choose to see is the negative – what the media favour is promoting the deficits – very little is acknowledged, highlighted, celebrated, demonstrated and or imagined with regards to the positive regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this country we all call Australia.

People from other countries appear more interested and know more about our history than many Australians – I would go as far to say the majority of Australians.

I was drawn to thinking about the United States of America when pondering this issue and I have to admire a people who despite significant animosity with regards to African Americans, Mexicans and others, with periods of terrific unrest and racial tensions, that despite all of this when it comes to an open love of their country, every house with its flag proudly blowing in the breeze, open displays of patronage and pride in their nation is palatable.

Australia – whilst we all love being Australian it is only on specific occasions that I feel we come together as a nation of 'Australians' and I think this is part of the issue we need to overcome.

We also have a much shorter history than that of other nations with regards to First Nations people – Canada and America as two examples. We can look to others and try to accelerate actions that might enhance efforts such as a voice to parliament and or agreement making and how these efforts have played out in other countries.

There is such loudness in relation to our deficits – poverty, poor education outcomes, alcoholism. There is so little noise about our strengths – the beauty of our culture, how we as families love and all have a place, the joy we have for our children, the role of family, multiple mothers and fathers, the emerging middle class, the success stories–this is not at the fore.

The governments of Australia need to push through, seek more. Australia Day demands the story to be told from creation (rainbow serpent) and move to the English arriving to the early years of hurtful policies and practices to now, ending with hope and with embracing each other.

This needs to be matched by stronger commitments to real initiatives that break through and smash both stereotypes and the low expectations we seem resigned to.

We also need to be responsible; as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we often present as disjointed, we cut each other down and play into the European notion of disclaiming each other and trying to determine who can speak for who, criticising each other.

We need to embrace others when they ask questions regardless of what we think about the question and we need to share with our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters and make them feel like they can play a role and contribute – we should not continue to divide and then seek for reconciliation. Why do we seek to make others comfortable with our identity?

Humanity–see me and I will see you. Let's talk to and show Aboriginal Australia to the nation, all the faces, shapes, colours, experiences and contributions we made and continue to make. There is not a one size fits all Aboriginality; we come in many shades, this doesn't reduce our heritage and or cultural connections.

We also need to re-engage the emerging middle class First Nation Australians who feel disenfranchised and more at odds with what it means to be Aboriginal.

We need to instil a right to acknowledge who we all are, be allowed and feel confident to identify. So, in short I don't want it to be passive. I seek active, whether it is engagement, dialogue and / or actions; we have a period where there appears to be genuine appetite so let's feed the nation and reimagine this country – a country where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not the 'other' to the side but at the fore and at the table contributing, making decisions for themselves based on their knowledge and expertise.

Let's make it possible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make decisions for themselves, to co-design policies and programs and responses to serious issues – self-determination in every sense. We have many gifts to give.

Save the Date – Metro North Caboolture NAIDOC

Come along and join in some basket weaving, have your face painted, have a go on either the little kids or the big kids jumping castle, test your skill on the rock climbing apparatus, kick back and listen to music as you enjoy a free sausage sizzle, or you can purchase some tasty treats from one of the food vans on the day.

Staff, patients and community members are invited to come together to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during NAIDOC Week (7-14 July 2019). The family fun day, held at St Columban's College at Caboolture, will feature a Welcome to Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancing and singing, cultural workshops and plenty of health stallholders.



**VOICE
TREATY
TRUTH** 07 - 14
JULY 2019
Let's work together for a shared future.

When: Tuesday 9 July 2019 - 9.30am – 2.30pm

Where: St Columban's Auditorium and Grounds

An event not to be missed!

Research study examines costs for Indigenous cancer patients at RBWH



L-R Brian Arley, Emma Galea, Patricia Kennedy, Caleb Meredith, Sheradene Sollen-Senge, Ronald Agie, Wendy Lewis.

A total of 14 Indigenous cancer patients, patient carers, cancer support agencies, Indigenous Liaison Officers and Oncology staff were interviewed for the Out of Pocket Costs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Patients (OoP) study over 2018.

Menzies School of Health Research worked in partnership with key staff from Indigenous Hospital Liaison Services and Cultural Capability Team and RBWH Oncology Procedure Unit and Clinics to conduct the research study.

The study explored how anticipated and unanticipated patient costs affect the health-seeking decisions and behaviors of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people living with cancer and their families. Mapping of what information is available, and from where, about public benefits or charitable services that could off-set patient costs will also be done.

Queensland Health officers supported Menzies to conduct individual interviews and four focus groups with the 14 participants. Study findings will be reported in the near future.

The study was also conducted at the Townsville Hospital Oncology Service in 2017-2018. This study had funding from the 'STREP CaCIndA,' a Cancer Council NSW Strategic Research Partnership Grant in Cancer and Indigenous People. Townsville Hospital and Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee approved the study.



Artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty

New artwork represents our vision for closing the health gap

Esteemed Aboriginal graphic designer and artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty created the artwork 'Better Together' as a visual story for the Metro North Close the Gap Plan 2019-2022.

Elaine has worked as a graphic designer and artist for the past 30 years and is a PANPA Award Winner, and winner of the 2015 National NAIDOC poster competition, as well as 2017 Collingwood Indigenous Round Guernsey.

"The design has the inspiration of the Moreton Bay region, and concentrates on the Closing the Gap Plan and what it delivers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community and the positive outcome it brings to the health and wellbeing of our mob," Elaine said.

The artwork is part of a larger project with Metro North, with Elaine consulting with each hospital and facility to develop a localised artwork story to be used across all Indigenous Health initiatives including the Reconciliation Action Plans. The project will be completed by the end of June.



Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Radiographer Luke Meeking.

Identification: It's your right to a healthier life

The Accurate Indigenous Identification campaign is designed to highlight the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to identify when accessing Metro North Hospital and Health Service hospitals and facilities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are under-identified in many health-related data collections. The accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in Metro North Hospital and Health Service data collection systems help us to achieve improving health outcomes by supporting the measurements of the Indigenous health status and the effectiveness of intervention programs.

It also allows the patients direct access to culturally appropriate care, additional screening and links to patient advocacy services.

Luke Meeking became involved as a staff ambassador of the campaign to promote the importance of asking our clients here at the hospital the question about whether they are Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander and therefore provide those important services to them.

"Now that I have my shirt and am involved in the campaign, I'm going to start lots of conversations with colleagues about asking our clients whether they are Indigenous and therefore being able to provide the appropriate services to them."

BETTER TOGETHER

A BETTER LIFESTYLE THROUGH OUR HEALTH CARERS

BY ELAINE CHAMBERS—HEGARTY



My design has the inspiration of the Moreton Bay region, and concentrates on the Closing the Gap Plan and what it delivers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community and the positive outcome it brings to the health and wellbeing of our mob.

Four icons that flow across the artwork, shows a timeline from the care and strong start to life when a child is born, then onto a healthy heart beat and hands to embrace showing the care of our people to influence a healthy lifestyle to reduce the burden of disease. The next icon shows the tree and represents growth and complex care of those in need. There are two message stick symbols that represent the communication with cultural awareness given from the staff during times of crisis. Whilst the last icon which has the medical cross and the shape above of a gunya to represent care at home or elsewhere, and living longer with the care provided, taking into account the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of clients and their families.

Circle marking represent the gathering areas and the coming together in community. The crosshatching in my artwork represents the structure and support of the policies established amongst the plan - similar to the crosshatchings on a weaving and how it all holds combines together. Whilst the middle image of the people show them as enjoying the healthy outcomes. I have added the two animals that are relevant to this area, and was a food source for the people many years ago.

Plastic bottles to patterned perfection

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit have sourced a new fabric for their identification shirts called Replay which features the artwork by Ronald John Abala Wurra-ghantha, “little spirit man”.



Indigenous Mental Health Intervention Program staff looking great wearing the new ID Shirts.

The shirts are worn by staff working across the hospital and health service to encourage the accurate identification of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander patients.

The shirts were produced by Intercept, an Indigenous company on the south side of Brisbane, using Replay which utilises up to six recycled water bottles per garment which is helping reduce the impact of plastic water bottles in land and our oceans.

Owner of Intercept, Kane Phillips said the material is exceptionally light weight, breathable, moisture wicking and anti-bacterial.

“Replay is one of the world’s first certified, traceable recycled fabric that utilises high quality fibres made from 100% recycled materials, the primary product being post-consumer water bottles.

“An estimated 370 million plastic water bottles end up in landfill and our oceans. Intercept are making the change, one shirt at a time,” Kane said.

Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Paul Drahm said supporting Indigenous owned businesses was a direct commitment from the Community and Oral Health Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan May 2018 – May 2020.

“Metro North has committed to incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation to procure goods and services.

“These shirts are a great example of supporting Indigenous-owned businesses for our important health initiatives,” Paul said.

If Metro North Hospital and Health Service staff would like to become an ambassador for the campaign to obtain a shirt, please contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit on Ph: (07) 3139 3235 / A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

Proud to Identify



Greg Pratt, Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR Berghofer)

Identification, it’s your right to a healthier life – this was a campaign launched during NAIDOC week (3 – 10 July 2016) by Metro North Hospital and Health Service and aimed at highlighting the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients identifying when accessing our facilities. This campaign contributed to improving the health outcomes of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

During a recent interview with Gregory Pratt, Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR Berghofer), the question “Are you proud to Identify as an Aboriginal man?” was asked.

“I remember when I was growing up in Laura, blonde hair, fair skin, blue eyes in a traditional environment where language was spoken as the norm and English was the second language. I didn’t identify as Aboriginal or Anglo Saxon, just a kid who lived in a community with a lot of other kids and their families. I knew then that I was Aboriginal and everybody knew that I was Aboriginal and accepted me as such,” Gregory said.

“My mum was of Irish background, my dad Aboriginal, but those elements were not as important as the fact that they were mum and dad. It was no different to someone identifying as a girl or a boy, and it wasn’t until I went to high school and mum had to fill in a form that I questioned what being Aboriginal meant.”

The question “Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?” was asked on the enrolment form, to which my mum put “yes”. I remember teachers at the time saying to me that I wasn’t Aboriginal, and my responding, “Yes I am. I’m Aboriginal”. To which their response was “But you’re not black, you know, Aboriginal people have dark skin”.

I remember thinking to myself “does the colour of my skin mean something?” You see, at the time I didn’t see colour. I remember growing up in community and not seeing colour. I didn’t see somebody with darker skin and think that they had darker skin. To me, everyone was part of our community, doing what we needed to do.

It wasn’t until we moved to the big city, that the colour of my skin became important to other people’s acceptance of my identity, to whether in their eyes I was Aboriginal. The community in which I grew up and the community from where my people are from, identify me as Aboriginal. Family is family, all sides, parts and connections of my family and I’m proud of all of them.

Be who you want to be

Simone Jackson, Executive Director Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), was a keynote speaker at the recent Queensland Health Aspiring Women Leader's Summit held during March 2019 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Simone Jackson, Executive Director DATSIP and Paul Drahm, Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit.

As a member of that audience the editor of Talk About was inspired and humbled by Simone's presentation. Simone spoke of the 'journey of life', a journey of what is an ordinary life but a life in which she found the gold to take up opportunities that have provided her with gifts to end up where she is today.

"And where I am today being well beyond the footprint that was given to me by default of my heritage. I am grateful every day for the opportunities, grateful for my braveness and grateful for my determination to succeed," Simone said.

Growing up in Inala within an Indigenous Community, then moving to Sandgate to attend a girl's college was an eye opener "There were only six Indigenous families in the area", Simone said. So as young teenagers they were quite confused because suddenly there was no diversity, there was no multiculturalism," Simone said.

Simone spoke of not having a 'gap' year at the end of her school days, instead found herself pregnant and considering what the future had in store.

After her daughter was born, Simone applied for and successfully gained a role in Corrections working at Boggo Road. Her time there saw her accidentally handcuff herself to the inside of a toilet cubicle, mistakenly toss her handcuffs, and protective gear into the washing and finally after realising this wasn't the role for her moved on to develop her career in the Government sector, following her dream to the Northern Territory and back to Queensland working in various

departments that related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Her stories were so inspirational and humorous, all the while her message is to believe in yourself. She encourages people to understand who they are and what they bring to the role, back themselves and seek out successful people to be their champion. "Lastly, make sure you deliver." Your reputation and opportunities will only grow if you deliver. Simone also encourages frank and fearless conversations in the workplace.

"The girl from Inala with the footprint bigger than what was assigned I ask for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to please look at us without your sensibilities, to really see us and understand the contribution that we have made to this country and continue to make. You need to embrace this and we need to embrace you. We all have something to contribute," she said.

Simone finished her presentation that day stating that success can be many things to many people, adding it can be a job, money, family, community, the contribution you make but ultimately, it's going to be what you decide. "I have been exposed to fantastic leadership, I have achieved my own level of success and am very happy with that and my final words are just embrace the humanity of each other, that's when we'll all succeed."

Simone was invited to a morning tea and to meet and greet staff at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit on Thursday 11th April 2019, where she further shared her life's journey, again called for equality and understanding, assured each of us that we can be who we want to be, to aim for the stars.

Metro North focuses on Indigenous cancer care

Reducing the rates of bowel, breast and cervical cancers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be the main focus of clinical priorities outlined in the Metro North Close the Gap Plan 2019-2022.

A&TSIHU Clinical Service Development Officer Kelly Smith said work was underway to introduce a clinical care pathway for Indigenous patients accessing Metro North hospitals and facilities.

"Our main focus will be opportunistic screening efforts for inpatients at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Caboolture Hospital," Kelly said.

"As a first step we hope to introduce cervical screening as part of the Ngarrama maternity program and bowel screening for Indigenous patients over the age of 50."

A&TSIHU has partnered with Metro North Cancer Care Services to introduce the screening program and develop ways to support the early detection of bowel cancer.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is low. We hope this will improve by introducing the screening as an option for inpatients and at a community level through our advanced Indigenous health workers," Kelly said.

"It's a simple test and in up to 90 per cent of cases, bowel cancer is treatable if it's found early."



L-R: Program Support Officer from Cancer Clinical Stream Mia Evans, A&TSIHU Service Development Officer Kelly Smith, Program Manager of Clinical Operations Strategy Implementation Geoffrey Bryant and A&TSIHU Senior Project Officer Denise Spokes.

NATIONAL BOWELCANCER SCREENING PROGRAM



Sharon shares how bowel cancer affected her family

Sharon Wallace is an Aboriginal woman who experienced firsthand the devastating effects cancer has on a family when her father died from bowel cancer.

Sharon's experience has reinforced for her how precious life is and how important it is to take the screening test for bowel cancer.

"Bowel cancer screening is very important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The bowel screening tests are sent in the mail when people turn 50. So it's important for people when they receive the test, to do it."

Sharon is a workforce policy officer with the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) – the peak body for Aboriginal community controlled health services in the Northern Territory. She says that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers are there to empower people to take control of their own health, and can play an important role in helping people to feel comfortable about completing the bowel screening test.

"We're in a perfect position as health care workers as the first point of contact – we understand the language, our culture – we can help our people feel safe and secure and explain to them the steps of doing the screening so that people don't have so much fear".

She also emphasises the important role family members can play in encouraging their elders to complete the bowel screening test.

"Our families play a big role in caring for each other and our community. So it's important that if you have a family member or loved one that's reached 50 years of age, or older, to ask them if they've done the test".

It was late 2013 when Sharon noticed her dad was tired a lot, wasn't eating much, and didn't want to leave the house – even when they went fishing he'd prefer to stay at home. He seemed a little disorientated and was spending a lot of time in the bathroom. After her dad hadn't eaten for a week, Sharon took him to the hospital. They discovered that he had bowel cancer. This was shattering news for Sharon, her dad, and the rest of the family.

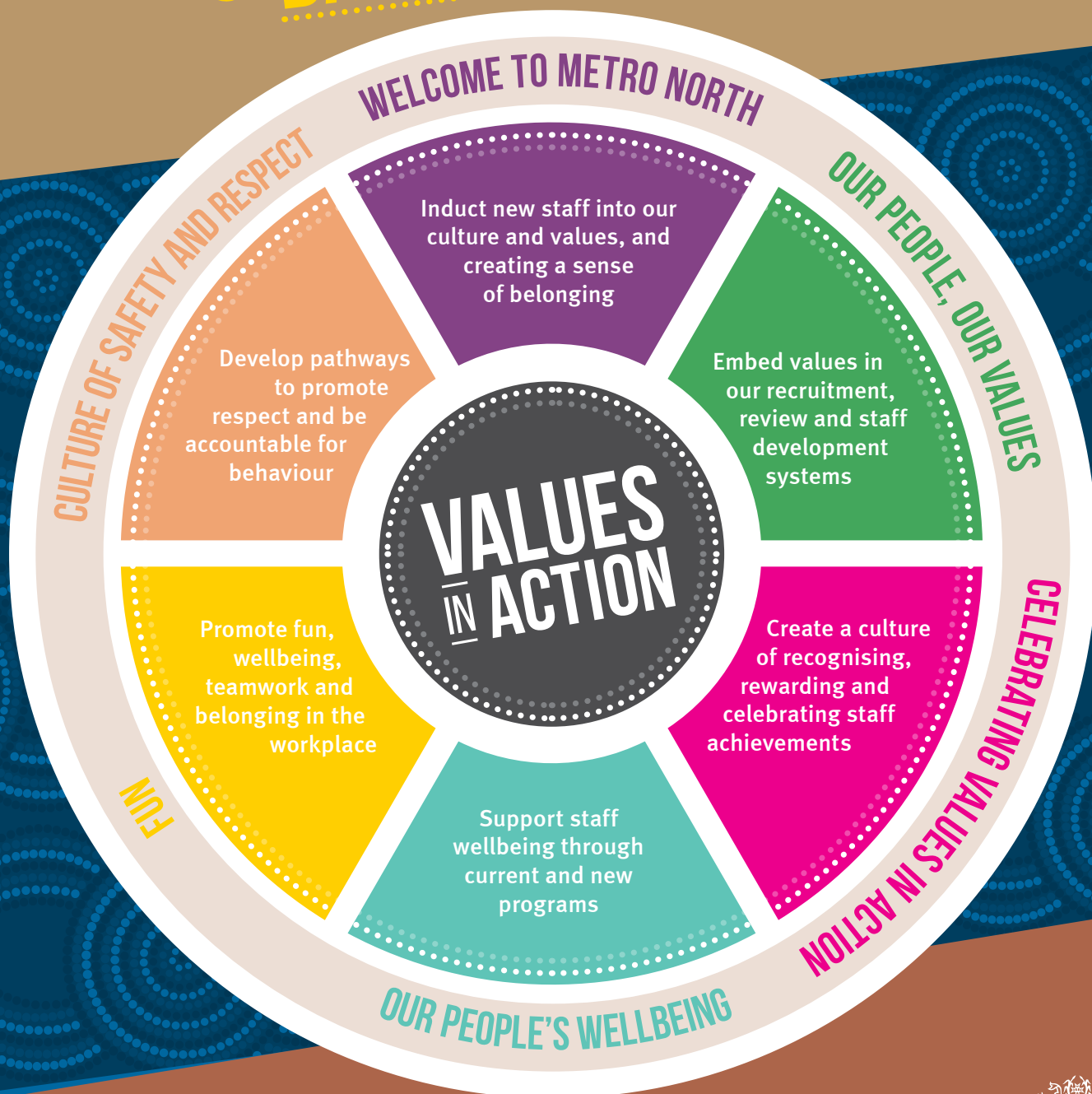
"It was hard for my dad to cope. He was worried about his children and grandchildren, he tried to give everyone hope," Sharon explains.

After Sharon's dad passed away, the family was left in grief, and the time that followed was very difficult. This experience led Sharon to become an advocate of bowel cancer screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"We want our old people to get old, we want them to see their grandchildren and great grandchildren grow up and we don't want them to be leaving us before their time. Don't just throw the screening kit in the bin like my Dad did. If he would've done that test things might have been different."

To find out when your next kit will arrive in the mail, visit cancerscreening.gov.au

BINAY **BALBLAGIZA AIMARN** **SIB WANAN** **MARRUMBA** **DAGHU** MAKING OUR VALUES MORE THAN WORDS



Supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Metro North Hospital and Health Service



* BINAY = Respect – Aboriginal Turubul Language, MARRUMBA = Integrity – Aboriginal Turubul Language, DAGHU = Teamwork – Aboriginal Turubul Language, BALBLAGIZA AIMARN = High Performance – Kalau Lagau Ya Torres Strait Islander Language, SIB WANAN = Compassion – Kalau Lagau Ya Torres Strait Islander Language.

More than words – turning the Charter principles into actions

Multicultural Affairs Queensland hosted its third Multicultural Queensland Charter Speaker Series forum on Friday 29 March 2019. The theme was *'More than words – turning the Charter principles into actions'*.

Minister for Multicultural Affairs The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP acknowledged First Nations people in his opening address. He said it was important to acknowledge the lands, winds and waters we now share and their ancient and enduring cultures. He felt it important to acknowledge the forebears coming from many backgrounds bringing together many different cultures forming an integral part of Queensland's identity.

Mr Hinchliffe explained the charter is more than a statement or aspiration and how do each one of us take the next step and bring these principles to life. His advice is to start with one principle that speaks to you and is relevant to your work and make that a priority.



Minister for Multicultural Affairs The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP



Right: Panel- How to bring the Charter to life in practical and meaningful ways (left to right) - Chin Tan, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission; Kathleen Forrester, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Planning Division, Queensland Health; Ian Stewart, Commissioner of Police, Queensland Police Service; Sara Parrott, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Suncorp.



Above: Today's program included registration and a Taste of Harmony networking morning tea. Participants were invited to taste various foods from all around the globe whilst interacting with one another. The African drop donuts pictured below which were a big hit amongst those in attendance.

"We can all take part every day in speaking against racism and discrimination in all forms and speaking up for diversity and inclusion," Mr Hinchliffe said.

Australian Human Rights Commission Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan explained the concept of Multicultural Australia and that we must embrace it we have people born in different places with different heritage and that we need to build on differences.

"We all have prejudices and bias and it's important to know where they lie. We become who we are because we choose to be. We need a healthy inclusive connected community a harmonious community that let's everyone in," Mr Tan said.

The time is now to roll up our sleeves and do the practical stuff to make this charter work. It's the responsibility of leaders to get the words right and for people to listen. The leaders need a simple essence of engagement and listen and hear the community.

"Governments and organisations need the right programs/policies/opportunities for people to find a way. We need more time and resources for this to work. We need to know the community, who they are talking to and what is important in community whilst encouraging and believing in the charter. We need to hold ourselves and also friends/work colleagues and elected officials," Mr Tan said.



The Multicultural Queensland Charter

Because —
the Parliament —

- honours the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and their ancient and enduring cultures; and
- acknowledges the achievements of our forebears, coming from many backgrounds, and that a bringing together of the cultures of people from many backgrounds forms an integral part of Queensland's identity; and
- recognises that diversity deepens and enriches our community and provides an invaluable asset for Queensland's future;

this Act establishes the following Multicultural Queensland Charter —

- A shared commitment to Queensland and Australia, and a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law, fosters a strong and unified community.
- The people of Queensland come from many diverse backgrounds and have worked, and continue to work, together to build a prosperous, fair and harmonious Queensland.
- The people of Queensland should be able to express and celebrate, in a lawful way, their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.
- Equal rights and responsibilities under the law and equitable access to the services provided or funded by the Government for all people of Queensland helps build a fair community.
- A shared commitment, among members of the Queensland community, to mutual respect, fair treatment and valuing the diversity of peoples in the community fosters a caring, safe and inclusive community.
- The creation of opportunities that encourage the full participation of people from diverse backgrounds in the cultural, economic, political and social life of Queensland helps build a prosperous State.
- Sustained, respectful and inclusive engagements between all individuals, groups and the Government are a basis for mutual understanding.
- A unified and harmonious community promotes a sense of belonging among its people and builds community confidence and resilience.


The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP
Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Arts


The Honourable Peter Wellington MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland

IN THE NEWS

News Articles

The Aboriginal health sector could face a major shake-up, with the federal government flagging a preference for more mainstream funding and services as it struggles to improve outcomes.

The commonwealth leads the delivery of primary healthcare, the Medicare Benefits Schedule, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and funding for indigenous health through the Indigenous Australians Health Program.

Alongside mainstream services, there are more than 140 Aboriginal-controlled health services employing about 6000 staff, most of whom are indigenous.

<https://nacchocommunique.com/2019/02/25/naccho-aboriginal-health-closing-the-gap-our-accho-aboriginal-health-sector-could-face-a-major-shake-up-with-the-federal-government-flagging-a-preference-for-more-mainstream-funding-and-services/>
<https://nacchocommunique.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/aal-iwd-1.jpg>

Young researcher awarded for fight against blindness

An Indigenous researcher has scooped up a major prize at the 2019 World Science Awards.

Clare Villalba, a proud Torres Strait Islander woman and PhD student in the Medical Robotics team at Queensland University of Technology, has been awarded the Women in STEM: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Jury Award.

<https://nit.com.au/young-researcher-awarded-for-fight-against-blindness/>

Business leaders are urging caution as Indigenous Owner - Operators race to catch a 'multi-billion-dollar wave of opportunity'.

Almost 12,000 contracts worth more than \$1.8bn have been filled by Indigenous business since 2015, under the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP). This in turn has led to a rapid rise in the number of Indigenous businesses nationwide. It's estimated that up to 16,000 Indigenous businesses are operating in 2019, and that number is growing steadily. However, the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce says too often,

start-up businesses fail because they rush in.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/new-indigenous-hub-aims-to-boost-entrepreneurs>

Indigenous Youth Suicides

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) are calling on the Prime Minister to make tackling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicides a national health priority.

Suicide was once unknown to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but now every community has been affected by suicide.

In response to the recent Aboriginal youth suicides and the release of the WA Coroner's report on the inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, we are calling on the Prime Minister and state and territory leaders to put the issue at the top of the COAG agenda and to implement a coordinated crisis response to urgently scale up Aboriginal led mental health services before more young lives are tragically lost.

<https://nacchocommunique.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/sp-racgp.jpg> <https://nacchocommunique.com/category/suicide-prevention/>

Indigenous Group looks to carbon farming to regenerate the outback

The demand for carbon farming projects is growing in south-west Queensland with one Indigenous group looking to the initiative to regenerate the bush. The Budjiti Aboriginal Corporation has been working with carbon farming developer Climate Friendly to give consent to property owners in the Paroo Shire Council region looking to start projects.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-01/indigenous-group-looks-to-carbon-farming-to-regenerate-outback/10934496>

Word of the Month: “Yawara”

yawara which is from the Wangkumara language of Western Queensland – it means ‘language’. It is also recorded in neighbouring language groups including Yandruwandha and Punthamara with similar meanings referring to ‘language’ or ‘talking in language’. A neighbouring language in North-East South Australia near the Queensland border is known as Yawarawarka and is based on yawara meaning ‘word or language’ and waka meaning ‘small’. Further south into North-Western NSW, yawara means ‘word’ in Barkindji/ Paakantyi.

The word of the week has been sourced from the following linguistic texts in the State Library collections.

Sources: McDonald, M. and Wurm, S. A. (1979) Basic materials in Wangkumara (Galali): grammar, sentences and vocabulary. Online version. Breen, J.G. (1990) Salvage Studies of Western Queensland Aboriginal Languages. J 499.15 bre

Steve Kemp is teaching all his traditional knowledge to his nephews

Ghangalu elder Steve Kemp has had five heart attacks in recent years and is feeling the pressure to pass on his traditional knowledge to the next generation, so he is taking his nephews on country, to the Aboriginal Shire of Woorabinda, to teach them as much as possible.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-16/10882120>

A Day in the Life of Kim Walker

What does your role involve?

My role involves providing culturally informed, consumer centred support to the treating teams, our mental health consumers, their family and the community to improve the mental health outcomes of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. The Indigenous Mental Health Workers (IMHW) form part of the treating teams and play a vital role in guiding the recovery of our consumers in a culturally appropriate way. The IMHW also provide education to consumers and their family about mental health and the language associated, the Mental Health Act and their rights. We provide education to nursing students that come into mental health to assist in better engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer and build a meaningful rapport. An important aspect of the role is to bridge the gap between the service and our consumers and the community.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I prioritise work for the day. Having said that usually the plan made in the morning resembles nothing of that by the afternoon. This is a hard question to answer given that IMHWs are working with some of the most vulnerable consumers that experience severe and persistent mental health that in its nature alone make the day and demands ever changing. It may be easier to elaborate further on the previous question and provide some of the task I complete on a regular basis.

In addition to providing practical support to consumers and treating teams I also complete the cultural section of Clinical Report required by the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT), attend meeting as part of the treating team such as MHRTs Acute Risk Management Committee meetings, case reviews, NDIS Planning meetings and Complex Care Reviews.



I complete recovery plans such as the Stay Strong Plan, participate in consultation groups such as suicide prevention, less restrictive way projects and Chair the Metro North Mental Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group. I provide in services for treating teams on the IMHW role and how the roles are best utilised. The role also involves ensuring the positive relationship with community organisations and mental health remains strong as these services are also paramount in the ongoing care and recovery for our consumers.

What do you see as the main risk and protective factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers mental health?

Trauma, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, family violence, sexual abuse, incarceration and at times the lack of positive family supports, historical factors including dispossession and loss of identity. All of that becomes part of what many of our consumers have experienced in their life. The stigma around mental health, fear of the system, a lack of mental health education for community, family and the consumers also contribute to risk factors.

The latter can also form part of the reason why some of our consumers delay in getting appropriate support that by the time they present emergency, they are extremely unwell. I don't know whether that's to do with the fear of the system or just not knowing. The protective factors, well our consumers are quite resilient. I think the more educated consumers become about their own mental health, the more empowered they feel in their own treatment which assist in reducing the reluctance in seeking support.

That becomes a protective factor for them as well. Every consumer and their family that enters the mental health system provides an invaluable opportunity to educate and in turn educate the community. The respectful trusting relationships formed with the Indigenous Mental Health team, plus all the treating teams become protective factors for our consumers. The desire for a better tomorrow and future is strong

How do you see the health workforce supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander patients presenting to our hospitals and facilities with mental health issues? What advice would you have?

I feel the workforce, whether primary health or mental health, do a tremendous job supporting consumers. As a workforce we all have the same goals, visions and commitment for the service, the individual and the community and this passion and drive is abundantly clear in the meaningful outcomes we produce. My advice would be to engage one of the Indigenous Mental Health workers as soon as possible to ensure support is available for our consumer and for the treating team in the assessment process.

Who inspires you at work?

My consumers inspire me. I think the trauma that they've been through in their lives and they continue to demonstrate great strength and resilience. Consumers come into a system where there is historic mistrust and they overcome those feelings to seek support and continue to strive to be better. I think about their lived experience and how they're then able to go and speak to their family and their community and start dispelling some of the stigma around mental health. From this the ripple effect is recognising earlier when they're becoming unwell so they come in in a less traumatic way. So, the consumers, they inspire me.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work

Hanging out with my kids. I think that's what I enjoy doing. I like going to my daughter's dances. I like going to watch Braiden, Jaden and Jesse's rugby matches. I guess just being a family and having that connection, whether it's by myself and the kids or with my broader family, just relaxing, taking care of myself.

SUPPORTING OUR DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Did you know you can now record or amend your diversity data at any time through Streamline?

Simply **log on** to Streamline to update and record your EEO status.



Pay advices



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Loans and overpayments



Enquiries



Diversity data
Maintain your diversity information

Response to these questions will provide Queensland Health with a starting point to identify the strategies and programs needed to build more diverse and inclusive workplaces, including:

- ✓ to help understand the diversity of the workforce;
- ✓ to track progress in meeting the workforce diversity targets;
- ✓ to target diversity groups that are under-represented in the workforce;
- ✓ a starting point to identify new programs or approaches to increasing our workforce diversity.

Supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Metro North Hospital and Health Service



We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events.

Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Communications Manager Renee Simon at Renee.Simon@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3139 3235.



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