

TALK-ABOUT

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

May/June 2016

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*

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Angela Scotney
Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

A word from the Director

Recently we have seen two events which have an impact on all our lives, these being “Close the Gap” and Harmony Day. These are perfect examples of the challenges in cultural diversity and communication. As a First Nations people we strive to do all that we can to ensure equality in all areas and that people have the opportunity to excel in life.

We are very pleased that both North Lakes and Pine Rivers celebrated Close the Gap Day, where staff came together with their colleagues in recognition of the importance of health equality. Our commitment is strong and we are determined to make changes for a better future.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit organised a morning tea on the 21st March to celebrate Harmony Day, to embrace multiculturalism, respect and understanding. We belong to one or more cultures, even if we don't realise it. Our participation in shared culture helps us to bond as a society and understand each other. The way for us to move forward is to break down all racial discrimination barriers so that we may work together as one.

I would like to acknowledge the Cultural Capability Officers for organising these events and ensuring our health equality messages were promoted to all staff members. We look forward to hosting more key reconciliation and health events throughout the year.

Angela Scotney
Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

Contact information

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers	
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Floor 5, Ned Hanlon Building	Fax: 3646 2284
Wendy Lewis	Ph: 3646 5612 or 3647 4173
Bernadette Bird	Ph: 3646 1696 or 3647 4171
Dell Hagan	Ph: 3646 7489 or 3647 4184
After Hours Service (RBWH)	Friday and Monday 12noon to 8.30pm Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6.30pm
Enquiries (Hospital Switch)	Ph: 3646 4154 or 3646 8111
Aunty Janet Layton	Ph: 3647 4183
Tyler Lea	Ph: 3647 4178
Candice Simpson	Ph: 3647 4173
The Prince Charles Hospital, Ground Floor, corridor leading to the Coronary Care Unit)	Fax: 3139 5810
Aleacha Hopkins	Ph: 3139 5062
Mark Budd	Ph: 3139 5165
Caboolture Hospital, Allied Health Department, Ground Floor	Fax: 5433 8730
Stella Laidlaw	Ph: 5433 8249
Redcliffe Hospital, Safety Quality and Performance Unit, West Block	Fax: 3049 6767
Rox-Anne Currie	Ph: 3049 6791
Michelle Pieper	Ph: 3049 2312
Improving the Patient Journey	
	Email: Improving_the_Patient_Journey@health.qld.gov.au
Manager: Gavin Tye	Ph: 0438 794 510
Rayna Cowburn	Ph: 3646 5612 or 0408 023 733
Pele Sebasio	Ph: 3646 5612 or 0428 110 425
After Hours Liaison Officer (RBWH)	Friday and Monday 12 noon to 8.30pm Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6.30pm
Robert Brown	Ph: 3646 5612 or 0409 583 967
The Prince Charles Hospital	
Ronald Agie	Ph: 3139 6623 or 0439 274 152
After Hours Liaison Officer (TPCH)	Friday and Monday 12noon to 8.30pm Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6.30pm
Temiah Henaway	Ph: 3139 6429 or 0429 897 982
Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team	
Manager: Robyn Chilcott	Ph: 3492 1823
Sexual Health Team	
Manager: Robyn Chilcott	Ph: 3492 1823
Indigenous Strategic Development Team	
Manager: Isaac Simon	Ph: 3139 4117 or email Isaac.Simon@health.qld.gov.au



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 3235.

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, Chermiside Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermiside QLD 4032.

Email to:

A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

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



Chris Seiboth
Executive Director, Community, Indigenous and Subacute Services
Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Executive Director Community, Indigenous and Subacute Services

Dear colleagues,

Congratulations to the winners and nominees in this year's International Nurses Day Awards. We care for many vulnerable people in our residential facilities, in their homes and in our clinics, and it's excellent to see so many nominations for the nurse, unsung hero and team of the year.

CISS has been given the opportunity to play an important role in Metro North's winter bed management strategy. This is a chance for us to strengthen our partnerships across the health service to ensure that when someone can be treated in a community or subacute setting, we're ready to respond. To this end, we need to also make certain that the data we're using and that other parts of the health service will use in their decision making is correct.

Let's Get PhyCISStical has been going well. We will be holding the first Reconciliation Shield on 27 May between our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit and the CISS All Stars. This is an important event for several reasons. Not only are we getting out and active together, it's also a step towards our first Reconciliation Action Plan. CISS carries the responsibility for leading reconciliation within Metro North, but it's something we do willingly and with pride. I am extremely pleased to be taking part in this event, although I will say in advance it's been a few years since I've chased a footy.

Chris Seiboth
Executive Director,
Community, Indigenous and
Subacute Services

NAIDOC Celebration 2016

All staff and patients
are welcome to attend



03-10
JULY
2016



Songlines:
The living narrative
of our nation

Hospital	Date	Time	Venue
The Prince Charles Hospital	Monday 4 July	10am–2pm	Outside Breeze Café
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	Tuesday 5 July	10am–2pm	Outside Education Centre
Redcliffe Hospital	Monday 11 July	10am–2pm	Garden Foundation Grounds
Caboolture Hospital	Wednesday 13 July	10am–2pm	Healing Garden
Kilcoy Hospital	Friday 15 July	10am–2pm	Hospital Grounds

Featuring an acknowledgement to country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancing, art workshops, face painting and storytelling, and traditional food.

The 2016 theme, *Songlines – The living narrative of our nation* – will highlight the importance of Songlines to the existence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Supported by the MNHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit.



Robyn Chilcott

Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team

with Manager, Robyn Chilcott

The Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team currently comprises three teams: the Adult Health Team; the Sexual Health Team and the Administration Team.

The Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team aims to improve the health status of Indigenous people to a level equal to that of the rest of the population. Its activities currently include:

- Improving and increasing access to quality health services and support services
- Assisting clients to manage illness better through culturally appropriate advocacy, support and linking clients to access early intervention and treatments
- A focus on chronic disease and risk factors
- Promoting good health, to prevent illness where possible and to improve the management of existing illness

- Delivering culturally capable and responsive services by targeted Indigenous-specific programs and assisting with coordinated and integrated care across service settings
- Referral to appropriate GP, Allied Health, Specialist Medical services and supporting services

The team holds client morning teas and support groups throughout the year to provide an opportunity for feedback and support to some of the clients of the service.

Clients accessing the Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team have significant and complex health concerns and the team are pleased the community embrace the support groups and provide informal guidance on improving our services to the community.

The Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team currently comprises three teams: the Adult Health Team; the Sexual Health Team and the Administration Team.

The Sexual Health team had approximately 1,000 occasions of service providing support to at-risk groups and supporting education and clinical testing for clients of this service.

The teams look forward to continuing to support and advocate for the local Indigenous community to achieve better health outcomes.



Pictured left, from top: Indigenous Acute and Primary Care Team Manager Robyn Chilcott; Members of the Acute and Primary Care Team with clients at the Pine Rivers Community Health Centre.

Indigenous Strategic Development Team

with Manager, Isaac Simon

This month we celebrate National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June). This year is particularly momentous, with Reconciliation Australia celebrating a number of anniversaries—including 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 1991. It is also 15 years since Reconciliation Australia was formed and 10 years of success in its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program.

The theme “Our History, Our Story, Our Future” is particularly relevant for us at Metro North Hospital and Health Service as we reflect on our national identity, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation’s story.

We are pleased the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital will once again host the annual Reconciliation Art Exhibition and Market Day. The event gives upcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists the opportunity to showcase their artwork to our patients and consumers, and the Market Day allows local businesses to sell their arts and crafts.

Reconciliation Week is important for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. May 27 marks the anniversary of Australia’s most successful referendum and June 3 Commemorates the High Court of Australia’s landmark Mabo decision in 1992, which legally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land.

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Isaac Simon

I’d encourage you to all to get involved with the Reconciliation Week celebrations and further build on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

National Reconciliation Week 2016

27 May to 3 June

OUR HISTORY, OUR STORY, OUR FUTURE



Reconciliation Art Exhibition

4th May - 6th June

RBWH Art Space, ground floor. Walkway between the Ned Hanlon and Joyce Tweddell Buildings

OPENING MARKET DAY Wednesday 1st June 10am - 2pm

The annual RBWH Reconciliation Week Market Day will once again be held on level 1 Atrium and will feature stalls selling various traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and crafts.

For more information, contact Metro North HHS Events

Tel 07 3646 1525 | Fax 07 3646 5177 | Email MetroNorth-events@health.qld.gov.au



Indigenous Hospital Services

with Program Manager,
Natasha White

The Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers (IHLO) have been involved in the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital (RBWH) Patient Experience once again. The outcome from these surveys will help the hospital implement effective changes in patient care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

We are currently evaluating the cultural appropriateness of our IHLO room at RBWH, Level 5 Ned Hanlon Building. This office is available to patients, escorts and their family members as a place to find sanctuary from the hospital setting. If you have been to the office and would like to provide any feedback or suggestions on how we can make it more comfortable to patients and their family members, please send an email to A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au.

The RBWH IHLO Office is available for patients, escorts and their families to go and relax while they are at the hospital, so go down to Level 5, Ned Hanlon Building and say hello to the staff.

Hours Office is open:
Monday to Fridays
8am – 5pm



Natasha White

IHLO services at RBWH continue to deliver a comprehensive extended hours service to patients:

Monday: 8am – 8.30pm
Tuesday: 8am – 5pm
Wednesday: 8am – 5pm
Thursday: 8am – 5pm
Friday: 8am – 8.30pm
Saturday: 10am – 6pm
Sunday: 10am – 6pm

All other Hospitals – The Prince Charles Hospital, Redcliffe and Caboolture operate:

Monday to Fridays
8am – 5pm

There is also an outreach service provided to Kilcoy Hospital on the first Wednesday of each Month:

9am – 1pm

Indigenous Patient Journey Program

with Manager, Gavin Tye

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all patients, their escorts and family members who have attended either Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) or The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) for appointments.

We recognise and understand that when you live in regional, remote or in one of our discrete Indigenous communities across Queensland, it's challenging (culturally, financially and physically) to make these appointments. The IPJ team will continue to be here to help as much as possible, to provide a range of supports to ensure your health journey is as stress-free as possible.

In the great "circle of life" we have seen many new babies born, and it's great to see they are getting the best start in life. Sadly at the other of life's journey some families have lost loved ones, which means a period of "Sorry Business". Our IPJ team members have been there to provide direct and indirect support with the immediate and extended family members, as well as provide Community support.

Improving the Patient Journey Aim:

Provide culturally appropriate advocacy and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inpatients, outpatients, their escorts and carers before, during and after they access services at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) or The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH).

The IPJ service encourages everyone to access the right health care in a timely manner, and by doing this early enough, you may not need to come to Brisbane for treatment.

Patient experience

Russell Age and Bridget Riley from Camooweal



Russell Age (escort) and his partner Bridget Riley (patient) recently attended The Prince Charles Hospital so Bridget could have a pacemaker fitted. Both live in Camooweal, 1992 kilometres North West of Brisbane, and close to the Northern Territory border.

Russell and Bridget were not aware of the IPJ program before coming to Brisbane, but were very happy the program exists. Both were very pleased that IPJ Coordinator Ronald Agie was able to show them around the hospital and escort them to Bridget's appointment, as they didn't know where to go.

This support assisted Bridget to not feel as anxious about her pending surgery.

Russell and Bridget called into the IPJ demountable office to say "thank you" for all the IPJ support before they left the hospital, after Bridget was discharged.



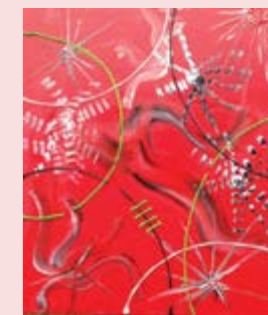
Gavin Tye



Indigenous Sexual Health Team

with Program Coordinator,
Ronald Abala

The art workshop that we have been providing for residents at Aspley has been successful, with an increase in numbers of participants and positive feedback. We continue to provide this workshop to residents as a medium for health education/promotion and are pleased to be given funding to facilitate ongoing workshops.



Some of the latest Art Creations from the participants

We were invited to participate once again at the Homeless Connect event held in May 2016 at the Eagle Farm Race Club. Last year we saw over 122 people who participated in our health survey and attended our stall for health information and resources, and we anticipate more this year. The event enables attendees to see what services are available to them across the Brisbane region.

We continue to provide outreach services to other venues in the Brisbane region where we access homeless people and other marginalised populations. We also undertake regular agency visits across Metro North Hospital and Health Service to meet the needs of marginalised groups such as youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and others as requested.

The Police Citizen Youth Club (PCYC) in Caboolture approached us to provide education/health promotion sessions. We will run these sessions alongside other organisations including the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts (ACPA), North West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Association (NWAICA) and Dakabin State High School, for the year 11-12 students.

OUT&ABOUT

Close the Gap Day

Staff at North Lakes and Pine Rivers celebrated Close the Gap Day on March 17th with a special morning tea.

Cultural Capability Officer, Elwyn Henaway, collected signatures at the North Lakes event for the '30 for 2030' challenge. The purpose is to collect 30 names and contact details in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality by 2030.

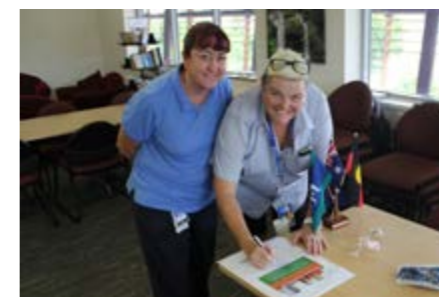
At the Pine Rivers event, Jarrod Parter gave an acknowledgement of country and Robyn Chilcott facilitated quiz games to help educate staff on close the gap issues.



Left to right: Phil Ahmat, Jo Walters, Liz Kidd, Elwyn Henaway and Rajni Nair.



Child Health Nurse Alicia Stevens is quizzed on her knowledge of close the gap issues by Acute and Primary Care Program Manager Robyn Chilcott.



Lisa Watson (left) and Susan Adams (right) sign the '30 for 2030' pledge in support of health equality.



Staff at Pine Rivers Community Health Centre celebrate Close the Gap Day.

Harmony Day

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit hosted a morning tea at the Chermside Community Health Centre as part of Harmony Day celebrations on the 21st of March.

Harmony Day is held every year to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Staff bought along their favourite dish from a different country and had the opportunity to learn about and celebrate all the different cultures working within Community, Indigenous and Subacute Services.



Elwyn Henaway and Christine Atkinson



Kim Sanders and Alison Palmer



A&TSIHU Administration Officer Vaughan Travers coordinated the morning tea and was thrilled with the participation from staff.



Antony Shields and Kay Digby

Staff Farewell

Staff gathered to farewell Sharni MacNeil on her final day with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit. Sharni spent the past four years in the role of Program Manager of Indigenous Hospital Liaison Services and was integral in managing staff across all hospitals and establishing the After Hours Service at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. We wish her all the best in her new role at the State Health branch.



Left to right: TPCH Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Aleacha Hopkins, Neressa Johnston, After Hours Team Leader Aunty Janet Layton, RBWH Team Leader Patricia Kennedy and Sharni MacNeil



Redcliffe Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer's Roxanne Currie (left) and Michelle Pieper (right) with Sharni MacNeil (centre)



Left to right: Caboolture Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Stella Laidlaw, RBWH Indigenous After Hours Officer Candice Simpson, TPCH Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Mark Budd, Patricia Kennedy, Aunty Janet Layton and Sharni MacNeil.

Identification Campaign

As part of the Identification Campaign, consumers were invited to submit a 30 second video explaining "Why it is important to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person when you access Health Services?" Each participant received an Identification T-Shirt as part of the promotion. If you would like to get involved, submit your video to A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3139 3235.



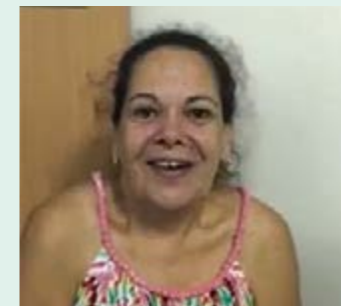
Jessie Kirby

"I'm proud to be Aboriginal as we are beautiful and the most generous people in the world."



Jason, Bundaberg

"My name is Jason from Bundaberg. I'm so proud of our people as we are the natural landowners."



Sandra Taylor

"I identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. I'm very proud of my heritage. I think it's important that we all identify especially when you go into hospital, prisons and schools. Come on you fellas, let's be proud, loud and identify all the time!"



Elwyn Henaway

"Identification is important for me as chronic disease now accounts for 30 per cent of Indigenous death rates. Chronic disease runs in my family and I have to make sure we get the screenings to check my children. As they are fair skinned children, I have to check they don't get the chronic diseases my father had."



Gene Blow

"It's my heritage, my culture and I'd like to be able to improve the status of our mob so when they do come into hospitals they tick the box to say they are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to receive the appropriate care."

IN FOCUS

Healthy Heart Program

Students from Sandgate District State High School had the opportunity to learn about healthy heart choices through a fun educational session involving Zumba dancing and exercising outdoors.

The program, run each year by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit's Acute and Primary Care team at The Prince Charles Hospital and participating local schools, is designed to educate youth about healthy lifestyle choices and preventable diseases.

Program Manager Robyn Chilcott said it is well documented that cardiovascular disease is one of the leading contributors to the health gap in major cities, regional centres and remote areas.

Those involved in the program include a local Indigenous Elder, Indigenous Community Education Counsellors, TPCH Cardiologist, TPCH Indigenous Cardiac Outreach Program, a Zumba Trainer and the Acute and Primary Care Team.

"The program has proven to be successful in ensuring the students take the messages learnt from the day home to their families and the wider community.

"We really want to empower them to make an informed decision about their own health and lifestyle," Robyn said.

The Acute and Primary Care Team is planning more sessions in late 2016. For further information or to become involved, contact Robyn on (07) 3492 1823.



Cultural message: 'Personals Before Business' a way to help Close the Gap, by Gene Blow, Cultural Capability Officer

A way to help assist Closing the Gap is to make Indigenous patients feel comfortable to access our hospitals and facilities.

We are promoting health care workers to start to build a rapport process when first contacting an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander patient in one of the MNHHS facilities. We call this 'Personals Before Business'. In other words, develop rapport first with an Indigenous patient before addressing any health business. By doing this you are developing trust with that patient which is identified as respect in a culturally appropriate manner.

Simple rapport can be developed by talking about:

- Where the patient comes from; or
- How they came into the health service facility on the day; or
- Even talking about sport – especially rugby league teams and personalities.

The strategy is to keep asking 'open' questions and this way the patient will see that you have a genuine interest in them as a person and not 'just a patient'.

Try it next time you come into contact with one of our mob.

Get involved in Reconciliation

Community, Indigenous and Subacute Services (CISS) is developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to help close the gap of disadvantage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The CISS RAP represents a public commitment by us to undertake practical actions with the intent of building strong relationships and enhancing the level of respect between ourselves and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and also providing opportunities for Indigenous Australians through employment and business development.

Critical to the success of the CISS RAP will be the establishment of a RAP Working Group that will oversee the development, endorsement, launch, and ongoing implementation of the plan. The CISS RAP Working Group will have responsibility for:

- Development of a CISS RAP within the context of CISS core business and Reconciliation Australia's RAP framework;
- The establishment of a process for engaging staff across CISS so that all CISS staff can contribute to the development and implementation of the RAP;
- Developing a project plan and timeline to develop, launch, and implement the RAP;
- Regularly liaising with key stakeholders across CISS to review progress of RAP commitment and actions; and
- Developing a new CISS RAP when the inaugural plan expires.

Nominations for the RAP committee will be sent out in the upcoming months.

IN THE NEWS

Former mayor studies to improve Indigenous health

The former mayor of Palm Island, Robert Blackley, is a paramedic now studying medicine to help improve the health of Indigenous Australians. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-02/former-mayor-turned-paramedic-starts-medical-degree/6990908>

Cervical cancer screening rates among Indigenous women show no improvement: study

There has been no improvement in screening rates for Indigenous women in the 25-year history of the Australian National Cervical Cancer Screening Program (NCSP), a study shows. Research also showed Indigenous women were twice as likely to develop cervical cancer and four times more likely to die from the cancer than other Australian women. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-12/cervical-cancer-screening-rates-among-indigenous-women-low/7320974>

Healthy outlook for Indigenous health

A draft health plan for the Territory's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been released for consultation. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan aims to identify and address key issues such as mental health and wellbeing, chronic disease and adult and young people's health over the next five years. <http://www.psnews.com.au/act/498/news/healthy-outlook-for-indigenous-health>

Indigenous leaders urge health priority

Indigenous leaders say government funding cuts to health services will reverse any efforts to Close the Gap in life expectancy. They are urging political leaders to make indigenous health funding a priority, warning failing to do so will result in indigenous people continuing to die 10 years earlier than other Australians. <http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/03/17/03/36/make-indigenous-health-a-priority-oxfam#4GUg2eZtFP80XAC7.99>

Protecting Indigenous culture and heritage for future generations announcements

The Turnbull Government passed legislation to set up the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for the future so it can continue to collect, preserve and promote Australia's Indigenous culture and heritage. <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media/announcements/protecting-indigenous-culture-and-heritage-future-generations>

Gomeroi maternal health centre uses art to turn around Indigenous birth outcomes

A centre that uses art as a way of encouraging Indigenous women to access pregnancy health services has also revealed an alarming statistic when it comes to birth outcomes. Less than half of all Aboriginal women experience normal pregnancy outcomes according to the international research sponsored by the University of Newcastle. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-17/researchers-look-at-art-to-improve-indigenous-maternal-outcomes/7177292>

Children from Indigenous communities more likely to suffer unintentional injuries, study finds

Children from Indigenous communities are almost twice as likely to be hospitalised for unintentional injuries than non-Aboriginal children, a study has found. The study, led by the University of New South Wales (UNSW), is the first of its kind in Australia, and found Indigenous children are more likely to be hospitalised for unintentional injuries such as burns, poisoning, and road trauma. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-19/unintentional-injuries-more-likely-in-indigenous-communities/7185212>

Indigenous middle ear disease: New 10-year plan launched to help children in Queensland

Queensland health authorities have launched a new 10-year plan to try and tackle middle ear disease which plagues Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia and is linked to a raft of social problems. As part of the plan, over the next year 500 health workers in Queensland will be up-skilled to better identify middle ear disease. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-01/indigenous-middle-ear-disease-new-plan-launched-children-qld/7212478>

Scabies mite genome mapped in boost for remote Indigenous health

Thousands of scabies mites were analysed by Australian researchers in a study that could lead to more healthy skin in people in remote Indigenous communities. The team used cutting-edge genome technologies to identify the genetic map of the human parasitic scabies mite. <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/13/scabies-mite-genome-mapped-in-boost-for-remote-indigenous-health>



Word of the Month:

"Gammon"

Term used which refers back to the original game of Backgammon and taken by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander as a pretence or fake movement.

Example:

When a person uses big words to explain a situation, a typical response could be 'That fulla only gammon!'

UPCOMING EVENTS

May

27 May – 3 June: National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week is held annually and celebrates the rich culture and history of the First Australians. National Reconciliation Week began in 1996 to provide focus for nationwide reconciliation activities. National Reconciliation Week coincides with two significant dates in Australia's history which provide strong symbols of the aspirations for reconciliation. May 27 marks the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and June 3 marks the anniversary of the High Court's judgment in the 1992 Mabo case. <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

27 May – 3 June: Commemorating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander war veterans

Ceremonies commemorating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans are held in the major capital cities during Reconciliation Week. Organised by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, see <http://www.dva.gov.au>

June

3 June: Mabo Day

Mabo Day is held on 3 June to celebrate Eddie Mabo, who helped overturn 'terra nullius' in a ten-year campaign through the courts ending in the historic High Court Mabo Judgment.

July

1 July: Coming of the Light

This is a particular day of significance for Torres Strait Islander Australians. It marks the day the London Missionary Society first arrived in the Torres Strait. The missionaries landed at Erub Island on 1 July 1871. Religious and cultural ceremonies are held by Torres Strait Islander Christians across the Torres Strait and on the mainland to commemorate this day.

3–10 July: National NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. It has since taken on the acronym NAIDOC and the celebrations begin on the first Sunday in July and run for one week. See <http://www.naidoc.org.au>

August

4 August: National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day

An annual event established by SNAICC in 1988 to highlight the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. SNAICC encourages all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, mainstream child and family services, government and early childhood services, schools and any other key stakeholders to celebrate this day.

9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous People

In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People will be observed on 9 August every year, during the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. On 16 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and adopted 'Partnership for action and dignity' as its theme. The International Day of the World's Indigenous People was continued as a part of this Programme of Action. The day is observed in United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and other offices of the United Nations.

September

7 September: Indigenous Literacy Day

Indigenous Literacy Day aims to help raise funds to raise literacy levels and improve the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Australians living in remote and isolated regions. We need your support to help raise funds to buy books and literacy resources for children in these communities.



A Day in the Life of Tracy Grant



Tracy Grant has enjoyed a long and rewarding career with Queensland Health. She recently took up the role as Acting Safety and Quality Officer at the Chermiside Community Health Centre. We sit down to discuss her family history, experience and why Indigenous Health Workers are integral to closing the gap...

1. You worked in the Ngarrama Child Health Team at Pine River's Community Health Centre. What was this experience like?

My substantive role is the Indigenous Team Leader in Ngarrama Child Health Team. Working in the Child Health field can be very rewarding as this is the beginning of life. Working in this multidisciplinary team was very rewarding as not only did Ngarrama provide a clinical service they also provided a cultural service too.

Ngarrama Child Health Team is made up of three specialised disciplines – Health Workers, Nursing and Social Workers. The dynamics of the team was made up of very strong women from all walks of life, all different ages, special unique skill set and determination. My role as Indigenous Team Leader was a new role in Ngarrama Child Health Team and to lead the team culturally and work under the Nurse Unit Manager.

2. Closing the Gap is an important focus in Queensland, how did your role with the Adult Acute and Primary Care team does contribute to closing the gap?

Participating in Closing the Gap to me is very important; to make a difference in one person's life for a healthier quality of life is job satisfaction at the highest. Helping my people to take ownership and be involved in managing their health care/needs is promoting empowerment. My role was providing advocacy and cultural support focusing within a Chronic Disease setting, which is very important for our people.

Gaining experience previously from working in a Rural and Remote community in Far North Queensland provided me with extensive knowledge and skills in Chronic Disease to provide a service in a non-clinical role. I believe my role in the Adult Acute and Primary Care Team regarding Chronic Disease was pivotal in ensuring Primary Care being a good prevention or intervention service to reduce a presentation or admission to Secondary and Tertiary Care.

Providing support to Palliative/Terminal clients and their family is also a service this role provided and was well appreciated.

3. What do you believe are some of the key things other health workers can do to help close the gap between life expectancy for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians?

Always provide a service with a "Holistic" approach and don't judge or criticise as first impressions will determine your rapport with our clients.

Be responsible to gain knowledge and update necessary skills to be able to provide our clients with a highest quality of service within your scope of practice. Listen and respect your patient/client/consumer situation and offer support in a safe and cultural manner.

4. How did you first enter into a career in health?

I applied for a job in health 14 years ago and not expecting anything as I had no experience whatsoever in health. The position was a Health Worker Trainee position 002 level and I had no idea what to expect and where it would take me. So I took it upon myself to expand my knowledge and skills by completing my Certificate 3 & 4 and Diploma in Primary Health Care as well as attending various training, workshops and conferences. As a result I have been fortunate to be given opportunities to put my skills and knowledge to good use in various higher positions and different fields in Queensland Health. My substantive position is an Indigenous Team Leader 007 level as I am currently acting Safety and Quality Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit. I am continuing to study my Bachelor of Nursing through Charles Darwin University.

5. You are currently involved in the planning of the A&TSIHU Identification campaign. Why it is important for people to identify when accessing our health services?

I believe it's important for our people to identify to assist with providing appropriate health care service with the support of cultural staff. It plays a big part in the "Closing the Gap" initiative. Our people can also feel safe knowing there is no pressure to identify but there is that option should you change your mind and still be offered the same service.

Identifying also helps with educating and promoting our service/s in the hospital and community setting. Also assuring our people they do not have to go through their hospital/health journey alone if there is no family/friend support.

6. What is one of your proudest moments working with the A&TSIHU?

Not giving up on a client who was very sick and missed a lot of specialist appointments as well as some in the community. It took me six months for this client to have trust in me that I was there to help her and not there to take anything or judge.

Along this client's journey I got to work in collaboration and partnership with other disciplines from the Hospital and Community setting. As a result the biggest highlight of my role was getting this client to attend specialist appointments after 2 years of not attending, with the Specialist not giving up on this client too.

Rebuilding the client's faith and trust in the Health Service is what makes my role in the A&TSIHU as cultural worker irreplaceable.

7. Tell me about your family history and where you come from?

I have the best of both worlds. My Dad is a Torres Strait Islander and my Mum is an Aboriginal. My Mum's maternal people are the Birri Gubba clan from the Mackay and northern area and paternal people are the Yidinjdiji clan from the northern Gordonvale area. My Dad's maternal people are from Boigu and paternal people from Thursday Island. I spent some of my early childhood years growing up on Thursday Island and Prince of Wales and the most of my school age years growing up in Babinda south of Cairns. Most of my immediate family live in the Cairns and surrounding area. Prior to moving to Brisbane, I lived in the Tully/Mission Beach area for almost 15 years.

8. Finally, what do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I love spending time with my family whether it's camping, playing sports or stuff around the house. I enjoy going to any shopping centres and bargain hunting, especially for shoes and handbags. You can always find me at Health Works Gym in Redcliffe five days a week.

RECIPE

Bunya Nut Pesto



INGREDIENTS

- 100g Bunya Nuts, de-shelled
- 1 bunch Basil
- 50g Parmesan Cheese
- 1 clove garlic – finely chopped
- 250ml Macadamia Nut Oil
- 2 tspns ground Pepperberry

Gently heat the Pepperberry in 100ml of the Macadamia Oil. Finely chop Bunya Nuts and mix nuts with the garlic and 100ml of the Macadamia Nut Oil. Roughly chop Basil in a food processor or blender with the 50 ml of the Macadamia Nut Oil. Process for one minute, and then add the Bunya Nut mix and the Pepperberry mix. This works best if the oils are poured in a steady stream. Do not over-process. This should keep in the refrigerator for a week – if it lasts that long!

ABOUT BUNYA NUTS

The bonyi (Gubbi Gubbi word for the bunya pine) is a distinctive tree, native to Queensland. It once only grew in the Bunya Mountains and the Blackall Ranges.

The Bunya (*Araucaria bidwillii*) tree grows to a height of 50 metres or more with the trunk often reaching one and a half metres across in width. The trees produce large cones (about the size of a football) which contain 60 or more nuts. These flavoursome and nutritious nuts, rich in oils and carbohydrates, can be eaten raw or roasted and ground into flour.

In the past nuts were harvested by climbing the trees using a strong vine looped around the tree and the climber's waist. Cones could also be found on the ground after they broke off and fell from the very top of the tree.

Once every three years between December and March a bumper harvest of nuts is produced. It was during this time that the Bunya Gatherings occurred, with invited Aboriginal groups travelling from all over Southeast Queensland.

At these gatherings groups conducted business:

- items, food, information and new knowledge were traded and shared;
- cultural, social and kinship obligations were observed and arranged;
- disputes and complaints were resolved;
- ceremonies were conducted and future events organised; and
- songs, stories and dances were swapped between groups to be taken home to their own people.

Groups attended other events with different groups and continued the cycle. Through this trading and exchange of information, songs, stories and material culture trade routes were established across Australia.

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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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