Southern Metropolitan Region Closing the Gap on Aboriginal Health Newsletter

BAYMob Health Day

The Peninsula Health/Monash University BayMob Health Expo attracted over 200 people to the Monash Peninsula Campus on Tuesday 27th September with a range of services on display and activities for all those attending. Aunty Carolyn Briggs gave the “Welcome to Country” as the crowds arrived and people interacted with the 48 stall holders, ranging in services from health through to education.

Kyle Vander Kyup was among the stall holders as part of a Monash University Indigenous Recruitment program supporting Aboriginal students through tertiary education. During lunch the crowd were treated to a wonderful performance from Kutcha Edwards and following some close encounters with the reptile handler, the younger participants moved to the hockey fields for touch rugby, soccer and cricket activities.

Many thanks go to the Peninsula Health Koori Services team of Deon Davis, Shyvonne Foggitt, Diane Aiello, Shane Wright, Trent Gilmour and Lorraine Carey (PenDAP) for their hard work and organisation of the event. Thanks also to all those who attended as stall holders and volunteers. Special thanks also to Monash University, Closing The Gap (Department of Health) and all other sponsors of the day.
The Year in Review - Projects

Gathering Places – Ken Liddicoat

Frankston Gathering Place: Following approval by Council for the Gathering Place site, two buildings have since been located on the site at Jubilee Park, Frankston. Works on utility connections, accessible ramps and other infrastructure are about to commence at the site.

Meanwhile in the Urban South area a viewing of a potential site (Council house) at Alma Park is being conducted by Local Indigenous Network members together with other key stakeholders to discuss the potential Gathering Place project. A community meeting of interested and key Aboriginal people is planned for the new year.
Building Strong Young Aboriginal People (Transition to Adulthood)

As 2011 comes to an end, next year bring new and exciting opportunities for Aboriginal Youth in Southern Metropolitan Region.

From Portsea to Port Phillip to Pakenham, we are really looking to create a wave of activity and excitement for and with OUR young people. We want to:

- Celebrate OUR culture
- Connect OUR communities

Through this newsletter we will share information, news and trivia.

We will also spotlight some of the fantastic young people in our communities, and provide them with a space to share their views/ ideas/ challenges.

Nathan Taylor, 18, Narre Warren

**Achievements**
- Finishing Year 12 VCE
- The Great Victorian Bike Ride 4 times
- Murray Marathon 4 times part of The Blues and Brothers Team
- Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Wannik Education Scholarship for years 11 and 12
- House Captain and Young Leader at school past 2 years
- Wannik Teaching Scholarship for University

**What are you most proud of?**
Completing my Year 12 VCE

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?**
Hopefully teaching full-time after completing University to become a Physical Education teacher

**What would your advice be to other young Aboriginal kids?**
Never give up, set a goal and don't let anything get in your way.

HAVE YOUR SAY & BE INVOLVED:
Share your views/ ideas/ challenges. We are keen to hear your thoughts and suggestions AND if you would like to be involved please email me Emma Thomas on ethoma@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone on 0478321280

**Trivia Questions**
In February 1965 a group of university students travelled around country towns in New South Wales protesting against racial discrimination. This became known as the 'Freedom Ride'. Who was one of these students?

- a) Eddie Mabo
- b) Kevin Coombs
- c) Charles Perkins
- d) Neville Bonner

Approx how many Koorie Kids are enrolled in school in the Southern Metropolitan Region?
(Prep to year 12)

- a) 2150
- b) 1200
- c) 650
- d) 1700
Community Services (Youth) – Course being offered in 2012

A Certificate III in Community Services Work Course is being offered in 2012. The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL), South Eastern Local Learning Employment Network (SELEN), Victorian Justice Department, Melbourne Storm NRL and Swinburne University TAFE division Centre for Lifelong Learning – Indigenous programs are working in partnership to provide an opportunity to complete a qualification in Certificate III in Community Services Work (youth electives). The course is directed primarily at Indigenous learners aged between 18 and 30 although all are welcome to join.

An information day will be held on 7th December in the community room at the Dandenong and District Cooperative from 12 noon – 2:00pm about the course. There will be no cost to participants. If you have missed this day, contact Melinda Eason on 9214 6435.

Community Services Work is a rewarding, challenging, exciting and interesting career choice. The course addresses many issues that face young people today such as drug and alcohol use, homelessness, education, legal issues, family breakdown/violence, health, etc. The success of the previous courses has been contributed to focusing on the positive strengths of Indigenous communities.

We have conducted this course since 2005 with 80 graduates and 70% employment outcomes.

Student feedback indicates that:

- The course has been a life changing experience.
- Learning from one another has been an important aspect – different ages and backgrounds
- Creation of a safe environment to learn in is a key element to positive participation and engagement
- Increased confidence

Community Services Work (youth) has a core focus on case management covering elements in each competency. With the new accreditation standards being implemented by sector reforms, qualifications will be of great benefit. There are great employment opportunities in this area due to skills shortage in this sector in Victoria.

Recognition of Prior Learning is strongly considered and encouraged when appropriate. Things have changed in this area making it a lot easier to understand and achieve.

Delivery and assessment of the Certificate III in Community Services Work will take place SELEN, 54 McCrae Street Dandenong, This is a nationally accredited course.

For further details please do not hesitate to contact Marion Hansen on 8710 2814 Project Officer, Closing the Gap Southern Metropolitan Region Department of Health or Melinda Eason, Course Coordinator and Trainer – Swinburne University on 9214 6435 or 0416 027 794.
On 16 November, a Tackling Smoking forum was held with over 30 participants. The Victorian Tobacco Action Plan was presented, along with presentations from QUIT Victoria, VACCHO and the Dandenong Cooperative’s Healthy Lifestyle team – their little friend “Smokin Susie” stole the show!!

A Working Group has now been formed to finalise a regional plan to integrate the Commonwealth and State initiatives on tackling smoking across the region.

The Dandenong & District Healthy Lifestyle team have been very active in promoting the message about reducing smoking rates in the Aboriginal community in the southern end of the region. They have also been out and about promoting the value of healthy lifestyles, with good food and fun exercises.

The Urban South Reference Group will be advertising early in the New Year for a Tackling Smoking Worker to do research and health promotion in their area. This will also be coordinated with the work on Tackling Smoking at the Ngwala Willumbong Cooperative in St Kilda.
Health Care Pathways

The purpose of funding these projects was to:

- **Make Indigenous Health Everyone’s Business**
- **Ensure primary care services can deliver**
- **Fix the gaps and improve the patient journey**

There are a number of Health Care Pathways projects that have had the go-ahead from the Closing the Gap Committee.

**PENINSULA HEALTH**

Will be doing a number of projects over the next two years that will seek to improve their services to Aboriginal patients and their families in a number of ways. A few of the things they will do include:

Provide every Aboriginal patient with complex chronic disease presenting at Frankston and Rosebud public hospitals (including those going through the Emergency Department) with a referral to the Hospital Early Linkage Program (HELP).

Pay particular attention to those being discharged from hospital to ensure that they are actively followed-up and assisted with getting the supports they may need when they go home from hospital.

Develop options for medical assessment in the patient’s own home or suitable environment that reflects the different needs of the Aboriginal population.

Undertake a review of the patient experience of acute and subacute Aboriginal patients over the past two years.

Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan and support partner agencies to do the same

Explore an Elder in Residence program.

**SOUTHERN HEALTH**

Will be doing a project that targets Aboriginal children in out-of-home-care living in the community. Nearly 40% of the 130 children in out-of-home care in the region live in the Cardinia, Casey and Dandenong areas. Aboriginal children’s health needs identified by research include speech delay, under-immunisation, behaviour problems, hearing problems, visual problems and dental problems.

The project aims to improve links between the health sector and Child Protection and work closely with VACCA to provide comprehensive health assessments and improve access to primary care services for Aboriginal children in out-of-home care and/or at risk.

It is proposed to employ a Nurse Co-ordinator position that would liaise across the sectors, co-ordinate assessments, facilitate follow up care, and provide monitoring and review. It will also target and train General Practitioners in paediatric health assessments.

This project will be coordinated with the **“Reaching Out”** project which aims to improve referral, access and co-ordination to health care and support services ensuring early diagnosis, treatment and advice is readily available to Aboriginal families and their children who attend any of the Southern Health hospitals.
URBAN SOUTH – CITYSOUTH GP SERVICES AND INNER SOUTH COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE (ISCHS)

CitySouth GP services will be employing a three day a week worker to engage General Practitioners in the Urban South area with the Indigenous Practice Incentives Scheme (PIP). The PIP provides extra care and coordination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, and free or heavily subsidised medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme list.

Inner South Community Health Service will be leading the work on the Health Care Pathways project which will be researching and tracking patient pathways into, through, and out of both community-based health services and acute hospital services provided by ISCHS, Caulfield General Medical Services and the Alfred Hospital.

The project will also document patient stories and make recommendations about how to improve the access and cultural responsiveness of services.

Sponsorships and Submissions

In February 2011 Closing the Gap funded eleven Urban South young people to go to the Woorangalook Surf Titles. Most of them did not know that there were any other Aboriginal young people around their area, so it was a chance to meet each other and have some fun.

They had a good time, and afterwards wanted to stay in touch, so now a whole new Inner South Youth Group has been formed. The group is being supported with Closing the Gap funds for a worker one day a week. Now young Aboriginal people in the area can undertake social activities and personal development together.

On 20 March 2011 Closing the Gap was one of the sponsors for the Relationships Australia Victoria Dandenong Harmony Day event. The idea behind this event was to improve understanding of each others cultures and the Aboriginal community, the Maori community and the Sudanese community all took part on the day.
On 2 April 2011 Closing the Gap was one of the sponsors for the Koorie Night Market in Mornington. Narelle Walker from the Healthy Lifestyle team at the Dandenong Coop had a stall there with brochures and information for people wanting to give up smoking. The give-away fruit was very popular, with bananas at $12 a kilo at the time, they didn’t last long!

And as featured on our front page, on 27 September 2011 Closing the Gap was a major sponsor of the BayMob Health Day at Frankston.

During 2011 Closing the Gap has also funded:

**Willum Warrain group for IronBar Koorie Kids** to enable 10-18 year olds from Hastings, Somerville, Tyabb and Crib Point to join a gym and swim program at the YMCA.

**City of Greater Dandenong Stepping Out Program** for Aboriginal people with disabilities to extend the existing gym and swim program to provide for personal gym memberships.

**Tjaegan’s Warriors Men’s Group** to tackle smoking and promote healthy eating by funding healthy food for their meetings.

**Southern Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association** for a Koorie Kids Circus program at their Frankston playgroup to promote physical activity in pre-school children and support parents with ideas for indoor “fun” exercises for their children on bad weather days.

**Dandenong & District Aborigines Cooperative Ltd** for purchase of healthy food (fish and fruit) for their monthly barbecue.

**Willum Warrain for Faces in Our Mob** project to involve young people in developing a publication of photos and stories of local Elders and respected persons.

**Mornington Peninsula Shire for Koories in the Kitchen Program** to purchase items of kitchen equipment, crockery and glassware to facilitate the cooking of healthy and nutritious food at the Hastings Gathering Place.
Committee Profile: Deon Davis

What is your background?
I am originally from Mount Isa, Queensland from the Waayni/Kalkadoon/East Arrente tribes. I have five daughters and have been married for 18 years. My passion to help the community with issues impacting on them is extensive. I have worked in the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), Department of Community Services as a child protection worker, an Aboriginal Official Visitor with New South Wales prisons, the Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Executive Officer for Gippsland.

I was manager of the Indigenous Service Unit for the Department of Corrections where I developed many new initiatives around behavioural change and community connection with the offenders/community groups.

I have worked in Disability Services where I developed and created the only Koori Disability resource guide in Victoria. I also worked as the Indigenous Family Violence Statewide Coordinator at the Department of Human Services and currently I am the team leader of Koori programs with within Peninsula Health.

Your biggest achievement so far?
The birth of my five daughters, knowing I have done a great job for the community and accomplished what I have challenged myself to achieve. The projects I have created to better improve the community (BAYMOB puppets project, Holiday Sports Program, Koori Kitchen, BAYMOB Expo and swimming programs) In 2012 I will complete my Masters in Public Health.

Who are your heroes?
My wife and my mum because of the health journey’s and inspiring stories they have to share and the Elders in the community who continue to inspire me in my work and the cultural journey I take with them.

What do you most want to achieve?
Knowing that at the end of the day, no matter what determinant of health or underlying issue a person/family has been offered appropriate quality of care and support in their identified issue and that I can as an Aboriginal male make a difference in whatever community I work.
Useful Websites

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS): http://www.vahs.org.au
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA): http://www.FaHCSIA.gov.au

Royal College of General Practice: http://www.racgp.org.au/aboriginalhealth/cst
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO): http://vaccho.org.au
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria – Department of Planning and Community Development: http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/indigenous/

For further information about Closing the Gap, please contact Ms Patsy Morrison, Project Manager, on 8710 2812 or email patsy.morrison@health.vic.gov.au

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 8710 2812.