



GURRINY YEALAMUCKA  
HEALTH SERVICE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

# Gurriny News

July 2019

**Gurriny  
celebrates  
NAIDOC  
Day 2019**  
More pics p 7



Pic by Dixie Hari

## Summit takes on men's issues in wider community context

A raft of recommendations from men-specific health clinics through to male role modelling were just some of the ideas to come out of a two-day Men's Summit held in June.



Men's Health Team Coordinator Darren Miller said nearly all sessions over the two days were facilitated by local talent including Leon Yeatman, Greg Fourmile and Paul Neal, with special guest presenter Dr Mark Wenitong.

"Mark talked on men's health overall, and it was very well presented, and Gurriny's Dr Jason King also presented some important health information," Mr Miller said.

"We worked closely with the Yarrabah Leadership Forum Coordinator Cleveland Fagan, members, staff and elected representatives from organisations such as Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, Gindaja, Justice Group and the Men's Group, who also attended meetings associated with organising the Forum."

He said engagement from the community had been very good.

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## Summit takes on men's issues in wider community context

“We had the high school boys come in and do a Q&A session with the Elders, giving them an opportunity to respond to some of the questions we had worked on in relation to the community,” Mr Miller said.

“There were presentations from Wugu Nyambil, Gindaja, Justice Group, YETI, police, and we also had Edward Murgha and David Baird on cultural community, family and spiritual values.”

He said overall the Summit was a success.

“It's been a testament to all of those who have been in this program from way back,” he said.

“We are keeping men's issues on the agenda in a community context, and I really am proud of those who came and the work we've done.”

Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, in collaboration with the Yarrabah Leaders' Forum, is planning similar Summits for Elders, Women, Youth and ultimately the Community as a whole over the coming months – watch this space for details.



“I think the best thing about the men's forum was getting out all the young men involved from the school. And they participated as well so it was good to hear what they had to say about the problems going on in the community at the moment. It was good to have them along and see what they think and what their future endeavours are, as well. Yeah. And it's good to hear what's going on, like, maybe around the law and order stuff, there's been a lot of break-ins, and we had the police come along, to hear what they're doing about it. Also, just opinions from the community and what they think should happen. A lot of ideas were raised and now it's just a matter of taking action upon everything that was raised.”

ROSZALY AITKEN

“Probably the best thing was the sort questions from around the community. There were pretty much, really interesting questions and, yeah, just seeing all the boys and men coming together was really, really good. Just, always talk to someone. Always, always, always. Make sure you have good company. So it was, yeah, really good. All the questions were really interesting and seeing the elders talk about the past and seeing the present, now, talk about the future. It's really interesting what they want to see in the next ten years, or twenty or so. And if we can stay together, the way we came together there, we can actually try and achieve it as a community, that would be really good.”

ANDREW GARRETT



“The thing I like about the men’s forum was coming together and the way we did the line up of the eldest to the youngest. The older ones told about the past and the younger ones looking at the future. This generation now can look forward and build change from what has happened in the past. It was good to see that the younger ones from the high school, young men, come to talk. Afterwards, the men had a round table, everyone sat together, talked about the issues - what can be done and where the younger ones could hear and start thinking about the future for everyone.”

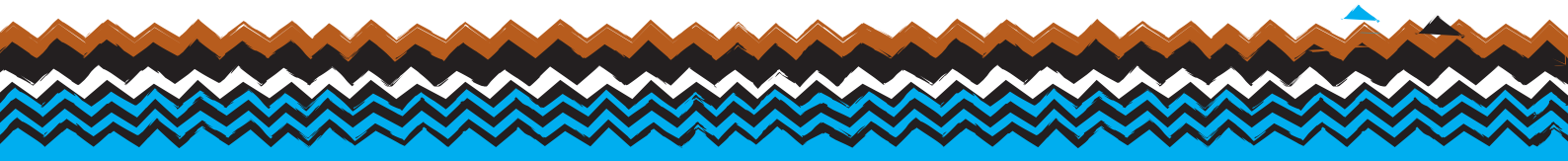
EDWARD MURGHA

**RECOMMENDATIONS included:**

- Men-specific health clinics including after hour and mobile;
- SEWB, mental health and mental wellbeing focus on cultural activities, ‘mateship’ and looking after each other;
- Partner with other community organisations;
- Expand Men’s Program
- Develop positive male modelling programs, especially for children;
- Develop regular Yarning Circles so the conversation on how we can address community issues can continue.

# RSAS celebrates success at winter camp

A camp and a day trip to Fitzroy Island were the rewards for students and their families who have improved their school attendance over the first half of this year with the help of the RSAS (Remote School Attendance Strategy) team.



RSAS is an initiative of Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, Yarrabah State School and the Yarrabah Leaders Forum, and funded by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Nine families were invited to the school holiday camp which was aimed at building relationships and creating opportunities for families to connect outside of the school environment.

RSAS Coordinator Dixie Hari said the camp and excursion was a success.

“We provided this camp and trip as a reward for students within our target group whose school attendance improved throughout the semester,” she said.

“It was great to see mostly fathers come along with their children.

“After full participation in the camp, the families were invited to a day trip out to Fitzroy Island.

“All the children were excited about going on the Ferry Cruise and looking into the Yarrabah Bay and coastal line.

“When we reached Fitzroy Island, we enjoyed the day exploring parts of the Island, going on the Glass Bottom Boat Tour and swimming on the shore line before heading on the Ferry back to Cairns.”

She said there were many highlights over the five days.

“The highlights of the camp and trip was the enjoyment and fun the kids had participating in the activities, the cultural presentation by Gunggandji Ranger Darryl Murgha, the Men’s Group kup-murri, the opportunity to engage with families out on the beach, and relaxing around a camp fire sharing yarns,” she said.

“We will continue to work with Yarrabah State School students and their parents to improve

school attendance.

“We hope to have more activities like this in future and want to thank those families that participated for ensuring their child attends school every day.

“Full school attendance is important for every child.

“It helps children to learn and excel academically and creates good positive relationships with other students and teachers.”

She said they were grateful to the following organisations for their contributions to the success of the camp: Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation Ranger program, Gindaja Treatment and Healing Centre Men’s Group Warrior program and Women’s Group program, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Youth Wellbeing program, and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council maintenance team.





# Transition evaluation shows overall improvements

Australian Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs) are grounded in the culture and values of their respective communities and provide services that reflect the unique needs and aspirations of each local community.

As an expression of self-determination, more than 150 ACCHSs provide health care to urban, rural and remote Aboriginal communities across Australia.

Yarrabah was the first Queensland Aboriginal community to transition Primary Health Care (PHC) services from Queensland Health operation to Aboriginal community control - through Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service.

Four years after the hand over, this review answers three questions:

- 1) What supported the transition of the delivery of PHC services to Aboriginal community control in Yarrabah, and what were the barriers to the transition?
- 2) Has transition to Aboriginal community control achieved better health care and health outcomes for the Yarrabah community?
- 3) What are the economic costs and benefits arising from introducing Aboriginal community control of PHC in Yarrabah from a health care system perspective?

The results will help to inform further development to meet increasingly complex and dynamic social, economic, political and health environments in Yarrabah and improve the design and delivery of other such transitions.

There were several key factors which drove the process of transition

to community control in Yarrabah, and which continue to drive service improvement and community development efforts today.

Based on the aspirations of the Yarrabah community, leaders saw a need for comprehensive, culturally appropriate health care that was responsive to community health needs.

Another factor driving the transition has been an ongoing process of increasing local self-determination and autonomy in Yarrabah.

Underlying the entire transition journey was a core process of building capacity in the Yarrabah community, and particularly within Gurriny, to manage and deliver local PHC.

One of the objectives of transition to community control was to increase the total amount of health funding flowing into Yarrabah while reducing reliance on government grants.

Since transition, the Workforce numbers and mix of workforce skills required to maintain service delivery under Gurriny's model of care have grown considerably.

Overall, staff numbers increased by 71%.

The proportion of the local Indigenous workforce has been maintained at high levels, with 58/76 (76%) positions filled by Indigenous people in 2017-18.

Gurriny's health care performance must

be measured against the backdrop of a high burden of disease present in the Yarrabah population to fully understand how well the organisation has performed.

Gurriny has demonstrated very strong performance in chronic disease management throughout its transition to community control with considerable improvements in both processes of care and, importantly, in intermediate health outcomes from 2012 to 2017.

There has been an upward rising trend in Potentially preventable hospitalisations (PPH) of Indigenous people residing in Yarrabah over time, with the most notable increase at and in the year after transition to community control.

In 2017-18, Gurriny spent \$6.17 million on staff salaries and the flow-on effect of employment from this expenditure was an additional \$1.54 million.

Overall, health data shows improvements in monitoring of the indicators however, ongoing annual monitoring and reporting against outputs, health care performance, and intermediate health outcome indicators and secondary and tertiary health care utilisation is necessary.

Continued evaluation of the impacts and economic benefits of transition of PHC services to community control in Yarrabah will help Gurriny to improve services into the future.

*Summarised from: Transition of primary health care services in Yarrabah to community control: Project Report for Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service by Sandra Campbell, Crystal Jongen, Irina Kinchin & Janya McCalman*

# Gurriny's NAIDOC Day @ PCYC



Pics by Dixie Hari & Christine Howes

# Profile: Counsellor Joe Sproats



Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services is pleased to welcome on board psychologist Joe Sproats, who will be working with the Family Wellbeing team.

Mr Sproats was born in Melbourne before venturing to Papua New Guinea in the mid-1970s, travelling fairly extensively nationally and internationally.

After landing in Mackay, then Townsville in the 1980s and early 1990s, he ran a disability services program and became a management consultant to several communities including Yarrabah, Palm and Mornington Islands.

Joe identifies as an Aboriginal (Djiringanj) and Australian South Sea Islander (Lifou – New Caledonia), and has Irish and English bloodlines. He has worked in various industries including disability, health, counselling, tourism and hospitality.

He has counselled many individuals and completed many consulting projects over the

past thirty years, and over the past twelve years has provided live-in training to more than 1000 students at his live-in training centre/resort in Ingham or home in Charters Towers. He officially retired in September 2017 but says he has never been busier.

He said he wanted to work again in Yarrabah, and particularly in mental health, because he believes in healing.

“I believe when we are experiencing difficulties, we need to change the way we think, and I believe we’ve got to develop new paradigms about the way we move forward,” he said. “For a long time now I’ve been saying, ‘if you see yourself as a person suffering from 230 years of failure and being completely done over, your aspirations and expectations for life will be really low, but if you see yourself

as someone from 60,000 years of the most civilised culture on the planet and full of success, your aspirations will meet your true capacity’.

“That’s something I completely believe in and that’s what I want to see happen here.

“My mission here is to do some one-on-one counselling, but also to contribute to the ongoing upliftment of the spirit of our people everywhere.

“Here in Yarrabah there are some fantastic people, some of whom I’ve known for a long time, who are doing just that.

“I want to be a part of that and I’m happy to be on board.”



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Earlier this year the community went through a potentially dangerous outbreak of Acute Post-Streptococcal Glomerulonephritis (APSGN).

This is a condition where skin infections (boils, impetigo) can go on to cause damage to the kidneys.

In previous outbreaks this has led to many children being affected.

Thanks to the fantastic work by the staff at Gurriny and the community as a whole I can report back that we were able to contain the outbreak to just four cases out of the nearly 1600 children in Yarrie.

Over 900 kids were eventually screened and over 120 kids received treatment for skin sores.

This is a fantastic result in the end and while those 4 children will

## Doc Jason's Last Word...

continue to be followed up, it's a timely reminder to make sure we look after our kid's skin.

Our child health team will continue to work with the schools and the community at large to educate families and carers about good skin health and provide resources (eg skin sore packs and healthy skin information) and treatment where needed.

If you see a skin sore on one of your little ones, cover it up, keep it clean and come to the clinic if it's not settling down in a day or two.

That way we can make sure these skin infections can be treated on time and stay clear of any damage to the kidneys.

Now we're well into flu season it's great to see so many of the community come into the clinic asking for flu shots.

Last time I spoke about the importance of getting your shots and this flu season has turned out to be much worse than predicted.

We continue to have flu shots available so please come in if you haven't already had your 2019 shot!

