

Southern Metropolitan Region Closing the Gap on Aboriginal Health Newsletter

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) Frankston Playgroup

Closing the Gap recently funded VACCA for a Koori Kids Circus program at their Frankston Playgroup.

For seven weeks over term three, Westside Circus facilitated a program to teach parents and carers how to assist, guide and interact with their children at Nairn Kirrup (Bay Friends) Playgroup in Frankston. The children learnt to balance, tumble, climb and roll safely through the construction of a variety of obstacle courses. This project demonstrated how to create gross and fine motor opportunities for development for inside (particularly in the winter months) or outside play.

Families were keen to attend circus. We had a minimum of five families attend every week and maximum of ten families with up to fifteen children. Parents held balancing children high or balanced them on their feet, while lying on the floor and learnt how to flip children. Children and parents joined in circles to play games that taught different body shapes used in the tumbling part of the program. Various games were learnt and played with great gusto.

The children really enjoyed themselves and parents loved the program. One parent commented that she loved the creative collaboration between the children and the circus facilitators. During a game, a child would make a suggestion and it would be included, for example, in Ship to Shore "seasick" was included and they all ran to pretend to vomit over the side (hilarious to watch); in the



acrobatic part of the program, whole stories would be created as the children imagined the obstacles differently, for example, the winding ladder became a bridge.



So many benefits and so much fun. Thank you to Closing the Gap for this fabulous opportunity.



Cultural Awareness, Cultural Competence, Cultural Respect, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Safety – what does it all mean?

All these terms are used when talking about cultural awareness training and it can be very confusing. In the recent review of the Improving Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients (ICAP) program, the Victorian Department of Health tried to clarify some of the words that are used to talk about making health services culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Here is what they came up with:

Cultural Awareness:

Involves acknowledgement of the differences between people of different cultures and recognises that people from different cultures have different needs.

*(Editors note: In other words it is about the **individual person**/staff member having an understanding of Aboriginal history and culture).*

Cultural Competence:

Is being mindful of cultural difference and modifying the way services are delivered to better meet the needs and cultural beliefs of people from different cultures. A culturally competent practitioner will provide care in ways that are responsive to the different values, beliefs, or behaviours of their patient/client.

*(That is, it is about the ability of **organisations** as a whole and their **systems** to provide care to people with diverse values beliefs and behaviours, and tailoring delivery to meet patients' social, cultural and linguistic needs.)*

Cultural Sensitivity – the next level to cultural awareness:

Is about awareness of cultural differences and involves people acting in ways that are sensitive or respectful of these cultural differences.

(Putting cultural awareness into practice)

Cultural Respect¹

Is the: "Recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent right, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island peoples."

Cultural Safety:

Is reached when a recipient of care, deems the care to be meeting their cultural needs. The person providing the care is mindful of the impact their own cultural identity can have on the care they provide.

¹ Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health 2004-2009.

The Storyteller comes to Southern Region



The successful tenderer for the Closing the Gap Cultural Awareness Training is Glenn Shea who will run a number of sessions of the Storyteller game with up to 100 selected participants from agencies involved with Closing the Gap over the next few months.

Glenn Shea, “the Storyteller”

The Storyteller Australian Board Game Education Resource (“The Storyteller”) offers a tool for intercultural understanding which has been developed since 2004, “To provide knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people society and culture from a generic and non-political perspective through alternative active learning pathways”.

The game has been developed by Glenn Shea - a Wathaurong/Ngarrindjeri man, the first Aboriginal graduate of NIDA, an actor/director/playwright - initially in his role as a Koorie Youth Justice worker seeking a means for cultural understanding for the young people with whom he was engaging. It has grown to be seen to be highly relevant in a broad context of intercultural understanding.

Glenn is the primary facilitator of the cultural awareness experience which has been developed around the game. The components of this include:

- facilitated playing of the game itself: creates a different understanding of cultural context and stimulus to further activity
- targeted content for particular groups: allows the introduction of material particularly relevant to the local community
- mentoring by local community Elders: provides oral learning outside of conventional European publications etc
- participant research: stimulated task focus to engage participants with issues presentations: oral conveying of knowledge.

This experience is provided face-to-face for groups of up to 40 people (10 participant groups of 4 to play the game and conduct subsequent research). This activity has been shown in community, school, government and corporate settings to provide participants with

- an experience of Aboriginal culture
- oral forms of learning
- specific task engagement on issues of relevance to them

Invitation to the Dandenong Casey General Practice Association/Dandenong & District Aborigines Cooperative Cultural Safety Training

Meeting the training requirements for cultural safety:

Dandenong Casey General Practice Association (DCGPA) in conjunction with the Dandenong District Aborigines' Co-operative Ltd is pleased to invite practice staff, allied health and dentists practicing within Dandenong and Casey to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Training conference.

Cultural Safety Training has been endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health and General Practitioners are eligible for 40 category 1 points.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal speakers who are experienced in particular topics with regards to cultural safety and Aboriginal health have been invited to present and we are confident it will be an informative and enlightening insight into local Aboriginal history, health needs and practical strategies to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders.

Learning outcomes will include:

- Definitions and demonstrations of cultural awareness and cultural safety
- A history of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander culture
- Strategies for identification of Aboriginal patients
- Referral pathways to culturally safe services
- Information about the Practice Incentives Program, Medicare Benefit Schedule items and the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme co-payment measure
- Tour of a local site of cultural significance and a cultural performance

When: Saturday 8th October 2011

**Time: 8:30am registration
9:00am – 5:00pm training**

**Venue: Punt Hill Apartments
Corner Lonsdale and Foster Streets, Dandenong**

To register for cultural safety please phone DCGPA on 8972 1900 or go to the following website:

www.dcgpa.com/au/events/

If you have any further queries regarding this conference please contact Amali Aluthgamage on 8972 1900 or email amali@dcgpa.com.au

Department of Health Cultural Resource Guide

This quick reference guide has been prepared to assist health services in sourcing and accessing some of the many cultural tools and training available in Victoria. It is proposed to update this resource six monthly. The guide can be downloaded at the following website.

www.health.vic.gov.au/aboriginalhealth/publications/publications.htm

Update and Progress of Gathering Places – Ken Liddicoat, Aboriginal Gathering Places Project Officer



Cranbourne – Attended Local Indigenous Network Meeting and discussions were held about the criteria, hours of operation, activities, location and committee membership. A meeting was held with the City of Casey to discuss the Gathering Place model, possible sites and the next stage. A report will be sent to the Executive Management Group about the project for their consideration.

Urban South – Discussions are currently occurring with the City of Port Phillip regarding the possibility of a council house being allocated as a Gathering Place. The house is located in Alma Park.

Frankston – On 1 August the Frankston Council accepted the proposal for a Gathering Place to be located at Jubilee Park, Frankston. The Frankston Gathering Place will be known as “*Nairm Marr Djambana*” (By the Bay Gathering). Buildings will be painted green similar to other buildings on site and in between the two buildings, indigenous designs and colours will be completed on both the inside and exterior walls.

Council are currently negotiating arrangements for a tender to relocate the Gathering Place building from Chisholm TAFE Frankston to the approved site (the planning permit has also been submitted to Council). Relocation of the building will occur in late September or October 2011.

The Gathering Place Committee is currently undergoing the process of being incorporated and having its own Constitution drawn up. Ms Dianne Aiello has been elected as the new President. Members of the committee have done governance training.

Mornington Peninsula – Hastings Gathering Place buildings are located on site awaiting utility connection and occupancy permit.

The Willum Warrain group is incorporated and has developed a Business Plan for the Hastings Gathering Place. Members of the committee have done governance training and some are doing a Cert IV in Cultural Heritage training.

Health Care Pathways

There has been considerable progress on the Closing the Gap Health Care Pathways projects since our last Newsletter.

Peninsula Health

Have proposed a comprehensive project which will improve access, service coordination, develop new models of care and build an approach that continuously improves the cultural competence and capacity of health providers. The project will cover the Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP), the Emergency Department and acute hospital admissions and referrals back to General Practitioners and other community-based services. It will coordinate with other programs such as the Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care Partnership (AHPACC), the Improving Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients (ICAP) and Early Intervention in Chronic Disease (EiCD).

Southern Health

Are proposing a project to work with children at risk including in out-of-home-care and children and families involved with DHS Child Protection Services. This will coordinate with an existing Southern Health program called "Reaching Out" and the Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies program which supports and educates at risk women with anti-natal care, education and support. The aim is to provide Allied Health support and Aboriginal paediatric health assessments by a nurse to identify issues such as speech delay, under-immunisation, behaviour problems, hearing problems, visual problems and dental problems.

Urban South (which includes the Alfred Hospital, Caulfield General Medical Service, Inner South Community Health Service and South City GP Services,)

Are finalising their project brief for a client journey project to collect case studies focussing on what works.

South City GP Services

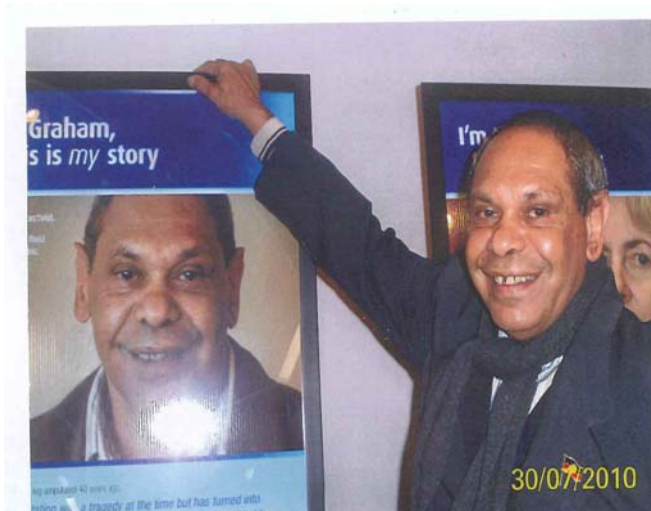
Will be running a project encouraging local General Practitioners to sign up for the Practice Incentives Program which provides Aboriginal patients suffering complex chronic disease, with free medications on the Pharmaceutical benefits Scheme and a range of extension to the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

Tackling Smoking – A Date for Your Diary

The SMR Department of Health is organising a Tackling Smoking Forum on 16 November 2011 in Dandenong. The purpose of the forum is to develop a regional approach to tackling smoking. VACCHO, QUIT Victoria, the Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control and Monash University have been invited to participate.

All Aboriginal Health Workers in the region are encouraged to come and discuss how we can do this together.

Committee Profile: Respected Elder Graham Geebung



Graham Geebung is a founding member of the Closing the Gap Committee and has attended the meetings regularly. He is a strong advocate for the Urban South communities at all times as well as supporting good ideas put forward for the whole of the Southern Region.

Graham was asked some questions about his background and hopes for the future for Aboriginal peoples in Urban South and in general.

What is your background?

I am a very proud Bidjara man from Queensland and am the youngest of five siblings. My mother who was born in the 1930's was born in Charleville and taken from her family and relocated to Cherbourg, where I was born and attended school until the age of six years. We were granted permission to leave Cherbourg when my stepfather passed away and we returned to Charleville and the surrounding area where we lived in camps for a number of years.

My mother passed away when I was only 14 years old and I lived with relatives here and there until I ended up in a boy's home and for the first time in my life I had three square meals a day. I was placed there in 1969 for six months for long term care.

When I was 17 years old I lost my leg from jumping trains and spent six months in hospital, where I went through the throes of depression. After completing rehabilitation I did various jobs and kept moving around with different family members.

In 1980 after completing a rehabilitation course I got a one way ticket and came to Melbourne where I stayed in hostels. After a period of time I gained some work with Aboriginal Hostels Ltd starting off as a trainee manager then moving around as a relief manager, night watchman, assistant manager and acting manager in fact "jack of all trades".

All in all I worked for Hostels for 11 years on and off, then I moved on to work for Australia Post as a mail officer, where I met my wife. I worked there for eight years and due to ill health had to take early retirement. I then moved to St Kilda in 2008 and became involved with the "Rainbow Place" and "Veg Out" and participated in training with the St Kilda Incentive Program that involved public speaking which enabled me to overcome my shyness and from there became involved with the Close the Gap Project.

Your biggest achievement so far?

I believe being a part of the reviews that Alfred Health and the Inner South Community Health Service undertook over the past 12 months or so, as I have seen a lot of changes for the

better and most, if not all of those involved are committed and determined to do whatever they can to assist in Closing the Health Gap.

Through chronic respiratory problems, I believe I have proven my determination to support my people in their ongoing struggle for a better quality of life by seeking recognition and understanding of our cultural identity which has been a part of our lives for at least the last 40,000 years.

Who are your heroes?

My heroes are the late and great Charles Perkins and Mahatma Ghandi who achieved so much in their lives.

What do you most want to achieve?

I personally would like to see the Aboriginal Communities begin to start trusting mainstream health services because most likely this will be the last opportunity to develop positive relationships and partnerships to improve Aboriginal health and begin to Close the Gap.

My future outlook is that we are now half way through the Close the Gap initiatives and our duties as Elders and community workers here and now is to lay the foundation for our future generations. My biggest concern now is “do we have the resources” to sustain what is put in place, given we need non Indigenous assistance.

After many years of consultations to identify and implement the appropriate changes that were required, we should embrace whatever assistance is given for it will reflect on our determination to overcome the plight of our peoples.

Useful Websites

Department of Health: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aboriginalhealth/>

For copies of SMR Closing the Gap Regional Plan: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aboriginalhealth/vip>

Closing the Gap Clearinghouse: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap/>

OATSIH: <http://www.health.gov.au/oatsih>

Indigenous Chronic Disease: <http://www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease>

Royal College of General Practice: <http://www.racgp.org.au/aboriginalhealth/cst>

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO): <http://vaccho.org.au>

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