



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

The VAHS express, vol.1, issue 1

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THE VAHS EXPRESS (Vol.1;Issue1)

IT'S FLU SEASON AGAIN ...

Well folks it's that nasty time of the year when the dreaded flu and pneumococcal bugs strike the community!

Respiratory illnesses account for a high percentage of hospital admissions within Aboriginal communities.

Now for the good news!!!

You can beat these bugs and prevent serious illness by getting yourself immunized!

The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service is currently immunizing community members against these two viruses.

Please contact a health worker to see if you are at risk and should be immunized.



VAHS 186 NICHOLSON ST., FITZROY, 3065

Hopefully, this will be the first of many VAHS newsletters, and it's FREE. So please take me home with you!



WE VALUE YOUR OPINION



Because we aim to provide you with a quality newsletter, it is important that we know what you would like to read about.

We welcome any suggestions, ideas and contributions that you may have to make our Newsletter more interesting.

You can forward your comments to:

"The Editor", P.O. Box 255, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065

There is also a suggestion box in the waiting room.

Hope to hear from you soon!!!!

Alternatively, E-mail us at: kelli@vahs.org.au

Editorial...a word from the Chief Executive Officer

Hello and welcome everyone to the health service's first edition of its' newsletter for 2001.

It has been some time since we have been able to produce a newsletter.

In this edition you will be able to read about what programs we are currently running and some new ones that have just started.

The most recent promotional activity we have been involved in has been the Drug and Alcohol free day (Dardee Munwurro Healing the Spirit, Strengthening the Community) held at the Aborigines Advancement League in January.

Up to 500 community members participated in the event, and those that attended heard a lot of things from our elders and others who have had experience in the field.

Healthy tucker and good entertainment rounded off a memorable day. Check out the story in this newsletter!

Until the next issue, stay healthy!!!



VAHS C.E.O. Tony McCartney

THE INTERCHANGE BENCH

The past 12 months have seen some staff move on and the appearance of several new arrivals.

Welcome to the following people:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Katrina Kirby | Sailaja Moturi |
| Gail Austin | Maureen Mc Neece |
| Felicia Morgan | Helen McQueen |
| Amedee Griffith | Justin Downing |



IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...

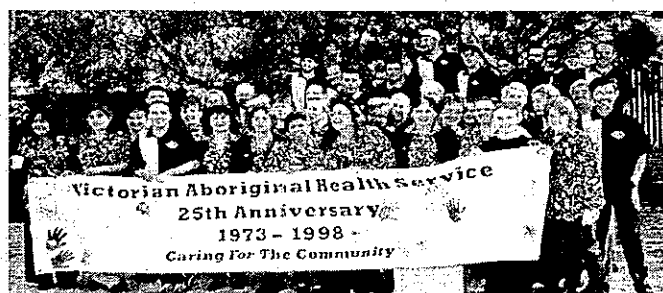
Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Co-Operative Limited will be held on Friday 11th. May, 2001.

The meeting will commence at 10.30am, and will be held at the Fitzroy Stars Community Youth Club Gymnasium, (184-186 Gertrude St., Fitzroy).

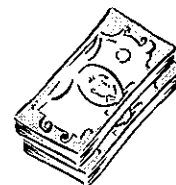
Registration at 10.00am., so be there early.

This is your chance to have a say about the future direction of this organization.

Hope to see you all there!!!



Financial Counsellor



FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR-Katrina Busuttil

Katrina facilitates as a Financial Counsellor every Friday at the VAHS.

Katrina supplies a totally confidential one on one counselling program, which supports individuals with information options, advocacy in the financial and consumer area. Katrina can advocate on such matters as:

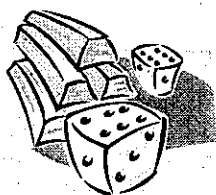
- Creditors action,
- Money problems,
- Warrants,
- Summons attachments to earnings,
- Bankruptcy installment orders,
- Financial statements,
- Repayment plans
- Money management plan,
- Utility relief grants,
- Capital grants,
- Housing
- Centrelink matters
- Debt recovery matters

Katrina can support the Koori community with regard to any issue. If an issue cannot be dealt with appropriately she will support individuals in making referrals to other services.

Katrina can be contacted on 94193000 (Mon, Wed and Fri) and on 0401990563.

Katrina can support people suffering from gambling. If you are a gambler or married to one, related to one or are somehow affected by gambling, contact Katrina. If you see Katrina around the Health Service, just walk up and ask her for help. She will support you and answer your questions confidentially.

There is financial and emotional support, just ask. Direct contact can be made with Gamblers Help if Katrina is not available on 1300 133 445.

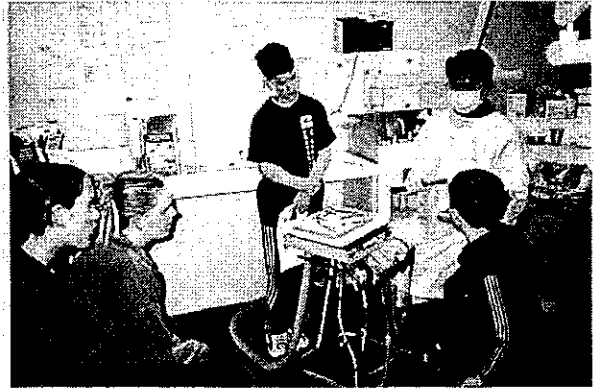


Katrina Busuttil

DENTAL...DENTAL...DENTAL...

Patients please note that some dental procedures may require the administration of medication one (1) hour prior to dental treatment. This is for your safety and a requirement of ADA & VAHS guidelines which all Dentists are required to follow.

If there are any concerns you may have in relation to this procedure, please speak with a member of the Dental staff.



Dr. Chris Fredericks and friends

In the interest of dental health, patients are encouraged to brush and floss their teeth every morning and evening. Low salt, fat and low sugar foods should be part of everyone's diet that will help prevent dental decay.

Patients please note that dental appointments are not available until August 2001, this is due to the high number of Kooris requiring dental care.

If dental emergencies arise please ring Christine Ingram, Dental Co-ordinator on (03) 9419 3680.

Please note that the Dental clinic is closed during working hours from 12.30 pm-1.30 pm to allow the practitioners time for lunch.

The VAHS is not able to provide for Orthodontic, Periodontal work; The lab costs need to be covered by patients themselves.



The Dental crew (October 2000)

"Patients are encouraged to brush and floss their teeth every morning and evening"

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES....



Ross Morgan (D&A Worker)

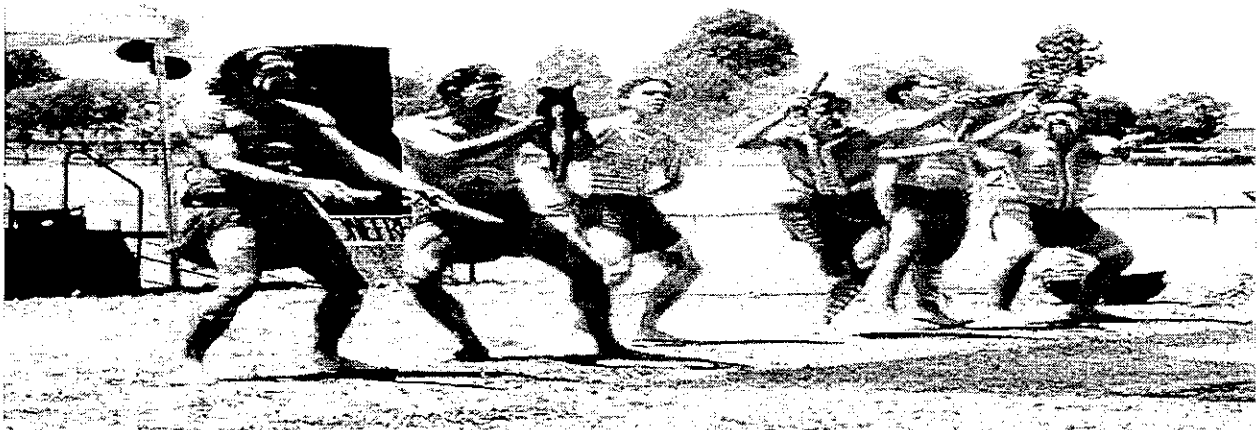
The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service launches into action with the appointment last year of our Drug and Alcohol worker Ross Morgan,

Ross is well known in the community, through his personal struggle and the on going battle within the community with the drug and alcohol problem.

He says there needs to be more supports put in place for people with Drug problems. In particular, we need to improve follow up or Rehab that is dealing with Drug Addiction in the Koori Community,

Along with the appointment of Ross, the VAHS now has a Family counsellor a Welfare Worker and a Trainee Welfare Worker all dealing with underlying Drug and Alcohol issues. In the near future there will also be a female Drug and Alcohol Worker within the VAHS.

Ross can feel confident that some action is being taken to give the support Necessary for people to free themselves from their addictions.



Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...Handy Numbers...

If you're in need of additional support, maybe these numbers will be of some use!!!



| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Travellers Aid | 9654 2600 |
| Salvation Army | 9480 1699 |
| State Relief | 9329 5599 |
| Smith Family | 9419 8500 |
| St. Vincent De Paul | 9478 6845 |
| St. Marks | 9419 3036 |
| Bedford St. Tenancy service | 9428 7800 |
| Aborigines Advancement League | 9480 6377 |
| Crisis Line | 9329 0300 |
| Women's Refuge Referrals | 9329 8433 |
| Alcoholics Anonymous | 9429 1833 |
| Narcotics Anonymous | 9417 6472 |
| Sexual Assault | 9349 1766 |
| Red Cross | 9387 1000 |
| Life Line | 9662 0000 |
| AIDS Line | 9347 6099 |
| Fitzroy Stars Gym | 9417 1531 |
| Galiamble | 9534 1602 |
| Winja Ulupna | 9525 5442 |
| Turning Point | 9254 8050 |
| ACCA | 9481 1855 |
| Hostels | 9285 6777 |
| G-Line (Gambling) | 1300 133 445 |



Well done Nicole!!!



Paul Stewart (Youth Studies)



*Community Programs
Manager Reg Thorpe...
(looking smug!!!)*



*Lyn Austin wearing her
heart on her forehead???*



*Pap Screen worker Vera Wigg hard at
work!!!*



*Thelma Williams (HACC Program),
hams it up with the King!!!*



VAHS Caretaker Alan Hedges



Rachel Brown (left) and Lauren Wordy are always happy to take your calls!!!



Infotech wizard Michael O'Connor (left) and Darcy Brown (Property Officer) trying to look important...



Lyn Briggs, Co-ordinator; Women and Childrens' unit



From left to right; Alma Thorpe, Tony McCartney, Bruce McGuinness (seated), Alan Brown and Anthony Brown...



Bradley 'Cool Man' Brown.....



John Brown has been driving everybody crazy!!!



Mental Health worker Gwen Brooks.....

...if you have a good photo that you'd like to share with us, please let us know and we'd be more than happy to print it in our next edition



The three amigos (from left to right), Colin Mitchell, John Nelson and Andrea Khan...

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HACC)

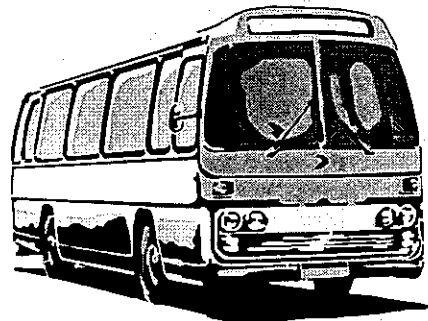
**The HACC PROGRAM (Home And Community Care)
assists our Elders in the following ways:**

*** Organizing Elders to be transported to medical appointments**

*** Social events and activities**

*** Funerals**

*** Assisting with KACPS program**



COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKER

This year we have registered with foodbank Victoria.

Foodbank gathers food donations from producers and food processing companies. Some times this is food that cannot be sold due to wrong labelling, close to use by date, or similar reasons, but is still good to eat.

Foodbank is usually accessed twice a week.

We have recently been donated a small freezer through the foodbank which means there will be food parcels available everyday.

KOORI COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES.....

The Koori Aged Care Packages are designed for Kooris with an aging disability who wish to remain living at home.

To be eligible for one of these packages you must:

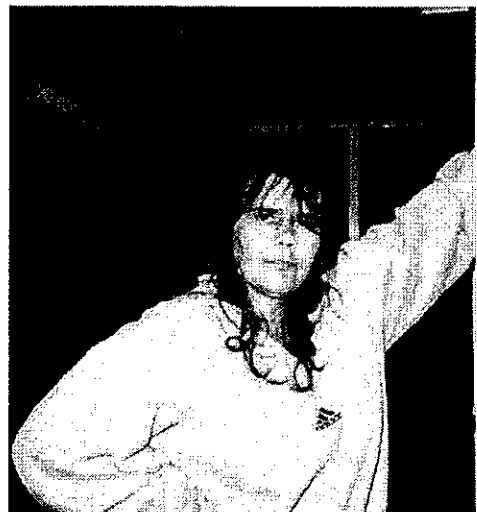
- * Be eligible for Koori specific services**
- * Live in Metropolitan Melbourne and not be able to afford private support services**
- * Have used all the available Home and Community Care resources and are still having difficulty coping at home**
- * Have an age related illness or disability**

Due to limited funding, not all requests for services are met. Priority is given to you if:

- * your safety or quality of life is a risk**
- * everyday tasks and activities are difficult for you**
- * you have a carer who needs support**
- * you are confused, or have dementia**
- * you are living alone with little or no support**
- * you believe that without extra support you will go to a residential home in the near future**

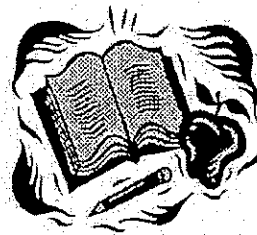
Some of the services provided by these packages include:

Home help, meals, transport, gardening, respite care, podiatry, day centre services, grooming, accommodation assistance, advocacy and home maintenance.



Contact Denise McGuinness (pictured) for further details.....

DULAP BINNINANG Homework Centre



Hey there, do you want ...

ATAS Tutoring in one or more subjects ?

Help with your homework?

A Deadly Feed?

Are you between 12 -25 years old?

**then Come along to the
Dulap Binninang Meeting Place**

Tuesday Nights 4.30 - 7pm (Except school holidays)

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service-186 Nicholson St, Fitzroy

Enquires: Ned or Laura Ph:9419 3000

Medical...Medical...Medical...

New After Hours Number!!!

The new telephone number for patients requiring after-hours medical care is 13 2660. This is a direct line. It is **not** necessary to dial the VAHS Administration number first.



Ask a Health Worker if you need assistance!!!

Pick Up Service:

Hours of operation: Monday to Thursday 9-5pm and Friday 9-4pm
The VAHS Pick-Ups are only available within the Melbourne Metropolitan area. There are two drivers who cover a 25km radius to and from the Health Service.

For hospital appointments bookings need to be made at least the day before for Pick-Ups.

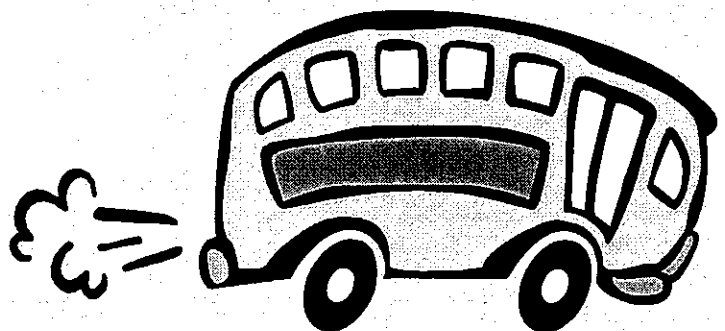
The VAHS is not able to offer Pick-Ups in late afternoon, due to the demand on drivers, and return drop offs cannot be guaranteed.

Please note; The VAHS is unable to offer Pick-Ups to patients on weekends.

The VAHS Co-Operative Ltd Clinic is available Saturday and Sunday from 10.00-12.00 noon

It is important that patients come early to allow enough consultation time for their appointment with the Health Practitioner/Doctor.

We apologize for the increase in waiting times at the VAHS for appointments with the Medical and Dental Practitioners. This is due to the increased number of patients requiring consultations with the VAHS staff.



The Clinical department encourages regular general check ups. When visiting the VAHS Co-Operative Ltd. Please ensure your doctor is aware of all medical conditions and/or changes to your state of health.

Patients please note; Nicorette and Nicabate products are expensive, therefore only the first weeks' supply is free. Please see your Health practitioner if you require patches or gum.

Congratulations to all staff that completed the Hearing Training ; Kelli McGuinness, Bradley Brown and Rose Dwyer. Please contact any of these staff members if you or family members are experiencing hearing difficulties.

Clinical Stats-clinic sees 300 patients in during a 5 day week with an average of 60 patients per day!!!

New chemist—The VAHS now uses a new chemist (*My Chemist*) who have replaced 'Lawson & Reilly's'. *My Chemist* is located in

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Young People's Project

94% of Young Kooris Have Fun With Their Family

Our survey confirms that our families are our major source of strength and support.

Our survey is looking at the health and well-being of young Kooris in Melbourne. At this stage we have interviewed over 200 young people on issues like education, employment, family life, sport, creative arts, substance use, emotional health, contact with police and corrective services, sexual health, relationships and the strengths of young people.

We have produced reports on *How the study was done*, *Cigarette Smoking* and *The strengths of young Kooris*.

We want this study to help the Community to identify and build on the strengths and at the same time, tackle the problem areas so we can improve on the health and well being of our young people.

If you would like a copy of our reports or have yarn about the project please feel free to contact either Paul Stewart or Anne Garrow at the Health Service.



....our happy, smiling, hard-working Medical crew!!!

Women's and Children's Update.....

Women and Children's Area

The VAHS offers a Koori Women and Children's Health Program for all women and children. We can assist with queries or concerns you may have.

Our Healthworkers can provide outreach and Hospital visits to Women and Children in their own home.

Staff in this area are:

Trish Williams Manager
Lyn Briggs Co-Ordinator
Rose Dwyer Children's Healthworker
Sue Hedges Breastscreen Worker
Vera Wigg Cervical Screening Worker
Terry Thorn Maternal and Child Health Nurse
Bernadette Prunty Midwife
Gail Austin Health Worker
Katrina Kirby Health Worker
Marg Rowell Paediatrician :



Trish Williams (Womens' and Childrens' Unit Manager)

Under 5's Clinic (Gneetung Tukae)

Opportunistic Immunization: vaccinations for adults and children available anytime

Audiology: hearing tests are available for children and adults

Well Children's Checks: regular health checks for children

Maternal and Child Health Nurse is available at all times

Paediatrician: available by appointment only (Clinical sessions every Friday morning)

Home visits and hospital visits

Well Women's Clinic

Cervical Screening and Breast Screening can be done in the Women and Children's area.

There is usually no need to wait for a doctor and no appointment necessary. A doctor is available in this area on Mondays and Fridays only. Pap screening is available on Tue, Wed, Thur's by our Nurse Practitioner.

This clinic provides a courtesy reminder/recall service as a reminder for your health checks e.g. Papscreens, Depo injections.

A gynecologist/obstetrician has just commenced in this area. Dr Paddy Moore sees women one session per month - these are on Wednesday mornings. Bookings are essential and can be made through GP or healthworker.

Ante Natal Clinic: This clinic provides ante natal/postnatal care for pregnant women. Information, education and support regarding family planning issues are also available. We can also help you to get to your appointments.

UP AND COMING EVENTS:

It looks as though we'll be very busy again this year with many things planned.

Some things to look forward to are:

- Launch of the VAHS Breastscreen/Arts Access Project—which will include the launch of the breastcreen brochures, posters and flipchart. This will take place on the 29th. May, 11.30am at the VAHS.
- VAHS Gneetung Tukae/ Arts Access Project—this is a new project which will involve transforming the childrens play area into a more child friendly environment. This will be done with community participation.



*Lyn Briggs
Co-ordinator
Womens' and Childrens'
Unit*

- Womens camp—to be held later in the year
- Women and children's Health Days
dates to be advised
- Boorai Classes dates to be advised

FAMILY PROGRAMS...FAMILY PROGRAMS... FAMILY PROGRAMS...

Exciting things are happening in the Family Programs. Starting with the Adult Mental Health Service, over the next 12 months we will see a lot of improvements to services.

During 1999, we employed Peter Gibbs from FLP Associates to be our consultant to review the Family Programs. The Board of Directors has received the review report and agreed to most of the recommendations. We have now asked Peter to assist us again in implementing the recommendations during 2000/2001.

The implementation process is supported by a Steering Committee that meets regularly to monitor and direct progress. The Steering Committee is made up of:

- Tony McCartney - CEO, VAHS
- Ian Anderson - Board of Directors, VAHS
- Alma Thorpe - Board of Directors, VAHS
- Lance James - Manager, Family Programs
- Pat O'Leary - DHS
- Rose Coombs - OATSIH, Victoria
- Lisa Thorpe and Sandy Hall - RUIMHER
- Peter Gibbs - FLP Associates



Les Corlett

We recognize that while the Family Programs has a long history of good work in dealing with mental health problems, that improvements in some areas will strengthen the programs and provide better services to our community members. We want to overcome the stigma that is often attached to mental health problems and to the Family Programs. We want a model of service that recognizes that specialist mental health services are part of a continuum of services for addressing emotional and spiritual well-being issues. We want to move away from mental health being seen as separate from other health issues and to make our contribution to holistic health care.



To make this happen we will not only be improving the way we provide specialist mental health services but also:

- undertaking far more mental health promotion and education of our community,
- providing information about mental conditions and how to get help,
- assisting access for people to mainstream services,
- engaging consumers and carers in shaping the Family Programs,
- developing stronger working relationships with the doctors and health workers within VAHS,
- identifying needs and opportunities for training and development of workers in emotional and spiritual well-being services.

In committing ourselves to such a large development agenda we recognise the difficulties and challenges that we will face. To assist in getting it right, we have asked the Department of Human Services for funds to employ additional staff within the Family Programs



A very happy Ruby Williams!!!



...members of the FAMILY PROGRAMS team...Keep up the good work!!!



*Graham
(Wilky to his friends)
Austin!!!*

As part of our wish to provide health promotion and education within our community, we plan to start by putting together a set of brochures or pamphlets of useful information about mental illness and about emotional and spiritual well-being that will appeal to our community members. We are hoping that when we form the consumer group and the carer group that members will be able to assist in identifying what information is most important and the best ways to let people know. We may not be able to achieve all that people want but we can make a start.

Around the middle of this year we are planning to hold a community forum for interested people to be informed about the Family Programs and about mental conditions and mental health and to contribute to the further improving the Family Programs..

National Standards for Mental Health

In assisting us to ensure that we can demonstrate quality services, we have adopted the *National Standards for Mental Health* as the basis for improvement of the programs. At the same time, we recognize some limitations of these Standards in their relevance to indigenous mental health. As we review our own services we will also modify the Standards to best meet our needs.

The Commonwealth Government has provided funding for the employment of workers under the *National Illicit Drugs Strategy*. As people are employed to these positions, they will be managed within the Family Programs. This will enable us to integrate the drug and alcohol and the mental health workers and better address the difficulties faced by people with mental conditions who also use drugs.

Once development of the Adult Mental Health Service is well on its way, we will move on to further development of Woorin Yan House, the Koori inpatient unit at St. Vincent's Hospital, the Adolescent Outreach Program and the Koori Kids Program.

Changes to the Steering Committee

Sadly for the VAHS, we have lost our two DHS Northern Region Office in the space of a few weeks. Both Barbara Stroud and Sonya Elmers have moved on from their positions. Both Barbara and Sonya have been strong advocates for the VAHS and active members of the Review Implementation Steering Committee.

Fortunately for us, Patrick O'Leary has replaced Barbara on the Steering Committee. Pat holds the Koori Mental Health portfolio for the DHS and was co-author with Shaun Coade of the Purro Birik Report. Sonya has been replaced by Barbara Curzon-Siggers. We look forward to working closely with them both.

A look at the St. Vincent's beds

The Family Programs has control of the use of the five Koori beds located in the St. Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Unit. The particular needs of Koori people are met through more flexible rules for admission than generally apply to non-Koori people.

We are currently conducting a study to better understand about the people who may benefit from going somewhere other than to the psychiatric hospital. If the information tells us that there is a need for an alternative, then we will pursue funding support for short term respite accommodation that is controlled and managed by the VAHS and employs Koori support workers.

CONSUMER AND CARER PARTICIPATION

We want to offer the people who use the mental health services the opportunity to contribute to decisions about what the Adult Mental Health Service should look like and how it could improve and to tell us more about their needs for these services. As of January 2001, regular meetings will take place with consumers to make this happen. Anybody interested in attending should contact Gwen Brooks.

We also want to offer the families and other carers who support the users of the mental health services the opportunity to contribute to decisions about what the Adult Mental Health Service looks like and how it should improve and what services they need from us. A group for carers has started, anybody interested in this group should talk to Ruby Williams.

Anyone who has dealt with the Adult Mental Health Team will know the sort of pressure they are under to respond to the constant needs of their clients. One of the concerns expressed during the review of the Family Programs was that it is mainly limited to reacting to people's demands rather than managing the way it does business.

Over the next year we will see a lot of change to the Family Programs in the way it provides services including a more managed approach with its clients. This will go some way to easing the pressure of demand and should mean a better service for everybody. At the same time we would like to do other things that make up a good emotional and spiritual well-being service including health promotion and education within our community and negotiating a better deal for our people with mainstream mental health services.

To do all these things we need some more staff and have asked the DHS for funding assistance. We will let you know how we go in future newsletters.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

MENTAL HEALTH

Manager

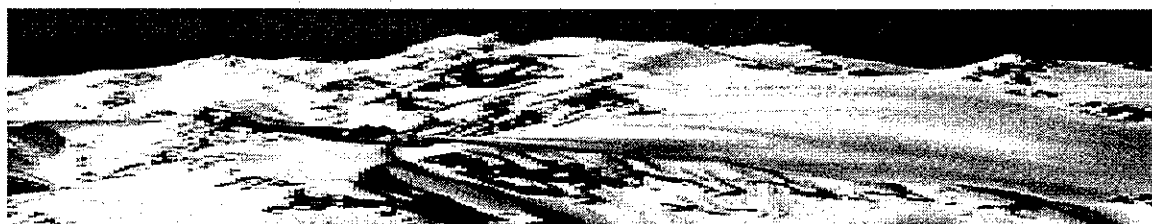
Lance James

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Mental Health Worker | Gwen Brooke |
| Mental Health Worker | Bradley Boon |
| Mental Health Worker | Graeme Austin |
| Koori carer/support | Ruby Williams |
| Psychiatric/Nurse | Ella Russel |
| Psychiatrist | Michael Duke |
| Psychologist | Robbie Page |

KOORI KIDS MENTAL HEALTH

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Co-Ordinator | Carol Potter |
| Mental Health Worker | Nicole Cassar |
| Mental Health Worker | Nareida Wyatt |



ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Co-Ordinator | Les Corlett |
| Mental Health Worker | Laura Smith |
| Mental Health Worker | Matthew Graham |

WOORIN-YAN HOUSE

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Support Worker | Robert Corcoran |
| Support Worker | Shane Potter |
| Support Worker | Peter Luttrell |
| Weekend house-keeper | Faye Thorpe |

DRUG AND ALCOHOL UNIT

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Ross Morgan | Drug /Alcohol worker |
| Felicia Morgan | Trainee Counsellor |
| Helen McQueen | Social Worker |
| Maureen McNeece | Family Therapist |



ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The VAHS provides mental health services to the Koori community at a local and state-wide level.

Allocation of 5 In-patient beds at St. Vincents' Hospital. Staff have ward involvement with patients who are hospitalised.

The clinical service delivery is based at the VAHS and services include:

Psychiatric assessment, treatment and counselling
Outreach Support Program
Management of anxiety and stress related problems
Case management

CARER / SUPPORT PROGRAM

Assist families by providing additional support in times of crisis or potential crisis.

Counselling

Day programs for residents include art, music, personal development and gardening program.



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LTD.

186 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, 3065

General Enquiries – Phone: 9419 3000
Fax: 9417 3897

Administration – Phone: 9419 3143
Fax: 9417 3897

Medical – Phone: 9419 3301
Fax: 9419 1208

Dental – Phone: 9419 3680

Dulap Bininnang Meeting Place

**Where: V.A.H.S. 186 Nicholson St
Fitzroy**

**When: Every Tuesday Evening
(Except School Holidays)**

Time: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Age: 12 – 25 Years Old

**For further information call
Paul Stewart, Les Corlett or
Nicole Cassar on 9419 3000**

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Reg Thorpe

Program Manager

Social Support / HNCC

Thelma Williams

HNCC Co-ordinator

Lyn Austin

HNCC Worker

Janice Austin

HNCC Worker

HIV/STDs & HEP C

Andrea Khan

Sexual Health Worker

Iles Balsh

Sexual Health Worker

Injecting Drug Use

Anke Van der sterren

Research Officer

Alister Thorpe

Research Assistant

Young Peoples' Project

Anne Garrow

Research fellow

Paul Stewart

Research Assistant

Justin Downing

Research Assistant

Koori Aged Care Packages

Denise McGuinness KCACPS Co-ordinator

Financial Counseling

Katrina Busitill

Financial Counselor

**IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, THE VAHS EMBARKED ON ITS
FIRST DRUG AND ALCOHOL IN-SERVICE.**

**IT WAS HELD OVER TWO DAYS AND MANY DRUG AND
ALCOHOL ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED.**

**BECAUSE ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IMPACT ON OUR
HEALTH STATUS SO DRAMATICALLY, IT WAS NO
SURPRISE THAT MANY PARTICIPANTS BELIEVED A LOT
MORE TIME COULD HAVE BEEN SPENT DISCUSSING
THESE ISSUES. UNFORTUNATELY, TWO DAYS WAS ALL
THE TIME WE HAD.**

**THE IN-SERVICE OVERALL WAS A TREMENDOUS
SUCCESS, WITH A DETAILED REPORT AND MANY
RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING OUT OF IT.**

**A GROUP HAS BEEN MEETING TO FOLLOW UP. IN TIME,
THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED
THROUGH AND ACTED UPON, ENABLING THE VAHS TO
RESPOND TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS MORE
EFFECTIVELY.**

**A DETAILED REPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR PERUSAL
AT THE VAHS.**

Dardee Munwurro - Healing the Spirit, Strengthening the Community
Sunday 28th January 2001

On Monday June 19th 2000 a Community Drug and Alcohol Aware Night was held at the Aborigines Advancement League. The main outcome of the meeting was that the community would like to hold regular meetings about drug and alcohol issues in the community. As a result of this a Community Drug and Alcohol Action Meeting was organised for the 21st of July 2000 at the AAL. The community members who attended the meeting decided that a group should be formed to share information, resources and ideas on tackling drug use in the community.

Dardee Munwurro

This group decided to call itself 'Dardee Munwurro Drug and Alcohol Support Group' - 'Dardee Munwurro' means 'strong spirit'. It is a group made up of volunteer community members and supported by Koori organisations. The group wants to "stop talking, and start taking action" on drug and alcohol problems in the community.

As our first activity, we decided to organise a Koori community event, "Dardee Munwurro". The theme of the day was 'Healing the Spirit, Strengthening the Community'. We wanted to have the day to start bringing Koori families and the community back together in a healthy environment. We wanted to create a good atmosphere to strengthen culture and community connections, and to encourage future networking and community-based action around health and social issues for our mob.

Smoking Ceremony

The day was held on January 28 on the Aborigines Advancement League oval and pavilion and began at around 12.30 and finished up at 8pm. There were many guest speakers and musicians as well as dance performances and activities happening around the ground. The day was opened with a speech by Elder Alma Thorpe, a dance performance and a smoking ceremony where everybody was invited up to walk through the smoke as part of a healing.

Over 400 people attended throughout the day, with a lot of those being young kids and young adults. Many community members volunteered their services for the day and everybody seemed to have a good time. Everybody respected that the day was a drug and alcohol free event and this contributed greatly to the family and community atmosphere.



Some of the musicians to perform were Kutcha Edwards, Illana Atkinson, Peter Rotumah, Karen Baker, Rachael Wirrapunda, Syd Austin and James Hollands. There were also some new young artists including Eran Uygen and Mikarli Diclemente.

Broadcast

3CR radio station also setup a temporary studio on top of the hill and broadcast the day live to air from 12pm to 4pm. The speakers during the broadcast were Ross Morgan, Jan Chessels, Barb Honeysett, Lester Green, Ted Lovett, Lillian Holt, John Sheppard and Chris Collard.

Activities & Dance performance

The kids had fun painting the mural, doing the wood burning on boomerangs and boards, didj painting and making jewelry and these activities were running all day.

Watbalimba and Koori Youth Will Shake Spears performed at the beginning and the end of the night and also did a workshop with the kids in the middle of the day with the little ones really getting into it.

Information

There was a marquee set up for drug and alcohol information and services as well as other general services and information about the day. Marquees were set up for the food and for elders to have shade and seating and also for the activities and workshops. Food and drinks were also supplied all day with barbeques and salads for lunch and a hangi with kangaroo and roasted corn, potatoes and carrots to cap off the evening.

Parts of the day were also recorded on video. Interviews were done with different people in the community including young people and Elders and they were asked their opinions of the day and what it meant for them. If you want copies of any of these photos or want to see the video contact Alister Thorpe on 94193000.

Thanks

Dardee Munwurro Drug and Alcohol Support Group would like to thank everybody who came on the day and especially to all the community members who helped out on the day.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for their support:

Aborigines Advancement League, City of Darebin, Ngwala Willumbong, Stonefree Radio, 3CR, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, and Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation.

Dardee Munwurro wants to run more events, activities and workshops in the future around drug and alcohol issues in our community and would like to involve community members.

If you are interested in knowing more about the group or would like to get involved contact Alan Thorpe on 0419103 152.

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS ARE?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE
HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS IS?

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HEPATITIS A, B AND C?

IF YOU DON'T KNOW OR ARE UNSURE YOU CAN TALK TO THE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATORS/
HEALTH WORKERS AT THE VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE.

THIS SERVICE IS FREEEEE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

INFORMATION ON GONORRHOEA, SYPHILIS, TRICHOMONASIS,
GENITAL WARTS, GENITAL HERPES, PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE,
NON-SPECIFIC URETHRITIS, HIV AND HEPATITIS A, B, AND C IS
AVAILABLE,

ALSO ADVICE ABOUT SAFER SEX.

FREEEEE CONDOMS DENTAL DAMS AND LUBES ALSO AVAILABLE

YOU CAN CONTACT THE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATORS/HEALTH WORKERS ON :
(03) 9419-3000 OR BY POPPING INTO THE VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE AT
186 NICHOLSON STREET FITZROY,
MON TO THURS BETWEEN 9.00am -5.00pm & 9.00am-4.pm. on FRIDAY



*Andrea Khan
Sexual Health
worker at the
VAHS*

Important Announcement

The Victorian Aboriginal Health service is currently updating it's database

Please take the time to fill out a patient update form available at medical reception.

The information you provide will assist us in providing a more efficient service to the community.

Thank you for your assistance....

