

## Dialysis unit close to reality for Yarrabah

After many years of campaigning it is hoped that at last the long trek into Cairns for dialysis patients in Yarrabah may be a thing of the past for most of the community's kidney patients by the end of the year.

Gurriny CEO Sue Andrews said funding was "likely" to be nailed down by November, providing a huge 'tick' on the list of transition aims for the community.

"It's been in the pipeline for some time now, it's just getting the logistics organised," Ms Andrews said. "Yarrabah is one of the largest Aboriginal communities and it's not good for our clients to travel over this hill every day to be treated at Cairns Hospital.

"This has been clearly identified for many years as a need in the community, it's just about making it happen and one of the things needed to make it happen is, as always, funding."

Mrs Andrews said Yarrabah community members requiring dialysis have to travel to Cairns

three times per week which means leaving Yarrabah in the early morning and not getting back until at least mid-afternoon. She said it would make a huge difference to current and new patients.

"There's 13 clients on dialysis at the moment, and I'm told there could be another three or four in the near future, so you can see the need for a unit in Yarrabah," she said. "The bus we have allows us to take care of these and other patients who need to get to a specialist in Cairns.

"But it can't carry that many people, so we've had to run that six days a week for most of this year under a temporary agreement which has been partially funded by Queensland Health, but has cost us in fuel and wear and tear on the bus."

She said other communities had successfully run their own units for several years.

"The Kimberleys has a fantastic unit which was funded by state and federal, and it's fully functional and another one that is doing very well is in Alice Springs, which is also a mobile clinic and that's fantastic when you look at the vast area they have to travel. Then you look at Yarrabah as the largest community, so this is definitely high on our list of needs and at long last we're very close to finally achieving this for our people."

Mrs Andrews said the commitment and support of Cairns Hinterland Health and Hospital Service CEO Julie Hartley-Jones had gone a long way towards making dialysis on Yarrabah a reality.

## Yarrabah Brass Band July 2013



Pic by Christine Howes and courtesy GMF

Musicians and budding musicians from all walks of life in Yarrabah, including Gurriny and Gindaja staff, joined in the first performance of the re-formed Brass Band with James Morrison at the inaugural Yarrabah Band Festival presented by the Queensland Music Festival in July. Pictured above are: Teresa Neal, Mary Kyle, James Morrison, Bevan Walsh, Tracey Radford, Fiona Patterson, Greg Fourmile, Paul Neal, Kaylene Jackson, Suanne Sands, Lynese Hari, Lee Rogers, Bernard "Knobby" Neilson, Gerald Fourmile and Ngarrayi Marrie.



## Psst...!!!

Got 40 minutes for an AO - Adults Only! - experience?

Health checks for 15-40+-year-olds are held every second Tuesday at Workshop St.

It only takes 40 minutes every year to help make sure you get to see your grandkids have kids of their own, *and* there's a \$20 chocolate voucher, we mean food voucher in it for you too.

Contact Lyn, Deanna, Darren or Colin at Gurriny for more information about times and dates.





Gurriny staff and kids alike literally had a ball at one of the most popular activities over Yarrabah's NAIDOC week in July.

MC for the afternoon of fun and games was Living Waters Church Pastor Paul Munn who said they were there to help inspire the kids to celebrate and enjoy NAIDOC on a wet and wild afternoon after school.

Organiser and Gurriny

Health Promotion Officer Alicia 'Dixie' Hari said the day was a success.

"It's based around healthy lifestyle, doing prevention stuff especially around exercise, physical activity and nutrition as well," she said.

"And to get out and enjoy



NAIDOC and celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.

"I'd also like to thank the Council and Yarrabah Living Waters Church for their support."

# Profiles

## Board Member LINDA SEXTON

I am from Yarrabah and have worked in health for 14 years.

I started as an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATODS) Community Development Officer for what was then the Yarrabah Primary Health Care Centre, formerly the Yarrabah Hospital.

From there I gradually moved on to general healthworker, then senior healthworker.

In 2005 I successfully applied for the District Healthworker Coordinator position for what was then the Cairns Health Service District. I then became the Indigenous Health Coordinator and my most recent position with Queensland Health was as Executive Director in Indigenous Health.

For the next 12 months I will be working at Wuchopperen

Health Services as Cairns' Integrated Service Model Project Officer and in future I hope to go into health consultancy.

In one way or another I have been connected to Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service over my entire working life and I have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the transition process.

I was nominated onto the Board two years ago and accepted the challenge.

I have enjoyed being a member of the Board, and have learned much from my colleagues as well as being formally trained in the areas of governance and legislation around community-controlled organisations.

The role has opened my



eyes to ongoing challenges Gurriny deals with from funding bodies, governments and peak affiliates, and all of the politics which goes with that. As we face those challenges, and disappointments at times, we do our best to voice our concerns in a professional manner, always keeping our community's best interests close to our hearts.

We have achieved much over the past two years and I look forward to continuing to work with Gurriny on maintaining those positive changes into the future.

## Chief Financial Officer Craig Ford

I was born in Geelong, Victoria and my wife and I moved to Cairns 18-years ago.

Before I came to work in Yarrabah, I worked as a contract auditor with a firm in Cairns for a couple of years.

During that time I travelled a lot auditing Indigenous councils in the Torres Strait and across Cape York. Before to joining the Health Services, I worked

for the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council for seven years as General Manager of Financial Services. Having worked in Local Government for a number of years, I would like to think that I bring a lot of knowledge and experience to my role at Gurriny. It is very exciting



time to be working here, with the transition to Community-Controlled Health well under way. I feel very privileged to be part of this process.

### COMING UP IN OUR OCTOBER ISSUE:

- What's next!
- Transition update
- Board and staff profiles and pics