

A long-held dream close to reality

“Gurriny is are entering the final stages of this transition with the Gurriny Board of Directors and the Cairns and Hinterland Health Service Board agreeing to complete this process by June 30th, 2014,” Transition Manager Ruth Fagan says.

“It’s a journey that has progressed Self Determination in Yarrabah,” she added.

“We’re excited to be able to identify local health problems and use local solutions to address them.

“The Chronic Disease program and the Bringing Them Home

program are great examples addressing health priorities that have been identified by the community and using strategies or solutions that have come from the community to try and address them.

“The history around this whole community-control movement

goes right back to when Yarrabah did a feasibility study and a big community survey.

“The key message from all of that was that you can’t fix up anybody’s physical health if you don’t address the illnesses related to Stolen Generations.”



*Pictured Left to Right is:
Carol Warta,
Emma Costello,
Millie Maywee,
Elaine Lefoe,
Hope Patterson,
Dorita Wilson,
Maria Richards,
June Noble &
Gwen Schrieber*

Gurriny’s Bringing-Them-Home Councillor Gwen Schrieber works with descendants of the Stolen Generations who are doing things their own way, she says.

“It has been written and researched that 80 per cent of the population of Yarrabah were members of the Stolen Generation,” Gwen said.

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Study seeks new ways of caring for chronic disease patients

Intensive chronic care delivered by Indigenous Health Workers will be the focus of a new intervention which is part of research project being trialled in several communities including Yarrabah, Trial Manager Barbara Schmidt from the University of South Australia (UNISA) writes...

UNISA, in partnership with the Queensland Department of Health and Apunipima Cape York Health Council, was awarded a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant to undertake the trial to implement intensive chronic care management delivered by Indigenous Health Workers to Indigenous adults with diabetes in 12 communities in north Queensland. The 12 communities were Yarrabah, Mareeba Mossman Gorge, Kowanyama, Napranum, Mapoon, Bamaga, Injinoo, Umagico, New Mapoon, Seisia and Badu Island.

The primary aim of the project was to improve blood sugar control in adults with diabetes. We also expected that by providing family-centred care, participants would improve other

things about their health like blood pressure control and weight, so they stayed well and avoided hospital.

We were interested to learn from participants if this approach to care suited clients better and they feel healthier.

Work on the project commenced in 2010, when people in Yarrabah who had diabetes and other chronic conditions were asked to join the study through Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service. Results from Phase 1 sites have shown the model was successful in helping participants reduce their blood sugar level which helps improve health and prevent long term complications.

The project is now rolling out the model of care into Yarrabah where Nanette Sands (*pictured left*

BTH clients making good progress

“A lot of our grandmothers and grandfathers and uncles and aunties have now gone, but the people I’m working with at this point in time,” Gurriny’s Bringing-Them-Home Councillor Gwen

“Inter-generational trauma is just passed down from one generation to another, and it really hasn’t been addressed, but at least we’re trying to do it our way.

“And I think that that’s much more effective for our community members.

“There are times when we need to call in professional help, but at this point in time things are working and really well because we’re doing it at our level where people are feeling comfortable and they’ll be able to tell their

stories and explain how they’re feeling.”

Last year a group of women were taken back to Cooktown, Hopevale and Wujal Wujal.

“Some of our grannies and aunties were taken away from those various communities,” Gwen said. “I called that trip ‘Connecting back to Country’, and it was really good because some of the ladies found their families and that was what the trip was all about, making that connection, not only to the country but to family.



“And now they’re feeling really good because now they belong somewhere, not only here at



above) has taken on the role of care coordinator for the clients recruited to the study.

She is working with Allison Bounghi (above right). Both are experienced Indigenous Health Worker who are well known to many people in Yarrabah. Their role will be to ensure people who have signed up to the study (along with other people with chronic disease in Yarrabah) get all the health services and education they need to manage their diabetes and other chronic conditions well.

Nanette started work on the project in January this year and has been busy making contact with clients to ensure all their care is up to date and to start providing more intense education and support to help them stay as healthy as possible.

She says, “this project is a great opportunity/ experience to work with my community to help prevent chronic disease such as diabetes becoming a major health issue for our younger generation”.

Nanette and Allison will be working closely with Dr Kingsley, Dr Anita and the rest of the chronic disease team to ensure that their clients get access to comprehensive care and are supported to manage their care needs.

If you would like to speak to Nanette about the project you will find her at the Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service at Bukki Rd, Yarrabah or you can call her on 4226 4100.

less doing things their own way

descendants that we do have now is maybe the third and fourth generations and they're the Schrieber says (from previous page).



Yarrabah but they do belong elsewhere, to their traditional country.

“We need to do an second trip and we’ve just got to keep working towards that.”

Meanwhile arts and crafts are held every week as they work on putting together jewellery and making clothes to sell at NAIDOC this year.

“Arts and crafts is one of the therapies that’s really relaxing for the ladies,” she said.

“At this point in time we just want to concentrate on what we’re doing at the moment, just to get our ladies to feel more relaxed and enjoy the therapy

they themselves are doing.

“That’s how you connect, by sharing your experiences, and it’s making the ladies feel much more comfortable and wanting to talk about it... there’s a lot of hidden things going on, but now they’re so relaxed they can bring it all out in a joking way, and feel better for it because that’s how we are.

“We do things our way.”

Pictured is Dorita Wilson, Millie Maywee, Gwen Schrieber & Hope Patterson with some of the results of their sewing.



Gurriny's Men's Group, with the support of the Health Promotion Unit, has begun a smoking cessation program aimed at providing education and quitting support for smokers, and to empower them to make positive lifestyle choices in relation to smoking and their health. Pictured from left to right is Kenneth Jackson (jnr), Craig Stanley, Merton Bulmer (snr), Greg Fourmile, Darren Miller (snr) & Suanne Sands.

Meet our staff...Mary Kyle & Kayleen Jackson

Mary Kyle

Female Life Promotion Officer

Born in Cairns

Why health? I've had an interest in health for a while because I've seen the struggles of health for a long time..

Weekends: I love watching junior league

Fave Music: Gospel music mainly and any other type of music

Fave Bush Tucker: They all taste good to me.

Fave Team: Broncos



Kayleen Jackson

Women's Health Officer

Women's Health Social & Emotional Wellbeing Unit

Born in Yarrabah.

Why health? Something different at the time and also to help my people make healthy choices in their everyday lives

Weekends: Fishing and spending time with my family

Fave Music: Country and the Seventies

Fave Bush Tucker: Fried or Curried Turtle and Fresh oysters thrown in a pan with butter, served on a plate with hot rice

Fave Team: The Mighty Brisbane Broncos

COMING UP IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

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