

# GURRINY news

ISSUE 1 : February 2013

## Goals set for new board & staff

Improving in all areas is the aim of the Board and staff at Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Aboriginal Corporation, CEO Sue Andrews says.



Last month the Board and senior staff met over a weekend to reflect on the past year and talk about plans and goal-setting for 2013. A major focus for this year will be community engagement, she said, which was integral in the lead up to community control. "Our focus this year will be to build a stronger than ever relationships with all the residents of Yarrabah, to continue to listen carefully to their needs and to work closely with them to maintain programs helpful to everyone," she said. "This year we can look forward more programs jointly run with Queensland Health (QH), and therefore seeing more of our doctors, nurses

and health workers out and about setting up clinics in different locations so people can access our services better. Our Chronic Disease Program has worked very well and I think critical to that success was QH staff and Gurriny staff working together. When you look at the statistics on pages 2-3, we're seeing people are being diagnosed with a chronic illness a lot earlier than non-Indigenous people. "Gurriny has an opportunity to be a real voice for what the community wants in terms of how they want their services delivered and what their priorities are. "Discussions across the two-day workshop were

also about funding cuts across all health areas. "The Board recognised the important role they will play this year in highlighting the health needs for Yarrabah to our funding groups to ensure we continue to receive their support. There's a greater level of accountability for us as Gurriny and as community people ourselves, back to community rather than if you were working with a government department. So it's important for us to hear what the community wants to make this service better. "We want to be able to tell the community how healthy they are and what we are doing to address that."

## Profile: New chairperson SANDRA HOUGHTON

I was born in the sand at Jilgi, hence the name Sandra. In 1957, my parents were ordered out of Yarrabah with no money, no food and no home We went to live with my dad's sister in Cairns. Later, we moved to Giangurra where I grew up. In the early 1970's, we moved back to Yarrabah. My first job was weed chipping on the weekends at Wah Day canefields when I was 10-years-old. In 1972, I met my husband and we have three children, all grown up now, and all living or working in the Cairns/Yarrabah area. There is also four granddaughters. From 1973 to 2012, I worked at everything from being

a receptionist at a steel company in Brisbane to being an ABSTUDY Policy Manager in Canberra to being Local Government Councillor Yarrabah, and in between all of this being self-employed. In 2012, I attended the Gurriny AGM where I was voted on as a Director then as Chairperson. As Chairperson I bring to the table my years of experience in Federal, State and Local Governments, as well as my business knowledge. I am also a member of Gindaja Treatment & Healing Centre, Juyuga Aboriginal Corporation and Yarrabah Justice Group. My vision for Gurriny is for full community controlled health



services and to empower our people, in particular our youths, to make a healthier lifestyle change. I would also like to see Gurriny move beyond the transition period well within the next two years and to take full ownership of its services and the health services building.

## Profile: CEO Sue Andrews

Firstly I'd like to pay my respects to the Traditional Owners. I'm Sue and I was appointed CEO of Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services in early November last year. I am a proud Aboriginal Woman with family connections from Western Australia's north west Kimberley region who has had a rich and valued Christian upbringing. I grew up here in Yarrabah after our family moved here in my early teens. Over the years I have always been involved in and supportive

of community events. Prior to my appointment as CEO I was Finance Manager for Gurriny for more than five years and I believe I bring a great range of skills and experience to my new position. Our strategies are aligned to the operating principles of assuming greater say and responsibility of primary health care for Yarrabah. There have been frustrations along the way, and we all know there has been many challenges in the way of closing the



gap on Indigenous disadvantage. These challenges will continue into the future but I am here in the hope we can develop strategies to combat these battles together.

### COMING UP IN OUR MARCH ISSUE:

- Interviews with Queensland Health staff
- More board and staff profiles
- Clinic news & data
- Transition update

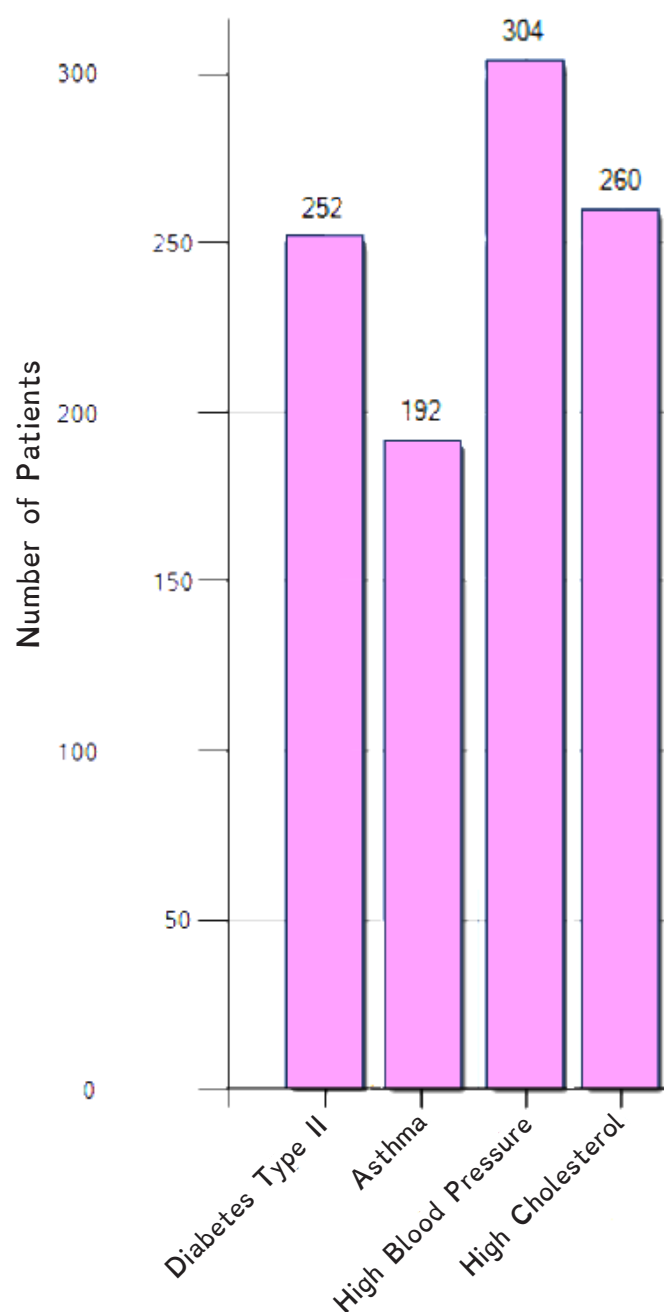
*This issue of Gurriny News was written, photographed, edited and produced by Christine Howes. For more information about the font 'Dyslexie' see [www.studiostudio.nl](http://www.studiostudio.nl)*



*If you're here → We don't want you to end up here!*



Yarrabah: Count of Disease Cases  
[population = 3476]



At nearly 28 years old Gurriny's Male Sexual Health Worker Milton Mossman (pictured right) is just a bit past it, he reckons.

Past it for his pet project for the next few months, that is, which is the Young Person's Health Check for 15-24-year-olds kicking off later this month.

"It's just a program where they come in for a bit of screening," he said.

"And it's because we know people pick up things like early diabetes by not being seen by doctors and that.

"At these ages there might be a lot of partying, staying out late, drinking a lot – anything happens.

"When we first did it we found a lot of blood pressure that was pretty high, even in that age group.

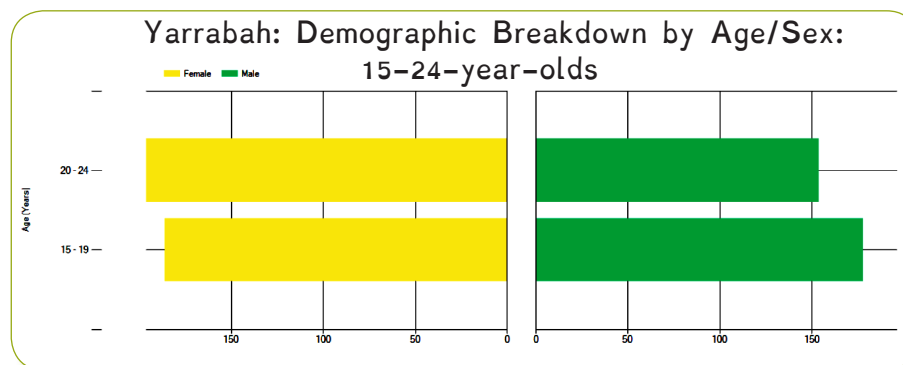
"So when they get here we explain it to them first what is it about.

"It only takes about 15 minutes, we get a consent form from them and we show them what is required, and then we do weight, waist and height measurements, and we get a urine sample for testing and do the bloods."

Clinical Practice Manager Steve Isbister agreed it was important.

"The graphs, which were made by Gurriny, show chronic disease are the main reason people get sick in Yarrabah," he said.

"Hypertension, which is blood pressure, hyperlipidaemia, which is cholesterol or fat in the blood, diabetes and asthma are the most prevalent.



# SO MAKE SURE YOU JOIN THE 2013 YOUNG PERSON'S HEALTH CHECK



"Most of these can be fixed or averted by just making a few lifestyle and diet changes.

"So the point of our Young Person's Check is twofold.

"One is chronic disease markers to identify young people before they develop serious issues and the second is to significantly reduce the level of sexually transmitted infections in Yarrabah because that age group is the particularly age group that are at high risk.

"By having the Young Person's Check we access an age group that traditionally do not come to the doctors because they are healthy. Finding things which run in the family and measuring what might be the markers for problems down the track is what we're trying to do."

- It's about measuring your risk for chronic disease and fixing up any sexual health problems you might have cos you can't always see them.
- It's youth friendly, only takes about 15 minutes and there are no questions asked, just a few measurements and some blood and urine samples...
- In 2009 and 2010 nearly 380 young people participated each year – that's nearly everyone! And if you did it before, you can do it again, catch up to make sure you're ok.
- Also in 2010 many infections were treated but not everyone was sick, only about 70 people – if you don't leave it too long, it won't be too late and it will be easier to fix!

## And the bigger picture...

Yarrabah: Demographic Breakdown by Age/Sex

