

## Yarrabah youth take their futures in hand

“It’s about sending a message to the youth: ‘We’re encouraging you to engage, we’re encouraging you safe, comfortable and say what you want to say and also that we value what you’re putting forward,’” Transition Manager Ruth Fagan says.

The Yarrabah Youth Forum was a two-day event held over the school holidays with exactly that aim in mind. Ms Fagan said Gurriny was concerned about youth and a lack of support for them, not only clinically but also in terms social challenges in the community.

“We’ve been doing some planning throughout the last year and thinking internally about what sort of programs should we be trying to deliver as a health service, where do we see the gaps,” she said.

“We are running the High School Tuckshop and the Breakfast Program, and then we do the Young Person’s Checks.

“But we need to engage more with

the young people in the community, really get a good sense of what their needs are and what can we offer that’s just more focussed on them.

“We were fortunate to have some funding primarily about increasing awareness of suicide and providing some sort of teaching tools for young people so they can provide peer support within their friendship circles.

“This was to help them to understand the signs and symptoms of suicide, what to look for and know where they can get help and what sorts of things they can be doing if they’ve got a friend who is in crisis.

“The Youth Forum was really about trying to give a voice back to the youth. We’re looking at trying to get

a sense from these kids about their resilience and coping with crisis.

“We’re not necessarily focussing the Youth Forum around suicides, we’re focussing it around their aspirations and around what we can do to help them cope better in their lives.

“So we wanted to capture some of what they are going through with our ‘Looking After Your Mates’ survey as well as some of the butcher paper activities where they were working in small groups and brainstorming with support from some of our staff, board members and other interested stakeholders.

“We think it was a successful exercise and we’re looking forward to seeing what will happen next.”

**MORE PICS INSIDE!!!**





Yarrabah's Youth Forum was not only "excellent", it was "really deadly" too Gurriny Youth Well Being Officer Paul Neal says.

"It was a great outcome for them and for us," he said. "Now we have some direction – we need more, but we have a start. We can't promise jobs or houses, but we can promise them a healthier life, more stable minds going in to look for jobs and just setting that support and rapport with the youths that was greatly missed for a long time in Yarrabah. We really want to thank those who came and we want to make it clear all youth are welcome to participate in what we're doing." Youth Wellbeing Co-ordinator Tamar Patterson said youth wanted to be heard. "Just being there was a start, and I think it's an inspiration to all of the community, not just to youths themselves. I spoke to people who wanted to be here connecting and networking with one another, just being with one another and being a part of something. I hope this means our youth can move positively forward and that they realise the value of owning what they have done and are doing, and that's what it's all about, they are empowering themselves."

Transition Manager Ruth Fagan said the two day meeting was a great starting point.

"The first day was a stakeholders meeting facilitated by Ross Andrews, which was about trying to re-engage stakeholders and people who deliver services or come in contact with young people in Yarrabah," Ms Fagan said. "The second day was all about getting some young people to come together and talk about their aspirations. We were trying to get a sense of the key things going on in their lives and looking at developing programs to support them. "But we want them to actually start to create what the program will look like, what's important to them."



### **What makes a better Yarrabah?**

**No raging in houses, more quality time between families, bring CDEP back, not too much social media, culturally appropriate information about the AMP, healthy food, unity, positive attitudes, traditional and cultural activities, cleaner community, contact with Elders, support for girls and young mums, stronger families, more weekend activities!**







## How can Service Providers help?

Exercise activities, employment opportunities, tell workers to be respectful towards community members, be relevant, more support in life skills and sports, work closely with local community, provide more activities, youth newsletter, allow youth more input into plans, transport, mentors, role models, more education and info, engage more, listen!





# Profiles



Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service Aboriginal Corporation's Young Persons Check, part of our Sexual Health Program, won the 'Innovation in Practice Award' at the national Deadly Sex Congress held on the Gold Coast last month.

The Deadly Sex Congress Awards started in 2010 to recognise the work and dedication of those working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexual and

Reproductive Health to the sector and their communities. "Good planning, community promotion/awareness, resource, teamwork, consistency and external stakeholders support and

community ownership contributed to this program successfully accomplishing screenings above 50% of the target population," Conference organiser Tony Coburn (QAIHC) said.

## Meet our staff...Petrina Bassani and Blake Fagan

### Petrina Bassani

#### *Finance Officer*

Born on the water between Yarrabah & Cairns

**Why health?** Health is one of the major factors in our community and community control is what we're looking forward to.

**Weekends:** I love my aunties and spending quality time with families and friends, beach, fishing and camping and football.

**Fave Music:** country music and gospel, worship and prayers.

**Fave Bush Tucker:** turtle and fish.

**Fave Team:** Cowboys



### Blake Fagan

#### *Chronic Disease Coordinator*

Born in Mackay.

**Why health?** Because I wanted to give back to the community and help my people with the burden of illness and disease.

**Weekends:** Sleeping, eating and sleeping some more

**Fave Music:** The Butterfly Effect, Metallica, Slipknot, Pantera and anything heavy.

**Fave Bush Tucker:** oven-roasted marinated gecko

**Fave Team:** Gold Coast Titans



## COMING UP IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

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

*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)*