

GURRINY news

HEALTHY
PEOPLE
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COMMUNITY

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Closing the Gap a work in progress



Making the right choices was the primary theme of Gurriny's Close the Gap Day morning tea which proved to be the perfect forum for about 100 community members and staff to hear how Gurriny was going, where it was going and what will be next.

CEO Sue Andrews said Yarrabah had a long history of wanting to control their own health.

"Last year we celebrated a significant milestone when our primary health care services were handed over to Gurriny," she said.

"This brought us one step closer to achieving health

equity in our own hands.

"For the first time ever we have the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive primary health model of care.

"This is just the beginning, what we are achieving in the health sector should be replicated across critical areas such as education, land ownership, cultural security

and economic development.

"The experience of transition has taught Gurriny that at local level building an evidence base, developing a clear vision of our intent and not the needs of our government providers allows us to stay focused and force the changes we need.

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“We have a clear understanding of our current workforce and Gurriny is committed to a health worker-led model,” Ms Andrews said.

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“The development of a local workforce is challenging but worthwhile. Our transition journey is still in progress, we aim in future to transition services still run by Cairns and Hinterland Health & Hospital Service including the Emergency Department, renal and dental services.

She said transition had created a new management-focus for the organisation as their staff had grown from 38 in July 2013 to 66 in March 2015.

“We can’t ‘close the gap’ without personal responsibility, we can do all we can in health but we as Aboriginal people must also take responsibility.”

She said the choices people could make to take that responsibility included annual

health checks, immunisation, taking care of maternal health, making sure children went to school, quitting smoking, exercise and stopping domestic violence.

“Gurriny will do all it can to close the gap around health, but until the other social determinants such as education, justice, employment and safe communities are also addressed we will not reach our targets,” she said.

Other speakers included board member Elverina Johnson, Ruth Fagan, Dr Kingsley and recently appointed Yarrabah Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Justice coordinator Lerissa Kynuna.

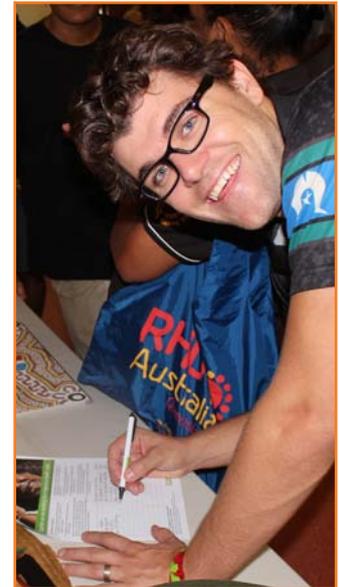
Ms Andrews said Gurriny welcomed feedback about their services.

“Feedback helps us grow stronger and ensure our service is Yarrie-style,” she said.

Feedback from community members of the audience included questions about when a 24-hour Accident and Emergency Services might be available on the community and how mental health emergencies might be better supported, also on the community.



Close the Gap Day



Our wins!

- Increased employment of local people by over 75% in three years
- Increased patient numbers by 58% in three years
- Increased Medicare-generated funds by over 107%
- a 468% increase in GP Care plans
- increased immunisation coverage
- increased number of health checks, from 306 in 2011-12 to 809 in 2013-14
- improved access to allied health services such as dietitians, diabetes educators, physiotherapists, exercise physiologists, podiatrists, psychologists and social workers.

Thinking strategically brings good result for everyone

Strategic direction, sustainability, systems and processes, health rights, programs and cost factors sounds like a recipe for a successfully executed weekend planning workshop – and it was.

“Every year we have a planning workshop, which is all about setting strategic direction, and it involves the Board and the Senior Executive team,” Transition Manager Ruth Fagan said.

“We do often do it with some support from Apunipima with some of their staff that come along and help facilitate, and we share experiences about what we’ve done around health reform.

“The workshop this year covered getting information back to the Board firstly about what we’ve done for the last year, how we’ve tracked against their strategic goals and then talking about some of the emerging issues; for example having conversations around the change in government and what that means for us in terms of how we engage politically.

“We have a new Health Minister – Cameron Dick – and we know we’ll get a new Director General.

“That hasn’t been

announced yet, but for now Dr Michael Cleary is the acting Director-General for the Department of Health.

“The politics also affect the Cairns and Hospital Hinterland Board, so there’s some changes that will happen within the Queensland Health System that will impact on us and we have to think about what do we need to be doing to establish relationships and reaffirming the various commitments we have to the community.

“As well as that, the Board have conversations around what they see as a strategic priorities moving forward.

“The Commonwealth Government is changing the way that we report which also impacts on our contracts.

“So there’s all sorts of changes coming for us and the Board is trying to prepare the organisation properly to manage that with the least amount of stress and interruption to service.”

Mrs Fagan said the Board’s strategic intents were about making Gurriny sustainable and accountable to the community as well as to various other stakeholders to ensure we get health outcomes as a priority.

“There’s also recognition from the Board we have to have systems and processes and an able workforce, so we are also committed to making sure our staff are well trained, have the right equipment and are being looked after,” she said.

“The other thing the Board is interested in looking at is to grow and promote ourselves nationally and internationally.

“They believe what Yarrabah has designed through Gurriny is innovative and is actually something that can be used by a lot of other people at a national and international level and so they want to see Gurriny build its reputation.

“And how we could achieve that is by going to conferences, national and



international conferences, and presenting our work, writing articles and also just promoting using social media, different things that we're doing to close the gap to get the attention of people so that they can see what we're doing and be just as

excited as the Board is about it. "They also recognise there are number of rights Indigenous people have and we want to work towards how we support the community and our patients to be able to have conversations around what are

our rights and how do we go about making sure they are actually happening for them, guided by the UN's Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People. "As a whole, they're strongly supportive of the right to self determination."

Meet the Board...

Last year's Board was focused on actually achieving the transition and after last month's planning meeting the new board has set the agenda for the next 12 months Gurriny CEO Sue Andrews says.

"Now we've achieved the transition it's more now about settling in and strengthening the systems and the processes, the frameworks, the infrastructure," Mrs Andrews said.

"We have two new Board members who are actually independent members, so they're not elected from the community but they've been invited because of their expertise.

"Robin's expertise is around marketing and Tom's is around corporate law.

"And we also welcome back to the board Elverina Johnson."

The new board is:

- Sandra Houghton
- *Lucy Rodgers*
- Linda Sexton
- Elverina Johnson
- Sharmaine Stafford
- *Mahalia Mathieson*
- Thomas Cameron
- Robin Giason

Board Chair Sandra Houghton said without doubt the transition celebrations were the highlight of the year.

"It was a beautiful day; everyone came together," she said.

"It was the Board and employees of Gurriny, and of course, the recruited Queensland Health staff. And when that happened, it was like their acceptance of Gurriny. I spoke to a couple of them after they came over and they said it was the best thing they've done.

"Over the next 12 months, we're aiming for Accident & Emergency Department and the dialysis unit. There is one there already, but it's run by Queensland Health.

"For the Board, I'd like to see us take on more governance and financial training for ourselves. I think because now we're not that little organisation now, we're big and we all need to improve our skills."



Board member Linda Sexton also said Transition Day was one of the best days for her over the past year.

"It was a really emotional day for some of us, and especially for those who did a lot of work around the transition and aren't here to see it," she said. "Over the next year the BOD will be focusing on bedding down our internal processes & systems to capture evidence based data. We will also be looking at our strategic intents especially around the funding priorities and upcoming opportunities. We will also maintain a watch on the health profiles of our community and position ourselves so that we can be responsive to community trends and needs and most importantly looking at options to expand our services. Governance training is another important aspect for me personally."



New board member Elverina Johnson is Traditional Owner from Yarrabah.

“I went to school in Yarrabah, went away to boarding school in Slade School in Warwick and I’ve had schooling in Sydney,” she says.

“Now I am the curator for Menmuny Museum in Yarrabah.

“I’ve been on the Board in previous years with Gurriny so I’ve seen various and different stages of Gurriny Yealamucka Corporation’s development. It’s been good to see the growth and I’d like to try and continue to be part of Gurriny’s transition and to help people that have a lot to contribute to it. I also hope that over the next 12 months I’ll be able to contribute to developing long-term goals for Gurriny.”



Board member Sharmaine Stafford says her favourite event over the past year was also Transition Day.

“I think it was the transition into community control after so long, after so many years, and just having ownership of that,” she said.

“And just getting back on the Board again after the AGM.

“I think I would also have to say winning the iPad at the NACCHO conference! That was one of the good highlights for me. What I expect over the next 12 months is we will tie up all the loose ends for Gurriny with Board decisions and the Corporation as a whole before we can branch out a bit more. Once that’s all done, then we can go further. We want to make sure everything is in place, done, and finalised, then we can go on further to do better things.”



Independent Board Member Thomas Cameron

I grew up in Launceston, Tasmania and am currently an Associate at Williams Graham Carman Lawyers.

I’m on the Gurriny board to assist the organisation with corporate governance and risk management as it grows and to be part of the good news story that is Gurriny. Over the next 12 months I hope we can achieve excellent corporate governance and continued improvements in wellbeing for the people of Yarrabah.



Independent Board Member Rob Giason

I was born in Griffith in the Riverina of New South Wales and started work in the tourism industry in March 1975.

After 40 years in national and regional senior tourism positions I am now consulting in tourism marketing & management & economic development.

I wanted to be on the Gurriny board because of my desire to contribute to the well-being of the organisation utilising my extensive administrative, governance, marketing and management skills derive from my many previous CEO & Board positions.

Over the next 12 months I look forward to working with the board and management to deliver the best possible service to the local client base and to chart ongoing growth and improvement strategies to ensure a sustainable operation well into the future.



Project Spotlight

A federally funded 'work for the dole' project managed by PVS Workfind and facilitated by Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Community Investment Manager Ross Andrews has helped Yarrabah's Seahawks keep their grounds in top shape for this year's footy season.

PVS Branch Manager Shonell Gohier said revitalising the grounds was a community project.

"We've actually been attempting to get this project off the ground for nearly 15 months, so it's been a long time in the process," she said.

"We have similar projects with other football grounds in Cairns, so we see the Seahawks project as something that could bring the community together and give something back to the entire community."

Mr Andrews said the project entailed getting young men and women involved in beautifying and the maintenance of Jilara oval.

"Yarrabah Seahawks has machinery, tractor and slasher, ride-on and push bar mowers

Jilara Oval in good hands



Pic thanks to Ross Andrews

and whipper snippers and all the equipment and tools," he said.

"So there's 30 people being placed on Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday and Thursday, in teams of 15 that are registered with the job network agency here in Yarrabah.

"They include young footballers including one with the Northern Pride Menmyny Murgha and Samuel Bann (Jnr) Yarrabah Seahawks actively now being engaged in the beautification of Jilara Oval.

"We encourage all the young men and ladies to have a Health Check, as this complements the work of Gurriny's health program around prevention and early intervention.

"It also encourages the young people and their families to access the support services

available to manage their health and wellbeing.

"Everyone has been inducted by the Council's Workplace Health and Safety Officer Daryl Geary and we've done risk assessment, so it's not only the beautiful landscaping, it's painting the building and doing a bit of maintenance work.

"So far the work teams are thoroughly enjoying their work and they feel excited about making a positive contribution to the community.

"It will keep them all busy for the next 21 weeks."

He said the project was an initiative of PVS Workfind, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, the Seahawks Clubs (Juniors and Seniors) and the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

Have you seen our new website?

<http://www.gyhsac.org.au>

This issue of Gurriny News was written, photographed (except where otherwise stated), edited and produced by Christine Howes (www.chowes.com.au) For more information about the font 'Dyslexie' see www.studiostudio.nl