



**GURRINY YEALAMUCKA**  
HEALTH SERVICE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

# Gurriny News

December 2018



## Help is at hand over the holiday break

Holidays are mostly happy, especially around Christmas and the New Year, but for some people handling pressure can be hard – feelings can build, emotions run high and things can head in unexpected directions.

Over the Christmas and New Year break much of Gurriny Yealamucka will be closed – other than the clinic and Emergency Department – but steps have been taken to make sure there will always be someone available to talk to if things get to being too much. Life Promotion Officer Mary Kyle said they had a list of nearly 20 people in the community – in all our

localities including Back Beach, Djenghi, Reeves Creek and Oombunghi – who were willing to talk and listen to anyone who needed help. “So while Gurriny is ‘offline’ we have a crisis referral pathway for people to turn to when they have suicidal thoughts, or just need to talk to someone,” she said. “If you’re feeling down and out, that list of numbers is

available from reception until we close, and it will be around the community in several places after that. There is also the Emergency Department, which will stay open.

“This is a time we’re all looking out for people and worrying about what we worry about, so if you are feeling down or stressed or thinking about self-harm, please ring one of these people up, they are there to help.”

The list of people who have put their hand up to talk is on page 2, the list of phone numbers will be available from our reception before Thursday 20 December, or from the Emergency Department, Clinic, police station and several other notice boards around town after that.

If you're feeling  
**stressed**  
over the break these  
are the people you  
can talk to around the  
community.

Below is a list of people who are willing to talk and listen to you when you need help. If for some reason you cannot talk to someone on this list, please seek help from someone you can trust and can talk to or, call the Suicide Helpline Callback Service on 1300 659 4767.

#### Community

Andrew & Vera Wilson  
Pastors Paul & Natasha Munn  
Wayne & Gwen Costello  
Pamela Mundraby  
Paul Neal Jnr  
Fr Michael & Valma Connolly  
Allenby & Vanessa Ambrym  
Amy (Judulu) Neal-Sexton

#### Reeves Creek

Merton Bulmer  
Melanie Walsh  
Tiana Yeatman

#### Mourigan/Back Beach

Fr Edward Murgha  
**Djenghi**  
David & Linda Baird  
Josephine Murgha  
Mary Kyle  
Leslie Baird

#### Gindaja (Rehab)

Thelma Richards

#### Gindaja (Drop-in Centre)

Lyndel Thomas

#### Oombunghi

Ainsley Dangar

## 'Tucka-Time' extended to three-year run

This year Djarragun College was one of only six schools across Queensland chosen to participate in a federally funded program called 'Tucka-Time', which has been extended to run for another three years.



The program was delivered and supported by the Australian Government Department of Health, the Centre for Rural & Regional Indigenous Health, CheckUP (a not-for-profit Brisbane-based organisation) and, in Djarragun, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services.

Gurriny staff were trained to facilitate the program over the 10 weekly sessions, whilst the dietitian and psychologist delivered information sessions about healthy food choices their connection to good physical and mental health.

Gurriny CEO Sue Andrews said she believed Tucka-Time not only benefitted the students undertaking the program but also their families.

"Tucka-Time teaches children about healthy food choices and how to prepare simple meals at home," she said.

"They then take that knowledge and those skills home and share them with their families."

She said the program provided a good opportunity for staff to connect with the school community and link families to their health services and other supports within the community.

Djarragun College Principal, Kathryn Todd said Tucka-Time was a welcome addition to the school.



# Conference keen to hear Yarrabah's story

Youth Wellbeing Officer Paul Neal and Life Promotion Officer Mary Kyle travelled to Perth last month to attend and present at the Second National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conferences.

Their presentation was around a book published by the Healing Foundation called 'Stories from Community – How suicide rates fell in two Indigenous Communities', which was about Yarrabah and the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory, as researched by Dr John Prince.

Ms Kyle said there was a lot of interest in how it was Yarrabah was still going so strongly on suicide prevention after nearly 20 years of dramatically reduced rates. "They wanted to know how were we keeping on this, what

are we doing to make sure it's not going to happen again, things like that," she said.

"We still look after people, we follow up with people, a lot of those people at the forum were looking for solutions and what can they do to support their families, their friends, and they wanted to know what we did to help them and to support them." Mr Neal said they presented to a packed room.

"It was a big forum, people



really appreciated what we had to say," Mr Neal said.

"We told them from the start that Yarrabah's success was a community effort, there was no one organisation or person, it was everyone."

## High standards set by testing audits

This year Gurriny was randomly chosen by the Office of the Registrar for Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) to have our books examined.

The examination is carried out to make sure large organisations, such as Gurriny, are compliant to their constitution and the ORIC Act.

CEO Sue Andrews said she was pleased to report, as per the exit interview with the auditors and Gurriny's interim Chairperson Mrs Sandra Houghton, that the organisation continues to set high standards across all our business structures in

Finance, Human Resource and Governance.

"As much as it can be daunting and time consuming going through audit after audit, it's also an opportunity to welcome a successful and independent assessment of the organisation's operations," she said.

**MEANWHILE** Gurriny's operations are annually assessed by external auditors under the International Quality

Standard - ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management Systems).

The most recent external audit was conducted in November 2018.

Gurriny again has passed this most rigorous review.

The Yarrabah community, our clients, Board and staff can be assured and have confidence that our services, governance and management systems are operating at a high standard.





# h Forum dubbed a success

t was a huge success, guest speaker Professor Gracelyn Health Forum, held at the Community Hall last month.

community members attend which was really good, and the presenters were awesome," she said.

"I think everyone enjoyed the day and, importantly, went home with a better understanding of what sexual health is which was one of our aims, as well as a great t-shirt, a goodies bag and a full belly.

"Our main message for the forum was to try and give enough information to our community about sexual health, and to not be shame about wanting to come in and get a health check.

"We're all here to help and everything is very confidential.

"The next think that we will be working on will be the Young Person's Health Checks coming up in April next year."

Gurriny Nurse Lexy Carroll said the Sexual Health Forum was well-supported by the community.

"We had some amazing speakers who work in sexual health and were able to share lots of their knowledge," she said.

"Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are on the rise in our region, so it was really important for the community to have an awareness of what diseases are out

there and how to treat them.

"And, of course, know that the best protection is prevention.

"We hope that more community will attend future events, so that we can spread this message."

She said anyone in the community can be tested for STIs at Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service.

"Health checks include testing for STIs but

people should also be getting tested with each new partner change, and also during pregnancy as its important to not spread bugs to baby," Nurse Lexy said.

"We take confidentiality very seriously and free condoms are available in front of our Workshop Street Clinic and through the clinic at Bukki Road."



# Pharmacy project taking out guess work

Keeping up to speed with multiple medications from several different sources for several different ailments can be a challenge but a Gurriny-supported pharmacy research project is hoping to change all that.

Consultant Clinical Pharmacist Pippa Travers-Mason, who has taken on several roles in Yarrabah's health services over many years, has been working closely with Health Worker Teresa Neal on a new initiative to take the mystery – and hopefully some of the pain or even danger – out of coping with multiple prescription drugs. The Integrating Pharmacists into Aboriginal Communities (IPAC) is a result of a three way agreement between the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), James Cook University (JCU) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA). “The project came about because the role of pharmacists in communities has been under recognised and there hasn't been a lot of coordination,” Ms Travers-Mason said. “Having a pharmacist around can be helpful but it takes more than a pop-in, pop-out community pharmacy service to make sure people are safe and as well as

they can be on their medications.

“This is about helping people to understand how to use their medicine, how to keep themselves healthy or make themselves healthier. A lot of the people in the community have to manage multiple conditions and multiple medicines and multiple different specialists they see and it gets very, very confusing.

“We also find people either don't have things explained to them adequately, because when you're in hospital and you're unwell it's very difficult to take in that information, or there are several specialists involved in several different aspects of care, which can mean different people telling them different things according to different priorities.”

She said overall management was important so they could work on the absolute best for every individual concerned.

“Working with Aunty Teresa has been fantastic, she's a real guru,” she said. “We've actually kept people out of hospital through intervening where medications have



clashed, which is not necessarily a mistake on anyone's part but a problem which hasn't been identified or recognised.

“And that's where Teresa comes in because everyone will talk to her, tap her on the shoulder and say, ‘I think so-and-so needs help with her medicine’. She's the health worker in charge and people know her for her skills.”

She said they were keen to sign people into the program.

“Anyone who is on multiple medications is welcome to come and see us,” she said.

“We can help with all aspects of your medication from whether you can read the labels because the type is too small through to making sure every aspect of every individual regime is thoroughly understood.

“We know having a pharmacist around, as part of anybody's medical team, makes a difference to patient outcomes, the aim of this project is to prove that.”



# Healthy kids are ready-to-learn kids!

An important part of preparing the youngest members of the family for their first days of school is to make sure they are as fit and healthy as they can be, Child Health Nurse Jess Proctor says.

To that end, her and her team (pictured below) are keen to encourage as many kids as they can in for health checks.

“Every age group should be up to date,” she said.

“But this year we’d like to really focus on the younger kiddies starting school so we can identify any health problems which haven’t yet been noticed.

“By around mid-January myself with a team of healthworkers, and we’ll have a designated doctor as

well, will set up a space at Workshop Street and hope to spend about half an hour with each kid.

“Of particular concern will be making sure all our children are up to date with their Meningococcal TWI vaccine.

“There was an outbreak of this horrible disease in the Northern Territory last year so for a limited time the Government is offering free vaccinations which I believe ends in February 2019.”

She said it was a good

opportunity to make sure every school age child was fully protected with immunisations.

“Sometimes when people go to different clinics, in town, for example, where some Indigenous-specific immunisations might have been overlooked.

“So we can check all of that as well as do some proper ear, dental, skin and vision checks, just to make sure they’re really ready for school and do really well.”





Over the Christmas and New Year period we will be CLOSED on Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26, Saturday 29 and Sunday 29 December, and Tuesday 1 January.

We will be OPEN Monday 24 (Christmas Eve), Friday 28 December and Monday 31 December from 8am to 4.30pm. Normal clinic hours resume from Wednesday 2nd January.



*Merry Christmas to all & a Happy New Year!*



**GURRINY YEALAMUCKA**  
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SEE WHAT'S GOING ON WITH GURRINY YEALAMUCKA LATELY, FOR UPDATES ON ONGOING/UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS, LIKE AND SHARE US ON FACEBOOK!!!

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**Christmas season is here and with it the heat of our far northern summer has arrived with it.**

The past week or two has seen temperatures soar above 40 degrees, which combined with the recent bush fires has made conditions in Yarrie quite difficult for many community members.

Staying hydrated with plenty of fresh water throughout the day is vital to ward off the effects of the heat and prevent things like sunstroke.

Keeping covered up with a good wide brim hat and sunglasses can also prevent sunburn and eye problems such as pterygium as well.

If you're experiencing any dizziness when out in the sun, seek shelter and water ASAP, and come in to the clinic if it persists.

The smoke from last week's fires has thankfully settled a bit, but without consistent rain yet, the risk of more fires is always there.

Those people in the community who have breathing problems such as asthma or emphysema should take special care at this time, making sure you have your puffers at hand.

## *Doc Jason's Last Word...*

If you haven't been to the clinic in a while to get your lung volumes or puffer technique checked out, now is a great time to get out of the heat and come down for a breathing test.

People with long-term breathing problems should have their lungs tested every year and our great team of health workers here are more than happy to walk you through the tests.

Finally I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and safe and enjoyable New Year.

I have been truly thankful for the opportunity this year to serve the Yarrabah community as doctor, and now SMO at Gurriny, and look forward to continuing long into the future.

