

# GURRINY news

HEALTHY  
PEOPLE  
HEALTHY  
COMMUNITY

ISSUE 4: May 2013

## Feedback sought for Gurriny initiatives

Things are coming together in a very positive way, Transition Manager Ruth Fagan says.

“We now have a genuine shift towards joint planning and a really positive integration of people and ideas around designing the best possible health programs for us here in Yarrabah,” she said.

“We are becoming one team, not Gurriny and not Queensland Health, but one team, fully committed to what we’re all doing which is in turn based on what we know of the health of the people of our community according to the stats we collect.

“Without a doubt I can say everyone here is wanting to improve our health, we get stuck sometimes on how we’re going to do that, but that just means some good robust conversations around what we’re doing and how, and we are seeing results.”

Mrs Fagan said with those very important steps towards transition finally in place, it was now up to Yarrabah.

“We’d really love to hear about what the community thinks of our programs –

whether they work or don’t work for them,” she said.

“We want to hear their ideas and they can always do that just by talking to the staff they see out and about in the community.

“It can be challenging capturing everybody’s interest and what their focus is but we are all strongly committed to improving Yarrabah people’s health and the more feedback we have about what we are doing, the better we can be for everyone.”

## ♥ Healthy Heart Week ♥



*Gurriny’s Healthy Heart team was out and about in Yarrabah last week – full story + more pics inside!!!*





# Healthy Heart Week

Gurriny Nutrition Promotions Officer Katrina Connolly says prevention and awareness were the key messages her and her team wanted to get across to the Yarrabah community during Healthy Heart Week last month.

“We want people to know the risks and the warning signs for things like heart attacks,” she said.

“It’s more a prevention and awareness promotion where we tell the community about how to recognise a heart attack, what the signs of a heart attack are and just, I guess, just maintaining the body to prevent these problems from occurring.

“We have a few promotional items here today from Queensland Health as well as Gurriny, and from the Heart Foundation.

“We also encourage community members to have a blood pressure check and a weight check just to see if their all good with their blood pressure, and their waistline as well, which is important as well.”



*Pictured: Top Left: Elaine Lefoe, Katrina Connolly & Rebecca Taylor; Top Right: Lakiah Underwood; Middle Left: Teresa Neal; Middle Right: In pram Grace Fourmile, behind her Budda Harris with health worker Adelaide Sands and mum Monique Murgha; Below Left: Paul Neal Rebecca Taylor Katrina Connolly & Brian Davidson; Right: Warren Bounghi.*



# FLU IS SERIOUS



Your flu shot is important to protect you and your family from serious sickness, especially if you already are already sick. Come to the clinic and get your flu shot.

A direct outcome of Gurriny's work on transition to community control is being able to work on addressing the lifestyle issues that have an impact on our risk of getting a chronic illness or becoming unwell, and also how to manage your illness if you do get sick, Transition Manager Ruth Fagan says.

Beat da Binge was a community-initiated collaboration between Gindaja, Gurriny, the Seahawks, PCYC, the school and other Yarrabah-based agencies along with JCU.

The project showed positive steps can be made. Gindaja CEO Ailsa Lively said the community was involved every step of the way including a logo design competition which was won by Tarquin Singleton.

Results since the start of 'Beat da Binge' in 2011 showed there was now:

- 16 per cent fewer young binge drinkers in Yarrabah
- a 27 per cent increase in awareness of binge drinking
- a 16 per cent increase in awareness of what a standard drink is
- a reduction in the drinking of spirits.

"Increasing awareness through health promotion and having information available that helps people make positive

decisions uses the same principles as those we use to decrease risk of chronic illness," Mrs Fagan said. "Gurriny needs to be focusing as much energy as we can on continually making people aware of their lifestyle choices and partnering that with opportunities to support those lifestyle choices.

"Just knowing about binge drinking and its effects has reduced the problem – imagine what we can do if more people know more about things like the connections between stress and high blood pressure, smoking and heart disease, diet and exercise and diabetes. And then being able to back that up for our people by working towards improved access to healthy foods, opportunities to do exercise like walking clubs, gardening groups and even using the pool more.

"Beat da Binge has shown we can achieve real outcomes which is what we all want to see from what we are doing."



# Profiles

## Board Member MAHALIA MATHIESON

I was born on Palm Island after my parents were sent there with 10 other kids.

I grew up there until I was 4-years-old and then we came back to Yarrabah. When I finished my schooling in 1975 I went back to Palm Island.

My first job was at the PI Hospital as a nurse, where I first became involved with health and that involvement continues to this day.

My husband Allan and I got married in 1984, and we moved to Wilcannia, Broken Hill, Adelaide and quite a few places before we came back to Yarrabah in 1996.

I had a passion for teaching

kids so I worked at the Yarrabah State School for quite a few years until I became ill and had to leave the job.

I still have a lot of kids around me, I have my own family and a lot of kids come to my house.

Allan and I, we both have a passion for our community.

We've been members of Gurriny for quite a few years, on and off the Board. Allan was on the Board for two years. This is my second year and I enjoy it.

We've seen how far Gurriny has grown and we just want



to be involved in achieving community control. Gurriny has faced a lot of obstacles to get where it is today. It hasn't been an easy road, it's been a struggle all the way, but we're seeing some changes for the better and it's good to be a part of that.

## Operations Manager Melanie Walsh

I was actually born in Cairns, but lived all my life in Yarrabah, so I was raised here.

I did all of my schooling in Yarrabah, right through to finishing my senior year at Gordonvale State High School. I worked at the post office for six months and that was my first job in Yarrabah.

Then I went to uni in Townsville to do child care teaching, which was my passion.

But I came back and I was just doing jobs like working in admin, and I worked for the hairdresser around that time too.

An opportunity came up with Playgroup so I started out there as Assistant and then actually got the Co-ordinator's job.

I did my Cert IV in Children's Services and when the new day care centre opened I was Group Leading for about three years, before I got the Director's job and I did that for 12 years.

During that time I completed my Advanced Diploma in Children's Services and Cert IV in Business as well.



As Operations Manager here at Gurriny I have a team of six staff. Chronic diseases are very serious and affect many people in Yarrabah, so the reason I'm doing this is for my family and my community, I want to be here for them.

### COMING UP IN OUR JUNE ISSUE:

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