



# The development of a National Indigenous Cancer Network – lessons learned

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## Background

- Indigenous Australians (compared to non-Indigenous Australians):
  - slightly less likely to be diagnosed with cancer
  - significantly less likely to survive the disease than (AIHW, 2014)
- CRE – *Discovering Indigenous Strategies to Improve Cancer Outcomes Via Engagement, Research Translation and Training (DISCOVER-TT)*
  - To address these disparities and improve health outcomes
- National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) formed in 2013





## NICaN aim

Facilitate **communication, collaboration** and **community empowerment** to improve outcomes for Indigenous people with cancer, including their carers and families.



## Communication

- [www.nican.org.au](http://www.nican.org.au)
- Yarning Place
  - Online discussion boards for members
- NICaN Newsletter





# Communication

- Social media
  - Twitter, YouTube channel



# Communication

- Traditional print and TV media



## Brisbane cancer walk promotes awareness



- Events such as NAIDOC and Close the Gap Days
- Conference booths





## Community engagement

NICaN organises annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer walks in partnership with Cancer Council Qld and key Indigenous health and research organisations.

- Over 550 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people in total have attended the 2014, 2015 & 2016 Cancer Walks held at Musgrave Park, South Brisbane.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attend the cancer walks to hear community members talk about their cancer experiences to dispel cancer myths, to promote the need for regular checkups and to talk about treatment and care services.



## Indigenous Cancer Walk Media coverage

- The 2014, 2015 and 2016 Cancer Walk received national media coverage through the National Indigenous TV, National Indigenous News, Koori Mail, National Indigenous Radio Service, Online media, SBS, ABC and commercial media coverage.



National Indigenous Radio News - Walk aims to raise awareness of cancer prevention

Posted on February 02, 2015 <http://www.nirs.org.au/NEWS/Walk-aims-to-raise-awareness-of-cancer-prevention>





## NICaN community events

- NICaN provides a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer awareness community events.
- In August 2014, NICaN held three Well Women's Workshops, supported by Cancer Australia, to raise breast cancer screening awareness and three Indigenous Male Cancer workshops to raise awareness of cancer, the need for regular cancer screenings and cancer and treatment services were held at Cherbourg, South-west Qld, Ipswich and Logan.
- The male cancer workshops were the first cancer awareness workshops held in the 3 communities.
- A total of 46 women attended the 3 Well Women's Workshops and a total of 20 men attended the 3 Male Cancer workshops.



## Plain language information

- Plain English cancer fact sheets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been developed in partnership between NICaN, Menzies and the Cancer Council.
- NICaN Ambassadors and Indigenous community members working in cancer care and treatment and primary health care were invited to review the cancer fact sheets to ensure they are appropriate and effective in communicating cancer awareness and prevention, cancer screening and care and treatment for a range of cancers for Indigenous men and women
- A total of 10 Plain English Cancer Fact Sheets have been developed and distributed across Australia.





## Collaboration

- Network of people in cancer-related services, those affected by cancer, and researchers, policy and advocacy groups
  - Learning from each other, sharing information and knowledge, increasing cancer awareness, and promoting better outcomes for Indigenous people affected by cancer
- Connecting people via:
  - Communication methods just presented
  - Annual Research Roundtables
  - Networking events at conferences
- NICaN partners – key stakeholders



## Community empowerment & engagement

- NICaN Ambassador Program:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced cancer are engaged and recruited to be NICaN Ambassadors
  - There are 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ambassadors based in Qld, NT, WA, SA and Vic who have been recruited through networks, contacts and events
  - Ambassadors receive training and support to promote cancer awareness, prevention, care and treatment





## Development of a network

Lessons learned, challenges and successes, including:

- developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with key partners;
- role of cancer survivors as advocates and ambassadors;
- ensuring community members' interest, input and ongoing engagement;
- the use of social media strategies
- building capacity (e.g., ambassadors, cadets)
- continued funding



## Outcomes

NICaN is a credible, Indigenous and independent (i.e., non-government, non-bureaucratic) organisation.

Increasing access to information about cancer for Indigenous people, and facilitating community engagement and research translation to assist in improving cancer outcomes for Indigenous Australians.





## Future of NICaN

- Halfway through funding cycle
- Increase number of ambassadors
- Revamp website to make more consumer focused.
- More emphasis on plain language & knowledge translation
- More audio visual materials made available



## Joining NICaN

- Visit NICaN at [www.nican.org.au](http://www.nican.org.au)
- For more information or to become and Ambassador email us at [nican@menzies.edu.au](mailto:nican@menzies.edu.au)
- Follow us on Twitter [@NICaN\\_Australia](https://twitter.com/NICaN_Australia)
- Visit the NICaN stand in the foyer area





## NICaN partners

