

Director's Communiqué

Issue 21:
November 2019

Director's welcome

Welcome to my final Communiqué for the year. Much has happened since my last Communiqué. It feels as if I have been on a continuous plane ride for months. I do not enjoy the air travel but the result of the travel is always meeting with so many of you at meetings, conferences or one of our Roundtables so it is well worth the effort. One of developments in air travel has both an upside and a potential downside. As many of you will know, many flights now have on board Wi-Fi... so on the upside I can text chat with my family and stream my podcasts and music... on the other side of the coin it means you can run but not hide from the avalanche of emails and work commitments. Ahh well the world develops and we must develop with it.

As the end of the year draws near (don't

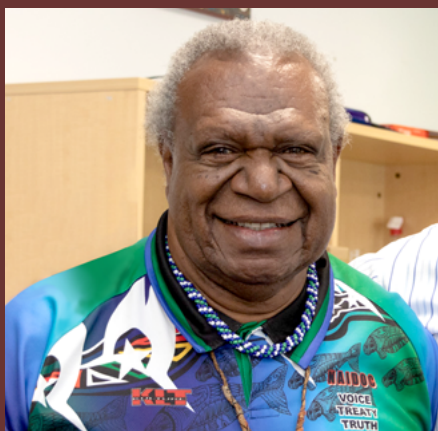
get me started on how quickly the year has gone!) I once again want to thank you all most sincerely for your ongoing support and encouragement for the work we do. It is our great pleasure and privilege to work on behalf of you all to provide the information that can support you in your vital work. To our funding partners of course we cannot do it without you... thank you. Our Advisory Board is a group of the most senior, wise, insightful and generous people representing some of the most important peak bodies supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. Thank you. To our Honorary Consultants, your support to maintain our resource at the highest level of excellence is crucial to our success. Thank you. To our 39 formal partners, we are thrilled to be in such

esteemed company. Thank you. To our hundreds of thousands of users throughout Australia and the world, we exist only to support you to continue to make the wonderful contribution you all make to seeking positive health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities throughout Australia. Thank you. To the staff of the HealthInfoNet... you are an amazingly dedicated, professional, compassionate and passionate team. Every day I remind myself of what an honour it is to work with you. Thank you.



Professor Neil Drew

Blast from my past



John Whop

In October, Dr Uncle Mick Adams provided one of the great surprises of the year for me. As we made our way to morning tea one day, he said he had to duck down stairs for a moment. When he returned he was accompanied by John Whop. I was flabbergasted. John was my first great mentor when in 1980 as a naïve, bright eyed and bushy tailed psychology undergraduate student I undertook voluntary work at the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service. John provided my first introduction to

working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector and began a journey that has brought me to my current role. I can honestly say that without John's support, patience and wise counsel I would probably not be here today. As an aside, it was during that time that John introduced me to Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, who was also at the service at that time and another blast from my past that it has been a thrill to reconnect with since commencing work at the HealthInfoNet.

Annual Advisory Board meeting

We held our annual face to face meeting in Canberra on 10th September. This year I was delighted to welcome two new organisations – NATSIHWA and Indigenous Allied Health Australia as members. We've had a long association with both organisations as well as with Karl Briscoe and Donna Murray and it made good sense to have them on board to provide strategic advice and contribute to the strong cultural integrity of our work.

I also welcomed Pro Vice Chancellor Braden Hill. Braden is the Edith Cowan University PVC Equity and Indigenous and Head of Kurungkurl Katitjin. He is also, I am delighted to say, my immediate Line Manager. Since his arrival at ECU, Braden has been a staunch ally and supporter and we are working on a number of ways to continue to develop the close relationship between Kurungkurl Katitjin and the HealthInfoNet.

During the trip to Canberra, as always to ensure maximum bang for travelling dollar, I had meetings with some key partners and allies including Monica Barolits-McCabe – CEO, Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association and



Back row: L-R Alan Cass, Mike Stephens, Neil Drew, Melanie Robinson, Karl Briscoe, Braden Hill, Ian Ring
Front row L-R Lisa Jackson Pulver, Janine Mohamed, Mick Adams, Glenn Pearson, Caroline Finch

Kyla Holmburg from the National Indigenous Australians Agency. I attended a parliamentary reception of the Poche Centre Indigenous Health Network breakfast event on the 9th of September. I also had the pleasure of meeting representatives of our core funding partner, the Australian Government Department of Health. At a presentation hosted by Michelle Craigie – Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, I gave an

update on the work of the HealthInfoNet to Departmental staff. While in the parliamentary precinct, I also had the opportunity to meet with the Hon Warren Snowdon, Member for Lingjari, Northern Territory and the Hon Linda Burney, Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services and Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians to update them on the work of the HealthInfoNet.

Brisbane Roundtable

As part of our ongoing engagement with peak bodies and organisations in the sector we held a Roundtable in Brisbane in October. In addition to presenting an update on the work of the HealthInfoNet, we welcomed the following partner organisation who spoke about their work.

1. Professor Roianne West, First Peoples Health Unit, Griffith University
2. Mary Jane Streeton – Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

At the Brisbane Roundtable we invited emerging young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders from Brisbane to be part of the sessions to network and contribute. This was a suggestion from our Sydney Roundtable in 2019 and it was a wonderful idea which we will continue with from now on.

As always with our Roundtables, it was an invaluable opportunity to update



Presenter Mary Jane Streeton

everyone on our work and how we can support them. It was also great to hear what other organisations are doing and to catch up for a chat to share ideas and information.



Presenter Roianne West with Neil Drew



New Honorary Consultant



Professor Faye McMillan

I am delighted to announce Associate Professor Faye McMillan to the ranks of HealthInfoNet Honorary Consultants. Our Honorary Consultants fulfil a vital role at the HealthInfoNet and are leading experts within various areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. A key role of Consultants is the peer-review function, which assures users of the quality of our summaries, overviews and reviews. The HealthInfoNet Consultants serve as an informal reference group by providing guidance in their individual areas of expertise. They assist also in the identification and collection of other materials.

Associate Professor Faye McMillan is a

Wiradjuri yinaa woman from Trangie, NSW, she works at Charles Sturt University (CSU) as the Director of the Djirruwang Program - Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health). Faye holds a Doctor of Health Science, a Master of Indigenous Health Studies and a Bachelor of Pharmacy - she was Australia's first registered Aboriginal Pharmacist. She also holds Graduate Certificates in: Indigenous Governance (University of Arizona, USA); Wiradjuri Language Culture and Heritage (CSU); and Education (University of Melbourne).

Her research interests are in Nation Building and Indigenous women in leadership roles; her Doctorate focused these two areas of research into her thesis as well as mental health. She is the 2019 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year and a Senior Atlantic Fellow (inaugural Atlantic Fellow for Social Equity). In 2017, Faye was recognised in the Who's Who of Australian Women and in 2014, recognised in the Australian Financial Review and Westpac 100 women of influence Awards. She was a founding member of Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) and was a board member of IAHA from

2009-2017 (chairperson from 2010-2016). She seeks to share her own lived experiences with others with the hope of making a difference and to highlight the transformative opportunities that education can provide. As you can see Faye is an eminent addition to our Honorary Consultants.

Congratulations

I'd like to also congratulate one of our Honorary Consultants. Haylene Gogan is Queensland's first ever Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer. Haylene will lead the newly created Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division, which will drive efforts to improve health equity and outcomes for First Nation Queenslanders. A proud Kuku Yalanji and Tagalaka woman, Haylene began her health career with the community-controlled Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns in 1982. She has since held senior positions in the federal and state governments, including in Queensland Health, in roles encompassing service delivery, policy development, program implementation and project management.

Cultural responsiveness

As part of our ongoing commitment to continuous learning some of our staff recently attended events which continue to broaden their knowledge and cultural awareness. These included:

- Cross Cultural Awareness PD at ECU
- Danjoo Koorliny Walking Together - a two day Social Impact Summit at UWA focussed on 2029 when WA marks 200 years of white settlement and what can be done to include Aboriginal people in the planning of this event and recognise the traditional owners of the land
- An ECU lecture titled 'Waabiny: Mobilising Song Archives to Nourish

an Endangered Language'. Associate Professor Clint Bracknell discussed the potential for revitalisation of endangered Noongar language and song in the south coast region of Western Australia. He explained how an interdisciplinary approach empowers and engages the community in sustaining their venerable traditions

- One day and weekend away on Country cultural awareness trips (south west of Perth WA) with Elder Dr Noel Nannup
- ECU 'Old Ways New Ways' Science Exchange in the South West



Some of our staff at a cultural PD with Noel Nannup



Presenters Carol Innes, Noel Nannup, Richard Walley and Colleen Hayward at the Danjoo Koorliny Walking Together Social Impact Summit

Primary research news



Uncle Mick in Darwin with some staff from Menzies

Uncle Mick and Jesse John Fleay met with Professor James Smith and his team at Menzies School of Research in Darwin, after attending the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Conference. Uncle Mick is Chair of the technical reference group for the Lowitja Valuing Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males research project led by Professor Smith in the Northern Territory. Uncle Mick and Jesse are in talks about possible future research projects in the Northern Territory and Far North Queensland.

Uncle Mick and Dr David Palmer travelled to Broome to give feedback on the Lowitja Valuing Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males research project they're involved in. They met with staff members from Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Centre, Broome Male Outreach Centre and University of Notre Dame; they were overwhelmed with the response to the video which forms part of the research project. Dr Palmer and Professor Len Collard conducted their part of the research in the Pilbara region of WA; while Uncle Mick, Jesse and Jack Bulman travelled to Cairns and Doomadgee in Queensland and Broome.

Uncle Mick attended the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Australia (NATSIHWA) 10 year anniversary conference in Alice Springs in October. Uncle Mick in partnership with Peter Pangquee (Indigenous workforce) and Warren Loch (Queensland Health) were a driving force behind establishing NATSIHWA. He is pictured (left) alongside the Founding Members of NATSIHWA and the original members below.



Foundation members of NATSIHWA: Warren Loch, Graham Rossitor, Uncle Mick Adams and Peter Pan Que

Founding Members of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association



BACK L-R: Christine Ingram, Warren Loch, Bradley Freshman, Clarke Scott, Peter Pangquee, Dr Mick Adams, Serikhe Stephen, Charles Davidson, Maria Egan, Patrick Akhi, Robert Dant
FRONT L-R: Ann Newchurch, Janine Mubomat, Jennifer Paulina

Visitors to the HealthInfoNet

We always welcome the opportunity to meet with key organisations when they visit Perth. In October we welcomed Professor Bronwyn Fredericks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), and Dr Carroll Go-Sam from the University of Queensland and during a morning tea we had the opportunity to hear more about Professor Fredericks vision for the future of Indigenous education. It was also extremely interesting to hear about the work of Dr Go-Sam who is researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander architecture, including the unique building where our offices are located. I also congratulated Bronwyn on her recent award as the first recipient of the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Health award. Both Uncle Mick Adams and Michelle Ewell (HealthInfoNet staff) have worked with Bronwyn in the past.



Professor Neil Drew, Dr Carroll Go-Sam, Professor Bronwyn Fredericks and Uncle Mick Adams



Some of the HealthInfoNet staff with visitors Dr Carroll Go-Sam and Professor Bronwyn Fredericks



Some of the HealthInfoNet staff with Jacquie Mayne and Neil Drew (centre) from the Family Inclusion Network of Western Australia Inc.

I also welcomed Jacquie Mayne from the Family Inclusion Network of Western Australia Inc. to meet our staff and talk about her work. They provide advocacy and support services

to parents and family members who have had their children placed in 'out of home care' i.e. foster care or relative care and are seeking assistance with statutory workers from the department

of Child Protection & Family Support. Parents who are at risk of having their children placed in care, grandparents and other affected family members can also access the service.

Conferences



Jane Burns presenting at the Cranapplus conference



Uncle Mick presenting at the NATSIHWA conference



Delegate at the PHAA conference



Claire Edwards, Avinna Trzesinski, Sonia Wood at NAHC

We exhibited at the following conferences promoting the HealthInfoNet, the AOD Knowledge Centre, The Healing portal and the Environmental health portal as well as our other funded topics.

- National Allied Health, Brisbane
- TheMHS, Darwin
- Local Drug Action Group, Perth
- Cranapplus, Hunter Valley (also used our bags as the delegate satchel)
- CATSINaM, Sydney
- PHAA, Adelaide (also ran a workshop)
- NATSEIH, Perth (also presented)
- IAHA, Darwin
- NATSIHWA, Alice Springs
- APSAD, Hobart

In addition we provided inserts to the following conferences:

- DANA (AOD Knowledge Centre)
- Oceania Palliative care and presented (Palliative care portal)
- Oceania tobacco (Tackling Indigenous Smoking portal)



Michelle Elwell (right) and delegate at the IAHA conference



Courtney King and Vilma FitzGerald at the NATSEIH conference

Knowledge Exchange tools

We continue to produce in house high quality evidence based videos, facts sheets and films as part of our commitment to knowledge exchange.



EXPLORE our Knowledge Exchange products

Eye statistics and eye screening resources

In conjunction with The Fred Hollows Foundation, we have produced a series of four eye statistic and eye screening fact sheets as well as animated infographics.



Find the latest eye health resources here

Our webinar recordings

We have now added 'chapter points'. This means you can just click to the part of the video that interests you. These chapter points are specified in the video's description and provide links to specific content in the video. All webinars on our YouTube channel now have chapters added. Newest recordings include Kava and Meth recordings webinars.



Explore all our video resources here!



New film series

A joint collaboration with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) saw five films in the series produced. The films form part of the organisation's strategy to grow the Indigenous allied health workforce and improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The films will be made available by IAHA at a later date. The films focus on Pathways into Allied Health, Student Support and Engagement, Supporting Transitions to Early Careers, Career Development and Support and Enabling Future Workforce Development.

HealthInfoNet staff news



Gemma West, Ashleigh Parnell and Courtney King



Monica Cass



Michelle Pierre

We welcomed three new Research Officers to our research team in August:

- Ashleigh Parnell is working on the AODKC and Tackling Indigenous Smoking projects
- Courtney King is working on WA State and environmental health projects as well as the *HealthBulletin*
- Gemma West is working with the chronic disease team.

Monica Cass joined us in July as a Senior Research Fellow to work with the team to develop an impact and evaluation strategy for the *HealthInfoNet*.

Michelle Pierre joined us in September as our new Research Coordinator – Digital and Multimedia Products. Michelle is responsible for coordinating the delivery of our ever-expanding suite of knowledge exchange research products and resources which include our infographics, infobytes, plain language summaries among other things.

HealthDirect interview

I was interviewed as the 'Partner in focus' for the last issue of their partner magazine. We are an information partner with HealthDirect and have been since 2007.

The issue will be made available on the HealthDirect website in December.



Health Direct
Information partnership

Keep up to date

Sign up to receive our health topic specific newsletters. In September we added a new newsletter for respiratory health. Sign up below and tick the health topic areas you are interested in. Ticking our 'corporate information' box, means you'll receive our Communique and media releases.



Sign up here to receive our
HealthInfoNet newsletters

Social Media news



I'm pleased to report on the success of our first social media strategy that ran from October 2018 to October 2019. With a focus on enhancing our knowledge capabilities through social media, our follower numbers have grown by 73%, we've increased our engagement rate from 1.5% to 5% and received a huge 2660% growth rate in the numbers of messages, comments and replies we received.

The social strategy saw the implementation of a number of new tactics, including repurposing and extending the life of the knowledge exchange products we produce. Two examples of this is the popular #towardshealthequality campaign, which celebrates the positive developments in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, taken from the Summary and publishing short video snippets of key takeaway messages from our webinar recordings.

In November we were invited by Croakey to host The @WePublicHealth Twitter feed from 18 to 24 November and had a lot of engagement.



Nathan Appo gave us a thank you for our donation to his Movember page.

The HealthInfoNet celebrates its 22nd Birthday



Professor Len Collard and John Whop at our birthday morning tea



Uncle Mick and Neil mark the day



We celebrated 22 years on the 22nd of September which is a real milestone for us – as is every year - as we continue supporting the workforce.



Please read my letter of thanks
to all our supporters

Core funding
is provided by the
Australian Government
Department of Health



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