



# Take Note:

NACCHO Newsletter



**March 2010**

## **From the NACCHO Chair Justin Mohamed**

Welcome to NACCHO's first newsletter for 2010.

In my first full year as Chair I'm planning to visit at least 50 of NACCHO's member services and all of NACCHO's affiliates as we work towards better utilizing the expertise and knowledge that we have in our sector.

Together with the Board we are building a stronger, more effective NACCHO (which is all of us) so we have greater influence on Government and others as we address the health of our mob.

### **Election year**

This is an important year for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health with a federal election likely later in the year.

The first part of the Rudd government's response to the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission recommendations has been announced (see later in the newsletter). This is one part of the health platform for the election. Its commitments to Aboriginal health and Aboriginal affairs generally will be released later.

There is no better time than now for us to be arguing our case for greater responsibility for our sector in setting the priorities in Aboriginal health and expanding our ability to deliver services to our people.

Member services can be part of lobbying government by inviting your local members of parliament to your service and by sending representatives to the NACCHO Advocacy Day at Parliament House Canberra in May (details will be available shortly).

In this new decade, in the Health Equality Statement of Intent the government committed to by 2018 having in place the services we need to be able to close the gap by 2035.

### **The Board meeting in Canberra**

The NACCHO Board held our first meeting for the year in February in Canberra. From our meeting all Board members are committed to building a stronger and more united NACCHO. As a part of this commitment, we will be putting in place plans for the year to ensure the appropriate steps are taken.

The Board meeting coincided in late February with the NACCHO Secretariat moving into new offices\* in the Canberra CBD to improve its capacity to meet the demands of the Board and Members. We will hold an official opening when the move is completed, all systems are up and running and we have the NACCHO logo proudly displayed.

I have stepped back from many commitments I had before becoming NACCHO Chair so I can devote more time and energy to this challenging role on your behalf. I have stepped down from being the Chair and board member of our Victorian affiliate and Chair of my local medical service, the Rumbalara



**Email NACCHO Chair  
Justin Mohamed  
direct:**

**[justin@naccho.org.au](mailto:justin@naccho.org.au)**

### **In this issue:**

- **NACCHO moves office**
- **New Health & Hospital Proposals**
- **Aboriginal Health Workers acknowledged**
- **NAIDOC Week**
- **New Directions needed to Close the Gap**
- **Close the Gap Day**
- **QUMAX Conference**
- **Quit Smoking lights up**

Aboriginal Co-operative,

Some of the places I have visited and meetings attended already in 2010 include Walgett AMS in NSW, our ACT Affiliate, the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council in Brisbane, the Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Service (AICHS) Brisbane, the Aboriginal Medical Service Redfern, the launch of the Lowitja Institute in Canberra, COAG workshops in Perth, the QUMAX planning meeting in Melbourne, the National Indigenous Health Equality Council meeting in Melbourne, Close the Gap Steering Committee meetings, the Aboriginal Leadership Program at Mt Eliza and the Aboriginal All Stars Rugby League game.

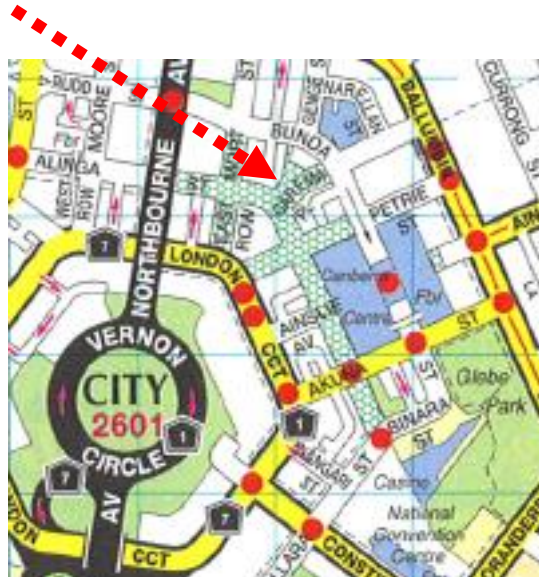
I've also had meetings with Minister Snowdon and Australian Government senior departmental staff who have a responsibility for Aboriginal health.

As we work together in 2010, I am confident this will be a milestone year for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health and improving our ability to achieve health equality.

Justin

### **\*NACCHO Secretariat has moved offices**

**The Secretariat is now on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floors of NACCHO House 3 Garema Place Civic**



We apologise for the inconvenience during the move.

Phone, Fax & PO Box numbers remain the same.  
Entry is from the pedestrian mall on the corner of Garema Place and City Walk in the Canberra CBD

An official opening ceremony will be held once the move and signage etc is complete.

#### **Contacts:**

**Note the Secretariat relocated in February 2010**

**NACCHO Secretariat  
NACCHO House  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
3 Garema Place  
City ACT 2601**

**PO Box 5120 Braddon  
ACT 2612**

**Ph: 02 6248 0644**

**Fax: 02 6248 0744**

**Elaine@naccho.org.au  
www.naccho.org.au**



Here's an artist's impression of the offices from the program for their opening in 1960 by Prime Minister Bob Menzies as Memorial Bible House.



## **Mr Rudd's National Health And Hospitals Network**

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on March 3 proposed the first of range of health reforms expected over the next few months.

The main points were:

- The creation of **The National Health and Hospitals Network** where for the first time the commonwealth provides most of the funding for hospitals (60%).
- Direct management of hospitals with passes to **Local Hospital Networks** or coalitions of local hospitals run by Governing Councils with local health, financial and managerial professional input rather than management from the state capitals.
- **Primary Health Care** and all GP related services outside hospitals would become the sole funding responsibility of the Commonwealth
- **National standards** for patient care will be imposed by the commonwealth as well as reporting and performance standards to create a more transparent and accountable system.
- Local Hospital Networks will be **funded fairly for every service they provide to patients** with rates determined by an **independent national umpire**.

NACCHO welcomes the Commonwealth taking over the prime responsibility in funding hospitals rather than the fragmented state based systems.

The Commonwealth's plans for setting of national standards, national data collection, and the potential for better governance should all benefit Aboriginal people who are also big users of the hospital system.

Our Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services already deliver frontline primary health care to our people, largely funded by the commonwealth, but we also welcome Mr Rudd's intention for the commonwealth to take over state responsibilities for primary health care. This should lead to savings from streamlined funding and better coordination of primary health and hospital services.



**NATSIHWA**



**Aboriginal Health  
Minister Warren  
Snowdon, Koonibba  
Health Worker Ashleigh  
Millera and interim  
NATSIHWA Chair  
Robert Dann at the  
association's launch in  
Ceduna**

As Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are strongly focussed on their local community we also welcome that management of the hospitals they work with daily will now also be more community based rather than run from the state capitals.

## **Aboriginal Health Workers formally recognised**

The Koonibba Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service in Ceduna SA hosted the official launch of their new Aboriginal Health Worker national association by the Minister for Aboriginal Health Warren Snowdon in January.

The Rudd Government is providing \$1.3 million over three years to establish the Association.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association (NATSIHWA) will work for the interests of its Aboriginal Health Worker members by supporting their careers, professional development, networking, accreditation of the profession and representing their interests at peak regional, state and national forums.

NACCHO Chair Justin Mohamed congratulated the interim Chair of NATSIHWA, Robert Dann of the Port Lincoln Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service and the members of the Association's interim board for all the work they have put in for their fellow Aboriginal Health Workers.

"Aboriginal Health Workers are an essential part of clinical services in the over 150 Aboriginal community controlled health services as well as in mainstream health services.

"They are one of the critical professions in advancing Aboriginal health"

"Aboriginal Health Workers perform a range of frontline clinical procedures, according to their qualification level, from internal and external examinations, suturing and specimen collection and they have a direct link with the Aboriginal communities they are part of allowing them access to the most difficult to reach and marginalised of patients".

"NACCHO continues to directly support the formation of the Association to ensure the interests of Aboriginal Health Workers will be properly represented and the profession has the chance to be part of the National Regulation and Accreditation of health professionals' scheme\*\*.

"There are estimated to be over 1,500 Aboriginal Health Workers nationally and I encourage them to join the Association at a cost of just \$10" Mr Mohamed said.

Find out more about joining by visiting the [NATSIHWA website](http://www.natsihwa.org.au/) (http://www.natsihwa.org.au/) or by talking to the workforce policy officer in NACCHO's state and territory affiliates.

\*\*[link to NACCHO's submission to the Health Workforce Principals Committee \(HWPC\) advocating National Regulation and Accreditation of Aboriginal Health Workers.](#)



**NATSIHWA CEO**  
**Alan Brown**

## **NATSIHWA CEO**

Mr Alan Brown has started as NATSIHWA's first CEO and is currently setting up office in Melbourne.

Mr Brown is well known to NACCHO Members as a former Board Member and currently as Chair of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service.

NACCHO congratulates Mr Brown on his appointment and looks forward to working with him and the growing NATSIWA membership to advance their profession.

Mr Brown said, "We want to build the membership of the Association and have a strong advocacy role on behalf of the professional standards of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers. This is the member's professional association, rather than a union. We believe that better Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers means health better outcomes for all our people".

## **NAIDOC Week 4-11 July 2010**

### **Unsung Heroes: Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way**

This year's theme is about recognising the unsung heroes; the quiet achievers in their communities who are helping others set their own direction for the future.

**National NAIDOC Awards** nominations are now open.

Take the time to recognise someone who makes a difference in the lives of others by nominating them for a National NAIDOC Award.

Nominate online at <http://www.naidoc.org.au/NAIDOC-awards/nomination.aspx>

Entries for National NAIDOC Awards close on Friday 30 April 2010

Awards will be presented at the National NAIDOC Awards Ceremony and Ball in Melbourne on Friday 9 July 2010.

Also check out the new NAIDOC Caring for Country Award!

Enter the 2010 **National NAIDOC Poster Competition** online at <http://www.naidoc.org.au/naidocPoster/enterOnline.aspx>  
All entries must be received by Wednesday 31st March 2010.

Visit the NAIDOC website for more information [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)



4-11 JULY  
**2010** | **Unsung Heroes**  
Closing the Gap by  
Leading Their Way



Click above for the Close the Gap Coalition's "Shadow Report" on the government's progress on in Aboriginal health. It includes best practise case studies from the community controlled sector.



## New Directions needed to Close the Gap

Prime Minister Rudd in his statement on the Closing the Gap marking the second anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generation recognised that not enough had been done in the past to bridge Aboriginal disadvantage and that while his government was trying to address it, much more was required.

The Prime Minister also announced \$9.1m over three years for new mothers and babies programs based at 10 health services across Australia.

"This is a further step forward in closing the life expectancy gap" said NACCHO Chair Mr Justin Mohamed.

"Its welcome recognition by the Rudd government of the further valuable work Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services can do when better resourced to meet the level of need in our communities.

"Support for births and care for new mothers and babies has always been a high priority for all of our 150 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services nationwide. This new funding can build on what is already being done.

"While we welcome the rollout of programs such as New Directions to assist our services to care for mothers and babies what we need ultimately is to be involved at the table when setting priorities, and developing solutions, in equal partnership with governments, if we are to Close the Gap", Mr Mohamed said.

**National CLOSE THE GAP Day**, coordinated by NACCHO's coalition partner Oxfam, is on **Thursday 25 March** this year.

This is the third annual National Close the Gap Day. The theme this year is "Let's get it right," focussing on the need to develop a detailed long term plan of action to close the gap as committed to by the Prime Minister in the Statement of Intent he signed in March 2008.

Last year, more than 500 events involving around 20,000 people took place around Australia.

Events ranged from large public forums at locations such as Federation Square in Melbourne to small neighbourhood gatherings in people's homes. Events also took place in workplaces, schools, universities, sporting clubs, public libraries and churches.

[Click here](#) to find out more, locate events in your area or to get a kit to help organise and register your own event.

Once an event has been registered, Oxfam sends organisers all the materials needed to host a successful event. These include a DVD, Close the Gap t-shirt, petitions, pledge forms and letter writing actions, promotional flyers, posters and brochures as well as wristbands, bumper stickers, balloons and tattoos.

Suggestions for hosting events are also available on the Oxfam website. Events are intended to be flexible and to require a minimum of organisation.

An eight minute DVD on the "Let's get it right" theme includes profiles of Sunrise Health Service in Katherine and Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation in Western Sydney and it features an interviews with NACCHO Chair, Justin Mohamed and retired Sunrise CEO, Irene



**Click here to  
download NACCHO's  
2008/09 Annual  
Report**



Fisher.

“Let’s get it right” means supporting the Close the Gap coalition’s campaign and people are urged to write to the Prime Minister seeking a long term plan of action in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and provide more support to the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector.

## **QUMAX National Conference 2010**

The QUMAX National Conference 2010 in March will cover the new Chronic Disease Package, including the PBS Co Pay measure and share strategies and ideas about the quality use of medicines in the Aboriginal community.

Delegates can celebrate their successes with QUMAX and prepare for the coming changes.

The delegates include the doctors, Aboriginal health workers, nurses and management who work in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, the pharmacists working with these services, and the community pharmacists providing QUMAX services to their clients.

Over a hundred delegates from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services have registered to attend.

The QUMAX program, funded as part of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement, aims to improve health outcomes, medication compliance and quality use of medicines of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who attend participating Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) in rural and urban area. It is jointly managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and NACCHO.

Since the QUMAX Program commenced in November 2008 it has been deemed a success by both services using it and Urbis, the external evaluators.

As of the beginning of February 2010, 20,231 clients have received QUMAX scripts and Dose Administration Aids. Under QUMAX, there have been 284,414 medicines prescribed and 131,364 prescriptions dispensed.

The conference is at the Novotel Hotel, Collins St, Melbourne on Thursday 18 March (9am – 5pm) and Friday 19 March (9am – 1pm). A welcome reception will be held at the Novotel on Thursday 18 March from 6pm-8pm.

## **Quit Smoking lights up**

Minister Snowdon has announced grants totalling over \$10m shared among 14 organisations in the latest roll out of measures to cut the high rates of smoking in the Aboriginal community.

The largest grant of \$3m goes to Bila Muuji a regional grouping of central western NSW Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services covering Brewarrina, Dareton, Dubbo, Wellington and Walgett.

Four other community controlled services were also funded among the 14 grants. The Minister announced the grants at the Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation in Katherine which receives \$1m.

Under COAG, the Federal Government also funded to \$100.6m over 4 years to tackle smoking in the Aboriginal community.

NACCHO has two representatives on the Tobacco Technical Reference Group and two on the Tobacco Social Marketing Campaign Reference Group which were set up to advise the government on implementation of the campaign.

**Tom Calma is now the  
National Coordinator for  
Tackling Indigenous  
Smoking**

Mr Tom Calma has been appointed National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking.

Mr Calma has been Chair of the Close the Gap Coalition Steering Committee and recently finished his term as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. Mr Mick Gooda took over as Social Justice Commissioner in February after heading up the Co-operative Research Centre in Aboriginal Health based in Darwin.

**NACCHO Staff Changes**

**Mitch Daley** NACCHO's computer whiz has left to further his career in IT.