**CONNECT WITH RESPECT: Issue 6 September 2019**

**OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS**

WELL-DESERVING WINNERS: Susan Marryatt and Ronan Walsh of the Reaching Out Team.

Each year, Eastern Health holds the A2i (Aspire to Inspire) Awards ceremony, a great event that allows us to celebrate the efforts and incredible contributions of our staff and volunteers across the organisation.

One award category, Closing The Health Gap, acknowledges Eastern Health staff or teams who demonstrate a commitment to promoting the objectives of Closing the Health Gap.

Each of the nominees this year is well-deserving of recognition for their tireless efforts to Close the Health Gap. Congratulations to the Reaching Out Team for taking out this year’s coveted Closing the Health Gap award.

**Reaching Out Team: WINNERS!**

Turning Point Statewide Services

The Reaching Out Team receives email referrals from Victoria Police for individuals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. They then respond by providing support to those with drug and alcohol issues. Team members are also active participants of the Billabong BBQ which is a weekly event where breakfast and lunch is provided as a way of building and fostering trust and rapport between the community and our services.

**Jeanette Taranto**

Communications Coordinator – Events Communications Department

Box Hill Hospital

Jeanette has skilfully and professionally provided oversight to Eastern Health’s NAIDOC Week events for a number of years. In 2018, she joined Eastern Health’s “Closing the Health Gap” committee

to support events and communications for this important program. In 2019, Jeanette was the coordination lead for the “Closing the Gap Family Sports Day” with a small but dedicated events team, a successful event which continues to bring communities together.

**Gavin Foster**

Manager

Dual Diagnosis and Service Development Mental Health Program

Gavin is committed to “Closing the Health Gap” and ensuring our mental health program is a welcoming place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

He continues to champion and inspire change to meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal people and to improve access to mainstream services. He also made successful bids for Aboriginal traineeships at Wellington House in 2017 and Adult Mental Health in 2019. Under his leadership, our Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community has significantly improved access to our sub-acute social and emotional care.

**Kathy Marshall**

Director of Nursing, Associate Program Director Acute and Aged Medicine

Wantirna Health

Peter James Centre/Wantirna Health

Kathy’s vision began in 2015 when she started making enquiries about developing a garden at Wantirna Health where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could feel comfortable to sit and reflect. Kathy, in consultation with the Aboriginal community and a local Aboriginal elder, is now seeing the garden come to fruition.

**Jenny Gladwin**

Clinical Nurse Consultant Lead Community Health Nurse

Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Health Yarra Ranges

Jenny is an exceptional Community Health Nurse who has worked with the Aboriginal Health Team for over 10 years. She provides outstanding clinical nursing support to the Aboriginal community making sure she delivers the best care to patients. Jenny also supports other staff including Aboriginal health care workers, family nurses and community nursing staff with her clinical expertise.

**FAMILY SPORTS DAY WILL RETURN NEXT YEAR**

IT’S BACK: The Closing the Health Gap Family Sports Day will be held again in 2020.

As part of our commitment to Closing the Health Gap, Eastern Health will again host the Closing the Health Gap Family Sports Day next year. It will be held on Sunday 1 March 2020, 9.30am-3.30pm at Don Road Sporting Complex, Healesville.

On the day, Eastern Health staff will play netball and football against some of the best Aboriginal sporting talent in Melbourne’s east. The event will also feature interactive information stands, face painting, a petting zoo, jumping castle, running races, giveaways, show bags and more.

For further enquires please email ctgsportsday@easternhealth.org.au.

Eastern Health wishes to acknowledge the passing of Aunty Dot Peters, who was deeply committed to reconciliation; we honour her leadership and courage. It is with respect that we convey our condolences to Aunt’s family and community.

**ABORIGINAL LIVED EXPERIENCE PEER SUPPORT WORKER**

HELPING HAND: Ashleigh would not trade her job for anything.

The Eastern Health Mental Health Program was the first mental health service in Victoria to employ an Aboriginal Lived Experience Peer Support Worker.

This role focuses on supporting people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to engage in their own mental health care and treatment before and after discharge from psychiatric inpatient services. In addition this role plays a key part in the continuing development of a culturally safe and aware environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and carers.

Ashleigh Bell, Aboriginal Lived Experience Peer Support Worker at Eastern Health, is grateful for the opportunity to help her community.

“I love helping people to achieve their goals and get back on track to recovery. I get to connect with people who have been through similar experiences to me and I am so grateful for that. I love my job and I wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world,” Ashleigh said.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PHARMACY TECHNICIAN TRAINEE PROGRAM**

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY: Kirsty looks forward to working in hospital pharmacy for years to come.

The Eastern Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy traineeship initiative has been put in place to help support Eastern Health’s continuous efforts to Close the Health Gap.

It delivers an exciting opportunity for one successful candidate per year to be upskilled through formalised workplace training within a hospital pharmacy department.

Eastern Health pharmacies provide ongoing support to the trainee while completing their Certificate III in Hospital/ Health Services Pharmacy Support, help them develop the skills they need to work effectively in pharmacy in the hospital setting, and create a more culturally welcoming environment and culturally responsive pharmacy service.

Kirsty, a Wiradjuri woman from New South Wales, began her traineeship at Maroondah Hospital pharmacy in February 2019.

“This opportunity has been amazing for me. As a young mother, it has provided me with the opportunity to study and work at the same time,” Kirsty said.

 Since starting in February 2019, Kirsty has worked across a range of pharmacy technician roles including medication distribution and procurement. Her next roles include dispensary services and aseptic services.

**NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS**

PICTURED: Cultural performance by Djirri Djirri Dance Group and Yadaki player Damien.

As part of Eastern Health’s commitment to Closing the Health Gap, we celebrated National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee or ‘NAIDOC’ Week with a number of events across our sites. The main event was held at Wantirna Health which was very well attended with standing room only.

NAIDOC Week (July 7-14, 2019) celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this year’s theme being “Voice. Treaty. Truth.”

The main event featured an inspiring Welcome to Country by a Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Joy Murphy and guest speaker Merilyn Duff, Eastern Health’s Integrated Aboriginal Services Manager, who shared the heritage of her possum skin and spoke of the importance of this year’s theme. It also included traditional cultural performances by the Djirri Djirri Dance Group and Yadaki player Damien.

Shannon Wight, Eastern Health Executive Director of Acute and Aged Medicine, Specialty Medicine and Ambulatory Care, Pathology, Pharmacy, Patient Access and Allied Health (ASPPPA) and the Eastern Health Executive responsible for partnering with the community and Eastern Health staff to Close the Health Gap, said the event was a very moving experience.

“It was wonderful to see so many people attending to watch the celebration. Aunty Joy’s Welcome to Country was the perfect opening to the event and Merilyn’s speech provided a good background into this year’s theme,” Ms Wight said.

Eastern Health continues to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to implement ways to Close the Health Gap.

**WE ARE HIRING!**

Closing the Health Gap Coordinator

The Closing the Health Gap Coordinator will support the Chair of the Closing the Health Gap Steering Committee (CtHGSC) in the preparation of meeting agendas and related documents to ensure CtHGSC members are presented with high standard information to enable effective decision making.

This 32-hours per fortnight role will be required to work across all Eastern Health programs and sites to implement and facilitate achievement of items in the Closing the Health Gap Innovation and Improvement Plan and support initiatives related to the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

INTERESTED? Email Merilyn.Duff@easternhealth.org.au for more details.

**ABORIGINAL HEALTH TEAM**

Eastern Health’s Aboriginal Health Team is a community-based service based in Healesville that is accessible to Aboriginal people and their families living in Eastern Health’s catchment.

It provides a range of services that are available on-site in Healesville and through home visits and outreach support. These include:

Primary health care: health checks, nursing support and general health information and education.

Case management and advocacy: care planning, case management, referral and advocacy for other services.

Social and emotional wellbeing: counselling services, school-based programs and education support.

Home and community care: domestic assistance, property maintenance and social events.

The Aboriginal Health Team is located at 377 Maroondah Highway, Healesville and is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm. Phone 5957 1100 or email AHTIntake@easternhealth.org.au

Explore Aboriginal cultures, histories, ideas, opinions and Treaty in Victoria.

Visit: deadlyquestions.vic.gov.au

Eastern Health is committed to achieving equality in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous Australians.