

August 2007
Issue 1

NEWSLETTER

NAMING NOT SHAMING

Calling all budding, blooming and even withering wordsmiths!

This esteemed publication needs a suitably impressive name. Send your suggestions by e-mail to Tracy Lewis (see details below) and you could have the honour of seeing your title in print.

Entries close Friday 28th September 2007.

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit is planning next year's State-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Forum. The Forum will be held March 2008. If there is anything you would like to have included on the agenda, please contact Tracy Lewis on 323 41793, or Tracy_Lewis@health.qld.gov.au

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To submit articles for inclusion or story ideas, contact Tracy Lewis 32341793 or Tracy_Lewis@health.qld.gov.au

Director's Message

by Sheryl Sandy



I'm very excited to welcome you to our first ATSIHSU Newsletter. Although it is less than three months since our State-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Forum, so much has been happening; it seems like a lifetime ago.

A great deal of the Unit's new direction relies on building strong relationships and I'm pleased to say that some of the benefits of building stronger relationships with other program areas within QH have already become clear.

This newsletter will provide an opportunity for me to keep you informed about the work of the Unit, and to share information about what is happening outside of central office.

I look forward to working in partnership with all of you to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Islander health, conducted by former Northern Territory Health Chief Executive Officer, Robert Griew is up and running.

Queensland Health's Executive Management Team (EMT) endorsed the Griew Review in April this year and work has commenced on implementing all of the recommendations. One of the first actions taken was to move the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health unit out of Population Health Branch, and into the Office of the Director-General.

Director-General Uschi Schreiber said, "Improving our performance in delivering health services to Indigenous Queenslanders is one of my priorities for Queensland Health in 2007. A key component of delivering on this priority is for Queensland Health to develop a new direction for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy".

The change has brought Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health firmly into the spotlight within the Department, and given the unit a vantage point from which to branch out and work in partnership with other program areas to improve the delivery of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Implementation of the review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit has added another word to its name in order to better reflect its new role. The unit is now officially called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit (ATSIHSU).

Acting Senior Director Sheryl Sandy said, "the old name may have given some people the impression that the Unit provided health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

The new name makes it clear that the unit exists to drive improvements in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by taking a high-level focus and acting strategically to influence the work of the Department," said Ms Sandy.

MODELS WORKSHOP

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Strategy Unit will host a workshop early next year to consider primary health care delivery models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It is widely recognised that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to health service delivery does not work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. With one quarter of the population living in remote or very remote parts of the State, not only are there geographical obstacles to appropriate service delivery, but

there are significant cultural issues to be addressed in order to provide equality of access to services.

Robert Griew, Executive Advisor to the Director-General on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health said that, "the workshop will provide an opportunity for Queensland Health's Indigenous staff to share ideas of models that have worked in various communities, and to get ideas to drive service delivery improvements in their communities."

All Queensland Health Principal Indigenous Health Co-ordinators, Regional Indigenous Operations Program Managers and staff from the ATSIHSU have been invited to attend the forum.

RHF's REWARDED IN REFORMS

Regional Health Forums will gain extra resources from Queensland Health as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health reform process.

All parties to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership have agreed that they would like to increase the Partnership's effectiveness in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

As part of that process, greater effort will be devoted to co-ordinating the Partnership's key mechanism for change - Regional Health Forums.

Queensland Health's Executive Management Team has approved funding for three additional positions to support the operations of the two forums that Queensland Health oversees that do not already have a support position (CAHS and SAHS) and a State-wide co-ordinator. Position descriptions have been developed and expressions of interest closed 2 August 07.

Upcoming Events

13 September 2007
Brisbane
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership meeting

February 2008
Brisbane
Models Workshop
More detail closer to the event

March 2008
Brisbane
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander State-wide Health Forum
Senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from Queensland Health will be invited to attend the Forum to discuss strategic issues.