

Media statement

22 February 2019

SCHHS making an impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) is committed to closing the gap in health inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We know we all have a role to play in Queensland's reconciliation journey and have implemented a number of programs which are helping to improve the health of our people.

Some of these programs and activities include the Jabba Jabba childhood immunisation program, the Worry Up No Worries Anxiety Program and the BUMPS pregnancy program.

SCHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program Manager Sharon Barry said these programs and activities are producing very positive outcomes for the community.

"Our Jabba Jabba childhood immunisation program has been operating out of Gympie Hospital for around 10 years, and is very well received within the community, providing a free home visiting vaccination program for children aged zero to four years," Ms Barry said.

"We are proud to report that recent immunisation data shows Indigenous children within the SCHHS had higher vaccination levels compared with non-Indigenous children. For the 12 months ending in September 2018, 92.9% of Indigenous children within the SCHHS region were fully vaccinated compared with 90.8% of non-Indigenous children," Ms Barry said.

In the past 12 months, 548 children have been immunised under the program.

"SCHHS also provides a Men's Health Worry Up No Worries Program through Gympie Community Health, which is aimed at helping participants recognise the signs, symptoms and effects of General Anxiety Disorder. It includes a cultural connection for men as well as self-help techniques and ways to seek help.

"Nine participants recently took part in the program, which runs over four weeks," Ms Barry said.

The BUMPS pregnancy program is also offered. Each woman who joins the program is allocated a midwife who follows her through her pregnancy, is on call and attends her birth, and visits her and her baby at home afterwards.

BUMPS participant Kehyra Smith has had two of her babies through the program and said having the extra support through pregnancy and labour made the world of difference.

"It was so beneficial having the same midwives there throughout the journey. I could call or text them at any time and because they knew me they were able to provide the highest quality of care.

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“The home visit service meant I was able to keep up to date with check-ups, when it can be impossible to get out of the house some days with a large family.

“Because of midwife Josie I had the most unreal birth experience with my last daughter, she executed my birth plan seamlessly at the drop of a hat, helping me to have one of the most beautiful experiences of my life,” Ms Smith said.

The team of midwives work closely with the SCHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Hospital Liaison service to ensure the women are linked into any relevant cultural and other community services.

Currently BUMPS has about eight mothers in the program per month.

In November 2018, we launched SCHHS Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which demonstrates practical actions and performance measures that will contribute to the national reconciliation movement, both within our health service and in the communities we serve.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities with Joanna Green, CMC, Midwifery Group Practice and BUMPS participant Kehrya Smith and her child.

Where: Sunshine Coast University Hospital (meet at Main Entrance)

When: Thurs 28 February 2019, 10:30am

ENDS

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