

GURRINY YEALAMUCKA
HEALTH SERVICE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Gurriny News

November 2020



RU OK?

New clinic a work in progress on Workshop St

Demolition of the older Gurriny buildings on Workshop Street has started in preparation for the construction of Gurriny's new Health and Wellbeing Centre, Chief Financial Officer Craig Ford says.

"The new centre will replace the existing older buildings, except for the Youth Hub, of course," he said. "The new centre has been drawn up by People Oriented Design (POD) and Coburn Architecture, together with Gurriny senior staff and Elders, to be culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable. "It will have specialist consulting and counselling spaces, a new active space, group meeting room, outdoor yarning circle and native garden. "And it has been designed to be

welcoming, non-institutional and suited to Yarrabah conditions." He said HC Building & Construction (HCBC) – an Indigenous building company – has the contract.

"They are working with Wugu Nyambil to provide opportunities for local people to work on the project," he said. The project is planned to be completed by June 2021.





Our AGM was held last month, and we have welcomed new board member Ailsa Lively to our director's team, CEO Sue Andrews writes ...

We were also pleased to present yet another unqualified (good) auditor's report, which goes to show we have good business systems in place, not only in regard to finance but also in terms of our general practice, as you will see from Karen's news on page 6 of this issue of *Gurriny News*.

The meeting was also an opportunity to tell the wider community what has been happening over the past 12 months.

COVID-19

A big part of that was focussed on the effects of COVID-19 and how we were able to support the Yarrabah community and keep us all safe throughout this pandemic when we have needed to.

We supported quite a number of community people here in Yarrabah, as well as out of the community where people were quarantining, for example, in Cairns.

One of the main things we did was to set up an outreach team based in Cairns for people who were part of the Yarrabah community and needed to cross the biosecurity line – how to fill out the forms and what they needed to do from there.

One of the biggest challenges was letting people know if they had to go into the hospital system in Cairns, they then had to go into quarantine.

So our team was able to help them with things like food supplies, some essential toiletries, helping mums with new bubs' supplies, and even with having access to a phone so they could Face Time to mob back home.

Thanks to Staff

The staff have been fantastic for doing that; it was challenging for everyone concerned, but they pulled it off and I was very happy about that and for them in supporting their mob.

If we look at Melbourne in Victoria, and what they have been through over the past six months or more, that makes me think about how it was when we were in lockdown and how we were able to support the community.

We went through all those processes with food security, the fever clinic, making sure our health was well kept, complying with all the COVID-19 rules for social distancing, etc.

All of that hard work and stress meant we all stayed safe, and that was because of all of those things.

It was the best possible outcome we could have had, and we did it – we still have a way to go, it is not necessarily over yet, but we are still here and we are ready for whatever comes our way as we move forward into 2021.



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Gurriny will operate to reduced hours and with fewer staff on some days over the 2020 Christmas/New Year period.

All staff will be on board from 8am to 4.30pm until Tuesday 22 December.

On **Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24, and Tuesday 29, Wednesday 30 and Thursday 31 December** Gurriny will operate with reduced hours and fewer staff from 8am to 4.30pm.

We will be closed on **Friday 25 and Monday 28 December, and on Friday 1 January**, as well as over each weekend, as usual.

We will be back to full operations on **Monday 4 January 2021**.

We wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and look forward to a better New Year for 2021.

RIGHT: New board member Ailsa Lively at a Yarrabah Leadership Forum meeting in 2019



Working with our young people an ongoing concern during COVID-19



The Workshop Street Youth Hub is very close to reopening through special access via a lane way, Acting Youth Wellbeing Coordinator Paul Neal says.

He said in the first instance he and his new staff would go in and set up before young people were once again invited to come and see them.

“Our new workers should be on board with us soon, and once we’re set up, we can get started again,” he said.

“It’s going to be new and exciting with a lot of new, more structured programs in place.

“We’ll still have other events, such as the youth forum happening as well.

“We’re on a steady road to recovery from COVID-19.”

He said that was not to say they hadn’t been active over the past few months, or even during the height of the community lock down.

“I’ve just finished some youth group meetings last month (pictured above) which were looking at setting up a youth advisory group for Yarrabah,” he said.

“But even through the lock down, we were going out to see a lot of the youth people to let them know about the closure and let them know we weren’t able to open.

“That’s going as far back as

February, and after that we worked with the doctors to educate them about hand washing and what they needed to do.”

Social Emotional Wellbeing Manager Tamar Patterson said they worked together on a number of fronts during the pandemic’s community closure.

“Paul was also very much involved in organising a funeral safety plan,” she said.

“That was about ensuring funerals were carried out safely, so as a health service, we were up front with lots of things from providing hand sanitiser to helping with contact tracing lists.

“So we’ve been doing a lot.

“Now we’re ready to open again; our focus is back to what’s happening with the youth and our Youth Hub.

“Paul has already been working hard towards providing a space that’s safe for the kids of our



Paul Neal & Tamar Patterson

community, even while the Hub has been closed.

“He’s been working with the schools, and has done a few presentations to the high school students, he’s also worked with Katrina around some of the health checks, so there’s been consultation and engagement around those.

“He worked with the RSAS (Remote School Assistance Scheme) team as well as touching base with young people through our Family Healing Service and family wellbeing programs, so our work with youth in the community has been fairly consistent throughout.”

COVID-19 changed a lot of things this year, including the way our organisation operated.

Many of our programs run group activities which were all put on hold, and some are still yet to resume.

For several months everyone was screened before entering the waiting rooms to see doctors, and even our visiting services were placed on hold unless urgent.

Our Health Promotion team stopped running Deadly Choice programs and focused on developing COVID-19 messages and videos to promote safe behaviours.

We started to offer doctor consultations over the phone, and some patients also spoke to their counsellors on the phone.

At first, the lockdown also meant trips to Cairns for specialist appointments required a 14 day stay in quarantine, but Gurriny successfully negotiated a “sterile transport tunnel” with the health biosecurity officer, so we could transport those patients who needed urgent health care under strict conditions.

One of the most difficult situations was when community members were flown or ambulated out of Yarrabah to the hospital.

Once they were discharged from hospital most had a long stay in Cairns at Red Cross or family’s homes in Cairns before they could enter the 14-day quarantine hotels and finally travel home on the Gurriny transport bus.

Many patients were spending four weeks and longer away from homes, and although they may have a support person and their small children with them, it was very stressful.

Gurriny and Gindaja Treatment & Healing Centre set up a small team to support the many people who found themselves in this situation.

The teams worked long hours visiting people, providing food and other supplies, and working with the hospital team to transfer people into the quarantine hotels.

The team also worked closely and supported the YASC with the exemption papers and permits, which was a very complex process in some instances, but also part of the process we needed to comply with as part of the Biosecurity Act as a way to keep our community safe from COVID-19.

Our Gurriny staff worked hard every day under difficult circumstances and they lived under the restrictions like everyone else in Yarrabah and Cairns.

They also presented for work each day despite increasing their own personal risk of being exposed to COVID-19.



We particularly want to recognise all our staff with a huge congratulations and acknowledgement for continuing to deliver care during these difficult times.

COVID-19 is still not over and even now Queensland still has restrictions in place – Gurriny’s focus now is moving to promote the importance of:

1. [ALWAYS practice 1.5 metre social distancing in public](#)
2. [ALWAYS wash hands properly with soap or use hand sanitiser](#)
3. [ALWAYS make sure you don’t touch your face](#)
4. [ALWAYS get tested if you have any symptoms](#)
5. [ALWAYS bump elbows, DON’T hug or shake hands](#)

Gurriny, Gindaja and Mutkin Residential & Aged Care are working right now with the Tropical Public Health Service in Cairns to develop a plan if a person in Yarrabah (or a person living in Cairns but connected to Yarrabah) tests positive to COVID-19.

IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN the Tropical Public Health Service in partnership with all our local health services and the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council would move very quickly to isolate the patient (and also any close contacts), contact trace – which means talk to every person who has come in contact with that person over a specific period of time – and finally, test everyone concerned.

Please keep in mind it is your responsibility to remember to maintain safe practices at all times.

MEANWHILE a two-and-a-half-year plan to bring paediatric services back to Yarrabah has recently paid off, Gurriny’s Senior Medical Officer Dr Jason King says.

Dr King said he had been working with the Cairns Base Hospital paediatric department to restart their outreach to the community.

“We have worked with Dr Hazelwood for many years and he has retired,” he said.

“We saw that coming and started making a succession plan, which means we now have a new, very exciting and collaborative model.”

He said they had worked out the new approach with thanks to the Head of Paediatrics at Cairns Base Hospital Neil Archer, and Gurriny GP Dr Sarah Fairhall, who has a special interest in the field.

“It means we’ll have a much better managed approach where our doctors and their specialists work side by side

for the day, working with families, health workers and our child health nurses to provide a really fantastic wrap-around service for the kids of Yarrabah who need paediatric input,” he said.

“It has been built on the principles of community-controlled health, and the end result will be a comprehensive, holistic, and culturally-safe primary care which is about local solutions to local problems and challenges, utilising local expertise. That’s why I think this model is going to be a great success.”

Dr King said it was a model they could use with other services such as optometry.

“Eye health is one of the biggest problems we deal with,” he said.

“The biggest causes of blindness in Aboriginal patients are all preventable things, some of which are easily fixed, such as the need for corrective vision (glasses) or cataract removal, or through to the more complex issues around diabetic retinopathy, which is a huge problem. Yet it was another area where a specialist would come out, set up shop for the day, leave at 2 pm and the rest of us would be none the wiser.

“Now we have optometrist Vicki Sheehan on board, who has been working at Wuchopperen for many years, and comes out to Yarrabah for an entire day once a fortnight and that is also supported two or three times a year by ophthalmology surgeon, Dr Brian Todd.

“We’ve worked really hard with these teams to look at better models of providing care so we can really strongly advocate for patients and make sure our information flows.”

He said Healthworkers played a key role in the new models.

“We’re not just about providing a GP service; we’re about all the services that are coordinated by local Healthworkers in the first instance – without their input, we would have zero patients,” he said. “They are a huge part of what we do, we need their expertise and their passion for working with their community, and we’re grateful to them for being here and being prepared to take on these challenges.”



GURRINY YEALAMUCKA
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CERTIFICATION

Standard practice set to a high bar

Gurriny's operating and business compliance requirements include lots of different 'standards' – state, national and international, Gurriny Director of Operations, Karen Dennien says.

“Standards are all about assuring and confirming to our patients, clients, staff and stakeholders, the quality and safety of our services,” she said.

“Compliance with any Standards or accreditation as it is called, is an indication of the quality, safety and effectiveness of your organisation's services.

“It is important to have our services independently audited for accreditation and to know if they meet the Australian industry best practice standards for health and wellbeing services.

“Those services which are Government funded at Gurriny are required to comply with the quality standards.

“Our ongoing business viability therefore is very much dependent on achieving compliance with the Standards and being accredited.”

Karen said a successful accreditation means Gurriny gets to display the logo of the relevant standards body, offering an assurance of quality and accountability to all our clients and patients, and the wider Yarrabah community.



Our main accreditations are:

- **International Organization for Standardization: ISO 9001:2015**
The quality and effectiveness of our business and operational systems are measured each year under our accreditation to the ISO. Gurriny's three-year accreditation audit was conducted in September 2020, and we are awaiting the outcome of the audit.
- **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP): 5th Edition Standards**
The Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL) provides accreditation to all Australian General Practices and other organisations against RACGP Standards, also every three years. Gurriny's audit under these Standards was postponed this year by the external auditors due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Human Services Quality Framework**
Some of our wellbeing services are required to be accredited to the standards of the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF), which is a system for assessing and promoting improvement in the quality of human services. Our audit this year was successful.

Some of our staff have moved...

Demolition of the old Workshop Street clinic to make way for a brand new clinic has meant that some of our staff needed to find new office space for at least 12 months, Business Development and Research Manager Ruth Fagan says.

"It's not an easy job to find space in Yarrabah, but thanks to the Yarrabah Seahawks Sporting Club our Health Promotion/Deadly Choice team have signed a lease to occupy the upstairs office space at the footy fields for a short while," she said.

"If you are wanting to visit the

team, you can now find them at the 'oval office' from Mondays to Fridays.

"Our Family Wellbeing team have relocated to the Gurriny offices at Noble Drive and are running support programs from there.

"Our Men's team is based at the Bukki Road clinic until a new

office space is found, but the shed located at Noble Drive is still available for men's activities as needed."

She said once the new building was finished the teams would be back down to Workshop Street and the Men's team would resume all their programs at Noble Drive.

New communications position to take on pandemic challenges

It has been a challenging year for everyone during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of making sure everyone in our community has correct and consistent information, Business Development and Research Manager Ruth Fagan says.

"We have always relied on our newsletters, posters, Facebook, website and sometimes door knocking," Ruth said.

"But during the COVID-19 lock down, our challenge was staying up to date as things changed all the time and often from one day to the next, which was very fast.

"Trying to get the right information to people quickly, and in a way that was easy to understand, was our challenge."

She said they were able to secure funds for a five-month communication project to examine ways we can all better understand what's going on and in a timely way.

"As a result, we have employed Communications Officer Helen Cook, who started early October," she said.

"Helen will be working closely with Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council Communications Officer Marita Miller to look at how our organisations can work together when we need to get information out in the community.

"We are hoping that when the project finishes all our local organisations will have better ways of providing not just health, but



"I am a former graphic designer and copywriter, originally from the UK, and I have been fortunate to have travelled extensively in Australia, but Cairns is home," Helen (pictured above) says.

"I began writing about researchers and their work at James Cook University, just in time to build the initial identity and communication tools for the Eliminate Dengue program (now World Mosquito Program) and their novel Wolbachia method to reduce dengue transmission by mosquitoes.

"I worked with the global program for the next seven

years, moving to its research base at Monash University, Melbourne and travelling from there to international sites to support the development of in-country communications and engagement strategies.

"But Cairns was always calling and I came back.

"I have recently worked for Cairns Regional Council, and Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service and I am excited about working with the Yarrabah community to develop and support its communication challenges, particularly in relation to COVID-19 and other potential natural disasters."

all sorts of information back out into the community, such as warnings about cyclones, fires or heavy rainfall events.

"Helen will be also be assisting our services with ongoing messages about COVID-19."

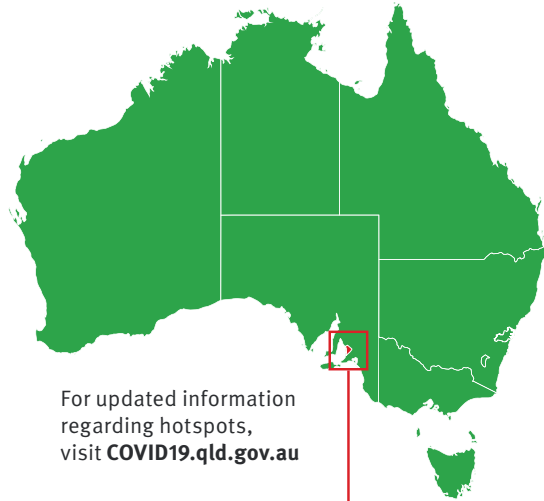
CURRENT RESTRICTIONS:

- › **Gatherings:** 50 people allowed to gather in homes and 100 in public spaces across Queensland.
- › **Indoor premises:** One person per 2m² (e.g. restaurants, cafés, pubs, clubs, museums, art galleries, places of worship, convention centres and Parliament House). Indoor play areas within a premises can open.
- › **Wedding ceremonies:** Up to 200 people can attend a wedding and all guests can dance (both indoors and outdoors).
- › **Funerals:** Up to 200 people can attend a funeral.
- › **Indoor events:** 100% capacity at seated, ticketed venues with patrons to wear masks on entry and exit (e.g. theatre, live music, cinemas and indoor sports). Performers can distance from audience at 2m, except choirs which remain at 4m from the audience.
- › **Outdoor events:** 1500 people permitted at outdoor events with a COVID Safe Event Checklist. Larger events require a COVID Safe Plan.
- › **Open air stadiums:** 100% seated capacity (with a COVID Safe Plan).
- › **Outdoor dancing:** Outdoor dancing allowed (e.g. outdoor music festivals, beer gardens).

BORDERS

Border Pass: Visitors can enter Queensland without having to complete a Queensland Border Declaration Pass or mandatory quarantine, unless they are travelling from a declared hotspot.

Hotspots: Visitors and returned travellers who have been in a Local Government Area identified as a hotspot in the last 14 days can enter Queensland with a valid **Queensland Border Declaration Pass** and are required to complete the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

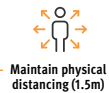


For updated information regarding hotspots, visit [COVID19.qld.gov.au](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au)

South Australia: Twenty (20) Local Government Areas in South Australia (including Adelaide) are declared COVID-19 hotspots, meaning travel from there to Queensland is restricted (from 11:59pm 16 November 2020).

STAGE 6 Subject to results of COVID Safe Check Point
From 1am 1 December 2020

THE 'NEW NORMAL'



Maintain physical distancing (1.5m)



Wear a mask when distancing is not possible (particularly in enclosed spaces)



Maintain good hand hygiene



Stay at home when sick



Collection of contact details to allow for effective contact tracing



Rapidly responding to outbreaks



Travel restrictions from hot spots



COVID Safe Plan or Checklist in place



POSITIONS VACANT

- **Medical Receptionist**
- **Senior Youth Case Worker**
- **Engagement Liaison Officer (identified)**
- **Family Healing Services Manager**
- **GPs**

@ GURRINY YEALAMUCKA HEALTH SERVICES ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Gurriny was created by the community, for the community and strives to provide Australian leading primary health care.

We aim to provide culturally sensitive, coordinated, comprehensive and continuing care to both individuals and families.

Working closely with a vast array of allied health and specialist services, Gurriny is tirelessly advocating for the community to improve wellbeing.

To discuss these roles contact: hr@gyhsac.org.au



GURRINY YEALAMUCKA
HEALTH SERVICE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

SEE WHAT'S GOING ON WITH GURRINY YEALAMUCKA, FOR UPDATES ON ONGOING/UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS, LIKE AND SHARE US ON FACEBOOK!

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