

GRAMPIANS REGION: HACC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

FINAL REPORT: JULY 2012

To:

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SUMMARY

This report concludes the Department of Health, Home and Community Care (HACC), Partnership Project conducted in the Grampians Region from January to June 2012.

The project has engaged the seventeen HACC Assessment Services (HAS) throughout the region and the three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) in a conversation relating to access and choice issues for Aboriginal people.

The primary outcome of this project is a documented commitment to further involvement in partnering activities that will increase awareness of access issues for Aboriginal people and the benefits of partnering. This commitment is in the form of four plans outlining partnership activities to be implemented with the support of the HACC Project Worker (Robyn Fletcher) and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer (Gary Wingrove). All four plans focus on agreed approaches to shared care, information regarding services for Aboriginal people and cultural awareness training.

The practical actions outlined in the four plans are also clearly linked with other recent HACC planning processes; including the Active Service Model and Diversity Planning. This supports all agencies to focus on a handful of manageable initiatives that improve the quality and reliability of services.

This report outlines a series of conclusions and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **All agencies have a new starting point in the development of any future interaction.** Recommendation one: That this project acknowledges the clear willingness of agencies involved to share information and services where this advantages Aboriginal people.
- 2 **A simple regional agreement regarding shared care is within reach.** Recommendation two: That the HACC Project worker and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer collaborate over time to develop a Grampians Region agreement (based on the examples in the Wimmera and Grampians Pyrenees) should the agencies in the Central Highlands see this as a useful 'next step'.
- 3 **A regional e-learning tool may be a cost effective and practical regional outcome.** Recommendation three: That the feasibility of publishing an e-learning tool providing introductory information for all HACC staff be explored as one element of a broader strategy to provide cultural awareness training across the region.
- 4 **The interest in cultural awareness training has been very evident.** Recommendation four: That the Department of Health Grampians Region and the Koori Aged and Disability Network Advisory Committee (KADNAC) collaborate on a broad strategy to support all Aboriginal agencies to promote training tools and models of care that focus on culturally appropriate practice in HACC services.
- 5 **Information is an issue for many agencies.** Recommendation five: That the feasibility of publishing a regional pamphlet providing contact information on all HACC Assessment and Aboriginal services be explored by the HACC Project Worker and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer.
- 6 **The Department of Health is a 'cultural leader' in the region.** Recommendation six: That the Regional Office consider arranging a Reconciliation Week event in 2013 that brings together the participants from this project in a forum to review / celebrate progress and to formally re-commit to the goals of this partnership project.
- 7 **Agencies need support to implement the wide range of plans completed over the past few years.** Recommendation seven: That the networks supported by the HACC Project Worker (HAS agencies) and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer (KADNAC) conduct a session to encourage agencies to 'line up' plans relating to this project, Active Service Model and Diversity Planning to seek effective approaches to implementing priority activities in areas such as information sharing, staff development, training and needs identification.

PROJECT APPROACH

The original brief for this project was to identify and address barriers to partnerships between HAS agencies and ACCOs across the Grampians Region by developing localised plans for further partnership activities.

The initial issue was the scale of the region and the large number of HAS providers. To overcome this problem the region was divided into four areas so that the three ACCOs could be linked with the seventeen HAS providers according to a logical area:

Area	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation	HACC Assessment Services (HAS)	
		Councils	Health services
Central Highlands	Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative	Ballarat City Council Golden Plains Shire Council Hepburn Shire Council Moorabool Shire Council	Ballarat District Nursing & Healthcare
Grampians Pyrenees	Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative	Ararat City Council Northern Grampians Shire Council Pyrenees Shire Council	East Grampians Health Service
East Wimmera	Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative	Horsham Rural City Council Yarriambiack Shire Council	Wimmera Health Care Group Dunmunkle Health Service
West Wimmera	Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative	Hindmarsh Shire Council West Wimmera Shire Council	Edenhope & district Memorial Health Service West Wimmera Health Service
	<i>3 ACCOs</i>	<i>11 Councils</i>	<i>6 Health services</i>

NB: The Wimmera area is supported by the one ACCO, Goolum Goolum. As the geographical area is so vast the Wimmera was divided into east and west to make the planning for partnerships more local and manageable.

The second issue was the engagement of the Aboriginal agencies. A forum was held on 15 February in Halls Gap. The project was outlined and a series of tools discussed.

Arrangements for a forum to be hosted by each Aboriginal agency were made. Timelines were broadly established to complete the project by June / July 2012.

P R O J E C T A P P R O A C H C O N T I N U E D ...

From March through to June each HAS agency was visited by myself, Robyn Fletcher and Gary Wingrove. These sessions generally involved meeting with the HACC Manager and Assessment Officers to:

- ▣ Outline the purpose of the project
- ▣ Explore any recent initiatives with the local Aboriginal agency
- ▣ Discuss enablers and barriers to partnerships
- ▣ Identify the preferred approach and content of the forum in that area.

These sessions were critical to the success of the project as participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and explore ideas for partnership activities in an informal and non-judgemental setting.

Following each 'road trip' to visit HAS agencies a forum was held in the four areas as follows:

1. Central Highlands: 20 March
2. Wimmera (East): 8 May – am
3. Wimmera (West): 8 May – pm
4. Grampians Pyrenees: 20 June

Attendance at all forums was very high, only one of the seventeen HAS agencies was unwilling to attend due to other priorities – this agency went on to support the project outcomes.

All four forums involved exploring ideas to enhance partnerships that developed choice and access for Aboriginal people. Following each forum an action plan was drafted, circulated and then finalised, resulting in four plans.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The project has delivered four plans that:

- ▣ Outline background to the project
- ▣ Identify all partner agencies, representatives and a key contact from each agency
- ▣ Document a set of practical activities and the role responsible for implementation / monitoring.

All four plans are attached to this report.

PROJECT CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations are offered:

- 1 **All agencies have a new starting point in the development of any future interaction.** In many cases agencies were simply not sure of what to expect from contact with another agency. In other situations agencies had experienced a negative or un-productive interaction in the past.

Through this project all agencies have a clearer idea of the capacity of each agency and their obligations should a person, who identifies as Aboriginal, seek services from both a HAS agency and an ACCO.

All agencies have willingly consented to share information on programs and resources so that Aboriginal people are more aware of all forms of support available in the region.

Recommendation one: That this project acknowledges the clear willingness of agencies involved to share information and services where this advantages Aboriginal people.

- 2 **A simple regional agreement regarding shared care is within reach.** Three of the four planning processes led to the publication of a one page agreement that clarifies communication, proof of Aboriginality requirements and planning arrangements where a joint assessment and / or shared care is both feasible and preferable.

This agreement clarifies many of the potential stumbling blocks to partnerships – including the potentially complex issues of proof of Aboriginality.

These agreements are to be regularly reviewed and, when refined, it should be a straightforward matter to re-package the agreement for the whole region. The completed regional agreement could then be included in training and e-learning tools.

Recommendation two: That the HACC Project worker and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer collaborate over time to develop a Grampians Region agreement (based on the examples in the Wimmera and Grampians Pyrenees) should the agencies in the Central Highlands see this as a useful 'next step'.

P R O J E C T C O N C L U S I O N S C O N T I N U E D ...

- 3 **A regional e-learning tool may be a cost effective and practical regional outcome.** All agencies have expressed a clear interest in being involved in training: including receiving or delivering cross cultural training relating to local stories and history. Arrangements are in place for each area to ensure that cultural awareness training takes place, at the very least with HAS Assessment Officers.

HAS agencies, have, however, expressed a need for an 'introductory' learning experience so that all staff can become familiar with the local Aboriginal agency, some cultural history and information on cultural safety. This reflects the reality that it is not feasible for all HACC staff to undertake extensive cultural awareness training.

The idea of developing an e-learning tool for the whole region arose during the project. This tool would involve collating information on each Aboriginal agency (based on existing brochures and web site information) alongside broad, introductory information (based on the information from the Department of Health "Strengthening Aged Care Assessments for Aboriginal Consumers" guide) and some local information that would be provided by each Aboriginal agency.

Recommendation three: That the feasibility of publishing an e-learning tool providing introductory information for all HACC staff be explored as one element of a broader strategy to provide cultural awareness training across the region.

- 4 **The interest in cultural awareness training has been very evident.** All HAS providers have indicated an interest in a range of training opportunities; including:
- ▣ Extensive training in local cultural history for Assessment Officers and a limited number of HACC staff who may be 'designated' as most likely to provide services to an Aboriginal client
 - ▣ Introductory training for all HACC staff – see Recommendation Three above
 - ▣ Training for other sectors of an organisation – for example Council recreation, library or children's services staff.

It is clear that the demand for training is significant.

Recommendation four: That the Department of Health Grampians Region and the Koori Aged and Disability Network Advisory Committee (KADNAC) collaborate on a broad strategy to support all Aboriginal agencies to promote training tools and models of care that focus on culturally appropriate practice in HACC services.

P R O J E C T C O N C L U S I O N S C O N T I N U E D ...

- 5 **Information is an issue for many agencies.** Many agencies have expressed a keen desire to provide all available choices to Aboriginal clients and also expressed a concern that they may not be aware of all options. The idea of producing a very simple pamphlet outlining all HAS and Aboriginal HACC assessment services in the region has arisen. This pamphlet would be limited to simple contact information and would assist Assessment staff to explain the range of options available – a simple illustration being people who live in Beaufort, who may prefer to receive services from BADAC, rather than Budja Budja, given the proximity of Ballarat. (This information would also be replicated in an e-learning tool, if that was a feasible project.)

At this early stage of partnership development such a simple tool would provide Assessment staff and Aboriginal agencies with immediate information that emphasises the choices available.

Recommendation five: That the feasibility of publishing a regional pamphlet providing contact information on all HACC Assessment and Aboriginal services be explored by the HACC Project Worker and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer.

- 6 **The Department of Health is a 'cultural leader' in the region.** The Department of Health is to be acknowledged for a range of activities that provide leadership in the area of reconciliation: this project has been an excellent example.

Throughout the project agencies have been asked to consider activities, in the case of HAS agencies during Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June). Aboriginal agencies have also been encouraged to consider activities during NAIDOC Week (first week in July). It is hoped that this project will lead to sustainable annual activities during these two significant national weeks.

Recommendation six: That the Regional Office consider arranging a Reconciliation Week event in 2013 that brings together the participants from this project in a forum to review / celebrate progress and to formally re-commit to the goals of this partnership project.

P R O J E C T C O N C L U S I O N S C O N T I N U E D ...

- 7 **Agencies need support to implement the wide range of plans completed over the past few years.** All agencies have appreciated that this Partnership Project has resulted in simple, achievable actions.

There is broad acknowledgement that there are 'a lot of plans around', including Active Service Model and Diversity Plans. Agencies are also mindful of additional activities relating to Community Care Common Standards.

One approach to sorting and prioritising actions would be for agencies to broadly 'line up' the action in each plan and identify the actions that appear in more than one plan and would seem to deliver the most effective results. This activity may be best shared amongst other agencies.

Recommendation seven: That the networks supported by the HACC Project Worker (HAS agencies) and the Aboriginal HACC Development Officer (KADNAC) conduct a session to encourage agencies to 'line up' plans relating to this project, Active Service Model and Diversity Planning to seek effective approaches to implementing priority activities in areas such as information sharing, staff development, training and needs identification.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By way of conclusion I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Department of Health partners in this project, Robyn Fletcher and Gary Wingrove.

It is clear that Robyn and Gary are well respected by the members of their networks and that the advice, support and guidance provided by them adds significant value to the work of all agencies. The successful implementation of the activities arising from this Partnership Project will, in large part, be reliant on this supportive relationship and the collaborative approach taken by Robyn and Gary. I am confident that the implementation of key project outcomes is in safe hands.

Finally, all participants in this project are acknowledged for their honesty, time and interest. The positive response to this project bodes well for future partnership links and increased access to services for Aboriginal people in the Grampians region.

Roger Hastrich