our health in our hands
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Chairman’s Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2012-2013. It is with great delight that I am able to report upon the continued development and delivery of high quality primary health care programs, services and initiatives that are directly targeted at tackling the Capes biggest health issues.

We are taking great strides in the development of our infrastructure, ensuring we have the latest technological equipment and using innovation in our service delivery methods with video and multimedia having a huge impact on the involvement of children and young people in health.

Underpinning all of that is our corporate and clinical governance systems. I am pleased to report that our quality systems are now embedded and we are seeing continual improvement as a core activity. We are again able to report sound financial management with our auditors declaring an unqualified audit and we are beginning to consolidate our risk management processes. We have yet again achieved ISO 9001:2008 quality standards and our community controlled health centre in Mossman Gorge retains its AGPAL Accredited status.

I would like to formally acknowledge and thank, Bernie Singleton, my predecessor, who over the past 13 years has made a significant contribution in leading Apunipima on its journey from advocacy organisation to the primary health care delivery organisation we see today.

In my first term as Chair, I hope to emulate and continue the progress we have and ensure we continue to drive the community control agenda and deliver culturally appropriate high quality comprehensive primary health care services to each of our communities well into the future.

THOMAS HUDSON
Chief Executives Foreword

This year has seen Apunipima continue to build our capacity and capability to deliver comprehensive primary health care services across Cape York. We have been concentrating on consolidating and innovating health services underpinned by good governance, clinical, corporate and community. This has enabled us to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in our core business areas.

Our programs continue to attract increasing numbers of clients and our family and community centred model of care has seen traditionally hard to reach groups – men and young people – engage in their own health and health services.

We continue to collaborate with our colleagues at Queensland Health, Royal Flying Doctor Service and the newly formed Medicare Local through joint initiatives to ensure the best health outcomes for the people of Cape York and we remain actively involved with our state and national peak bodies – QAIHC and NACCHO in leading the community control agenda regionally.

Health service infrastructure for clinics and staff accommodation continues to be a challenge for us but the progression of our infrastructure program supported by federal Health and Hospital Funding should lessen the impact over time and allow us to deliver fully community controlled health services in Cape York.
Since its inception Apunipima has grown from a small advocacy organisation to
Apunipima Cape York Health Council emerged out of an indigenous health conference held at Pajinka Wilderness Lodge, near Injinoo, in 1994. The conference was attended by representatives of 17 Cape York communities and associated homelands concerned about poor health status of Cape York Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Apunipima was officially established on 14 September 1994 as a health advocacy organisation, mandated to inform the Cape York Land Council and the ATSIC Regional Council about health issues on Cape York.

In the two decades since its inception Apunipima has grown from a small advocacy organisation to the largest Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in Queensland. With over 120 staff, offices in Cooktown, Mapoon and Coen, the Mossman Gorge health centre and the Kowanyama Mums and Bubs clinic, Apunipima is continuing with its mission to eliminate health inequality on the Cape. Apunipima is now the largest community controlled health organisation in Queensland and delivers a comprehensive primary health care service to 11 Cape York communities. This service includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, outreach midwives, podiatrists, audiologists, physiotherapists, dieticians and nutritionists, diabetes nurse educators, paediatricians and GPs. Apunipima adheres to a family centred model of comprehensive primary health care which sees clients as people embedded in families and communities.
A YEAR IN REVIEW

IN THE PAST YEAR APUNIPIMA HAS ACHIEVED

• A steady increase in access rates to health care services
• An improvement in client care coordination which is reflected by a reduction in episodes of care and increase in client contacts
• Better community engagement which is reflected in a 9% increase in access rates and a reduction in episodes of care
• Increased efficiency which is reflected by a reduction in staff FTE while increasing services
• More than half of the current workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
• Steady income streams

EMPLOYMENT

CLINICAL SERVICES

INCOME
Diabetes needn’t be a life sentence when you’ve ‘Got Suga’

Life in Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal and Laura got a lot sweeter in August when the ‘Got Suga’ mob hit Hope Vale as part of a diabetes workshop for local people.

Type 2 Diabetes, a preventable and manageable disease, is one of the biggest killers in Aboriginal communities.

Over 30 people attended the Hope Vale event which was hosted by Apunipima, Queensland Health and Diabetes Queensland.

‘Got Suga’ takes a new approach to tackling diabetes by inviting participants to work out solutions to their problems through storytelling and role playing. Led by actor and writer Anthony Newcastle, the program is designed to promote change in communities through empowerment and education.

Traditional Hope Vale elder, Clarence Bowen was keen for his people to get involved. Clarence works as a personal carer at the Hope Vale Aged Care Hostel, where many of his clients are on dialysis. He said of diabetes, “It is sad and downright rotten that most of our dialysis clients are young people.

“I have watched, and nursed many of my people (and have attended their funerals). We need to stop this. We must work together and pull out all stops, to make our people realise that diabetes can be stopped.

“Education is one way for people to learn more about the disease, and how to take preventive measures against it. I welcome the ‘Got Suga’ team and I encourage my people to attend and see and hear and take part in the workshop. Don’t be afraid, ask question, share your experience, because it is all about how we can interact with the professionals and get a better health care than what we have now.”

Mayor of Wujal Wujal Clifford Harrigan was also behind the workshop, saying, “I support programs that will empower individuals to gain knowledge and understanding of chronic disease and enable them to take control of their health through self-management.”

Apunipima’s Health Promotion Officer for Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal and Laura Priscilla Gibson said, “Diabetes is not a life sentence; you can live a normal life by getting active, eating healthy foods and learning how you can manage diabetes more effectively.”
Getting to the Core of Life in Weipa

The maternal and child health team held two core of life sessions in Weipa in November at the Western Cape College residential campus.

The family health team, supported by Queensland Health’s Jenny Aspinall and Lynn Steer covered a whole host of topics including the realities of pregnancy, birth and parenting; effects of drugs and alcohol; the importance of a really good diet and exercise and where to get help.

Overall the sessions were well received by the youngsters who were aged between 13 and 17 years who said in their evaluation that Core of Life had:

- Increased their knowledge about choices that need to be made during pregnancy and birth
- Encouraged young mothers to breastfeed
- Increased their understanding of the effects of drugs and alcohol on the unborn child

15 boys and 17 girls participated in discrete sessions led respectively by Men’s Health Team Leader Bernard David and Maternal and Child Health Nurse Educator Rachel Sargeant.

New equipment for new life in the Cape

This year saw Apunipima take delivery of its first ultrasound machine. This is very exciting news for all expectant mum’s in the Cape as it means they will now be able to see their little ones in the community rather than having to come to Cairns.

Although diagnostic tests like Nuchal Screening will still need to be done in Cairns, Apunipima’s midwives were all trained to measure the heartbeat, undertake dating using a variety of methods and identify the sex of the baby amongst other things.

Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Rachel Sargeant said, “This piece of equipment will make a real difference to families in the Cape expecting a new addition. Mum’s and dad’s will get to see the little one as it grows in utero, supporting attachment and bonding and even lifestyle change.”

Partnership working sees BreastScreen Success

Apunipima’s health promotion work around breast screening, particularly with women’s groups and girls’ camps has paid off with nearly 50 per cent more women attending breast screening this July than at the same time last year.

BreastScreen Queensland Health Promotion Officer Rowena Cramp praised Apunipima staff and said, “We aim to continue education and awareness of breast cancer prevention and early detection in between mobile visits to communities and continue to be very grateful for your support with the BreastScreen Queensland program.”

“I believe that the partnership we have been developing has had a strong impact on our screening numbers this year. In July 2011 we screened 124 women – a year later, in July 2012, we screened 219 women, an increase of over 50%.”
Apunipima’s Baby Basket program continues to benefit babies across the Cape with 153 Baby Baskets delivered to families in the first six months. The Baby Basket program sees families receive three ‘baskets’ during the course of their pregnancy, birth and journey into parenthood.

Apunipima’s Child and Maternal Health Team give out the baby baskets to new mums and work with them as throughout pregnancy and through their journey into motherhood, offering advice, support and practical tips on taking care of baby and ensuring both mum and bub are in the best of health.

“The baby baskets are well received and act as an ice breaker, allowing us to share vital health information with the women. Basket number two, given to mothers in Cairns just before or after the birth of the baby, is the most popular. The fruit and vegetable vouchers are great as nutrition needs addressing and the vouchers open a dialogue with the mothers.” – Danielle Weise Midwife

Key to our family and community centred approach to our model of care is the connections and relationships we create within the communities we serve. Mapoon Health Worker, Daphne de Jersey is certainly living up to that with her work in the local school. Having seen her in action through previous activities, head teacher of the school specifically asked Daphne to come to the school and work with the children. Having recently completed her Cert III, Daphne now runs a clinic at the school every Tuesday, really demonstrating health worker led child and ante natal care delivered through a family and community centred approach.

Baby baskets benefit bubs across Cape York
Taking on the challenge of a lifetime – Coke vs Water

The Apunipima nutrition team, health promotion officer and diabetes educator have been supporting people to choose sugar free drinks in Pormpuraaw.

Water is the best choice of drink for everybody but we know that in remote communities for every sugar free drink sold, 12 full sugar soft drinks are purchased.

People who drink a lot of full sugar soft drinks such as Coke often have trouble managing their weight and diabetes.

The Department of Communities Retail Stores Branch and Coca-Cola Amatil are working together to see if they can reduce the consumption of Coke in communities by promoting the sugar free option (Coke Zero) and water. Switching from Coke to Coke Zero can result in improvements in weight and diabetes management, and will hopefully be the stepping stone for people to then switch to water. This project is targeted at adults only, as water and milk are still the only healthy drinks for children.

Apunipima has been supporting this project with activities such as promoting Coke Zero as an alternative to Coke and water as the best choice at in-store promotions and at community events, providing education to community based staff, services and groups about better drink choices, and supporting the Coke Zero challenge at the clinic.

The project in Pormpuraaw is part of a larger project which aims to increase understanding about the types of marketing, pricing, education and community involvement initiatives that are required to reduce consumption of full sugar soft drinks within Cape York and other remote communities in Australia.

The icing on the cake for Coen Young Kids Cooking and Nutrition Group

The Coen Young Kids Cooking and Nutrition group has been awarded a community grant of $4,782 from the 2012 Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Fund, enabling the program to continue throughout 2013.

Dietitian Kirby Murtha said, “The fantastic thing about this grant is that it was awarded to us by the staff of Commonwealth Bank, so a big thank you to them.”

The Coen Young Kids Cooking and Nutrition Group was established in November 2010 with support from Apunipima, school teacher Tammy Gibson, local teachers, parents and Royal Flying Doctor Service Wellbeing Centre staff.

Good nutrition is a major contributor to good health and preventing chronic disease so it is vital to establish healthy eating behaviours early in life. The Coen Young Kids Cooking and Nutrition Group was originally developed to increase nutrition knowledge and cooking skills amongst primary school children through monthly cooking and nutrition education sessions that run at the local Wellbeing Centre.

The Coen Young Kids Cooking and Nutrition Group is an important platform for kids to learn about healthy eating and food safety before they go to boarding school. As well as nutrition, we also talk about physical activity, oral health, social and emotional wellbeing.

The local primary school doesn’t have cooking facilities such as a home economics room or a tuckshop, so we adapt the cooking sessions for the limited resources and equipment that we have at the Wellbeing Centre. The kids have cooked many dishes such as stir-fry, lasagne, sushi and banana cake and enjoy every minute of the preparation, cooking and eating.

The funds received from the 2012 Community Bank Staff Community Fund will be used to purchase much needed cooking equipment and resources for the group. Funds will also be allocated to the development of a community cookbook and an end of year dinner where the kids can showcase their skills to their families and celebrate their achievements.
Kids at Laura State Primary got the opportunity to look at food modelling during a workshop run by Apunipima designed to get young people interested in and understand more about the different food groups.

Using newly purchased kit, the workshop centred on fun and was designed to be interactive to increase the relevancy to the children, and their health literacy.

Specifically, the activity involved the children taking turns in selecting a food model and then attempting to place the model within the correct food group, on a large version of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating and a healthy food pyramid.

This encouraged discussion amongst the children as to the best place to put the models.

After all the food models had been correctly placed, some of the important characteristics of the food groups were discussed.

Principal Karl Gunter was very happy with the involvement from Apunipima and said “I was very pleased with the outcome, the use of models really cemented the students’ knowledge of the food groups as well as discussing some of the important characteristics of the food groups.”
Kowanyama’s Mum’s n Bub’s Centre is a former Queensland Health facility. Apunipima acquired the lease in 2012 and spent a number of months refurbishing the building. The facility will be host to Apunipima, Queensland Health and community programs, meetings and initiatives.

Apunipima’s infrastructure team started work on the building in May and were confronted with a huge task in turning around the disused building.

The end result seeing 3 consult rooms, a reception area, 3 offices, a meeting room, server room, playroom, kitchen, toilets and storage areas. All offices and consult rooms are air-conditioned and the Centre is fully equipped with furniture.

Men’s Health Team Member, Robbie Corrie was instrumental with engaging community people and community services to help deliver this project and will continue to work with community to find a new language name for the centre which is expected to open for business very soon.
Coen Central Remix
[indigenous hip hop projects]

Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP) was proud to partner with Apunipima and the communities of Coen and Mapoon to make deadly music videos that promote strong health messages.

The videos, Coen Central Remix and Old Mapoon Boom Boom Boom, feature the kids, country and culture of the two communities.

Apunipima’s Health Promotion Team and Hip Hop team coordinated the project as part of the Department of Health and Ageing’s Go Physical Be Healthier program which aims to reduce the risk factors of chronic disease in the community.

Apunipima’s multi-disciplinary health team provided information around healthy eating, physical activity, making deadly choices, regular health checks and chronic disease.

The Hip Hop Crew worked with the local community members to build capacity, leadership, knowledge, respect, self-determination and confidence to make changes towards better health and wellbeing.

Exercise Officer Annie Creek, one of the stars of the Coen video, said the project was of benefit to the community.

“It was a lot of fun. We don’t get a lot of these opportunities in Coen. We wrote the song in one night then practiced for two days and travelled out bush. Look out for CJ (with the beautiful voice) in the future!”

Blown away by Lockhart-River’s Kids

Apunipima’s Men’s Health Team got together with a group of kids in Lockhart River to do a music video promoting good hygiene when it comes to coughing and blowing your nose. Five students from the Lockhart River State Primary School were shining stars in the video “Wipe Your Neeyi by the Lockhart River mob” The Apunipima team shared with the kids how important it is to blow your nose and the effects it has on your ears.

The video is designed to help kids get in the habit of blowing their nose as it is one way to reduce ear infections that lead to deafness. The music video stars Mashonda Accoom – vocals, Nguumpii, Barney Claudie, Herbert Moses, Telsey Hobson, Zoe Adams and Troy Brown. The team also took the opportunity to share with the kids how important it is to eat fruit and vegies with Matt Topping, Dietician showing them how much fun they can have while preparing a healthy meal. Men’s Health Team Leader, Bernard David said, “It was a fantastic day and we got a fantastic product from it that we can share with other communities. I would like to thank all of the kids involved.” To view the video please visit our website at Apunipima.org.au
Apunipima’s Diabetes Educator Bernadette Heenan provides services to clients in Mapoon, Napranum and Mossman Gorge.

Inspired by Apunipima’s commitment to continuous improvement, Bernadette developed an innovative way to improve client’s experience. When asked what continual improvement means to her Bernadette said, “To me it means three things, never having to worry about an audit (because we are always trying to get things right as part of our everyday practice), seeking workable solutions to obstacles and always looking for better ways to do things.”

Due to the number of services going into Mapoon and the limited space available for service delivery, Bernadette had to consult with clients in the corridor outside the staff toilet in the Queensland Health Clinic using a dressing trolley as a table.

“I was seeing a 12 year old client when the QLD Health Minister came for a visit and his Personal Assistant was shocked to realise she had to interrupt us as she rushed to the loo,” Bernadette explained.

“Sitting in this spot, I used to feel wiped out at the end of each day – the air-con didn’t reach this area properly so it was quite stifling. I knew there must be another way to do things and so with the help of Apunipima’s Quality Team, Infrastructure Manager and Queensland Health staff we looked for solutions to this problem.”

A quick and easy solution presented itself and Apunipima has now purchased four fold-out tables for Mapoon and Napranum. The table Bernadette now uses in Mapoon (though still in the hallway) is in a spot where the air circulates. The Chronic Disease and Family Health teams also utilise the Mapoon tables while the ones in Napranum allow multiple health providers to share a room when other visiting specialists are in town, or to utilise their hallway for breezy consults.

**Which Way? A Better Way**

**Breakfast on the Go......**

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it provides the necessary fuel to work, learn, exercise and play.

To help our clients have access to a good brekkie, the Client Transfer Department has acquired continental breakfast packs, to issue to those patients who arrive in Cairns that are either short of money or arrive too late at night to purchase breakfast items. The pack contains cereal, UHT milk a small fruit juice, a pack of fruit and nuts and a bottle of water.

It is hoped that it will make some difference to the wellbeing of our people by taking some of that added pressure of leaving the community behind and coming to Cairns for appointments.
Over the past year our workforce has increased by a further 5% reflecting the confidence of our funders in our ability to deliver primary health care services in Cape York. Since 2007 our workforce has increased over 600% (from 17 in 2007 to 116 headcount as at 30 June 2013) and we have a turnover rate of 20% which is well below health industry benchmarks which trend significantly higher than this in rural and remote settings.

Our workforce profile continues to exceed key Australian health benchmarks. With 53% of our workforce identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander compared with 1.6% of the national health workforce, it reflects Apunipima’s reputation amongst other community controlled health organisations, as employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

We are proud to boast Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation across all occupational groups, organisational functions and at all levels within the organisation.

The age distribution of our workforce sees over two thirds of our staff aged 45 or younger which strongly supports our ability to achieve a sustainable and stable workforce and a return on training investment.

Apunipima has continued to strengthen relationships and our reputation with the clinical bodies and vocational training sector. Over the last year we have continued to increase the number of clinical trainee placements with the approved registrar training runs and registrar placements and nutrition students.

To cement our reputation as an employer of choice we successfully agreed and implemented an Apunipima Enterprise Agreement which ensures our employment terms and conditions continue to support Apunipima’s context, values and family and community centred primary health care service delivery philosophy and increasing the numbers of and capacity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people entering and working in the primary health care workforce and living and working in Cape York communities.

Apunipima enters hall of fame for work in Quality Improvement and Accreditation

2012 saw Apunipima achieve its second entry into the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council’s hall of fame for our work on Quality Improvement and Accreditation. Apunipima was presented the award for Quality Improvement and Accreditation at the QAIHC 2012 Hall of Fame Dinner in Brisbane. The award, recognises the dedication, passion and commitment of all Apunipima staff in delivering quality primary healthcare services to the people of Cape York. This is Apunipima’s second foray into the QAIHC hall of fame as deadly doc Mark Wenitong was inducted in 2010 for his lifelong commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders.

QAIHC established the Hall of Fame in 2008 to formally recognise and honour the dedication and commitment of individuals and organisations to the establishment and expansion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services in Queensland.

The Hall of Fame acknowledges the struggles and achievements of those who have provided a platform for the present day sector to build upon and continue to support their communities to improve their health and well-being.