

ANNUAL REPORT

2008/09 and 2009/10

VISION

The vision of Apunipima Cape York Health Council is:

Cape York communities own solutions to live long healthy lives,
strengthening our culture and regaining our spirit.

MISSION

We aim to achieve our vision through:

Eliminating health inequalities

Strengthening community control of health outcomes
Increasing access to culturally appropriate services

Educating better

Advocating for communities
Influencing social issues that impact on health

VALVES

We aim to achieve our mission through:

Respect and honesty

Focusing on community

Responsibility for action

Motivation and striving to achieve

Promoting a positive attitude and sense of hmour

Integrity and loyalty

Understanding and agreement

Harmony

Fairness

Inclusiveness

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Welcome to the annual report for 2008/09 and 2009/10. The last two years have been a period of incredible growth for Apunipima. We have gone from 30 employees to 85 employees and from an advocacy only organisation to a health service delivery organisation.

It has been an exciting time to be a member of Apunipima and see our strategic vision begin to come to fruition. Slowly but surely the direction set by the Board and implemented by our Senior Managers is beginning to have a real impact.

We have a full complement of chronic disease services, have expanded our maternal and child health team and have a burgeoning community development unit. Our presence in Cape York has been strengthened with the introduction of three Primary Health Care managers, one each in Mossman Gorge, Coen and Mapoon and we also have community GP services in Hopevale and Mossman Gorge.

Our Maternal and Child Health service has been expanded and enhanced with health workers based in most communities, supported by fly in fly out men's and women's health workers, child and maternal health nurses and educators and midwives. We have developed and implemented more programs designed to improve the health and wellbeing of families in Cape York including Core of Life, Baby Baskets, Fruit and Veg voucher scheme amongst others.

We have continued to make great strides in beginning to transition services to community control, working with our partners to fulfil our obligations under the 2006 Deed of Commitment.

Working in partnership with the Far North Queensland Rural Division of General Practice, Apunipima successfully transitioned the comprehensive primary health care initiative from the Division and are now delivering a range of chronic disease services in Cape York communities.

As the lead agency for community controlled health services in Cape York, we are continuing to work with our partners and communities to continue momentum and next year expect to transition the comprehensive primary health care initiative from the Royal Flying Doctor Service to Apunipima.

In the meantime we are continuing to work with state and commonwealth government and our peak body Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council to take forward this agenda. All were involved in the Cape York Health Conference held in March 2010 where community members from the 17 Cape York communities attended a conference held in Palm Cove and hosted by Apunipima to look at community control and what it meant to communities themselves.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Over 150 community members took part in the four day conference, discussing all aspects of community control with the outcomes being used to inform Apunipima's community development strategy that we intend to publish next year.

One added bonus of the conference was not only that community members reaffirmed Apunipima's mandate to be the lead agency for community control in Cape York, but our grass roots governers, Health Action Teams, took a real impetus from the conference and have become much more active and are quite rightly demanding support and infrastructure in order to operate in the way in which we intended.

Our focus over the past two years has been establishing ourselves as a community controlled health organisation and the next few years are going to be one of consolidation and growth so when full transition to community control happens we are ready and community do not suffer as a result.

Apunipima has achieved a lot in the past two years and it has not been without its challenges but each challenge has been overcome by the consistent hard work and dedication of the staff and managers who are committed to seeing Cape York communities own solutions to live long healthy lives and strengthen their spirit.

B. Single (on)
Bernie Singleton
Chairman



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We have come so far since Pajinka in September 1994 and are on the verge of realising our vison.

Apunipima is the first Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation covering Cape York and is a new model in Aboriginal health services.

We have worked hard to ensure our development has been underpinned by comprehensive research; based on valid data and health indicators; that our strategy development is

evidence-based and always underpinned by a groundup approach reflecting 'for the people by the people'.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are committed to working with the community and mainstream health system to coordinate improved health service delivery. While initially, we were looking to fill the gaps in services as prioritised by the communities that make up our membership, the health reforms over the past few years have now provided the focus for Apunipima to assume the full responsibility for health service delivery.

Our Board has had the courage to be visionary in its approach and provide the strategic governance required for the organisation to develop capacity and capability to meet the challenges ahead. We believe the key to more efficient and effective comprehensive primary health care and improved health outcomes across Cape York is to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led, strategic approach to health programs and health program delivery. It is a reflection of the quality, professionalism, and innovation of Apunipima staff that we now have a model which reflects an evidence-based, systematic model of primary health care.

Apunipima could not have achieved what it has without the vision, drive and commitment of its Board members, who have, alongside staff, worked tirelessly in progressing our agenda to improve the health of our people.

By building relationships with other service providors, influencing decision makers, and working with communities, we have been able to develop a health system that is driven by local health priorities.

Cleveland Fagan Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Direction of the board

Reduce gap in life expectancy

Make sure the right services are in the right place

Improve access to services

Reduce the number of people who have to go to hospital when the don't need to Reduce the rates of diabetes and other chronic diseases

Reduce the number of preventable deaths



ABOUT US

Apunipima means "United - All in One" in Injinoo Ikya language. Its name was given by a now deceased elder from Injinoo at the meeting at Pajinka Lodge where people from Cape York communities gathered to look at what was needed to improve the health of their communities. Their view was that to improve the health of our people, the people need to control their own health system.

The representatives from 17 communities of Cape York and associated Homelands held the four day health conference to look at the lack of improvement in the health status of Cape York Aboriginal people. Representatives resolved to make the move to form the Health Council.

Apunipima Cape York Health Council is the lead agency representing the health needs of Cape Communities.

Since that time the organisation has tripled in size from a small group of 15 to now over 80 staff located in premises at McCoombe Street, Cairns and within local Cape York communities.

The staff and the Board are constantly working to create an environment that will facilitate an improvement in the health of individuals and communities in Cape York.

Although initially providing leadership in health advocacy and consultation, Apunipima has now implemented a program of primary health care delivery to the communities in Cape York via its Primary Health Care Unit.

This service now includes Aboriginal health workers, outreach midwives, podiatrists, audiologists, physiotherapists, dieticians and nutritionists, diabetes nurse educators and several doctors. Nearly all Indigenous health workers are based in Cape York communities with a particular priority on delivering high quality and appropriate maternal and child health services directly to Cape York communities.

The emphasis on maternal and child health reflects both our funding, New Directions (Federal) and Making Tracks (State-based) and our four priority areas in health care, which include maternal and child health, chronic disease, social and emotional wellbeing and alcohol, tobacco and substance

Apunipima is developing a leading role in population health and targeted health service program delivery. This includes adolescent and adult health screening and targeted health service, initiatives focusing on child and maternal health.

Apunipima also provides an increasing range of direct clinical support to Cape York primary health care through these programs and an increasing emphasis on directly preventing and supporting excellence in adult health care delivery particularly as it relates to adult chronic non-communicable disease in remote Cape York communities.

Apunipima is committed to working with communities and the mainstream health system to coordinate improved health service delivery, and to fill gaps in services as prioritised by the communities that make up its membership.

GOOD GOVERNANCE MAKES APVNIPIMA A 'LOW RISK' ORGANISATION

In May 2010 Apunipima was subject to a Risk Assessment conducted by OATSIH (Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health) on behalf of the Department of Health and Ageing. The audit assessed Apunipima's systems and processes in four areas against 53 standards.

The four areas are:

Management Structures
Management Standards
Control, monitoring and review
Accountability and financial management

Having been assessed against the standards, Apunipima was found to be a 'low risk' organisation and were able to satisfy the minimum criteria against almost all of the standards.

The only standard where minimum criteria was not met is Criteria 4.35 under Section 4, Accountability and financial management and this standard requires the organisation to have had an AGM within the last 12 months.

As members are aware, Apunipima has submitted an action plan detailing the steps involved in achieving this standard that has been accepted by OATSIH.

Apunipima has shown significant improvement since its last assessment and as a result of being classified low risk this time, will next undergo an assessment in two years" time.

TAKING A FAMILY CENTERED APPROACH TO HEALTH CARE

2010 saw the publication of Senior Medical Officer, Dr Mark Wenitong's discussion paper - Comprehensive Primary Health Care and a Family Centred Approach. In it he outlines the model of care that Apunipima is going to deliver in order to improve health outcomes in Cape York communities.

Poor health outcomes and low life expectancy continue to affect the lives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Cape York. With a few exceptions health outcomes have changed little over the past twenty years, in spite of the best efforts of many excellent health providers.

Different approaches need to be developed and evaluated to address these health discrepancies.

Australian evidence is available from Hoy and others to show that real health gains can be made in remote Aboriginal communities by systematic primary health care services.

Apunipima believes the key to more efficient and effective primary health care and improved health outcomes across Cape York is to develop an Indigenous led, consistent, strategic approach to health programs and health program delivery, and the articulation of these with evidence based, planned, model of primary health care.

Primary health care planned at local community level, based on relevant data and local need, and community ownership of this model are important elements that ensure effectiveness.

These local health plans need to drive regional strategy and planning - a ground up approach. Visiting programs and regional strategy can only be as effective as the local primary health care model they are delivered within.

In Cape York, this requires a lead agency with community ownership, cultural resonance, strong leadership in planning, coordination and delivery of health services, as well as the facility for effective ongoing engagement at local community level. Apunipima can lead this innovation.

This model requires effective federal and state relationships and funds pooling to ensure sustainability, which is consistent with the new Australian Government health reforms. A quality improvement approach which aims for excellence for Cape York primary health care services is part of this model, as is a framework for Aboriginal health workforce development.

The two key aspects are a comprehensive or 'holistic' community controlled primary health care model and a family centred approach at community level.

The comprehensive primary health care model deals with health system reform and the Family Centred approach ensures systematic engagement of the target population.

Over the coming months Apunipima will be working towards implementing this model across all disciplines and across all communities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

From Pajinka to Palm Cove

In March 2010 Apunipima played host to over 140 delegates at the Cape York Health Conference. Held in Palm Cove the conference addressed the specific core health services needed by individual Cape communities, the obstacles to community residents accessing quality health services and the benefits to improving health services under the proposed Aboriginal community controlled model.

Although any change in delivery model is subject to approval by Queensland Health, throughout the conference a series of workshops were held with community members to tackle each of these issues and the outcomes were collated and summarised as follows:

Key themes around barriers to access were:

- the language used and attitudes of providers and lack of culturally appropriate staff and services;
- poor infrastructure in terms of buildings, size and number clinic rooms, availability
 of accommodation and vehicles for staff;
- the quality, sustainability and availability of services and
- the lack of health information available be it health promotion, information on services and information on medication.



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When deciding what community control should look like there was a clear mandate for Health Action Teams to deliver community control. There was also a concern about the name 'community control' with many wanting to change it to a community language name that reflects ownership, self-determination, empowerment, responsibility, accountability, involvement, flexibility, community driven, partnership.

Essentially delegates agreed that Community Control in Cape York should be delivered by Health Action Teams that could make decisions, that are supported by infrastructure, who are accountable and responsible to the community and made up of the wider community - engaging partners and hard to reach groups like young people.

Health Action teams should be able to shape and control the way services are provided through an open and transparent process where strong governance is in evidence.



Interestingly it was also a common theme that services that are provided under community control do not necessarily have to be staffed by community members as in some cases it was felt inappropriate for them to be so.

What was important however is that services need to be run and managed by the local community and that they are flexible and tailored specifically for that community. Anyone delivering services in the community should also be required to sign up to a code of conduct in terms of their approach to delivery and the language and terminology used when in community.

One of the things to be highlighted as most important was that there needed to be the same structure and framework for each community and that a criteria and measures for readiness of communities to assume community control be established.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Finally the delegates were asked to set out what needed to be in place to make Health Action Teams sustainable, including training, learning and development needs.

Membership was raised in every workshop as an important issue with a particular emphasis being placed on making sure there is a good cross section of the community represented.

Making sure that there is a clear framework, structure and terms of reference for each Health Action Team was seen as vitally important along with clear objectives for each supported by a clear plan for implementation.

Support and infrastructure in terms of mentoring, promotion and marketing and dedicated support for each team was also raised as a key priority alongside the support and acceptance of the authority of Health Action Teams to make decisions and have the time to deliver their objectives from the community, clinical team, partners, providers and most importantly employers.







Networking on a local, regional and national level was identified as a need in order for Health Action Teams to learn from each other, collaborate on programs and receive support and guidance from those who had gone through the process before.

There was a vast array of training, learning and development needs identified ranging from literacy and numeracy to governance and clinical data analysis.

The outcome from this conference will set the strategic direction for Apunipima in terms of establishing a plan of action to try and deliver all that has been identified as needed.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Health Action Teams

Health Action Teams are Apunipima's grass roots governance, the voice in community holding the organisation accountable for the health of individual communities.

Over the past two years, the community engagement team has been working with communities to develop sustainable health action teams in Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Aurukun, Mapoon, Napranum, Wujal Wujal, Hopevale, Mossman Gorge, Lockhart River and Coen.

Throughout 2009 each member of the health action team took part in Building Healthy Community Capacity and Development Training giving them the skills to operate as a functioning committee that is empowered to question, challenge and hold Apunipima accountable for service delivery in communities.

Introduce culture into health
Grass roots governance of Apunipima
Made up of local people and health professionals
Accountable to the local community
Identify the needs of the community as a whole
Influence and shape service delivery
Improve health outcomes









MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

In Wujal, small steps make a big impact .. itís as easy as ABCDE

In the short space of year the child and maternal health team working in Wujal Wujal have, been able to improve health outcomes for children and their carers by increasing the number of child health checks, brief interventions and advice to carers and scheduled services to children.

With Wujal Wujal receiving dedicated support from a Child Health Nurse and Midwife, from April 2009, the child and maternal health team have managed to make significant improvements by not only undertaking health checks but also establishing links with the school, planning to conduct cooking classes, engaging with clinic staff and involving carers in their child's health.

Over the course of a year, the number of children receiving child health checks has increased by 51% meaning that almost all Wujal children have received a child health check (92%).

By using the whole team approach, advice is also being given to carers and parents on nutrition, the dangers of passive smoking, infection prevention, physical and mental stimulation, domestic social environment and hygiene and oral health.

Uptake of scheduled services has also increased with all children having their development assessed and receiving eye examinations and routine blood tests.

Increased the number of completed child health checks in Wujal Wujal between 2008 and 2009 from 41% to 94%

School Screening Success in Pormpuraaw

Apunipima's Child and Maternal Health Team, working in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Queensland Health spent the month of June 2010 undertaking a complete school screening at Pormpuraaw school (prep to grade 6).

In total 74 kids we screened and the team were able to pick up many hearing, visual ,and skin problems that may well have been missed otherwise.

The headmaster told us that this is the first school screening that has occurred in the school for 25 years so we are thrilled to have been able to provide the service. Such was its success the screening is now set to be an annual occurrence. That was not the end of Apunipima's relationship with the school however as the head master has requested education sessions on various health related issues for terms three and four.



Baby baskets bring support to Cape York Mums

Apunipima's Maternal and Child Health Team introduced a program called "Baby Basket's" to help support mums in Cape York before they have their baby, when they have to come to Cairns and have their child and a couple of months afterwards. Each mother gets a total of three 'baskets' each containing supplies and equipment they will need in the late stages of their pregnancy and beyond.

Baby Basket 1 contains all the things mum might need before she comes to Cairns to give birth like a washbag, toothpaste, soap and washers.

Baby Basket 2 contains all the things mum might need once she has given birth like nappies, baby grows, bibs, burping cloth, face washers, towels, cotton wool balls, nursing pads etc.

Baby Basket 3 contains all the things bub might need and is given to mum once bub is six months old. It contains things like baby toothbrush and toothpaste, baby food, developmental toys and sippy cup, bowl and spoon.





MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Community based Maternal and Child Health Workers

Fulfilling its commitment and strategic objectives to support increased capacity and capability in community, Apunipima now has community based Maternal and Child Health Workers in Aurukun, Pormpuraaw, Mapoon, Napranum, Coen and Kowanyama.

Working alongside Child and Maternal Health Nurses from the Royal Flying Doctor Service,

Queensland Health and Apunipima, the community based health workers are supported in their development by

a range of learning from formal training, workshops and on the job learning.

By living and working in community they are much better placed to provide continuous care to community members whilst being able to support them to access specialist services when needed.



Fruit and Veg Vouchers

Nutrition in Cape York has long been a struggle particularly with the price and availability of fresh fruit and vegetables. To help combat this, particularly for expectant and breast feeding mothers, Apunipima introduced the Fruit and Veg voucher scheme.

Working with stores in communities, Apunipima's child and maternal health workers issue new and expectant mum's with vouchers to the value of \$40 dollars a time to be spent on fresh fruit and veg in the stores.

Only redeemable for fruit and veg, store owners make sure they have fresh fruit and veg available and mum's are able to have access to the fresh fruit and veg they need to keep them healthy throughout their pregnancy.

The scheme is running in Aurukun, Coen, Hopevale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon Mossman Gorge, Napranum, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal.



CHRONIC DISEASE

First steps to community control become a reality

2010 saw Apunipima begin to expand its service delivery programs with the transition of funding for the Improved Primary Health Care Initiative delivered by the Far North Queensland Rural Division of General Practice to Apunipima.

As the funding for that program transitioned, positions covered by that funding also transitioned including podiatrists, diabetes nurse educators, community health engagement officers, a medical officer and dieticians.

Since that time, Apunipima have been delivering the program and have expanded their Chronic Disease team to include a physiotherapist, health workers and health promotion officers

Transition of health services in Cape York to community control was cemented in 2006 when a Deed of Commitment was signed by Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Queensland Health, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Department of Health and Ageing, Queensland Ambulance Service the Far North Queensland Division of General Practice and Mookai Rosie.

The Deed of Commitment was a binding pledge by all the organisations to transition primary health care services in Cape York communities to community control by 30 June 2011.

Promoting community control is a key principle of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and is considered best practice for the planning of primary health care services. It has been proven in other nations to improve health outcomes for aboriginal peoples

A key component of the success of the task set under the Deed was that funding and primary health care resources transitioned to Apunipima.

When the Improved Primary Health Care Initiative was originally established in Cape York, the Department of Health and Ageing who fund the program, made it clear to providers that at some point the funding would transition to community control.

The Department of Health and Ageing continue to fund the Royal Flying Doctor Service to deliver the Primary Health Care Initiative Program but that is expected to transition in 2011.

For the moment chronic disease services are delivered by Apunipimaís Chronic Disease team to Mapoon, Napranum, Hopevale, Wujal Wujal and Mossman Gorge.

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COMMUNITY HEALTH

Building Capacity and Capability in Community

Primary Care in community took a great leap forward in 2009 with the appointment of Primary Health Care Managers in in three communities.

Mossman Gorge welcomed Sharryll Ellington, Mapoon saw the arrival of Lou Akenson and Louise Pratt set up shop in Coen.

Their role is designed to build capacity and capability within to community to support members to take community control of the health services they receive.



Working with Health Action Teams and other health service providers, the now called Clinic Coordinators both live and work within the communities within which they serve giving them a real ability to work with community members to shape local health services.

With the hard work being put in by all three each of these communities are a step closer to assuming community control of their health services.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Health surges across Cape York

Throughout the months of May and June 2010, Apunipima, working alongside staff from Queensland Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service undertook health checks in a number of communities across Cape York. Over 300 adults and children were screened during this period with the majority being male, one of our traditionally hard to reach groups.



In total 343 health checks were undertaken across five communities and two schools. Particular acknowledgement must be given to the following staff for their contribution to this magnificent effort: Bobby Adidi, Lomas Amini, Robbie Corrie, Bernard David, Kathi Gibson-Steffenson, Robert Laidlaw (Medical Student), Louise Pratt, Klem Rosandich, Myra Spurling, Danielle Weise, Dr Mark Wenitong, Laurie West (Casual RN) and Ramona Williams.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Advocacy

Apunipima continues to maintain its advocacy role and in 2009 prepared a detailed feasibility study into patient transport services within, to and from Cairns for the people of Cape York communities.

The aim of the report was to identify the gaps in the patient transport subsidy scheme and it found that there was a huge gap. Evidence shows that by providing an effective transport service between community, the airport, appointment and return to the airport not only reduces stress and anxiety but also increases access to health services and aids more rapid recovery from treatment.

Transport is vital part of the patient journey, and should form part of the health care continuum. The evidence of its benefits as outlined in the study were so persuasive that it was submitted to local members of state and commonwealth government for consideration but at this time Apunipima continues to advocate for an effective patient transport service.

Apunipima continues to advocate on behalf of the people of Cape York and by working with partners and funders both locally and regionally, Apunipima uses its advocacy role to improve health for the people of Cape York communities.



Government panel grilled by community members at the Cape York Health Conference

CORPORATE SERVICES

Putting people first

Apunipima's HR Team have had their work cut out over the last two years with the rapid expansion of the organisation and the continuing change in focus from advocacy to service delivery.

Since 2006 Apunipima has significantly increased its workforce by 79%. From 21 in 2006 to 85 in 2010.

Now employing 6 doctors (3 delivering services to communities), 80% of staff are involved in direct service delivery positions with over half of all staff based in community.

Boasting a full complement of health care professionals, Apunipima has six Medical Officer, 15 Nurses, 9 Allied Health Professionals including Diabetes Nurse Educators, Dieticians, Podiatrists, Physiotherapists, 18 Health Workers, with the majority based in community, four community engagement staff, three health promotion staff, 11 admin staff supporting all of the units and 19 Corporate staff (including program managers and project specific roles) managing finance and payroll, HR, Quality, Communications, Infrastructure and IT.

All staff are subject to a rigorous evidence based recruitment process and once employed undergo a robust induction to ensure they are the right fit for Apunipima and Cape York communities alike.

Apunipima continues to strive to being a best practice employer becoming the first Aboriginal company to be accredited as a Family and Breastfeeding Friendly organisation and continuing to partner with key organisations to encourage and develop young people into a career in health in the Cape.

New base of operations

So big was staff expansion in the period 2008 to 2010 that the premises in Anderson Street became too small so Apunipima moved its base of operations to the old Southern Cross Ten building at McCoombe Street, Bungalow.

Now home to almost 100 staff, the premises boast state of the art facilities enabling staff to be supported in their clinical duties.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Using technology to support service delivery

In 2008 Apunipima was operating with one server that supported a diverse range of workstation hardware that was purchased in an ad-hoc manner. Additionally, the workstation software varied in the type of operating system and versions of Microsoft Office.

Now in 2010 Apunipima has adopted a standard operating environment based on the latest operating system from Microsoft - Windows 7 - and the latest office product - Microsoft Office 2010. The deployment models adopted enable the IT services to configure a workstation in under an hour.

The network environment has been stabilised with the implementation of a security accredited Wide Area Network (WAN) compliant to ISO 27001 that connects the Cairns Office to offices in Cape York and mobile staff working on 3G modems.

The servers now reside on a virtual cluster that provides an efficient, redundant and scalable environment that consolidates multiple under-utilised physical servers leveraging reduced space and power which delivers significant cost savings for operations and management.