

Yarn Up

Aboriginal Careers in Mental Health Initiative

Edition 4, September 2013



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What's On

Group A Block 3: 23 – 27
September 2013, Tranby College

Trainee network meeting: 18
September 2013, 12.30-2pm

Employer Network Meeting:
11am-12.30pm, October 2013
Date to be advised

Group C Block 2: 14-17 October
2013, Tranby College

MHCC News

Training update

Group C's first block assessments have been flowing in, well done! Group B has participated in their second block of training. They had lots of fun driving to a home visit (photos below), and looking at discrimination and inclusion.

We are looking forward to Group A starting Block 3, which will cover:

- Working with Aboriginal People;
- Cultural Diversity;
- Law and Ethics; and
- Assess and Respond to Suicide.

Mentors and STS Resources

State Training Services have finished rolling out the Cultural Diversity workshops. Thanks to RichmondPRA and SFNSW who supported STS in organising the pilot workshops in Nowra. Greg Harwood said "Everyone agreed the way Neil and Michelle delivered and managed each aspect of the program was brilliant ..."

STS's Aboriginal Employment Unit is disbanding due to the end of their project time frame, however your mentors will remain the same. They will now sit under "The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People Mentoring Program" within DEC.

Trainee Network

The first meeting of the trainee network was held by teleconference on 24th July. People got to know each other, we talked about the purpose of the Terms of Reference, and develop a draft Terms of Reference for the Network.

Everyone was very enthusiastic, and all mastered the new skill of participating in teleconferences. We learned not to hit the hold button (elevator music ensues), and to identify ourselves before talking.

Program evaluations

An external consultant is conducting a review of the ACIMH program, and her mid-point report is due in December 2013. Feedback from trainees, supervisors and managers will be sought.

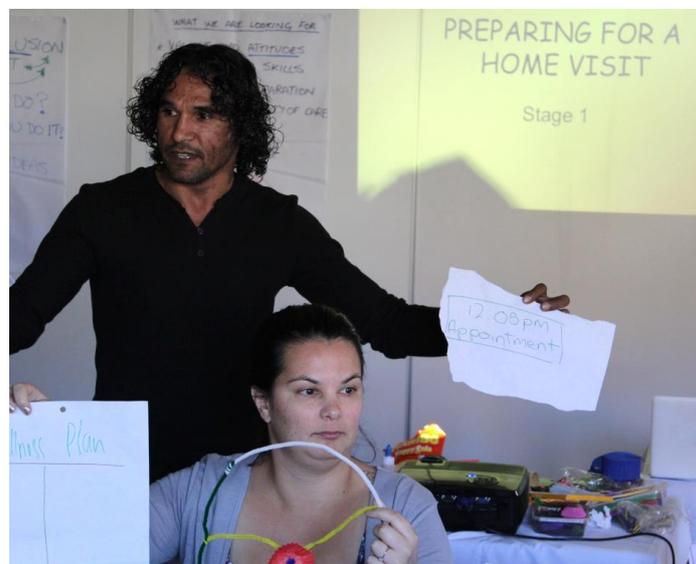
Trainees and supervisors will have the opportunity to participate in (separate) focus groups by phone, if they choose.

New website

MHCC has a new website. The ACIMH page is at www.mhcc.org.au/sector-development/workforce-development/aboriginal-careers-initiative.aspx



The home you're visiting... What's it like? Jess, Jess and Mick.



Preparing for a home visit: Rachel in the car, Anthony explaining.



Trainee Profiles

What's your name and mob?

Jaru-Miah Dunn, Connors Mob from Inverell

Favourite hobby?

Art & Music

Who has inspired you and why?

Parents, family and community elders

What were you doing before the traineeship?

Studied arts and sociology

What inspired to apply for position?

I've always wanted to be in a position to help others in need of support

What do you like most about your job?

Being in the field within the community.

What difficulties are there for Aboriginal People re Mental Health?

Stigma and isolation

Any inspirational words?

Never underestimate yourself or doubt the ability of self belief.



Above: Jaru Dunn

What's your name and mob?

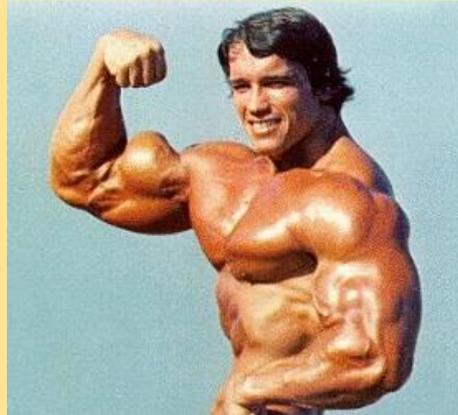
Steve (Trikilis)

Favourite hobby?

Gym

Who has inspired you and why?

Arnie cause he's a beast (below).



What were you doing before the traineeship?

Youth work and Support work (mental health)

What inspired to apply for position?

Passion to help people

What do you like most about your job?

You get to help people

What difficulties are there for Aboriginal People re Mental Health?

Culture and education

Any inspirational words?

Failure is not an option. Everyone has to succeed.



Above: Trent with cake for Steve and Ramona's birthdays last block.

What's your name and mob?

Trent Kilby, proud Wiradjuri mob from Dubbo country.

What were you doing before the traineeship?

Labour work, CTG (closing the gap) on Chronic illness

What inspired to apply for position?

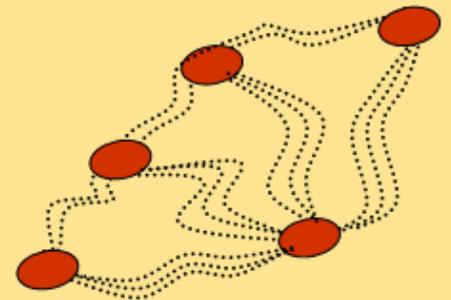
Family members and our people in my area, who have been doing their best to improve the community.

What do you like most about your job?

Seeing positive changes in people's health. Persons seeing an extra reason to fulfil their lives.

Any inspirational words?

Our people are not alone, don't be worried about asking for help. We were raised to be there for our people.





Organisation Profile



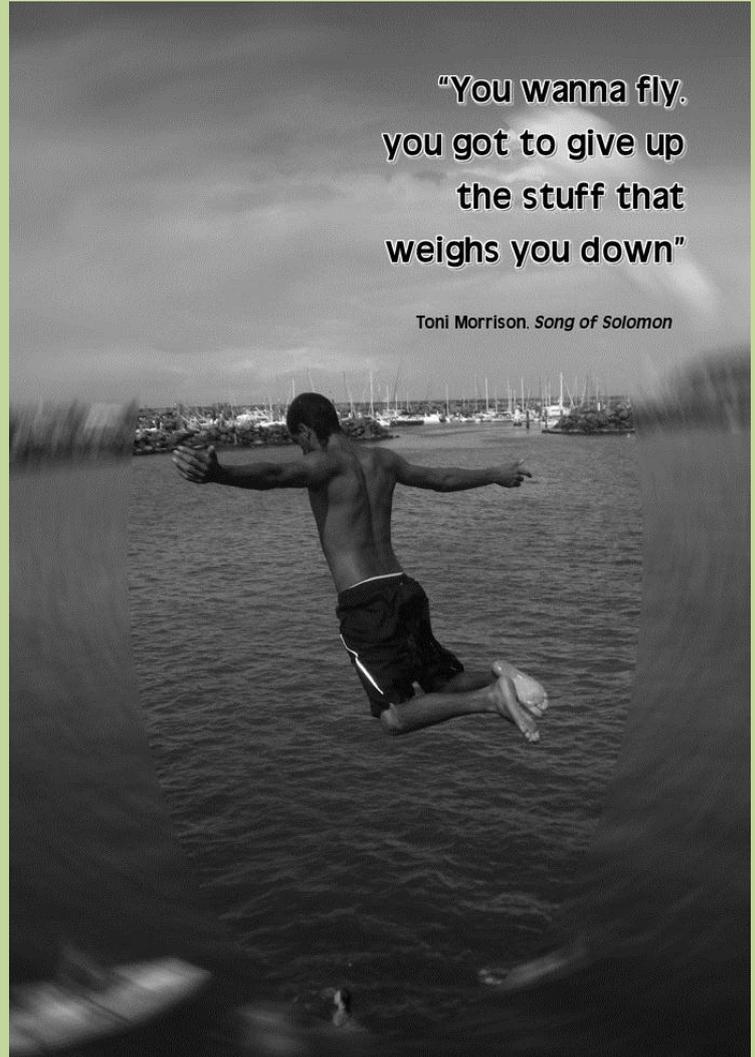
Junaa Buwa! is Mission Australia's co-morbid youth Service in Coffs Harbour. Junaa Buwa! offers a three month program for young people of ages 13-18 with mental health and drug or alcohol problems.

Residents participate in daily education groups about a range of topics, such as alcohol and other drugs, decision-making, and life-skills.

We have up to 8 residents at any one time. Residents receive specialized counselling, and enjoy regular gym sessions and outdoor recreation.

Our Trainee Phanessa is part of the residential team and contributes to activities and groups in all components of our program. She's doing a great job, and we love having her.

There is also a six month 'aftercare' phase where clients will receive support to carry out the plans they have created, such as relapse prevention, re-engagement with further education or work as appropriate.



"You wanna fly,
you got to give up
the stuff that
weighs you down"

Toni Morrison. *Song of Solomon*

Photo: Buwa! participant at Coffs Harbour Jetty

We also have Outreach Programs that work with local youth who are at risk in our community and their families and parents. Check out our video, the password is "mission". <http://vimeo.com/52264460>.

By Carolyn Heise

Farewells and exit interviews

We have said farewell recently to some trainees. Most of these trainees have been willing to reflect on and offer feedback on their experiences as trainees in the ACIMH program, as part of formal "exit interviews". This feedback helps MHCC to revise and improve the program, and is greatly appreciated. It will also inform the project evaluation (all comments will be de-identified).

Most trainees were positive about the program, the training, the people they met, and the impact it had on their future opportunities. Some also made comments for improvement.

Where are they now?

- Alan Bennett has returned to country to work as an AOD worker with Orana Haven.
- Terrence Murphy is heading to the mines in WA to make his fortune!
- Beverly Ward, Adrian Dodds, Petina Smith, Richard Phillips and William Munro have also all exited the program.

We say farewell to all these trainees, thanks for your participation in the program, and good luck for your future life, work and study.



Trainer interview: Thomas Franks

Where are you from?

I'm a Wonnarua man – from the other side of Maitland. My Dad and co have been on country for ever and a day. My mum came through Parramatta Girls home – not through her own or her family's choice. I lived on country at Mount Olive, about 50km from Singleton, next to the Black Camp, till I was 15 years old, we still have continuous family connection to that place right up till today. I'm married and have a son.

What is your story?

I say I have two lives – one from before, and the life I have now. By the time I was 15, I was taking hard drugs. I went to jail a couple of times, and life was pretty catastrophic. When I was 28, I went into rehab for 9 months, which showed me a new way of life – a "normal way of life". Nine years ago, I started my education (before that, I couldn't read or write). I did my Cert IV in AOD, then in Mental Health. I worked at the rehab I went through (WHOS). Three years ago I became PHaMS coordinator at New Horizons. Then I did my Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management. I coordinate Program Support of 5 staff with a client load of 52 participants (and their families) – all indigenous families.

What does "recovery" mean to you?

It's the new track in life. I have two wolves sitting beside me; one is recovery and the other is my illness. I have the power to feed these wolves, however now I can pick which one I feed. Having knowledge of my illness helps me keep track of where I am and the support I need to get there.

What do you think are the difficulties confronting Aboriginal people with mental health issues?

Big stigma, and not enough indigenous workers on the frontline to break the stigma. Also Aboriginal workers being forced to work in non-suitable framework eg medical model.

Who has inspired you and why?

In rehab, I met a key person, who gave me a number of helpful sayings or clichés.

- If you sit in a barber's chair long enough, you are going to get a hair cut.
- You can't be half pregnant.
- Are you drinking coffee out of me, cos I'm not a mug.
- Pack your matchbox and hit the bitumen.
- Let go and let God.
- The longest journey you'll ever have is from here (head) to here (heart).
- You can't save face and save ass at the same time.
- Those that matter don't mind. Those that mind don't matter.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy fishing and 4WD, remote control cars, the outdoors and being with my family as much as I can.

What do you like about being a trainer?

I love the variety and commitment of students. That they have made being back on time a priority. It gives hope, inspires me, how committed they are.



Group B Block 2 Front: Thomas (Trainer), Racheal, Denyse, Anthony, Ayli, Darren.

Back: Rachel, Jesseka, Jessica, Michael, Dean, Bradley (Trainer) Not present: Robert, Debra Lee, Michelle