

north richmond community

health centre NEWS

This newsletter is also available in Chinese, Turkish and Vietnamese. Please contact the centre on 9429 5477 for a copy to be sent to you.

New Building The Latest News

Since the last newsletter NRCHC has continued to make good progress on the new Centre. The design phase of the project was completed in November 2007 and copies of the most up to date designs are available around the Centre. A huge amount of work has also been undertaken to finalise the plans in preparation for the submission of the town planning application.

Town planning is a critical phase in the project. The Department of Human Services and the consultant team have worked hard to get the application ready for submission.

The Department lodged the application with the City of Yarra in early December 2007. Council is now responsible for facilitating the planning process in line with the planning scheme.

We are hoping for a decision on the application by March 2008. Once we have further news we will inform the local community and clients.

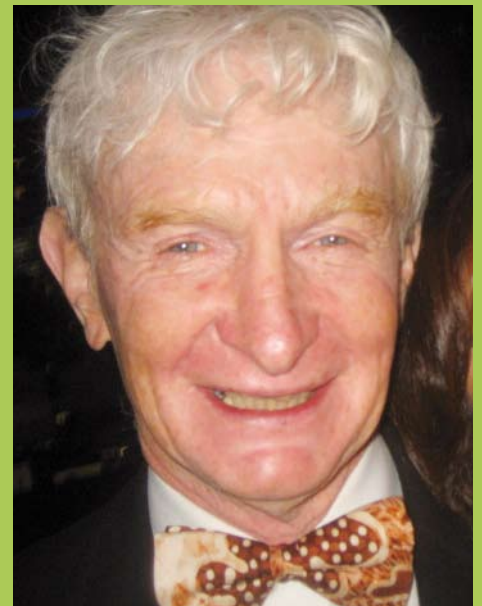
If you have any questions about any of the information set out above, please contact Sally Bramwell on 9429 5477.

Uncle Doug

I first met Doug in Umuwa a group of dusty administration buildings in the Central Australian desert area of the Musgrave Ranges.

He seemed a bit cheeky as he told me he knew Demos (CEO, NRCHC) and to make sure to give him a hard time next time I saw him. What a curious connection out there in the middle of "no where"! At that time he was working on the Aboriginal lands in aged care. Doug as I found out was perfect for Aboriginal community work he is "Tjilpi" a senior or elder man obvious by his white (once red) hair, he understands relationships, is a networker and generally takes his time about things. He listens more than he talks.

Many years later Doug had moved on from the desert. In Melbourne he was gathering his networks together for a go at Aboriginal Oral Health. There seemed little relationship between dental and his work at RWAV (Rural Workforce Assistance Victoria) which was primarily aimed at getting GP doctors into country service. However Doug was paying and promised good eating! So we headed to Mildura up in the Murray Valley. A meet-and-greet visit including Sunraysia Community Health, Mildura Aboriginal



Co-op where half an hour in the tea room can teach you quite a lot. Next a pleasant, one hour drive along the river, past anti toxic dump signs and the biggest carrot farm in the Universe, to the Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-op (MVAC) in Robinvale. I was aware they had an unused dental chair and that we weren't the first to take an interest in it. 12 years ago the Federal Government ran a \$100m per year Commonwealth Dental Health Program (CDHP) which was money used by the States to improve infrastructure and provide services targeted at those in most need. MVAC managed to install the dental chair just as the CDHP was

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North Richmond Community Health Centre

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Opening hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00am to 8:00pm, Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday 9:00am to 11:00am

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defunded. The chair was still in great shape, untouched with all the equipment working, most still in the original packaging. This did seem like a unique opportunity.

Back in Melbourne Doug formed a 4 person committee with Tony – DHS, Timothy – Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisation (VACHO), himself and a dental expert (me). Before long we had a very sophisticated Victorian Aboriginal Oral Health Strategic Plan. A document with all the bases covered: prevention, training, service delivery, coordination, integration with primary health, community control even a “hub and spoke”! Everything a strategic plan should have including blind faith it would be accepted on its merits, didn’t even cost that much. The only thing was that with all our expert knowledge and back slapping we forgot that Aboriginal Oral Health has three words which when combined in different ways has different meanings: Aboriginal (oral) Health translates as Federal responsibility; (Aboriginal) Oral Health translates as State/Territory responsibility.

... Some time later! And not to be defeated ...

It was time to follow up on Uncle Doug’s original instructions and went to give Demos a “hard time”. This time the three of us headed north to see if we could work out a solution. During those couple of days it seemed possible in partnership with MVAC to operate an outreach dental service from NRCHC’s existing dental program. Sunraysia Community Health didn’t mind as long as it didn’t impact on their budget; the Aboriginal Co-ops (Mildura, Robinvale and Swan Hill) were very supportive even committed dollars seemed like we had local stakeholders.

The Partnership’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was drawn up, instrument list developed and costed and timelines set. It seemed like we were getting somewhere at last. However, due to a change of management in the CEO of MVAC leaving, again circumstances changed and we were delayed once again. Not to worry Doug had plenty of experience with the politics of Aboriginal organisations; take your time patience is a prerequisite when working with

communities – so we waited. Six months later Gary is back as CEO and the partnership on again. MOU signed and instruments bought.

Thought it might be time to let DHSV in on the project and after an initial surprise and negativity they became supportive agreed to give it a go and even gave some funding. The evaluation section seemed very happy as we gave them a pathway to the Indigenous data that they have always wanted. People started seeing win-wins without sticking their necks out, we all agreed to keep it hush-hush! No press.

It’s been nearly two years since we started dental visits to Robinvale and DHSV has now accepted the program . We may not get there as often as they would like but the partnership has strengthened as has relationships with the staff and the general Robinvale Aboriginal community. Still plenty of hush-hush– those three words **Aboriginal Oral Health** still has those at funding levels nervous.

Uncle Doug, Tony and their dental expert still meet over noodles and coffee.

**Martin Hall, Dental Program Manager
– Yarra Oral Health**

Our AGM for 2007!

Firstly thank you to all community members and staff who attended our Annual General Meeting for 2007.

The meeting was a great success and we are now pleased to announce our new board members for 2007-2010 are:

- Dr. Rob Baird
- Sue Corby
- Lyn Dixon
- Dr. Janet Fitzell
- Stephen Kerr
- John Ryan
- Tat Hian Tchia
- Miranda Thorpe
- Evelyn Wuchatsch

We would also like to thank the hard work of the outgoing board members who have retired from office:

- Bernado Duarte
- Bev Lewis
- Sophia Panagiotidis
- Susanna De Pedro
- Gavin Ryan

The Free Food and Family Festival was a very popular this year with international cultural food, a jumpy castle, face painting and farm for the children and performances from the East Timorese choir and West Papuan band. Thank you to all members of the community and NRCHC staff members who came along to show their support and to celebrate the work of the centre and the contribution of the North Richmond Community.



Moon Lantern Festival 2007

We were very lucky with beautiful weather for the 14th annual Moon Lantern Festival for 2007.

Thank you to all community members who attended the festival held on the Richmond Estate on the 22nd September 2007. We would like to firstly thank our partners, North Richmond Tenants Association, Jesuit Social Services, Office of Housing and the City of Yarra for funding and in-kind support for the day. Highlights included

overwhelmingly busy lantern making workshops, an afternoon of cross-cultural eclectic performances highlighted by the inclusion 35 local children and young people in a finale performance about the experience of a young Sudanese teenager. The Moon Lantern Parade itself featured various installations along the parade walk including a Lotus Stencil, Bottle Lantern Wall and Plastic Cup Temple. Other free activities featured on the day were face

painting, temporary henna tattooing, hair braiding, rock climbing, jumpy castle and circus workshops. The North Richmond Tenants Association also held a very successful BBQ and corn sizzle – which paid tenants and raised funds for more plants for the 106 garden area. The day was a spectacular success and we hope that the community enjoyed the festivities and we're looking forward to as much involvement in 2008!



Staff member profile: Dr. Jessica Kneebone

Dr. Kneebone is an avid horse rider and loves to go bush walking. While Dr. Kneebone was working in the Northern Territory, she came across a lonely stray dog. She fell in love with the dog immediately and the dog warmed to her. It had a beautiful brown colour fur coat. One of Dr Kneebone's patients, an Aboriginal woman, named the dog 'Browngirl'. When Dr Kneebone decided to move back to Melbourne, Browngirl came with her and has been a part of the family ever since.



Dr Kneebone loves all aspects of medicine, however she has a special interest in adolescent health. She feels this is a difficult age group to target and therefore may need special attention. She is also interested in working with the culturally and linguistically diverse client groups. While Dr Kneebone was a medical student she spent 2 months of her training in East Timor. Now she loves to work with people from Timor and would like to establish links with this group by talking about her experiences while she was in training. She also likes to find out about her East Timorese client's lives and their experiences living in East Timor. She is very excited about making contacts with other community groups and learning about their life and experiences in their own country.

Dr Kneebone finds the short 15 minute consultation very limiting for patient care, especially if they require an interpreter. Her aim is to encourage patients to book longer appointments for complex cases and earlier appointments for a pre booked telephone interpreting session.

To make an appointment to see Dr Kneebone, call 9429 5477.

Interview by Rena Bahdus

Volunteer Program

Come join our friendly team here in 2008!

You could become a Walking Group Leader and combine volunteering and fitness or perhaps assisting Secondary School Students with their Maths Homework is more suited to you. Why not sign up to assist someone with their English conversation skills? Training reimbursements and supervision are available. To find out more information about these positions or other opportunities that may be available, please call Selma on 9420 1326 or email selmas@nrhc.com.au

Scholarships for emerging languages

Scholarships to Study Interpreting in Emerging Languages

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is offering scholarships to students enrolled in the 2008 RMIT Diploma of Interpreting in the following languages: Burmese, Dinka, Karen, Somali, Swahili and Tigrinya. Once selected, scholarship recipients receive \$1,200. This amount will help to meet the costs of course fees, study materials and any additional expenses such as transport or childcare. For further information, please contact James Butterfield on 9208 3832.

Information and application forms are available from the Victorian Multicultural Commission website at: <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/web24/vmc.nsf>



Tết Festival 2008

The Tết Festival, traditionally organised by NRCHC in partnership with the community living on the Richmond Public housing Estate, is on again this year organised with the generous sponsorship of the City of Yarra and the Office of Housing.

Tết or Vietnamese Lunar New Year is the most important festival of the year. Traditionally, the Vietnamese people take an entire week to celebrate Tết; it is a special time for family reunions, commemoration of ancestors, harmony and exchange of best wishes, special food, new clothes, new beginnings and other festive activities.

All activities are undertaken with great care to ensure that people will have happiness, good fortune and longevity

throughout the year. The date for the Festival organised by the Centre and residents is set for **Saturday the 16th February**.

This year the Festival is going to be held on the estate in the late afternoon between 5–8pm. Come along to join in the celebration with your neighbours.

There will be a lively program of local performances and lots of delicious things to eat.