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Our Community Health News



WINNUNGA NIMMITYJAH
ABORIGINAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Nothing About Us Without Us

December, 2023

Winnunga acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We also pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that newsletters may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs, films, recordings or printed materials.

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1. Julie Tongs CEO Update

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I wish to take this opportunity, as we approach Christmas and the end of the year, to acknowledge the Winnunga Board and all my wonderful staff here at Winnunga. I am extremely lucky to work with an engaged and truly supportive Chairman and Board and I wish to acknowledge their importance to me personally and to the success of our wonderful service.

Winnunga would, of course, be nothing but for our professional and highly motivated staff and their unswerving commitment to the health and welfare of our more than 9,000 clients and I extend to all staff my thanks for all you do and for your dedication to our people.

I also extend on behalf of the Board and myself season's greetings to all our clients. I am acutely aware that Christmas can be a very trying and difficult time for many families, especially those for whom life is a constant struggle and while Winnunga does not have unlimited resources please do not hesitate to reach out to us here at Winnunga if you feel there is a chance we can assist or support you or your family in any way.

I am conscious that it is now less than a year until the next ACT election and in light of the tortuously slow, and at times total absence of improvement in Aboriginal outcomes and welfare here in Canberra I am proposing, in the new year, to convene a broad-based all of community meeting at Winnunga Nimmityjah to discuss a united way forward in the identification of and agreed response to the many

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challenges faced by the Aboriginal community of Canberra and the region.

It is a matter of fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Canberra experience either the worst or among the worst outcomes against all the standard measures, when compared to the Aboriginal residents of all other States and the Northern Territory. It is doubly concerning that despite the absence of any significant improvement in outcomes for Aboriginal residents of Canberra there is neither a plan or any evidence of a change in approach to Aboriginal disadvantage or the services needed to address existing failings.

In light of this I believe it is important that the local Aboriginal community come together to talk about, debate and seek a consensus on a policy and program regime designed to address the unacceptable levels of poverty and disadvantage and the distressing life outcomes that are as a consequence, a feature of the lives of far too many Aboriginal families residing in Canberra.

I will communicate, through the Winnunga News, early in the new year about planning for our community day and, as I mention above, I look forward to the involvement of a broad cross section of our community.

I wish also, to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Emma Davidson on her recent appointment as ACT Minister for Corrections. I believe that her appointment as Minister for Corrections will complement her role as Minister for Justice Health and I look forward to working with her to address the massive over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canberra in prison or otherwise in touch with the criminal justice system.

I wish also to acknowledge the contribution which Ms Elizabeth Kikkert has made to the Aboriginal community in her role as Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and look forward to working with her successor in that role, Mr James Milligan.

I was deeply honoured that Senator Pat Dodson, a truly great Australian, chose Winnunga Nimmityjah as a venue for the celebration of his retirement from politics and of all he has achieved in a lifetime of activism, advocacy and commitment to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

In my estimation Pat Dodson is, at least within the Aboriginal community but highly likely within the broader community as well, the most highly regarded and trusted Aboriginal leader in Australia. I am one of those that sincerely believe that if Pat had not suffered the

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health issues he is currently confronting, just as the Voice Referendum came to be debated across Australia and had been able to participate fully in the YES campaign that the outcome would have been markedly different.

Pat first achieved national prominence in roles he held with the Central Land Council and the Kimberley Land Council before his appointment in 1989 as one of the Royal Commissioners into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. I am sure that the fact that not one Australian jurisdiction has fully implemented the recommendations of the deaths in Custody report is among a raft of issues that Pat has toiled on tirelessly over the decades that continue to cause him great angst and disappointment.

Pat was also Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation from 1991 to 1997 and is universally and fondly and appropriately recognised as the father of reconciliation.

It is, therefore, not at all surprising that Pat has expressed strong misgivings following the defeat of the Voice referendum including what it means for reconciliation.

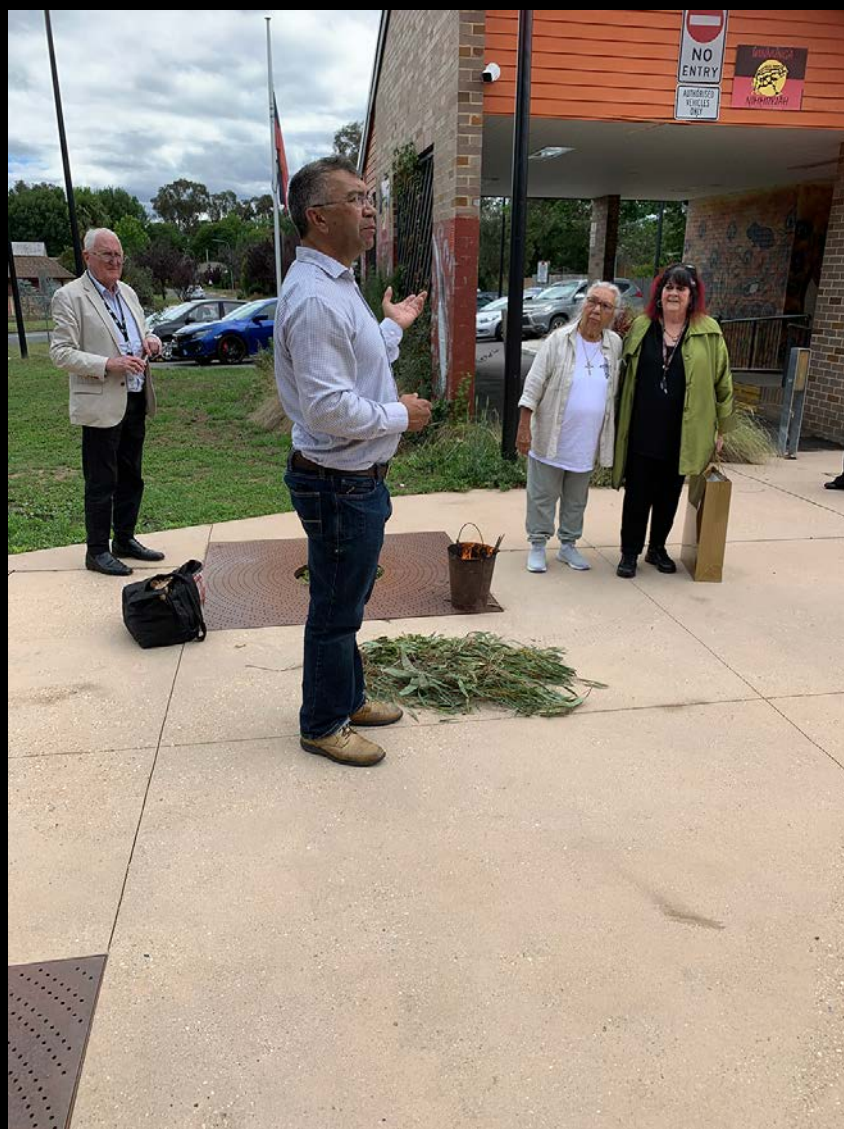
Pat has, in a personal capacity, been a longtime client of Winnunga Nimmityjah and we will all miss him dreadfully now that he is relocating permanently to his home in Broome. I and all my staff at Winnunga will miss him dreadfully. We will also, in addition, be eternally grateful for all he has done for the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

.....

**2. Thankyou Pat from all of us.
Relax (if you can) and enjoy your
retirement back home in Broome.**

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Photo: Peter Yu, Beth Sturgess, Lieutenant General John Sanderson, Senator Patrick Dodson, Simon Costello back of Senator Patrick Dodson, Julie Tongs, Barb Causon and Jon Stanhope (Image: Jess Whaler/National Indigenous Times).



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Thank you Aunty Matilda House and Paul Girrawah House for conducting the Smoking Ceremony for Senator Patrick Dodson.

Photo: Murray McLaughlin, Paul Girrawah House, Aunty Matilda House and Julie Tongs.

3. A huge thanks to Aspen Medical, Equity Health Solutions and GM Service Delivery for meeting with Winnunga



A huge thanks to Bruce Armstrong CEO Aspen, Steve Jones CEO Equity Health Solutions, and Nicole Longley GM Service Delivery Lines for meeting with Julie and Simon to discuss the possibility of a future partnership between Winnunga and Aspen Medical.

4. Winnunga from the archives

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6 News

Prisoners wait weeks to see GP

Major health risk fears

By Danielle Cronin
Health Reporter

Prisoners were waiting six weeks for a 10-minute appointment with a GP when some should spend an hour with a psychiatrist, according to a Canberra health service.

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service provides medical care for people in Belconnen Remand Centre and Quamby Juvenile Detention Centre and also runs health clinics at Cooma and Goulburn jails.

Winnunga chief executive Julie Tongs said Dr Peter Sharp and a health worker visited Goulburn prison every fortnight.

"Dr Sharp sees between 18 to 20 inmates at Goulburn in four hours on a good day," Ms Tongs told a conference on indigenous health.

"There is a six-week waiting time for inmates to get to see him."

Ms Tongs said most inmates had drug, alcohol and/or mental health problems.

"If the inmates were not using drugs before they went to jail, they started to use in there," she said.

"It is common knowledge that drugs are freely available in prisons but syringes are not and that creates a major health risk."

"[And] inmates with mental health problems should be able to spend an hour with a psychiatrist not 10 minutes with a GP."

Ms Tongs said Winnunga also provided services for inmates when they were released from prison.

"We have become the extended family to many of [our] clients and they will ring and let us know that they are locked up whether it is in the Belconnen Remand Centre, Queensland or Tasmania," she said.

"Winnunga staff are the link between the inmate and their families. We support the family. Often they are young women with babies."

Indigenous people made up

about 1.2 per cent of ACT's population but 9 per cent of the prison inmates.

"The ACT Aboriginal community is a diverse community with many people who have moved to Canberra from other rural, remote and urban communities throughout Australia," she said.

"They have made Canberra their home [and] isolation is a big problem in this community. Many families have become isolated without any family support and Winnunga staff have become their extended family."

The ACT Government is planning to build a prison and Winnunga has received \$50,000 from Healthpact to kick-start a research project on the needs of indigenous inmates.

Ms Tongs said the study would involve reviewing existing research and looking at health services provided in prisoners around Australia and throughout the world.

The aim was to develop a holistic health service for indigenous inmates in the new ACT jail, their families and ex-prisoners.

Mr Tongs said the proposed project had support from Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, Health Minister Simon Corbell, the Australian Medical Association, ACT Division of General Practice, ACT Corrective Services, magistrates and others.

"I know that we can and will develop a best practice model for Aboriginal prisoners and we will be the only jurisdiction in the country to implement the relevant Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations."

In August 1987, then prime minister Bob Hawke set up the royal commission amid growing community concern that these deaths were too common and poorly explained. The commission made a range of recommendations dealing with procedures for people in custody, police training and working with Aboriginal groups.

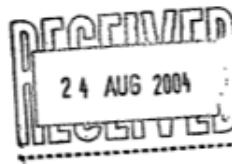
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Justice Health Administration PO Box 150, Maitreville NSW
Phone: (02) 9289 2977 - Fax: (02) 9311 3005 - ARN 70 184 581



Ref: GEN54/04

Ms Julie Tongs
Chief Executive Officer
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service
AINSIE NSW 2601

Dear Ms Tongs

Re: Aboriginal Health Services to Cooma Correctional Centre

I have been approached by the Nurse Unit Manager at Cooma Correctional Centre, with supporting correspondence from the Koori Delegate, that designated Aboriginal Health Services be provided to inmates at Cooma. This would be in-line with services that Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services have provided to Goulburn Correctional Centre for the last four years.

It is encouraging to receive feedback from our patients that it is because the service at Goulburn is so valued, that the request for a similar service into Cooma is requested.

The Justice Health Aboriginal Health budget is fully committed, and you have informed Justice Health that you would not like to reduce services at Goulburn in order to provide a new service into Cooma.

Currently 9 of the 85 Aboriginal inmates at Goulburn, and 3 of 19 Aboriginal inmates at Cooma originate from the Australian Capital Territory. Should it be possible for your service to secure additional funding for a second-monthly clinic at Cooma, our staff would be fully supportive, and would facilitate the new service to the limits of their capacity.

Should you require further information regarding this initiative, please contact Michael Levy.

Yours sincerely

Dr Richard Matthews
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

16 August 2004

Adolescent Health
CJ Department of
Juvenile Justice
Ground Floor,
84-76 Kippax Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Ph: (02) 6216 3355
Fax: (02) 6216 3350

Centre for Health
Research in Criminal
Justice
Suite 302, Level 2
Westfield Tower,
Eastgardens Shopping
Centre,
162 Burnerong Road,
PAGELWOOD NSW 2144

Ph: (02) 8372 3000
Fax: (02) 8344 4151

Statewide Forensic
Mental Health
Suite 702, Level 7,
491 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Ph: (02) 8295 7000
Fax: (02) 8295 7099

Forensic Executive
Support Unit
Suite 702, Level 7,
491 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Ph: (02) 8295 7000
Fax: (02) 8295 7099

Forensic & Prison
Hospital Project
Suite 602, 6th Floor
15 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Ph: (02) 6232 0665
Fax: (02) 6221 6545

www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au
C:\Aboriginal Health Service Cooma.doc

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STANHOPE BOILED CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Ingredients

1kg chopped mixed nuts
250g dates roughly chopped
250g raisins
2 cups water
1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt
250g butter
2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
3 eggs
2 cups plain flour
2 cups SR flour
2 teaspoon mixed spice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup rum

Materials for Binding Pudding Before Boiling

62cm square of calico
2.5m cotton string
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain flour

What to Do

In a saucepan place the mixed fruit, dates raisins, water, sugars, salt and butter. Stir over low heat until the butter has melted. Simmer for 8 mins, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat and stir in bicarbonate of soda. Allow to stand until mixture is completely cold. Lightly beat together eggs and rum and stir into cold mixture. Add sifted flours, mixed spice and cinnamon and mix well.

Bodywise at Bundah



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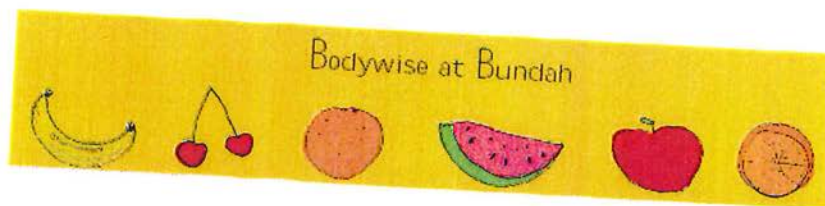
Eat Well • Be Active • Feel Good About Yourself

To Boil Pudding

Drop calico into boiling water and boil for 30mins, then remove from the water and wring out. Spread out cloth and cover with flour. Then place the pudding mixture into centre of cloth and mould into round shape with flat peak at the top. Gather corners and sides of cloth together and twist material to give the pudding your desired shape and tie firmly with cotton string leaving 2.5 cm between string and top of pudding to allow for expansion. Leave the string long to allow for ease of lifting pudding in and out of boiling water.

Fill large saucepan with boiling water every 20 mins. Note that the water must not stop boiling. After 6 hrs remove pudding from water and suspend, allowing pudding to swing freely. Leave the pudding to stand overnight. Refrigerate until day of serving, then re-boil 2 hrs on the day. Pudding is served with either custard or ice cream. Enjoy!

Submitted by Jon Stanhope



This information was sourced from a publication which was given to Winnunga "Bodywise at Bundah Recipes for Wellbeing" publication. Recipes for Wellness is the culmination of the 2006 theme for Kootara Well, Bodywise at Bundah. Throughout the year the students at Narrabundah Primary School have developed an understanding of how their bodies work and have been encouraged to develop healthy eating and exercise habits.

5. A walk down memory lane with Dr Jill Guthrie and Dr Phyll Dance



A walk down memory lane with these two lovely ladies Dr Jill Guthrie and Dr Phyll Dance.

In the late 90's early 2000's we partnered to deliver a number of research projects Jill and Phyll were both at the National Centre of Epidemiology and population health at the time.

"I want to be heard" An analysis of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drug Users in the ACT and region for treatment and other services.

6. What's been happening at Winnunga

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Photo: Ambrose House, Coral Watson ACT Government, Dante Devow and Thomas Williams. Thankyou City Services, TCCS for the Donation of Presents to Winnunga from your Christmas Giving Tree.



A huge thanks to all the Winnunga and Gudan Gulwan staff who volunteered on the day for our combined Christmas Party your work never goes unnoticed.

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Winnunga Black Stars Touch Footy Team plays every Wednesday night from 6.00pm at the ACT Touch Footy Oval at Deakin. For more information please contact Social Health Team and come along and have some fun.



Women's Group operates every Wednesday at Winnunga between 11am-3pm. Morning Tea and lunch are provided by Winnunga staff. Some of the activities the Women engage in include: Painting, Sewing, Baking and offpremises outings. If you are interested in attending Women's Group, please contact Social Health Team for more information.

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7. Thankyou Laura Gooyers from Every Little Bit helps for donating the care packs to Winnunga



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Santa Claus at their Christmas party at Winnunga



9. Winnunga staff Christmas party



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10. Message from Professor Mick Dodson

We cannot afford to keep drifting

'In part the unfinished business in the myriad of reports, commissions, inquiries and studies we as a nation have conducted over decades. We've had health reports, housing

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reports, education reports, welfare reports, community violence reports, law reform reports, economic development reports, employment and unemployment reports, Social Justice Commissioner reports, death in custody reports, the taking of children away reports, the list is almost endless ... and on top of this we've had assessments, evaluations, pilots, trials, umpteenth policies and policy approaches. ***And all of this paperwork would comfortably fill a couple of modest suburban libraries. And, it's on the shelf where most of them have stayed. They've stayed their unread, unfinished, their recommendations unimplemented, and they're very much unloved.***

Professor Mick Dodson

11. Winnunga opening times over Christmas and New Year

WINNUNGA'S OPENING TIMES OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Over the Christmas and New Year Period, the Winnunga Clinic will open in a reduced capacity with access to a Nurse and GP

**Winnunga will be closing at
1.00pm, Friday 22 December 2023.**

Monday 25 December 2023: Closed

Tuesday 26 December 2023: Closed

Wednesday 27 December 2023: Open 9am to 1pm

Thursday 28 December 2023: Open 9am to 1pm

Friday 29 December 2023: Open 9am to 1pm

Monday 1 January 2024: Closed

**Back to normal hours and services 9am to 5pm from Tuesday
2 January 2024 onwards.**

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