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OFFICIAL CONFERENCE

OPENING • TUESDAY 12 MAY

DAY ONE • WEDNESDAY 13 MAY

DAY TWO • THURSDAY 14 MAY

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Preface

1 This conference monograph has been produced by the enHealth Working Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH), and is the seventh in a series of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health conference monographs.

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3 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health conferences are currently held on a biennial basis in order to provide a national forum for discussion and to raise the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health issues. Previous conferences have been held in the following Australian locations:

6	Cairns	1998
7	Broome	1999
	Alice Springs	2000
	Adelaide	2002
8	Terrigal	2004
	Cairns	2007
	Kalgoorlie	2009

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These forums increase the understanding and awareness of environmental health issues, with a key focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Practitioners and people. The monograph showcases the wide range of presentations delivered at the conference and reports on recommendations arising from conference delegates, with particular reference to recommendations from the Indigenous participants' post-conference forum. These recommendations are used to inform national policy and strategic activities developed through the national environmental health committee (enHealth) and WGATSIEH.

The next National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference is scheduled to be held in Darwin in 2011.



Super Pit - Kalgoorlie

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Glossary

AHO	Aboriginal Housing Office
AMRRIC	Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
AWARE	All Western Australians Reducing Emergencies
BASEH	Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health)
BIITE	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
CASC	Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
CAT	Centre for Appropriate Technology
CDP	Community Development Project
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DEMC	District Emergency Management Committee
DPC	Desert Peoples Centre
DPI	Department of Primary Industry
EHA	Environmental Health Australia
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
EHP	Environmental Health Practitioner
EHW	Environmental Health Worker
EM	Emergency Management
ESO	Essential Services Office
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FESA	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
KESAB	Keep South Australia Beautiful
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
MSO	Municipal Services Office
NPA	National Partnership Agreements
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NIHG	National Indigenous Housing Guide
NIIG	National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide
NSWALC	NSW Aboriginal Land Council
NWC	National Water Commission
PHU	Public Health Unit
PTS	Pre-Tertiary Studies
UWS	University of Western Sydney
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WALGA	WA local Government Association
WGATSIEH	Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health
WGIR	Working Group on Indigenous Reform
WQRA	Water Quality Research Australia

Acknowledgements

The Working Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH) are grateful for the financial support provided by the following organisations to meet the costs of running the 7th National Indigenous Environmental Health Conference.

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- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- Western Australia Department of Health

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- Department of Health, South Australia
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- New South Wales Health
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder

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Exhibitors

- Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
- Department of Families Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
- Environmental Health Australia
- Western Australia Department of Health

Special thanks, in particular to those who planned, organized and made the Kalgoorlie Conference successful.

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The Conference Manager

WGATSIEH particularly recognises Conference Management Solutions, who provided the expertise in managing the preparation and proceedings of the conference and post-conference activities including the compilation of this report.

Adam Druce, Conference Manager, Conference Management Solutions

Allison Aldred, Delegate Services, Conference Management Solutions



Introduction from enHealth and WGATSIEH

The Environmental Health Committee (enHealth) of the Australian Health Protection Committee (AHPC) and the enHealth Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH) are pleased to present the proceedings of the 7th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference, held in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia between 12-14 May 2009. enHealth and WGATSIEH acknowledge the Wongatha People, the traditional owners of this region visited by all conference delegates.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference Organising Group; Adam Druce, CMS Conference Manager; Kalgoorlie-Boulder Council and Western Australia Department of Health for their marvelous support in helping to organise this conference. A key role of WGATSIEH is to organise each national conference and provide feedback and make recommendations to enHealth and other key stakeholders on national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health policies and associated environmental health issues.

The enHealth *National Environmental Health Strategy 2007-2012* identifies key national environmental health issues and provides the framework for the important work to be undertaken by its sub-committees, including WGATSIEH. The annual enHealth Workplan details the projects to be undertaken by WGATSIEH, most of which arise from recommendations made at these national biennial conferences. The recommendations arising from this Kalgoorlie Conference are on the next page and will be included in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 enHealth workplans.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health is a major ongoing challenge. The environment too in which we work, live and play is constantly changing. So this conference continued to showcase the tremendous responses by environmental health practitioners to these ongoing changes and challenges to achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The presentations in this monograph highlight new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health programs and initiatives targeting improved Indigenous housing and infrastructure; environmental health education, training and workforce development; partnerships and community engagement; food safety and nutrition; hygiene and sanitation; water and waste management; animal control; and climate change.

enHealth and WGATSIEH would like to thank all of the conference sponsors, as this successful conference would not have been possible without their ongoing support and contributions. We would also like to thank the presenters for contributing to such an exciting program and for highlighting the many positive actions occurring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Finally, thank you to the conference delegates for attending.

You are all urged to continue working together to achieve better Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in a changing environment.

Kevin Buckett

Chair
enHealth

Xavier Schobben

Chair
enHealth Working Group on Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health



Recommendations

Recommendations arising from the 7th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference, Kalgoorlie

1. Investigate a proposed requirement that, in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines require that safe water be provided to the tap of the consumer, not just to the boundary fence as currently required.
2. Develop a generic national hygiene educational and promotion package for use by environmental health practitioners in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This should utilise parts of the national training package, TAFE resources, 'Mister Germ', Environmental Health for Aboriginal Communities – a training manual for environmental health workers (Western Australia) – aka 'the black book' - and hand washing campaigns.
3. Consult with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand on the development of a culturally appropriate and effective national food safety educational and promotional package for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities translated into various Indigenous languages.
4. The Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH) will highlight the linkages between major projects by providing information on the enHealth website about the relationships between the projects and by providing links to the various publications. Projects to be included are: water management guidelines, the National Water Commission projects (e.g. the water resources kit), the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide (NIIG), Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) etc. HealthInfoNet will be encouraged to provide similar information.
5. WGATSIEH advocates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health projects include an evaluation component.
6. WGATSIEH gives its ongoing support for the formation of an association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners.
7. WGATSIEH will request clarification of the Council of Australian Governments' National Partnership Agreements (NPAs) to:
 - a. clearly establish where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health funding is within the NPAs and how it can be accessed
 - b. identify how the NPAs (or the environmental health parts of the NPAs) fit within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework
 - c. ensure all programs identify their funding sources.
8. Recommends to the Australian Health Protection Committee (AHPC) that it develops a strategy for ensuring that emergency management plans are developed for all discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
9. WGATSIEH will place enHealth strategic plans, enHealth annual work plans and associated reports on the enHealth website with a link to HealthInfoNet.

Keynote Speakers

Dr Tarun Weeramanthri
Executive Director Public Health, Western Australia
Department of Health

After training as a general physician at Royal Perth Hospital from 1984-1990, Tarun moved to the Northern Territory in 1991 as a research fellow in Aboriginal health at Menzies School of Health Research. From 1996-2003, he worked as a Community Physician with NT Department of Health and Community Services, and as a specialist physician at Royal Darwin Hospital. During this time, he helped to develop the NT Preventable Chronic Disease Strategy. He became Chief Health Officer in the NT in 2004, and moved to WA in early 2008 to head up a new Public Health Division. He provides professional leadership and strategic advice to the Department on public health issues, and remains an active health services researcher.

Prof Ken Wyatt AM
Director Aboriginal Health,
Western Australia
Department of Health

Ken has a strong Noongar, Yamatji and Wongi heritage and believes that education and access to the knowledge society involves life-long learning and is the key to change and making informed decisions of choice. Ken recently held the position of Director, Aboriginal Health, New South Wales Department of Health from 2003 and has returned home after being successful in being appointed as the Director, Aboriginal Health with the Western Australian Department of Health. His leadership at the national level and within New South Wales is widely acknowledged and appreciated by many. Prior to leaving Western Australia Ken held the position of Director of the Aboriginal Education Department of Education Western Australia from 1992 until June 2002 where the focus of his work was on improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. He also held the position of Pro Chancellor of Edith Cowan University Western Australia for a period from 2001-2003 when he relinquished the role to take up his appointment as Director, Aboriginal Health in New South Wales. In 1996 he was honoured to receive an Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and in 2000 The Centenary of Federation Medal for his efforts and contribution towards improving the quality of life, firstly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to mainstream Australia society in education and health. Ken has been actively involved with numerous committees associated with Aboriginal Affairs, Education, Health and the Aboriginal Lands Trust at the community, State and National levels and with ATSIC as a Regional Chair. Ken is committed to working towards achieving better outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous Australians and Australian society.

Dr Mark Bin Bakar

Mark is a member of the Australia Council's National Indigenous Arts Reference Group (NIARG), and a member of the Indigenous Implementation Board of WA. A musician, a performer and radio announcer based in Broome, in the Kimberley, Mark is best known for his television character Mary Geddarddyu, or Mary G who hosted a variety show broadcast nationally on SBS Television. Mark travels extensively throughout remote areas talking to people about alcohol and drug abuse, health care, emotional wellbeing, respect for elders, domestic violence, and instilling a sense of pride back into the wider community. He also uses the character to assist in the reconciliation process of Australia by using the character of Mary G to Bridge and Close the Gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people. In 2007 he was recognised as National Indigenous Person of the Year and in 2008 West Australian of the year. He received an Honorary Doctorate from Edith Cowan University early this year.

Dr Sue Gordon AM
Children's Court Magistrate
(retired)

Sue was taken from her mother aged 4 years in 1947 under government policies relating to part Aboriginal children. Her family found her over 30 years later. She has served in the Defence Forces as a soldier, worked around Australia in various administrative positions, including more than 14 years in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, for Aboriginal people. She was appointed Commissioner of Aboriginal Planning in Western Australia in 1986 making her the first Aboriginal person in Western Australia to head a government department. She was appointed a Magistrate of the Children's Court of Western Australia in 1988 and became the first Aboriginal Magistrate in Western Australia, retiring in September 2008. She was one of the first appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Commissioners in 1990, has sat on various national boards and committees and is a member of a wide range of organisations, including the Chairperson of the Sister Kate's Children 1934 to 1953 Aboriginal Corporation. She was awarded an Order of Australia in 1993 for her work with Aboriginal people and the community generally, a Centenary Medal in 2003, the Defence Service Medal 2006 and in the same year appointed as a Member of the Council of the Order of Australia in 2006. She has a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Western Australia, which she completed as a mature aged student and was later awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters. In June 2007 she was appointed as Chairperson of Prime Minister Howard's Northern Territory Emergency Response Taskforce (NTERT) for a period of 12 months. She finished the 12 months under the Rudd Government in June 2008. In December 2008 she was appointed to the Western Australian State Training Board and has also recently been appointed to the Western Australian Indigenous Implementation Board.