

MACUNITY

Minutes
Tuesday 27 October 2009
Eagle Vale Leisure Centre
Eagle Vale

Attendance:

Jane McIvor	Sector Connect
Greg Squibb	Centrelink
Kelly Watson	Attorney General
Regina Nagy	SSWAHS
Mary Mann	The Drum (United Care Burnside)
Patricia Ceulen	Sector Connect
Debbie McCall	Campbelltown City Council
Birgitte Lund	NSW Sport & Recreation
Wies Schuiringa	The Benevolent Society
Jacqui Baird	Volunteer – Sector Connect
Leo Dynevor	Muru Nanga Mai
Leanne Hunter	Department of Justice and Attorney General
Krysten Briggs	The Benevolent Society
Alana Moffett	Benevolent Society CFWH (Aboriginal Women's Health Services)

Apologies; Alison Croall (HNSW), Patick Vasquez (MDS), Carolyn Hughes (TAC), Rebecca Whiford (Youth Solutions), Alice Wood (SSWAHS), Frances Jamieson (HNSW), Silvana Baute (Northcott), Warunee Nuij (Smith Family), Veronica McDonald (Burnside).

MacUnity aims to adopt the use of the Aboriginal process as best we can when conducting meetings. The minutes hope to reflect this process.

Acknowledgement of Country

- Welcome and acknowledgement given by Leo.
- Jane expressed apologies for cancellation of last meeting due to sickness.
- Correction to last minutes Alison Croall not working for Smith Family.
- Today's meeting to continue to brainstorm the gaps in youth services.

Business arising

- Our Aboriginal Experience Cultural Awareness course is running on 5th November 2009 for MacUnity but is full. Sector Connect plans to support running further courses in 2010. Sector Connect has started a waiting list and those people on the list will be given first chance when courses open and so it is worth putting your name down. Places are already filling quickly.
- "Keep them Safe" (A shared approach to child wellbeing) is a new system of child protection due to start on 27 January 2010 that includes important changes to the definition of "risk of significant harm" and relevant action. Everyone working with clients need to be aware of these changes. Sector Connect has been negotiating with TAFE for additional training spaces for Keep Them Safe as all sessions in this region are full immediately they are advertised. By increasing the size of the sessions over 450 additional places have been released. An online package will also be available at the end of November 2009. Sector Connect will circulate information when available. Everyone needs to let their networks know the importance of these changes.
- There are a few new Aboriginal youth projects in the region that will be presented later in the meeting e.g. YAPA Making Tracks Project.

- Update from Leo regarding \$15,000 project for Aboriginal youth (KOORI FLOW) happening in Camden 2010. Discussed possible play and presentation to begin the festival. An aboriginal cultural theme, two traditional stories from the region and running workshops with didgeridoo, song, dance and stories, costume making, design, props and artwork etc. Workshop could be taken to youth services i.e. Narellan Youth Café etc. Picton High School is doing a workshop. (see flow timeline below)
- Camden has funds for a show – Sacred Musical Festival – Aboriginal welcome ceremony. Stake holder and partners are the three (3) councils and others to get involved, i.e. Burnside. Approaching Youth Café and utilising a youth librarian to be engaged in the project.
- Funding is for eight (8) workshops. A youth project steering committee to meet in December 2009 where elders will be invited.
- Funds from YAPPA “Better futures”

KOORI FLOW TIME LINE

DRAFT:

October 09

- 1st meeting held to establish Working Party
- Consult stakeholders

November 09

- 3rd Nov. – hold 2nd meeting with invited guests at Narellan Youth Space – Leo to invite Uncle Ivan, Aunty Yvonne and Steve Montgomery

December 09

- 1st Dec – 3rd Dec. meeting with wider stakeholders to start consultation process – education reps etc.
- Plan to develop spaces i.e. culturally-friendly
- Finalise planning workshops
- Develop ceremonial story with local elders for workshops to follow

January 2010

- 19th Jan. – 4th Jan. meeting of working party
- promote workshops
- plan launch

February 2010

- Friday 12th Feb - workshops launched on National Apology Day – launch to bring participants together and to get media coverage that will further help get the message out.

March 2010

- Workshops begin (or late February)
- Service providers provide activities or drop in opportunities

April 2010

- Rehearsals (??) Where separate LGA's come together – can rehearse at Mt Annan, i.e. inspiring culturally significant space???
- Youth 10-18 April 2010
- Performance/progress demonstration – Appin Massacre Memorial Day – 19 April

May 2010

- Performance – Reconciliation Week Celebrations

June 2010

- Making Track project ends
- Evaluation
- Funding acquittal completed

July 2010

- NAIDOC Week Celebrations

November 2010

- Inaugural Camden Sacred Music Festival

Koori Flow next meeting is 1st December at Youth Café

Other projects

- Sticky beak tours – bus tours for aboriginal youth currently being developed through Nabu Aboriginal Team. It will include questions and answers about youth services. These tours will be presented to youth network and potentially run during youth week.
- Macarthur Youth Services Network – wants aboriginal community to present to them their needs and how mainstream services can better engage Aboriginal youth.
- We need to hear from Aboriginal networks about all new projects. A lot of legwork needs to be done to get young people there. A connection through the schools is a possibility to get more Aboriginal people involved.
- Leo thanked Mary and Denise for the work they do and the great exposure they are creating.
- Debbie McCall gave feedback on her consultation with the Aboriginal community for Campbelltown Council's social plan. General themes were a need for Aboriginal youth to get their own space. If an Aboriginal Youth Centre is not possible it was suggested that space should be put aside in youth services to provide Aboriginal specific youth activities.
- It is worth noting that there is only one Aboriginal youth worker available in the region. Services (both mainstream and Aboriginal) could identify a position where an Aboriginal worker could be employed to deal with Aboriginal youth.
- Cultural Awareness training – suggest that staff to take up

Sector Connect's Youth Sector Model Development Project (YSMDP):

- Stage 1 of the YSMDP (funded under Better Futures) has been finalised which involved in depth mapping of youth services across Macarthur and Wingecarribee, identification of issues / gaps and suggested models / recommendation to address the needs. The report and a comprehensive service directory is available on Sector Connect's website: <http://www.sectorconnect.org.au/projects/youth-sector-development.html> .
- Aboriginal issues and recommendations from previous MacUnity meetings have been included in the report for consideration including recommending that government jointly fund an Aboriginal specific youth centre for the region. The issue of over representation and dominance of pacific islander youth at youth centres has been raised in the report and has been linked to the lack of engagement of Aboriginal youth.
- Stage 2 of this project is to implement the recommendations regarding the service system in Campbelltown and Stage 3 is implementation in Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. Stage 4 will evaluate the project effectiveness.
- Sector Connect is waiting on the Campbelltown Youth Services temporary auspice to be resolved as it involves 5 of the 6 youth centres in Campbelltown. The report will inform the tender process. Tenders are expected to be released before Christmas from Community Services (DoCS) and there is no reason why the Aboriginal community could not consider tender.

Tharawal Men's Group:

- Men's Group – Muru Nanga Mai in partnership with a number of services including TAC and SSWAHS have agreed to have one men's group for the region. Leo provided a detailed description on how it was to be run. The youth is to be part of this group with the men becoming more accountable to young boys through mentoring etc. There is a problem with a lack of options for referring children. A number of members are keen to target this issue and keep youth on the straight and narrow. An interim steering committee has been formed to get the men's group operational.
- Formal sentencing – no funding for aboriginal youth. Supervision of offenders difficult. This is why it is important to have men involved in mentoring programs through the men's group. Aboriginal men need to be more accountable for the youth with no strong leadership or direction from the men in the Aboriginal community. One of the roles of the Men's group is an avenue for things to come in and resources allocated where needed. Avenues the men's group could look at are education, mentoring and drug/alcohol issues.

- A model is needed first and is currently being developed to enable community ownership. An Aboriginal approach is needed as the community knows what we want for our Aboriginal kids but we need to adapt it to the modern way. This will lead to better decisions for our kids.
- The men's group is due to meet in 3 weeks
- Benevolent Society said to let them know what services are needed.

Other

- A traditional Indigenous Games day is being held every Tuesday in Term 4 at 3.30pm for 5 to 12 years olds at Star Top Reserve in Ambarvale. Open to all children. Two aboriginal children attended the first week.
- Fitness program – David Bell (Airds Leisure Centre) for 15 – 25 yr olds. Tuesdays 4 – 6 pm. Not specifically Aboriginal.
- Running your club – Wednesday 18 November - 6.30 pm – 10pm Sydney Olympic Park
- Forum Sentencing to be added to the Youth Service Directory under the YSMDP. Jane to follow up with Leanne.
- Cultural awareness (community for children) – 24 November – Rosemeadow/Ambarvale area – contact Melanie Andrews.
- Midnight Basketball started again – 66 kids turned up. Tharawal Bus available to increase Aboriginal youth engagement.

Aboriginal Engagement: Relations & Connections

Introduction:

- Can develop structures to improve Aboriginal youth engagement BUT without genuine relationships of trust between both workers and the community success is unlikely
- Before continue building on work – June meeting – open, honest discussion on engagement
- Evident mainstream & Aboriginal services overall act differently regarding the importance of relationships in business.
- Does not mean there aren't some great examples of mainstream's engagement – need to build and learn from these.

Group had an open discussion regarding the following

From an Aboriginal perspective; what is the importance of relationships and connections when engaging the Aboriginal Community?

HOW WOULD YOU PREFER BUSINESS TO BE DONE?

- Not to make assumptions about people – treat as individuals
- Observe/look
- Listening to others
- Learn – mainstream do some learning themselves and not just rely on Aboriginal websites – careful when asking questions.
- Two way street of respect
- Important to be aware of the way mainstream say info/share (use “we” not “I”)
- Enable opportunity/patience to express self
- First impression important and built on – not oppressive, but kind and open (real/genuine) not just to gain something
- Keep it simple
- Timeframes too fast – can destroy – timing is important
- High importance on personal relationships of trust
- Koori time is relevant when building relationships of trust
- Need consistent, ongoing approach to building relationships (e.g. my exp. 5 yrs.) separate from funding & consultations

- Patience & time from others

WHY ARE THESE CONNECTIONS IMPORTANT TO THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

- Body language demonstrates genuine 80% communication
- Get flow/feel of situation
- Historical issues of oppression and domination
- Programmed by experiences
- Fear of authority
- Aboriginal community believe that things come together
- Relationships outside funding important
- Trust in difference
- Respect
- Place, relationship & connection to the land, animals and each other is the corner stone of the Aboriginal culture

FROM A MAINSTREAM PERSPECTIVE: DO YOU HAVE ANY POSITIVE STORIES OF EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY AND WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?

- Aboriginal community need time to think about answers and clear explanation is important. Need to allow this. If you get a quick answer from clients it is usually only what they think you want to hear.
- Mainstream people need to be open to learn.
- Don't pretend to be an expert but be honest and open. Be consistent. Informal 'cuppa' is a great way to encourage engagement.
- Genuine engagement is vital.
- Important to take the time to talk and build relationships/culture to get genuine engagement back.
- Make safe environment e.g. Koori colours, Koori flags/posters throughout
- Welcome worker helpful – meet and make people comfortable
- Aware of Aboriginal body language and engage appropriately (want to talk or not)
- Support young people to engage in Aboriginal events
- Young people need to feel equal and to have rights. So try and stay on the same level and not an expert.
- Clear explanations important – simple language and ensure they do not look stupid. (respect) and put it cultural terms if possible.
- Be respectful and don't ask for too much too early in the relationship
- Be genuine and yourself – it will be picked up if you aren't
- Build trust through demonstrated action – don't just expect trust through words
- Make the time just to catch up without an agenda to break down barriers

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST OR COULD BE DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT MAKING THESE CONNECTIONS?

- Build relationships independent of funding
- Macarthur Youth Services Network (MYSN) presentation. Many mainstream services have a percentage of Aboriginal funding and so it is important they consider how to address engagement with this target group.
- Develop partnerships with Aboriginal people – need to develop TRUST.
- Justice Group – feeds into justice system regarding issues. (Crime prevention slant).
- Mentoring (between mainstream/Aboriginal workers) and beyond.
- Lighthouse mentoring (Mount Druitt), SW (SPYNS), St. Uni in Liverpool
- Look at models from other areas (email MacUnity)
- Karri – at risk program (Sarah Redfern) – remote control cars and other skills
- Fitness Program – (Airds) Elders support/partnership
- Look at collaborative approach to risk management
- Joint projects/collaborative approach
- Build what is there
- ALO
- Police Liaison Officers
- AES
- Council Aboriginal reps

- TAC (Boe)
- Would it help if the main Aboriginal organisations provided certain times / opportunities to meet mainstream / other services and build relationships?

WHAT BARRIERS EXIST AND HOW COULD WE OVERCOME THEM?

- Risk management
- Council rules
- Mainstream expect Aboriginal workers to know everything
- Access to community for mainstream – continuing connections and trouble opening doors (unwelcome) in some areas.
- Careful how you ask questions
- Mainstream's work is usually separate to their home life but for Aboriginal workers it is often integrated.
- Mainstream consulting inappropriately regarding funding – genuine connection necessary. (e.g. using networks – SW Koori – needed to re-evaluate membership as a result of previous inappropriate consultations)
- Funders drive timeframe and work practices. Might be good intension – need to be aware when putting in tenders regarding timeframe – flexible delivery.
- Submissions to Aboriginal networks
- Government need to assess tenders around real engagement with Aboriginal community
- System orders and demands young people to engage with services – does not support engagement.
- Mainstream services competing for Aboriginal work.
- Afraid to offend or not follow correct protocol
- Time & resource poor workers – time is needed to build relationships with no immediate outcomes
- Valuing relationships for what they are NOT what you gain
- Limited opportunities to build connections
- Competition
- No clear obvious cultural structure / protocol in local area for mainstream to understand – need to build on this

Aboriginal Youth Needs: Priorities for Action

(taken from consultation with MacUnity June 2009)

OWN SPACE:

- Aboriginal youth need their own space to:
 - Rebuild cultural platform to gain personal stability and identity
 - Develop ownership and create their own space (home away from home)
 - Rebuild trust with others and each other

ACCESIBLE ABORIGINAL YOUTH SPACE:

- Provision of safe transport options to services
- Centrally located
- Flexible, informal service options
- Youth services need to be attractive to Aboriginal youth (what does this look like?)
- Youth need lots of soft entry points
- Youth services to have specific days for Aboriginal youth
- Youth programs to be designed specifically for Aboriginal youth
- Increase number of Aboriginal identified youth workers
- Mainstream need to take action to accommodate Aboriginal youth needs when funding includes engaging with this target group especially with the large gaps in service provision
- Mainstream services to develop partnerships and work closely with Aboriginal organisations
- Aboriginal youth need to be engaged earlier than 12 or 13 (high school) when many of the issues have already been entrenched
- Youth services need to consistently engage with the whole family where possible

SAFE ABORIGINAL YOUTH SERVICES:

- Youth services need to be more adequately equip to maintain safety within youth centres
- Youth program development needs to consider how to be more inclusive and avoid the dominance of one cultural group
- Youth programs need to take into consideration the tensions that exist between particular cultures
- Need more stable, consistent youth services
- Need to develop trust and respect of Aboriginal youth and workers through open, honest communication

NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABORIGINAL CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE:

- Important to understand and respect Aboriginal protocols and roles
- Important to understand Aboriginal family structures / households and their engagement in the community
- When working with Aboriginal youth it is essential to acknowledge the past issues and allow them to develop shared memories.
- Need positive cultural leadership and direction that has been limited to date.
- Men's and women's business still applies to youth and must be taken into consideration when using mentors
- Patience is required when building relationships of trust
- Important to always consult with Aboriginal youth to check what they want. If you push ideas onto them they are more likely to pull away.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- National Indigenous Cadet's Program
- Advertise staff vacancies through Koori networks
- Promote mainstream opportunities to the Aboriginal community and networks
- Improve strategic planning across youth services to incorporate Aboriginal needs
- Consider the needs of Aboriginal youth as part of mainstream client group (not separate but inclusive)
- Design cohesive youth program that include Aboriginal youth needs
- Design some programs specific to Aboriginal youth
- Mainstream to develop more partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to improve outcomes for Aboriginal youth
- Develop mainstream organisations to be more Aboriginal friendly
- Roll out further Cultural Awareness Training specific to youth for both staff and young people. This training needs to be consistent and on-going to address high staff turnover. This could support changing future generations perspective on the Aboriginal community
- Build significant relationships with Aboriginal workers to provide an avenue for advice (this takes time and patience)
- Run Aboriginal cultural activities for both Aboriginal and mainstream youth (e.g. art, dance, storytelling)
- Explore effective Aboriginal youth projects in other areas
- Youth services to engage consistently and appropriately with the Aboriginal community through Elders, Aboriginal networks, events and celebrations
- Set up an Aboriginal Youth Advisory Committees
- Advocate that funders more accurately measure Aboriginal youth engagement to ensure accountability for Aboriginal funding
- Use and develop Nabu Youth Council (DAA)
- Make Aboriginal youth a priority in service provision (engagement, relationships, roles of management, education)
- Aboriginal community to work more collaboratively on youth needs
- Provide opportunities to develop the skills and experience of young people and showcase these
- Use events to more effectively engage Aboriginal young people

ISSUES:

- Cultural shyness (on both sides)
- Urgent need to address Aboriginal youth issues. They are the next generation and if not addressed the community will continue to go backwards

The above information was presented to the network from the June meeting. Open discussion regarding next steps.

Discussions / Actions:

Presentation to MYSN needs of Aboriginal Youth

- Discussed whether network was really ready for MYSN on 4 November 2009 (next meeting).
- It would be good to introduce what MacUnity have started to do and present a couple of the new programs under Making Tracks
- Aboriginal workers could show them the way
- Mentor type roles would be helpful both for mainstream and aboriginal workers
- The priority is getting young people engaged.
- 12 to 25 is the official classification for youth.
- MYSN seeing a similar gap in engaging Aboriginal youth and are looking for answers.
- Get MYSN workers to experience.
- Engagement and connection is the main area where work is needed. It could be an idea to run the engagement session ran in MacUnity today by an Aboriginal person.
- There would be more impact if started at the beginning of the year
- MacUnity needs to decide who to present the project in February – great if it could be an Aboriginal person.
- Also discussed other places MacUnity wanted to take it to
- Minutes from MacUnity to the whole network
- Organisations to come up with how they can put into practice the needs of Aboriginal youth by December meeting
- Also discussed the opportunity for an Aboriginal worker at Camden Council through Community Builders. Agreed the worker may be too isolated in Camden and discussed the potential to put a Community Builders submission in for Aboriginal Youth Worker to cover Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly. A position which is mobile could work well too.

Agreed Actions:

- Aboriginal representatives from MacUnity will run the Engagement / Connections with Aboriginal youth session for MYSN in early 2010 (proposed February).
- Aboriginal representatives from MacUnity to follow up the above presentation with one on the issues and needs of Aboriginal youth and how mainstream can support.
- Members of Koori Flow working group to present this project to MYSN at the November meeting as an introduction to the Aboriginal work on youth and MacUnity.
- Members of Koori Flow to discuss the potential of a Community Builders submission for an Aboriginal Youth Workers to cover Campbelltown, Camden & Wollondilly and submit application if appropriate.
- Organisations represented on MacUnity (and beyond) to look through minutes above (especially the Aboriginal youth needs & opportunities) to identify areas where they could support and implement.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday 15 December 2009

10am – 1pm

Sector Connect

351 Welling Drive, Mount Annan

Agreed Agenda:

- MYSN presentation (February 2010)
 - Identify Aboriginal volunteer presenters from MacUnity
 - Determine what is to be presented e.g. relationships / connections etc.
- Discussion regarding organisation's ability to support proposed opportunities (see above)
- Christmas food and time to network and get to know each other