



Submission Report

Inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring

November 2012

To The Secretary
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
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Summary

This submission will report on the contribution of sport to Australian Indigenous* people's wellbeing and mentoring with a particular focus on the Terms of Reference as outlined by the House of Representatives Committees:

- IUIH is a non-government organisation that utilises sport and physical activity as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people;
- and
- IUIH contributes to Indigenous sporting programs, particularly through formal rugby league partnerships and through links with participation-based sporting organisations as a tool for reaching close the gap targets.

IUIH has developed three key initiatives which form the basis of this submission. These are:

- *Indigenous Youth Sports Program*
- *The Deadly Choices Health education program* and;
- *Work it Out Chronic Disease Rehabilitation Program*

Key Points:

- Participation: The emphasis of all these programs is on participation rather than sporting ability. Sport is promoted for its physical, social and emotional benefits, highlighting the importance of life-long participation.
- Links with health: All the programs are designed to increase knowledge of chronic disease prevention and management, behaviour change and to promote and improve access to health services
- Mentoring is a key component of all the programs but not focussed elite sportspeople
- Each program has a multipronged approach which is holistic and based on a foundation of effective relationships between deliverers and recipients of the program. Often these relationships extend beyond programs into informal mentoring networks.
- There is great diversity in the ways young people engage with sport and physical activity and programs need to be developed with flexibility and diversity to meet this need.
- Evaluation of programs is essential to measure and demonstrate their impact and outcomes

* In Australia the term 'Indigenous' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Officially, Australia has two groups of Indigenous people. An Aboriginal person is defined as a person who is a descendant of an Indigenous inhabitant of Australia, identifies as an Aboriginal person and is recognised as Aboriginal by members of the community in which he or she lives. Torres Strait Islander people have many cultural similarities with Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands people. One must be a descendant or a traditional inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands to be recognised as a Torres Strait Islander (Jonas and Langton, 1994; Nelson, 2007).

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Background to the Institute For Urban Indigenous Health

The **Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH)** was established in July 2009 as a strategic response to the significant growth and geographic dispersion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the South East Queensland Region. IUIH is a new model of community controlled health services in South East Queensland, and was formed by the four Aboriginal Medical Services in South East Queensland; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS Brisbane), Yulu-Burri-Ba Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health, Kalwun Health Service and Kambu Medical Centre.

IUIH is the only one of its kind in Australia, and provides a way for community to have a voice in improving health outcomes in an urban setting. IUIH has been meeting with community members and organisations in the design of new services to make sure we get the best possible services and access for all members of the community. IUIH also develops partnerships with mainstream health service providers to improve access and health outcomes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South East Queensland.

Mission

The vision of IUIH is to achieve equitable health outcomes for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the South East Queensland region have access to culturally safe and comprehensive primary health care.

IUIH aims to increase health service access and opportunities, and provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service development and coordination across the SEQ region.

IUIH also aims to support the effective implementation of the COAG 'Close the Gap' initiatives and other strategic developments in the region and promotes partnerships and integration with other mainstream health services.

Core Values

IUIH will apply the following values in order to achieve its mission:

- Strategic focus in every activity and relationship
- Quality in performance of every task and in every process
- Enhancement of the capabilities of member Services
- Accountability to stakeholders and communities for meeting all commitments
- Solidarity in working together, sharing, strengthening and supporting each other

Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service Providers

The UIIH was formed by, and has the support of four local Community Controlled Health Services (CCHSs) operating within the South East Qld Region.

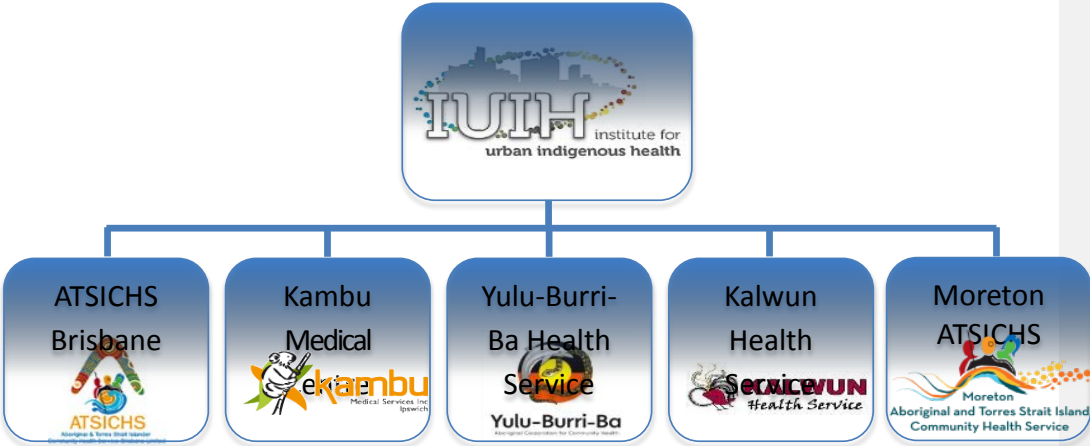


Figure 1 2009 Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services

The Indigenous Youth Sports program

Participation in sport and organised physical activity can be a vehicle for personal and social development in young people. There are also links between health, academic performance and participation in sporting activities. Although the link between sport and academic performance is not of statistical significance, research suggests self-esteem is notably higher amongst children of all ages and both genders who were involved in sport and physical activity. Its successful use in discouraging and decreasing anti-social behaviour is well documented in Australia. These concepts have contributed to the conception of a university-based program for Indigenous young people in Brisbane.



The Indigenous Youth Sports Program (IYSP) was designed as a week-long program to engage young urban Indigenous Australian students in cultural, educational and sporting activities within a university environment. The program was developed in partnership with The University of Queensland, UIIH and the Inala Indigenous Health Service. The program was based on the National Youth Sports Program – a

nationally recognised program that has run for 40 years in Cleveland, USA. The IYSP runs in January each year and since its inception, has engaged 160 young people aged 10-16 years from the southern and western parts of Brisbane.

The young people selected for this program must attend school and come under the R.A.P criteria; Respect, Attend and Participate. The young people are involved in activities which include sports, academic, cultural, health and well-being activities (Zumba, Hip Hop & Dance Workshop, Aboriginal Art, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture, Public Speaking & Deadly Choices (Health). The program is run during the school holidays. The main aim is to

provide young people with the opportunity to be exposed to a university campus, facilities and career goals around training and employment. The young people also have an opportunity to witness a panel that consisted of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people already in the roles of studying at UQ, employment (eg; Virgin Airlines representative, Murri School Teacher, Healthworker, Aboriginal Doctor and Youthworker).

IYSP has four main aims:

- To provide a safe and positive learning environment for young people and reinforce the role of sports, academic activities and cultural strength on health and well-being.
- To apply the knowledge to other areas of young people's lives, specifically relating to building confidence, self-esteem and respect for themselves and for others.
- To operate on a university campus in order for young people to benefit from the excellent facilities for sporting, academic, cultural and health & wellbeing-based activities.
- To create a respect and appreciation for the role of higher education, making sure each young person feels comfortable in a university setting through this program.

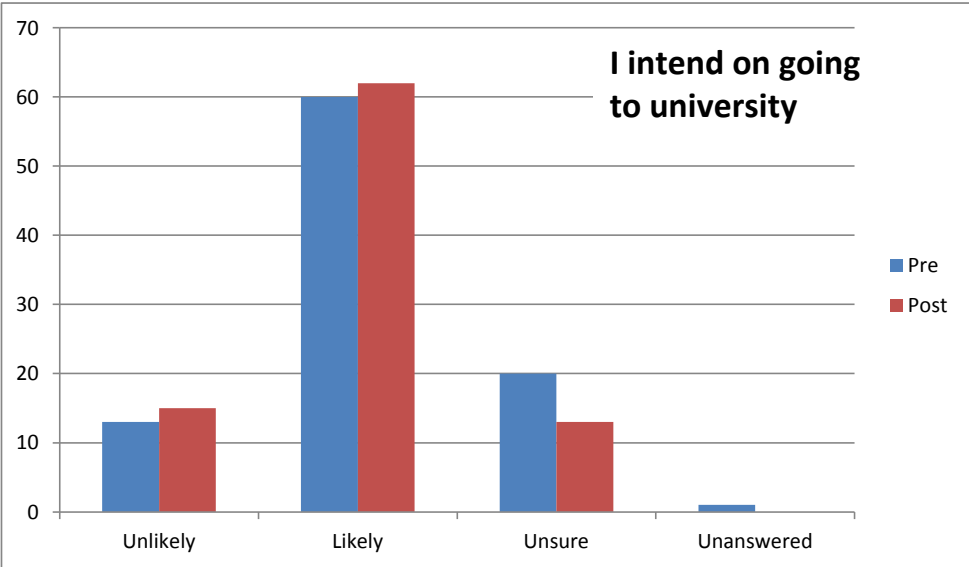
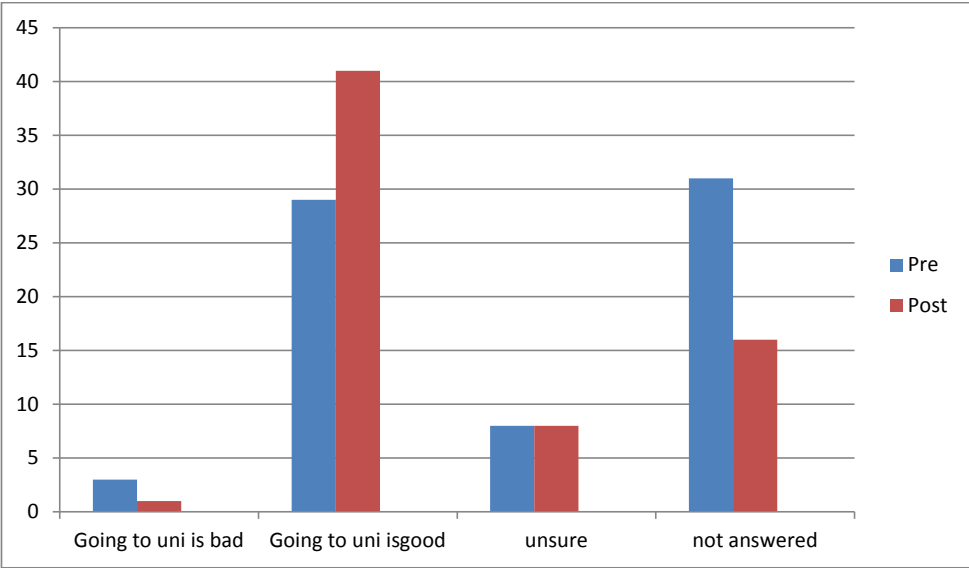


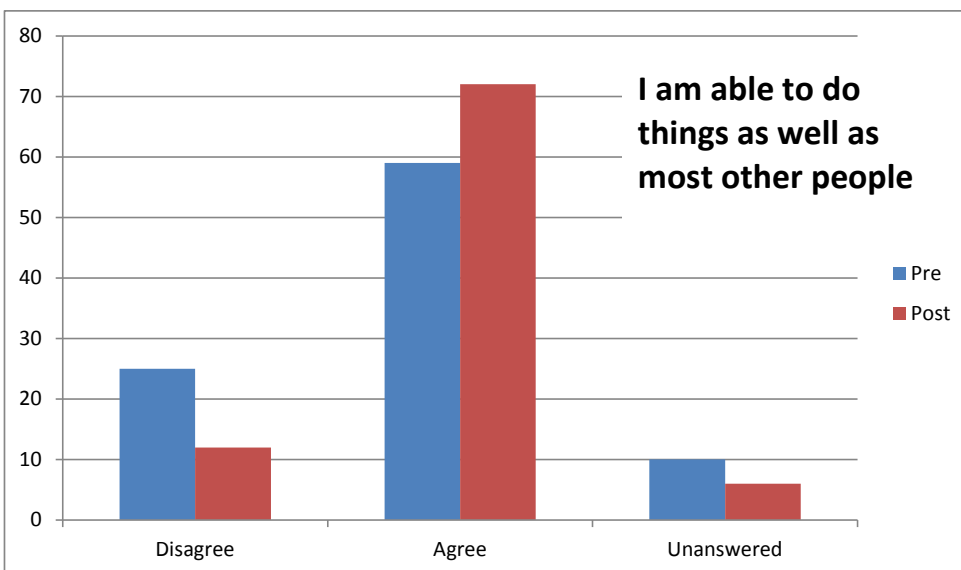
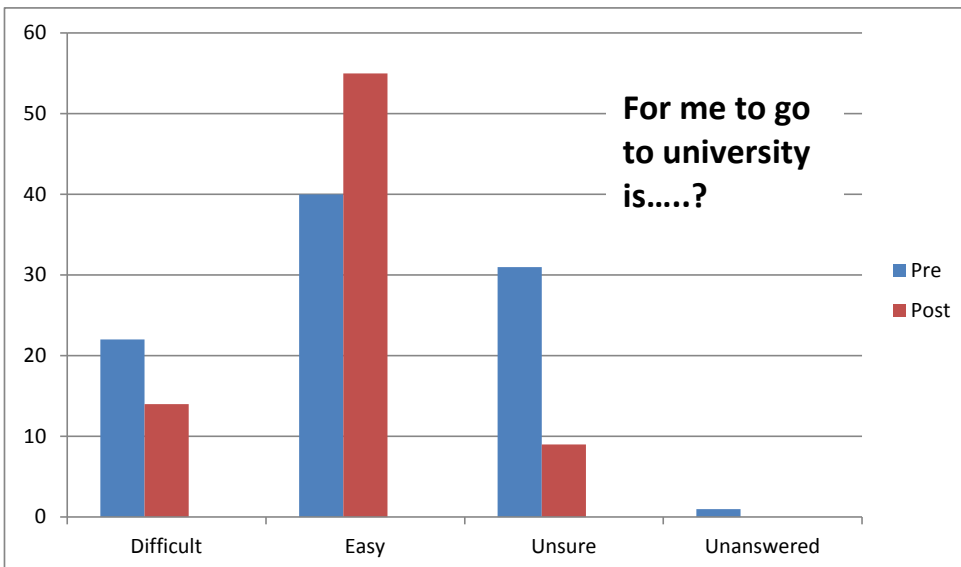
The video clip of the IYSP program can be view at <http://vimeo.com/uq/review/35553146/0ca8768581>. And the article "Sport program to improve Indigenous University enrolments" which can be viewed at <http://livelonger.health.gov.au/>



Evaluations

A survey is conducted at the beginning and the end of the week, exploring students' perceptions of university, their intent to go to university and their feelings of self-worth and control. As can be seen in the charts below, students experienced greater feelings of self-worth and perceived university as more achievable after the IYSP experience. As the program is only in its second year, time and further investigation is needed in order to track students' actual participation rates in university.





Interviews and focus groups were conducted with participants following the completion of the program in order to explore their perceptions of university and examine changes in attitude. These included a selection of young people who participated in the program, community mentors and University of Queensland student mentors. All participants expressed positive opinions about the Indigenous youth sports program.

Involvement in the IYSP was perceived by parents and community mentors as an opportunity to increase knowledge and experiences of university. Some of the community

mentors acknowledged that the IYSP provided a more “real” exposure to university than they had previously experienced.

The confidence gained by the young people and community mentors was seen as a strength of the program by its organisers. *“My biggest highlight would be seeing the kids in the university. I don’t think it’s ever happened like that before, 50-60 indigenous kids in the university just being kids you know? Not being scared, just realising ‘hey you can go to university, you can get a job here’ that was really pleasing”* (Jackson).

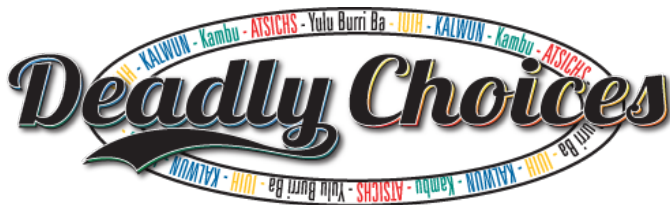
Following the program, many young people expressed renewed interest and positive attitude towards their schoolwork, with goals to *“work harder”* (Timothy), *“get my schoolwork done on time”* (Eric) and *“get good grades, and not muck around with friends too much”* (Cath). For the majority of the young people the possibility of attending university in the future was cited as the main driving force behind their change in attitude. *“It [the program] has changed the way that I’ve been going, because now I really, really want to go university”* (Lilly).

The findings from this initial evaluation indicate that the IYSP contributed to young people’s positive perceptions of university and confidence in themselves and their control of their future. This finding supports the notion of sport as a tool to engage young people in a variety of education and encourage positive outcomes.

(McQueen, McDonald, Nelson, Gucciardi & Brady 2011)



Deadly Choices



The 'Deadly Choices' Program is an example of both a non-government organization utilising sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people, and contributing to an Indigenous sporting program.

Deadly Choices is a chronic disease prevention and education program for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program was developed on the principle of empowering young people to make healthy choices and employs a strength-based approach. Deadly Choices uses sport and physical activity in sessions to encourage attendance and link health messages to healthy sports performance.

Deadly Choices covers 7 key health areas:

- Leadership
- Chronic Disease
- Nutrition
- Substance Misuse
- Smoking Cessation
- Sexual Health
- Health literacy and access

"We strongly encourage ownership and control of the program by the participants and thus their input is to be sought on an ongoing basis in order to tailor it to their needs and desires".

Deadly Choices was developed to be easy and flexible and any community or group leader can facilitate the program with almost any size group. Deadly Choices can be run in almost any community setting including high schools, health groups, AMS's and youth centres. The content is simple and easily adaptable to a group's specific needs.

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Since 1st July, 2011 Deadly Choices has been implemented across South East Queensland, reaching approximately 250 young people aged between 13 and 18 years of age. It was also delivered to a men's group at Kambu Medical Service. Deadly Choices has been run at the Aboriginal and Islander Community Independent School (Murri School) for 5 consecutive terms where it was incorporated into the school's curriculum and has been at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre for 4 consecutive terms.

Based on the feedback from students participating in the program, incorporating both comments during the sessions and the results from pre and post evaluation surveys, the program has been enjoyed and well accepted by participants. The majority of students noted that they really enjoyed the entire program, 98% said they would do the program again and 84% felt that they learned a lot from it that they felt confident in passing the knowledge they'd gained on to others. There was also very positive feedback regarding the method of program delivery, with general consensus being that it was delivered in an interesting and fun way and that plain language was used which helped with grasping overall concepts on some very complicated issues. There were also positive reports on communication skills gained, and the cultural appropriateness of the program; in addition, students enjoyed learning more about culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Pre and Post Evaluation

Following a preliminary evaluation of the program, key outcomes identified by students' self-report include:

- 100% of participants reported they now eat breakfast more
- 57% increased physical exercise daily after doing the program
- Smoking decreased by 14%
- 83% liked health & drug education including Tobacco
- 30% believed the program should run longer
- 100% did not understand chronic disease before the program
- 100% said they would do the program again

The program has proved to be very successful with disengaged young people showing improved school attendance so they could be a part of the program.

Deadly Choices cooperates with other programs, assisting them with chronic disease education, including the **'Broncos Mentoring'** and **'Living Strong'** programs run by Queensland Health. Deadly Choices one-off modules on leadership, chronic disease and smoking education work in conjunction with Indigenous employment programs being run in South-east Queensland, and are important components in encouraging leaders of the future.

Deadly Choices Ambassadors Sam Thaiday and Preston Campbell



The Healthy Lifestyle team with Mr Tom Calma, National Tobacco Coordinator and Co-Chairperson of the Close the Gap Steering Committee

Brisbane Broncos Mentoring Program

During July 1 2011 – June 30 2012 IUIH Healthy Lifestyle Team delivered a Deadly Choices presentation around healthy lifestyle and chronic disease to 18 different schools (approximately 160 young people) across South East Queensland. Collaboration with the Brisbane Broncos on this program has provided networking and building relationships with schools which could benefit from the program.

The Deadly Choices team is now delivering the program for men, women and sporting groups. A Deadly Choices facilitators guide has also been completed and the training package and supporting materials are being used elsewhere across Australia.

Deadly Choices - Community Events

Physical activity is one of the key focus areas highlighted by the Australian Government's Close the Gap initiative. The Healthy Lifestyle Team is involved with planning and coordinating Community Sports Days in order to promote healthy lifestyles and encourage physical activity in South East Queensland's Indigenous populations. These events promote the health benefits and importance of physical activity, while providing an opportunity for community engagement around healthy living. These community events are utilised as vehicles to address the broader mission of IUIH to promote healthy urban Indigenous communities in South East Queensland. Furthermore, these days provide communities with opportunities to meet local community controlled health service staff and access services such as health checks. Some of the community days have been supported through funding provided by the Department of Health and Aging, Live Longer! Campaign.

At each day, participants register and are given a participation card. If they participate in each of the activities on the card they are eligible for a prize pack and a healthy lunch.

Activities include physical activities like Zumba for the adults and climbing a rock wall for the children as well as participation in the Deadly Choices health promotion stand where interactive discussions take place around nutrition, smoking and chronic disease prevention.

Adult participants are invited to undergo a health screening and then linked with either their local mainstream GP (if they have one) or the closest community controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service. This process is made more seamless by the partnership between IUIH and the local health services, with staff attending the community days and working alongside each other.

QLD Murri Knockout

The Queensland Murri Carnival (QMC) was held on the 22-25 September 2011, at Mudgeeraba, Gold Coast. The QMC was a state-wide rugby league carnival hosting 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teams across 3 divisions: men's, women's and under 15's. IUIH was a major sponsor of



the event and the Healthy Lifestyle Team assisted with the coordination of health checks for approximately 25 teams (750 players and staff) in South East Queensland. This is a great example of how the IUIH Healthy Lifestyle Team engaged with the community to provide information about health promotion and promote behaviour change in making healthy lifestyle choices.

Jets Indigenous Appreciation Round – 6 August 2011

The Healthy Lifestyle Team initiated the first Ipswich Jets Indigenous Appreciation Round that was held on August 6, 2011. The aim of this event was to strengthen the relationship between the Ipswich Jets and their Indigenous players, coaching staff and families and to create awareness about Indigenous Health and promote positive change within the Indigenous community. The day focused on Indigenous health and how we can contribute to the Australian Government's Close the Gap initiative by involving a number of organisations that provide the community with expert knowledge in their respective areas. These included:

- University of Queensland: providing knowledge of access to University and Indigenous career opportunities.

- Qld Police Service: promoting their JEP (Justice Entry Program), an Indigenous specific program which is a pathway into the Police Force.
- Kambu: administering health screenings and following up with 'at risk' participants if necessary. Kambu also provided health information to the community.
- IUIH: providing information on key areas that impact on Indigenous health including, smoking cessation, chronic disease, nutrition, physical activity, Medicare and health checks.
- QLD Sport and Recreation: providing an information stall.

Approximately 200 community members attended the day and participated in a range of health promotion activities including health screenings, brief intervention around smoking, health surveys and physical activity.

Work it Out Chronic Disease rehabilitation program



The 'Work it Out' program is a joint project of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services in South-East Queensland, Rehab+ Fitness and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. 'Work it Out' is a rehabilitation and education program for people with chronic disease/s (e.g. diabetes, lung disease or heart disease) to help them to cope and take part in everyday activities. The program promotes "living a healthy and active life with chronic disease rather than letting chronic disease live your life". 'Work It Out' runs over a five week period with two sessions per week, Wednesday and Friday, 9.30-11.30am. Each program session involves a 45 minute education session, followed by 1 hour of exercise, and finishing with morning tea. The education session discusses topics such as:

- How the body works
- What chronic disease is
- The importance of physical activity and keeping active
- The use of medication
- Stress management
- Relaxation techniques
- Nutrition

During the education sessions, participants are encouraged to share their ideas and feelings with other people with similar problems and develop a support network.

A number of staff and students are involved in this program, including: Health workers, Doctors, Exercise physiologists, Physiotherapists, Nurses, Occupational therapists, Pharmacists, Psychologists and Nutritionists. All referrals to the program come from the general practitioners of ATSICHS Brisbane. General practitioners must first complete an Aboriginal health assessment and complete a GP Management Plan before referring to the program.

Primary aims of 'Work It Out':

- To reduce activity limitation and participation restriction for indigenous people with chronic disease.
- To enhance a person's level of independent functioning and management of their chronic disease.

Goals of 'Work It Out':

- Increase participation in everyday activities.
- Improve quality of life.
- Enhance participation in therapy decisions by building self-management capacity.
- Increase exercise tolerance in order to reduce impairment.

- Reduce frequency and severity of symptoms.
- Improve mood and motivation.
- Reduce health care burden for patients, families and communities.
- Improve survival.

(The Australian Lung Foundation & Australian Physiotherapy Association, 2009)

With funding from the Department of Health and Ageing, Work it Out is now being rolled out across the South-East Queensland region. The Work it Out program is based on best practice evidence from research literature and current practice, but modified for the local contextual needs.

Physical Changes

Preliminary evaluation has shown that all clients have improved in their 6 minute walk test results (ie increased exercise tolerance). Variable results have occurred with weight, with some clients losing 1-3 kg and 2 clients staying the same or increasing their weight by 2 kg.

Emotional and Social changes

All clients reported significant changes in their social and emotional well-being through the work it out program. These have been captured through recording of qualitative comments.

Client's comments have been analysed thematically and are reported below:

Changes in lifestyle

- *I used to get 6 blocks of chocolate, now when I go to the shops I get 1 block. I also used to get 200g or 400g of coffee in one hit. Now I have 1-2 cups in the morning. We need to look after our health, you know."*
- *Drinking herbal teas and less coffee*
- *Using Equal (sweetener) instead of sugar*
- *Drinking less diet coke and more water*

Improvements in health status and health knowledge

- *"Why hasn't anyone told me this before?" (regarding effects of cigarette smoking)*
- *"Coming to this program I found that it keeps me away from the doctors. It's doing me a lot of good."*

- *"I can walk. The more I walk the better it is. I've been walking up to the shops not using the car."*
- *"I try to do more each time (referring to exercise). The first time I came I did one set (of wall push-ups), then the next time I did two sets and now I do three sets. I aimed for four today but couldn't quite make it. I figure it's not worth coming unless I can do a bit more each time."*
- *"I'm 50% better in getting up the stairs today. I went straight up rather than sideways."*

The 'Work it Out' program has been developed based on principles of best practice for self-management of chronic disease for urban indigenous clients and incorporates a successful social marketing approach to the ownership of the program

Conclusion

As many other submissions have noted, sport has a significant role to play in the promotion of well-being in Indigenous people and mentoring through sporting programs can contribute across a range of areas. This broad approach to sport's contribution needs to be emphasised, beyond people playing sport to participation and other benefits gained through association and involvement in sporting and physical activity programs. Using sport as a vehicle for other activities (e.g. engaging young people in university programs) can be beneficial, but again, diversity needs to be considered so that those not interested in, or confident in sport are also encouraged to participate. Evaluation of these programs should be woven into all levels of program development and delivery.

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