Community Services Skilling Plan

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Home and Community Care Services Best Practice Stories

Queensland Government
The Community Services Skilling Plan Team is working on a diverse range of workforce and sector development initiatives for the Department of Communities, Home and Community Care (HACC) Services.

This HACC initiative is a key commitment under the HACC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Development Plan and involves showcasing best practice HACC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery models to promote innovative and positive service delivery practices to meet the cultural needs of their communities and build cultural capacity within the HACC sector.

This is the first of three publications that will be distributed to all HACC Organisations.

Through these publications HACC organisations and service providers have the opportunity to showcase their initiatives and to learn of activities and service models other HACC services are implementing.

Please contact Di Jordan on 0419 191 802 if you would like to submit an article to be included in the upcoming publications.

Tracks artwork and story
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Graphic design and print
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Burringilly Community Care and Blue Care Acacia Ridge are benefiting from participating in Crossing Cultures workshops delivered by the Community Services Skilling Plan. Burringilly and Blue Care have been working in partnership to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Brisbane South region have increased access to Home and Community Care services.

Nerida Jones, Respite Coordinator at Blue Care Acacia Ridge said that Blue Care had noticed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not accessing their service and wondered what they could do to change this.

Blue Care who participated in the Crossing Cultural Workshops invited staff members from Burringilly to visit Blue Care and to have a chat about how to become more culturally friendly. After a couple of meetings with Burringilly, Blue Care organised a mini cultural day and invited Burringilly staff and clients to come along. Following this initial gathering, the two organisations have arranged a number of dates where Burringilly staff and clients will visit Blue Care and Blue Care staff and clients will visit Burringilly.

Christine Fewquandie, Manager at Burringilly says that the Brisbane South region is large and this makes it difficult for Burringilly to provide services to all Indigenous elders and people with a disability on a regular basis. This is particularly the case when it comes to respite care. Whilst Burringilly delivers centre-based respite care four days a week, Christine says that the only clients that they can bring in for respite more than once a week are the local mob in Woodridge who don’t need to travel far.

Visits to Blue Care Acacia Ridge thus far have provided Burringilly clients with an opportunity to get to know the Blue Care staff and surroundings. Christine hopes that the partnership with Blue Care will mean that Burringilly clients will start to see Blue Care as a safe place and in time access additional respite days though Blue Care.

“Our clients hang out all week to come to Burringilly. If they could get another days respite through Blue Care it will get them out of the house and this would be better for them and their family,” says Christine.

Building Partnerships: Burringilly & Blue Care
When Jymbilung House was first established their services were delivered out of a small room rented from the Mununjali Housing Development Company. Today Jymbilung House operates out of its own large building which includes a respite centre, a commercial kitchen, and large outdoor area. As Jymbilung House continues to grow, the organisation hopes to expand into a second building.
Jymbilung House: From Little Things Big Things Grow

Jymbilung House has grown from humble beginnings. Established in 1994, Jymbilung House originally operated out of a small room rented from their auspicing body, Mununjali Housing Development Company, and employed just three part time staff members who delivered support and care to 15 clients. Today Jymbilung House employs 44 staff members and delivers community care services to over 245 clients living in the Beaudesert region.

Over the last 17 years Jymbilung House has been successful in receiving 55 Community Aged Care Packages as well as Home and Community Care funding for the delivery of centre-based day care, respite care, nursing care, domestic assistance, personal care, social support, transport, allied health care, meals and home maintenance.

More recently Jymbilung House has received funding through the HACC program to establish an Assistive Technology pilot project. Although Beaudesert is just 100kms South West of Brisbane, this community is isolated in many ways. Access to public transport in this area is a significant issue and this makes access to specialist medical and allied health appointments in Brisbane very difficult. The assistive technology pilot project will trial the use of video streaming to connect Jymbilung House clients in Beaudesert to allied health services located in Brisbane.

Jymbilung House is also preparing to launch a Functional Independence Project. As part of this project, Jymbilung House aims to get clients actively involved in a review of their care plans. Jymbilung House will work with their clients to develop individualised care plans which will include a set of goals which the client hopes to maintain their independence.

So what is behind the success and growth of Jymbilung House? Matthew Moore, Jymbilung House Manager says that the name ‘Jymbilung’ means ‘Family’ in the local language and suggests that part of the success of the organisation can be attributed to its relaxed family atmosphere. Jymbilung House tries to recruit staff who will contribute to this family atmosphere and Paula Jakavicius, Operations Manager at Jymbilung House, believes that the recruitment of quality staff has made Jymbilung House the success it is today. Jymbilung House always tries to employ staff from within the community through school-based traineeships, job networks and work for the dole programs. ‘We like to give locals the opportunity to enter the aged care workforce,’ says Paula.

Matthew and Paula suggest that organisations wishing to grow and develop new and innovative services consider the following tips:

• Recruit good quality staff and provide them with ongoing training and mentoring

• Demand accountability and consistency from all levels – staff, management and the Board

• Give locals an opportunity to join the aged care workforce

• Try to fully understand what the rules around your funding are so that you can determine how you can best utilise it for your community

• Take on board any advice provided by quality auditors about how you can improve your service

• Network, Network, Network! Stay connected not just with your local community but with other aged care and home and community care providers. Networking can help you access information that can make a real difference to services at a management level, and last but not least

• Always do what’s right for the client.
The Nandjimadji art group connects artists to their culture, provides a safe space for yarning and provides an opportunity for the artists’ carers to have a break.

The Nandjimadji art group meets every week at the Maroochydore Community Centre.
Lightening the Load through Art

Nandjimadji, which means “to lighten the load” in the Gubbi Gubbi language, is the name of the local Aboriginal art group which gathers on the Sunshine Coast. Members of this art group are Aboriginal artists who are living with a disability or are carers of a person with a disability.

This group was initially formed when Paul Calcott, Client Service Integration Manager at Suncare Community Services, received a number of referrals for respite care though a local Indigenous Health worker. Paul, being an artist himself, noticed that many of the people he assessed for respite care shared an interest in art and thought that art was a great way to bring everyone together.

Paul says that the Nandjimadji group has many benefits. It gives people a reason to leave the house and participate in a meaningful activity; it also provides people with an opportunity to use their creativity. It connects the artists to their culture, creates a safe space for yarning and provides an opportunity for the artists’ carers to have a break. “Friendships are forming amongst people who before this group formed were not even leaving their flats,” says Paul.

Nandjimadji meets regularly at the Maroochydore Community Centre and Kabbarli, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HACC service supports the group by providing transport to the Community Centre. The group has grown over time and now has over 12 people aged between 11 and 60 joining every week. “We have never had to advertise the group. People have heard about it through word of mouth and we are seeing people come along who we may never have come across otherwise,” says Paul.

The Nandjimadji art group held their first art exhibition at the Novotel Twin Waters Resort during NAIDOC week this year. On opening night over 100 guests arrived to view the artwork and share some bush tucker. Paul said that a year ago many of the artists would not have gone to a function with more than three people yet during the week of the exhibition the artists proudly stood by their work and were available to answer questions. The exhibition at the Novotel was a great success and many of the Nandjmadji artists were pleased to have sold their work.

Suncare Community Services initially provided the group with some basic art supplies, however a community grant through the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and the profits from the art exhibition at the Novotel have allowed the group to purchase further supplies. “They have been able to get some really good quality art supplies through a local wholesaler and this has really reinforced that their artwork is quality stuff,” says Paul.

Paul recommends that any organisation wishing to establish an art group similar to Nandjimadji group should ensure that the artists involved have ownership of the group. “The Nandjimadji artists all help out in setting up for a gathering and if they choose to sell their artwork they are all encouraged to put a small percentage of their sales back into the group for the purchase of supplies,” says Paul. By contributing to costs of canvases and paints the artists own the group. Paul also recommends that groups are set up as a peer support rather than a formal art class where people can get together and yarn while creating art.

Following the success of Nandjimadji, Suncare Community Services has established similar art groups in Caboolture, Nambour and Zillmere. The Novotel has agreed to display and sell the work of Nandjmadji artists on a regular basis.
Crossing Cultures: Building Cultural Capacity in Service Delivery

Late last year participants from a number of Home and Community Care services providers in the Brisbane South area attended a Cross Cultural Program. It was delivered in workshop format by the Community Services Skilling Plan in collaboration with representatives of the regional community sector which included indigenous stakeholders. The program, held over a series of 2 day workshops, was driven by a genuine desire by HACC service providers in the region to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to Home and Community Care services.

Led by Kim Smoother and Linda Walker of the Community Services Skilling Plan, the program engaged numerous indigenous sector professionals to deliver components of the program. Jennifer Cullen, Chief Executive Officer at Synapse (formerly Brain Injury Association of Queensland) delivered the session: Practical Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. This presentation encouraged mainstream HACC service providers to consider barriers preventing their organisations from meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Participants discussed and analysed actions they could take to ensure their services were more inclusive and integrated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services.

Jennifer asked participants to reflect on the cultural competence and awareness of their organisation by considering the following questions:

- Are staff encouraged to attend and participate in important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events?
- Have staff participated in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence training?

“Building cultural capacity internally is really important,” said Jennifer. “If HACC agencies can increase their cultural capability internally, then they can attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into their workforce and we can get more black fellas caring for our Elders”.

The cross cultural workshops have led to a number of practical partnerships between mainstream organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. Jennifer has reported that following the workshop organisations have started talking to their workforce about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provision and have commenced approaching local elders in their community to ask them to be cultural advisors for their organisations.

“Seeing the impact of organisations going up to do stuff together is invaluable, and in the long term it will benefit the way services are delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” says Jennifer.

Jennifer has also been building the profile of Indigenous Australians within her own organisation, and has managed to secure the support of high profile rugby league player Johnathan Thurston as the Synapse Indigenous Ambassador. Thurston’s image will feature in the new Synapse Indigenous awareness poster that aims to create awareness of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) prevention in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Copies of the poster are available now from Synapse’s Community Response Service team on request. To request a poster email info@synapse.org.au or call Synapse on Ph: 07 3137 7400 (Freecall 1800 673 074 if outside Brisbane).