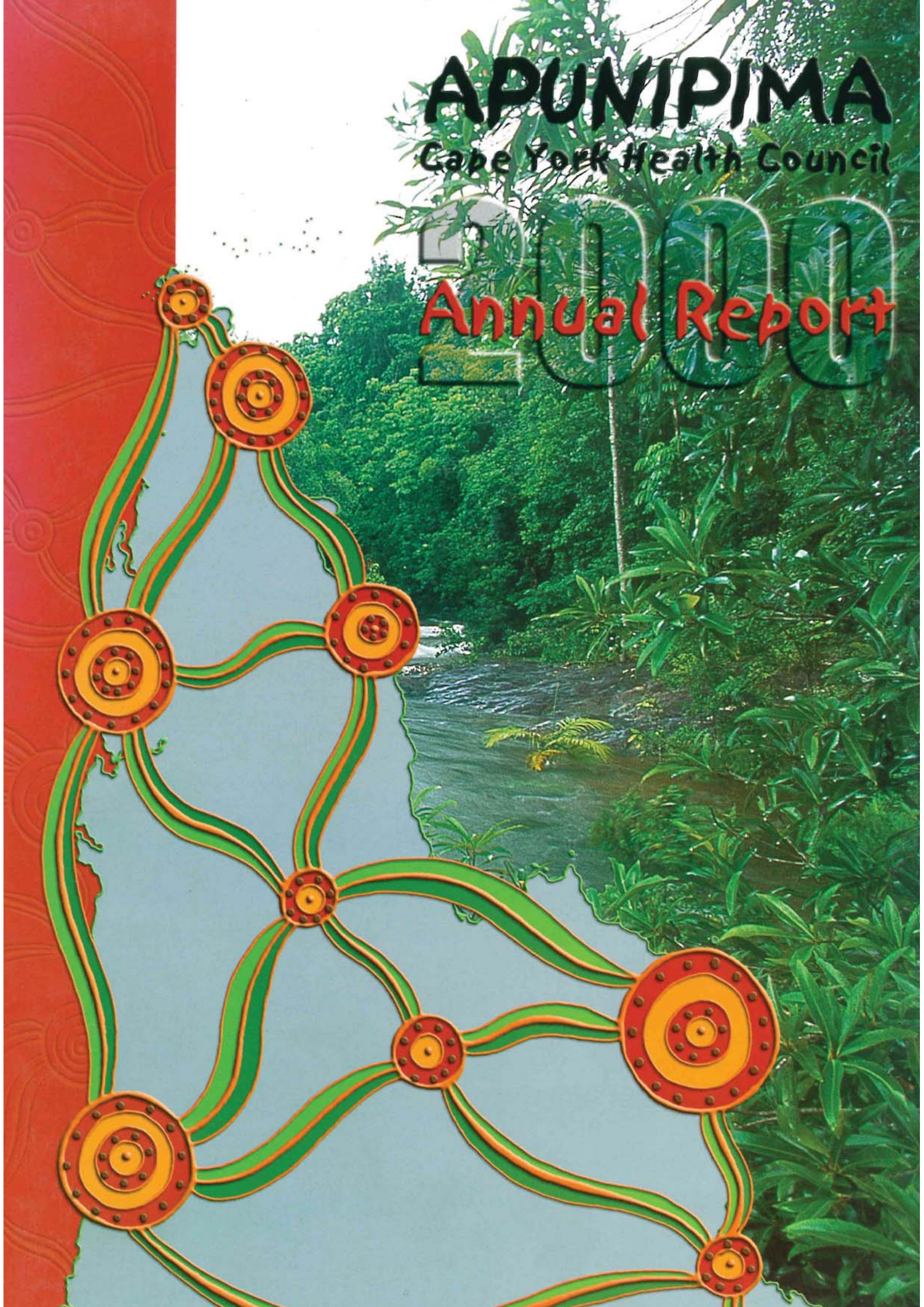
APUNIPIMA

Cape York Health Council

2009 Annual Report



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ROLE STATEMENT

Role Statement

The Apunipima Cape York Health Council is a multi-disciplinary health resource for the communities and people of Cape York Peninsula.
Our role is to identify deficiencies in services and activities influencing health, and to push for solutions.
We do this by:

- Lobbying for improved health services
- Advocating for the provision of "best medicine - best practice" with a skilled health workforce
- Working with communities and decision makers for greater community ownership of their health
- Bringing expertise to achieve regional strategic planning
- Advocating for adequate information for the evaluation and monitoring of health
- Ensuring implimentation of Commonwealth and State policy on access and equity at a regional level
- Promoting and pursuing consumer health rights and responsibilities
- Working with other organisations for healthier environment and improvements in health status
- Promoting regional coordination for best cost effective results

The Organisation

Apunipima Cape York Health Council is the lead agency representing the health needs of Cape Communities. The strategy adopted by the organisation is a systems advocacy approach where the Government and non government service providers are lobbied to improve services and resources to Aboriginal communities in Cape York. The core business of the organisation is to coordinate health activities, facilitate a change in service delivery and develop innovative solutions in partnership with communities to improve access to services for Aboriginal people.

Underlying Principles of Apunipima

- People and communities should be involved in determining and managing the types of services / programs sponsored by Apunipima.
- Health Care should be available to all as close to their homes as possible.
- Health Services should be of the highest possible quality within resources constraints.
- Maximum benefits should be achieved from expenditure of resources.
- The organisation of health services should be designed in such a way as to provide efficient service delivery and proper communication between different levels in the system.
- The promotion of good behavioural management and the prevention of disease should be given priority.
- That the organisational structure reflects a structure that facilitates leadership in program development, opens communication channels within the organisation and places functions such as policy development and budget management with the program areas where the content knowledge about these issues lie.

The Formation of Apunipima Cape York Health Council

"Apunipima" means in the Injinoo Ikya language "All in one - united"

Apunipima Cape York Health Council (ACYHC) was conceived at the Panjinka Wilderness Lodge, near Injinoo (the tip of Cape York) on the 14 September 1994 with a mandate to carry the health-related issues to both the Cape York Land Council and the ATSIC Regional Council. The representatives from 15 communities of Cape York and associated Homelands held a four day health conference concerned about the lack of improvement in the health status of Cape York Aboriginal people resolved to make the move to form the Health Council.

ACYHC was incorporated on the 11 November 1994 and was the first community controlled health organisation covering Cape York and was a new model in Aboriginal health services. The health council is committed to working with the mainstream health system to coordinate improved health service delivery and to fill the gaps in services as prioritised by the communities that make up the membership.

The formation of the Health Council was the initiative of the ATSIC Peninsula Regional Council and the Cape York Land Council. It forms part of the inter-woven web of regional organisations that represents the grass roots - the community people.

"We still are and will be the most researched people in Australia and as far as the Cape goes, we are the most neglected people and what we are trying to do is to turn it around and I think it's past time when we've got to make the decisions on what we want and not listen to bickering, to jealousy from other people wanting to try and control us. It's time we got up and did something ... for too long we have had to sit in the back seat and take what's thrown at us. Let us take the lead and make the decisions."

Lester Rosendale, Pajinka
14 September 1994

CHAIRPERSON

Billy Daniel - Chairperson

As recently appointed Chairperson on the 12th May 2000, I would firstly like to thank the Governing Committee members for having confidence in me, and also their support.

Also, I would like to thank the staff of Apunipima Cape York Health Council who have moved on and who committed their services to the organisation and past Chairperson. I thank them for their commitment to the health of our people.

A "big thank-you", goes to Kerry Arabena for the past effort she has contributed to this organisation as both a Sexual Health Coordinator and in her later role as the Executive Director. Congratulations to Doreen Hart for her appointment to the new position of General Manager, my confidence is with you.

Becoming Chairperson of Apunipima has given me the opportunity to experience how this organisation addresses and achieves the desired results for the health and well being of our Cape communities. I for one will be looking at health related issues of concern that are raised by community people, bringing them to the table at our Governing Committee meetings and I will encourage all other members of the committee to do the same, so that we can address our issues together.

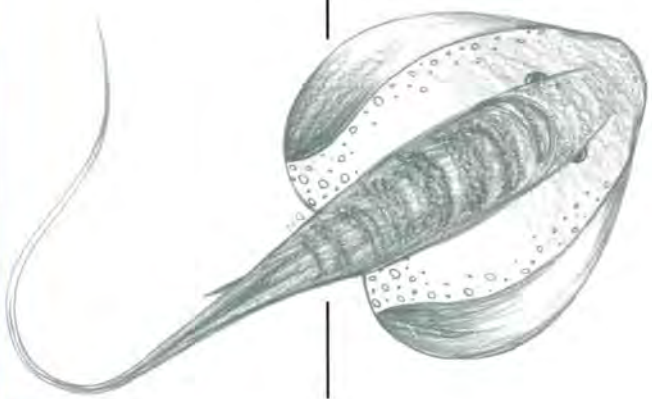
I've witnessed the struggle in some remote communities on the Cape and the things that they have to live with, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, broken homes and neglect. All these things lead to other problems. This is the life pattern we are living with today and these are the patterns we must change.

My aim is to conduct Health Council business and the business of the Governing Committee in a way that is open to comment from all members of the community and able to best address all our health needs. I will also continue to liaise with other regional organisations such as ATSIC Regional Peninsula Council, Balkanu, Cape York Land Council, Thurpuntoo Legal Service, ACC and the Youth Council etc. to strengthen our relationships and work closely with the Cape York Partnerships office to improve the future of our people.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all members and staff of Apunipima for their support, encouragement and respect. I look forward to a future where community is actively involved in decision making, is self sufficient and has better access to health care.

United we build, divided we fall,

Billy Daniel
Chairperson



GOVERNING COMMITTEE

Front Left: Chris Henry, Dylys Gilbo, Geiza Wigness, Tom Bowie
Second: Anthony Kerridun, Billy Daniel, Jackson Shortjoe, Adelaide Baird, Myrtle Foote.
Third: Daphne Barkley, Cedric Friday, Cyril Rocky, Paul Gibson, Maria Henry
Fourth: Naomi Hobson, Beatrice Hobson, Robyn Toeboy, Gwendolyn Toby
Fifth: Helen Hanush, Lizzy Young, Enid Namok, Doreen Hart
Absent: Winifred Ngakyunkwokka, Robbie Salee, Tom Bero, Noel Pearson, Greg McLean, Gordon Solomon, Rhonda Henry, Gabriel Butcher, Ron Ngallametta, Kathleen Barkley, Charles Woosup

ATSIC PRC REP
Robbie Salee

AURUKUN
Anthony Kerridun

Winifred Ngakyunkwokka

COEN
Tom Bero

Naomi Hobson

CYLC REP
Noel Pearson

COOKTOWN
Paul Gibson

Helen Hanush

HOPEVALE
Greg Mclean

HORN ISLAND
Tom Bowie

Geiza Wigness

INJINOO
Enid Namok- Secretary

Gordon Solomon

LAURA
Maria Henry

Rhonda Henry

LOCKHART RIVER
Gabriel Butcher

Beatrice Hobson

MAPOON
Robyn Toeboy

Daphne Barkley-Treasurer

MOSSMAN
Cyril Rocky

KOWANYAMA
Chris Henry

Dylys Gilbo

NAPRANUM
Ron Ngallametta

Kathleen Barkley

WUJAL WUJAL
Adelaide Baird

Cedric Friday

PORMPURAAW
Jackson Shortjoe

Myrtle Foote

NEW MAPOON
Billy Daniel-Chairperson

Gwendolyn Toby

UMAGICO
Charles Woosup

Lizzie Young

Doreen Hart - General Manager

As the recently appointed General Manager of Apunipima, I would first like to thank the Governing Committee for appointing me to this position. Your faith and support motivates me to make changes that are of benefit to my people.

I would like to thank past staff members who have contributed to the work enviroment during the course of the year - Alastair Harris, Tracey Callegari, Bedeliah Mallet, and Kaarena Kennell. I wish you all the best for the future.

Last but not least my gratitude to Kerry Arabena, without your long term vision the organisation would not have progressed as far as it has. Your inspiration will be sadly missed but the world is yours for the taking, all the best for the future.

Apunipima has been involved in various ongoing and new projects. Many of these will be expanded on throughout this Annual Report including the Family Violence Advocacy Project and the North Queensland Sexual Health Strategy.

Apunipima is working with Cape York Partnerships, Cape York communities, Queensland Health and other service providers to draft a comprehensive regional health strategy and partnership agreement on Aboriginal Health.

Cape York Partnerships is a part of the new strategy that Apunipima has adopted from the direction we received at the 1999 Wujal Wujal Land and Health Summit. Apunipima will have to manage the development of this role under Cape York community control, providing a good role model for community people, and developing Family and Community Health Plans for change. At the same time we have signed an interim Memorandum of Understanding with Queensland Health to do the following;

* Queensland Health in close collaboration with Apunipima and Cape York communities will commence implementation of measures aimed at improving services arising out of its review of health services in Cape York.
* Further develop and refine upstream strategies affecting Aboriginal health including a comprehensive Drug and Alcohol Strategy.
* Further develop and refine strategies for community engagement in Aboriginal Health strategies
* Further develop and refine our roles in the improvement of health outcomes in Cape York.

We are also negotiating with a range of departments to accept the concept of, and fund Apunipima's 'River of Life Health Strategy'.

Apunipima Cape York Health Council has been given a direction by our Governing Committee to dedicate resources to our 'River of Life Health Strategy'. Through Cape York Partnerships there is a unique opportunity to advance this Strategy and to attract the necessary resources and funding to make it happen.

Apunipima is currently meeting with individual Community Councils seeking support for this strategy that will focus attention on developing 'Family/Clan Health Plans' and assisting families to receive the necessary training, resources and opportunities to create healthy communities. We want to see families empowered to look after their health in conjunction with, and not almost totally reliant on community health centres.

Apunipima Cape York Health Council's 'River of Life Strategy' is about creating meaningful jobs that reconstruct social responsibility by breaking the cycle of problems that people live with daily. In conjunction with Queensland Health we are examining how better services can be provided to communities and how families and individuals can receive training and resources to be better equipped to progress beyond a constant state of emergency.

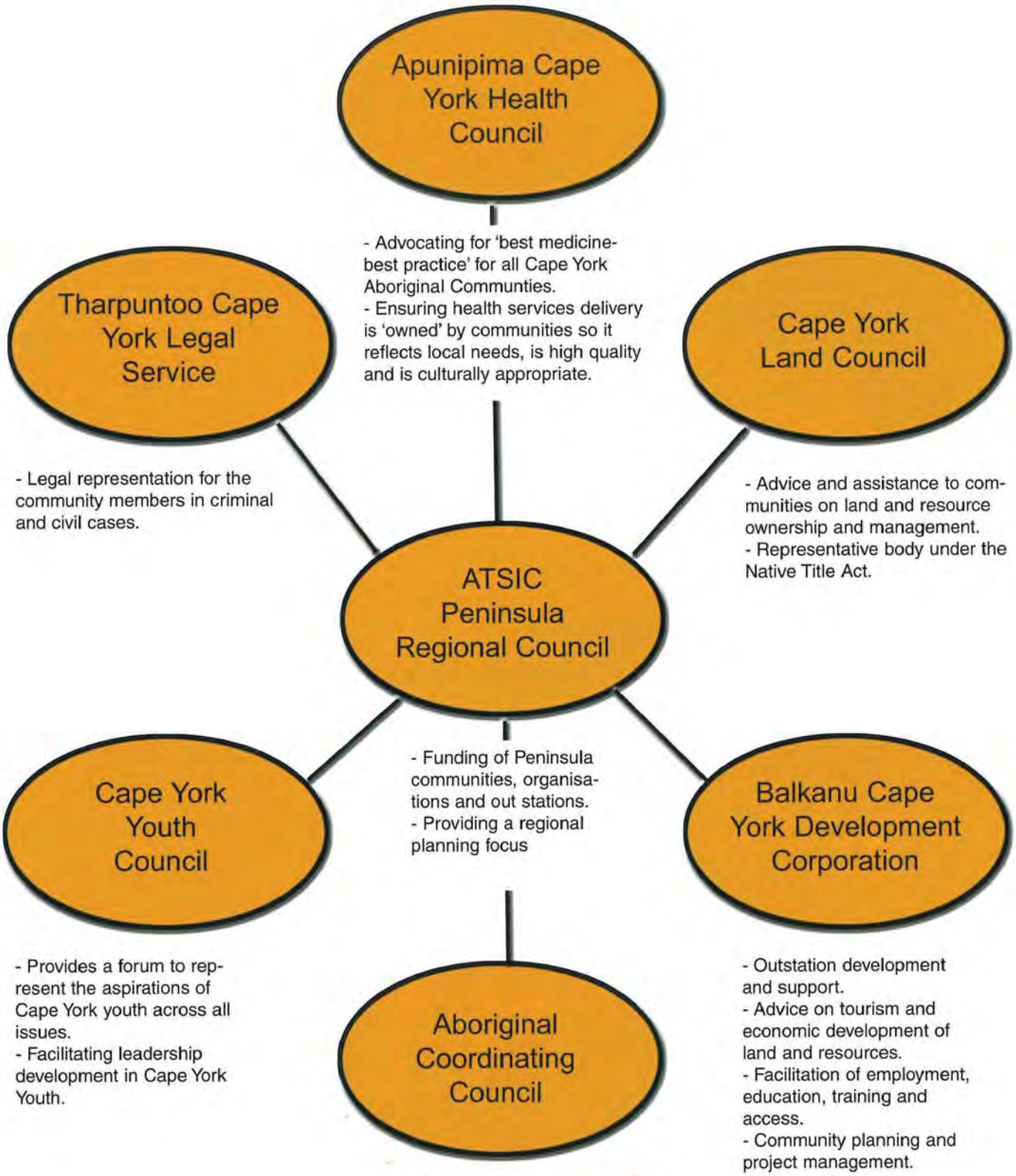
Apunipima is a unique organisation designed to facilitate and advocate for change in Cape York communities. We will continue to seek ways to develop the capacity of our organisation and community groups and to continue to form strong linkages with all levels of service provision and government. Apunipima is above all a community-controlled organisation and will continue to fight for, and address health issues on behalf of communities. I would especially like to thank our current staff and the Governing Committee for their confidence in me to lead the Health Council into the 21st Century and look forward to working closely with all communities to achieve happy, healthy and proud lifestyles for all.

Doreen Hart
General Manager

Moira Liggins - Personal Assistant & Research Officer

David Sharkey - Executive Support

Linkage of Regional Organisations



CAPE YORK
YOUTH CAMPS
HOPE VALE

Business Support Unit

The Business Support Unit is responsible for the management of the business functions of the organisation. This includes human resource management, administrative support functions, maintenance of the library, occupational health and safety, record management and archiving, vehicle fleet and Asset management. This Unit is also responsible for developing training programs, managing the purchase system within the organisation including the delivery of services, travel, accommodation and vehicle hire.

It is the responsibility of the staff within this Unit to support Apunipima's Community Development and Program Units with the coordination of health activities that support innovative change to service delivery in partnership with communities. It is also with great privilege that we support these efforts, in conjunction with the Cape York Partnerships staff, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Cape York Land Council, to improve access to all services for Aboriginal people.

The aims and objectives of the Council's constitution define the role and vision of Apunipima Cape York Health Council. However, it is the responsibility of this Unit to deliver the policies and procedures that all staff and people associated with Apunipima can adopt to ensure that the values and philosophy that underlies the business of the organisation is maintained.

In the past year the development of a comprehensive human resource plan, Orientation and Governing Committee *Roles and Responsibilities* Manual has been completed. The manuals explain the responsibilities of the Governing Committee and outlines the policies and procedures of the Organisation. The Organisation has undergone internal staff position reviews and supports the philosophy of professional development, including multi-skilling through training and solid staff support mechanisms. Apunipima has worked successfully with TAFE and Peace Lutheran College in supporting work experience students who have contributed to the workplace environment.

The Apunipima Library has now been relocated to the Business Support Unit and a filing system re-established as part of the Library Upgrade project. Our Senior Admin officer completed basic training with the Cape York Land Council Librarian and has worked diligently to provide reference and information services to our program area staff. A member of the Conservation Unit from the Queensland State Library has completed an audit regarding the basic archiving and preservation of Apunipima's video, cd and photographic library, hard copy documents, and including the Aurukun collection of artwork. The Library currently has on display a collection of carvings and weavings from various Wik Artists associated with the Cultural Resource Centre of Aurukun.

The Council's Workplace Health and Safety Policies are incorporated into the philosophies and direction the organisation takes and communicates the values, beliefs and commitment of the Governing Committee, senior management, and staff to health and safety. This commits Apunipima to pursuing progressive improvement in health and safety performance with legal requirements and advisory standards defining the minimum level of achievement, and by maintaining effective systems of communications on health and safety matters. Effective management is implemented through a certified Safety Officer and managed by a safety committee situated in the Business Support Unit.

The Business Support Unit is responsible for Asset management and the vehicle Fleet. In keeping with Quality Improvement Plans incorporated into the Business Support Unit Strategic Plans and workplace health and safety requirements, Apunipima has now equipped their fleet with Remote Area First Aid Kits, safety equipment, Fire extinguishers and a new SAT phone for Cape travel. Staff members have undergone training in 4W Driving; Senior First Aid and CPR and Field Trip Safety policies have been implemented. Training modules are currently being developed in-house utilising the existing skills of our staff members.

It is a great pleasure to work with the administrative team currently employed, and to be associated with the staff within our Regional Organisations who spear-head the 'dream of a time when our people do not have to rely on welfare, and are healthy in mind, body and spirit'.

Elizabeth Pearson
Human Resource, Policy & Administration

Elizabeth Pearson
Manager Human Resource Policy and Administration

Vivian Pearson
Senior Administration Officer

Teressa Gibson
Trainee Administration Officer

Tanya Wilson
Administration and Reception

EddieBuli - Manager Community Development Unit

Hello again to the people of Cape York Peninsula from Apunipima Community Development Unit. What a long wet season we had this year. The year 2000 has been an active one for Apunipima's Community Development Unit. Apunipima Cape York Health Council has experienced new organisation structural changes, since August 2000.

The Community Development Unit has been involved with several issues and projects throughout Cape York communities. The role of the Apunipima Community Development Unit is to develop partnerships with communities by :

- Supporting and enhancing the role of our Governing Committee.
- Developing strong links with Cape York Community Councils and other representative groups for Cape York communities
- To support capacity building within the communities through joint projects.

The Community Development Unit has continued with its community visits via community requests. Through invitations, we develop links with communities and other Indigenous and non Indigenous organisations. Whilst in the Communities, team members have been involved with addressing and following up community issues. These issues vary in each community involving Youth, Elders, Mens Health, Womens Health, Environmental, Outstations, Young Persons Health Check, Well Persons Health Check and other critical issues. The outcome we work towards is developing partnerships between Indigenous and non Indigenous, Government and non-government organisations and departments for lifestyle improvements of our Cape York people.

In addition, we promote Apunipima Cape York Health Council in establishing new bridges and maintaining old bridges forming networks throughout the Cape York Peninsula.
The Community Development Unit is also represented on various Committees to share knowledge and expertise relating to a move forward for Indigenous people. The Community Development team has attended conferences and workshops regarding Youth, Men and Health issues.

Aurukun Outstation Advisory Group

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation

Cairns Base Hospital Ethics Committee

Cairns Division of General Practice Limited Diabetes Working Party

Cape York Development Corporation Policy Development Group

Cape York District Medical Benefits Scheme Steering Committee

Cape York Sport and Recreation Steering Committee

Eastern Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alcohol and Drug Reference Group

North Queensland Injury Prevention Reference Group

Northern Indigenous Sexual Health Workers Reference Group

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HACC Reference Group-Continence Sub-Committee.

The National Youth Initiative

Qld Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Education Program Aboriginal Corporation

Youth Suicide Prevention Group

There were two Men's conferences attended this year. Firstly, our southern brothers held one titled Indigenous Men's Health Conference 'Its Up to Us' in Mackay in May 2000. Secondly, a Men's Conference was held on Thursday Island, it was the 2nd Meriba Garkaziw Garwidhamin 'Our Men's Gathering' in July 2000. This was organised by the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Health Authority. A special mention must go to the Men's Health Coordinator (Torres Strait), bala Frank Cook for bringing it all together.

Some good news that has been along time coming Sports and Recreation This all came about from the Sports and Recreation workshop held in Cooktown 1999 and a Cape York Sport and Recreation Steering Committee was formed. The committee consists of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, ATSIC Peninsula Regional Council, the Department of Sports and Recreation Queensland, the Faculty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies-Community Recreation, Cairns TAFE and Apunipima Cape York Health Council.
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Department of Sports and Recreation Queensland then sought joint funding. Apunipima Cape York Health Council is the project manager for the Sports and Recreation Planning Project for the Cape York Peninsula.

Apunipima has already tendered for a Sports and Recreation Consultancy team. The consultancy project will be carried out over twelve months. During that time the project will do an audit of Sports and Recreation in the Cape York communities. This will include identifying community liaison officers, training issues, Sport and Recreation infrastructure, developing individual community Sports and Recreation Plans and developing a Regional Cape York Sport and Recreation Plan for the Cape York communities to implement. This project is a stepping stone for the development of Sports and Recreation, identifying and nurturing the potential natural talent that we have in the Cape York communities.

The Community Development Unit look forward to travelling to the Cape York communities catching up with family, old acquaintances, making new friendships and building a stronger relationship within the Cape York, NPA and Cairns Districts.

Robbie Corrie - Community Liaison

We would like to thank the Cape York people and others who support and encourage our roles for this change in our status - this change that our present and past Elders have foreseen during their struggle for equality. Now the fighting stick is passed on to our younger generation to pursue.

Eddie Buli -"One Walk, One Talk, One People."
Manager - Community Development

An initiative was taken up by the Community Development Unit to incorporate the Dynamic Poster Workshop into some of their community visits. This included sexual health posters being produced in Coen and a Men's Health poster being produced for the Men's Health conference on Thursday Island. The Community Development Unit also produced a short explanatory video on the Dynamic Poster Workshop for communities to see.
In my role as the Community Resource Development Officer I have produced a number of different print resources. This includes a series of brochures for the sexual health unit, a book on Traditional Birthing in Cape York, Apunipima Action and health posters for various communities.

Aaron Davis

Above: Aaron Davis - Community Media Resource Officer
Left:: Men's Health Workshop Resource Poster - A poster workshop product.

FINANCE

Anthony Yagmoor - Financial Controller

Once again I have the pleasure to report that the Council has enjoyed a year of positive financial growth as evidenced by the increase in Apunipima's net assets. Since incorporation in 1994/95, Apunipima has increased its net assets each year (after adjusting for unexpended grant funds) to allow the organisation to take on a financial existence outside of specific purpose funding.

I would also like to pay special thanks to all the staff at Apunipima who have all worked so hard together to ensure Apunipima's financial accountability to it's members and funding bodies is unchallenged. During the financial year, Apunipima administered a total of twenty grants. Of these projects, four have been finalised and sixteen are ongoing.

Apunipima traditionally does not publish its audited financial statements in the annual report as there is no legal requirement to do so however Apunipima members may obtain a copy if they so desire by writing to the Council.

On a personal note, this last year has been wonderful meeting members from various communities and being a community-controlled organisation, I continue to encourage members to question and have their say in Apunipima's financial management.

Apunipima's ability to carry on its charter into the future is enhanced by the financial health of the organisation and I personally look forward to seeing that this transpires into better health for all the indigenous peoples of Cape York.

Anthony Yagmoor
Financial Controller

1999/2000 Projects

Respect Your Elders
Australian Multicultural Foundation

Family Violence Advocacy
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Sport & Recreation Workshop
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Sport & Recreation Plan
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Women's Workshop
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Domestic Violence Survey
Criminology Research Council

Youth Advisory Forum 1998
Department of Equity and Fair Trading

Community Literacy Program
Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations

Photo Workshops
Department of Families, Youth and Community Care

Youth Council Workshop
Department of Families, Youth and Community Care

Operating Grant
Department of Health and Aged Care

Suicide Summit
Department of Health and Aged Care

Sexual Health
Department of Health and Aged Care

Staff Training Support
Department of Health and Aged Care

Indigenous Churches of Qld
Environmental Protection Agency

Oral History of Birthing
Environmental Protection Agency

Respect Your Elders
Environmental Protection Agency

Donovanosis Elimination
Queensland Health

Integrated Mental Health Project
Queensland Health

Sexual Health Pamphlet
Queensland Health

FAMILY VIOLENCE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Apunipima Cape York Health Council won a National tender to fund a 3-year Family Violence Advocacy Project. The aim of the project is to develop a model of "best practice" for service providers to respond to family violence.
The project is now in its final year of funding and we are confident that the three-armed approach we have taken over the past 18 months is the approach that the model will take.

The three-armed approach involves working with:

i. **Regional Cairns-based Service Providers**
ii. **Community Women**
iii. **Community-based Service Providers**

Very early in the Project we established IFVAG (Indigenous Family Violence Action Group) which is a group of Cairns-based service providers, who in some way respond to family violence incidents in the Cape. Our Team members have facilitated the meetings of IFVAG and provided secretariat services. Very recently, to encourage ownership, a decision

The Indigenous Family Violence Advocacy Group

was made to rotate the Chair and venue of monthly IFVAG meetings. It is hoped that after the duration of the project, IFVAG will remain an entity of its own and service delivery to the Cape Communities will be coordinated, efficient, effective and in line with community values.
Upon request from communities, "Healing Our Families" workshops are conducted by the Project Team - Daphne, Helen and Carol. Information is given on: the Project, the various forms of violence, some causes for the violence (historical and cultural perspective) and referral agencies. The workshop focuses on encouraging individual development and gives women perspective in their own lives. We also gather information from the women about what services they access locally and how well these services cater for their needs. The workshop ends by discussing options they may wish to take for their own lives.
As a follow-up to the community workshops, a meeting between community-based service providers

Family Violence Advocacy Project Team
Carol Fyfe - Project Administration Officer
Helen Myles - Project Officer
Daphne Naden - FVAP Coordinator/ Policy & Programs Manager

and community women ("Building Bridges") is organised and facilitated by our Team. This meeting is to encourage interaction and to inform community women about the services available, what services

Family Violence Advocacy Project Resource Materials

are provided, who is first point of contact, how the services interact and support each other - encouraging networking between services on communities.
From these meetings, local protocols are then drawn up.
Any gaps in services or concerns raised at either the "Healing Our Families" workshop or the "Building Bridges" meeting are reported back to IFVAG where members collectively decide what action is taken.
It is hoped we will be able to cover most of the Cape York communities over the next 8 months to conduct the community workshops with women and the follow-up meetings with community and community-based services. This will give a more extensive picture and analysis of service responses to family violence in Cape York. We feel this model is very workable but its success depends on community willingness to be part of the process that can only result in improved service provision at both community and regional levels.

Daphne Naden
FVAP Coordinator
Apunipima Policy and Program Manager

Helen Travers - Coordinator Sexual Health Unit

This has been another dynamic year for Apunipima. We continue to play a central role in the coordination and facilitation of regional sexual health strategies and campaigns in North Queensland. Through the Indigenous Sexual Health Workers of the north, the sexual health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continues to be a major focus for Apunipima and the Governing Committee. The Well Persons Health Check program and the community people that support it, are doing good work in finding STI's and addressing other health problems, without causing shame to people. In fact, the Well Persons Health Check (WPHC) program has been so successful here, that people from all over Australia want to have it in their areas.

Cape York people have proven to Australia, that community people, through their councils, can decide what works for them and how to do it. The WPHC happened in Pormpuraaw and Mapoon this year, and is about to hit Bamaga, Seisia, New Mapoon, Injinoo and Umagico. Kowanyama and Lockhart River communities are in the early stages of planning for their screens. Coen community hosted the Young Persons Check in January, continuing the good work in sexual health for their young people. They produced a deadly poster to help educate their community about how to stay healthy sexually. Judith Taylor, Sexual Health Coordinator, has moved on to Noumea as Coordinator of HIV/AIDS & STD Project in the South Pacific region, and we have lost a great health advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Capably taking her place as Coordinator of Sexual Health is her partner Helen Travers, who has been with the program since its start. Together with Judith, she has been involved in a lot of ground-breaking work in Indigenous sexual health in the Cape, designing, assisting, facilitating and most importantly, coordinating sexual health initiatives like the Well Persons Health Check.

A new face at Apunipima is Ian Steadman from down south of the border at Tamworth NSW. Ian has been the Aboriginal Sexual Health Promotion/Education Officer for the last 4 years with New England Area Health, has a nursing background and has also worked in the Aboriginal Medical Service at Brewarrina in far west NSW. He is now the Sexual Health Project Officer, and you'll probably see him around in various Aboriginal communities from time to time.

Northern Indigenous Sexual Health Workers Reference Group

This group was formed out of an Apunipima initiative which decided that if we were to introduce new ways of working in sexual health, then Sexual Health Workers needed to be at the centre of that work. After all, health workers are the ones who are in communities for the long haul, not doctors and nurses. Apunipima decided that they needed avenues for support, shared resources and experiences, and also for professional development.

NISHWRG has been a unique and dynamic group of Sexual Health Workers. This year they have:-

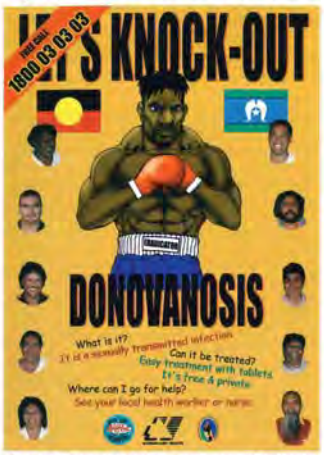
- strengthened their supportive network and ability to pool and share their experience;
- had a direct effect on how sexual health services should operate for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people;
- provided direct curriculum input and advice, with regard to the Sexual Health Course for Health Workers;
- presented at the Australasian Sexual Health Conference in Darwin. They made a great impact with their presentation of the Course in Sexual Health and a poster presentation of the achievements made in implementing the North Queensland Indigenous Sexual Health Strategy, entitled Empowering Our People.
- provided valuable input to the development of the STI pamphlet series;
- provided a resource base for other Health Workers with an interest in improving the Sexual Health of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders;
- been the driving force behind the development of the Donovanosis Eradication Campaign that aims to wipe out this disease in the Cape and Torres Strait, in 5 years.

Indigenous Health Promotion Theatre Troupe

This group is a team of Indigenous actors/dancers based in Townsville who promote good health through dance, music and theatre. They worked with the school kids from Coen before the Laura festival last year, and all had a great time. Apunipima arranged for them to workshop with the kids at the recent Croc Eisteddford. They were really well received. We are now working at establishing this kind of health promoting activity permanently in Cairns. We can then utilise local and Cape dancers/actors to convey messages on important health and community development issues to people.

Donovanosis Awareness Campaign

This year has seen the NISHWRG members and the Sexual Health Program at Apunipima, developing posters, pamphlets, radio ads and a Donovanosis Education Kit for Health Workers, to assist in the Donovanosis Eradication Campaign. The most important aspect of this campaign is the launch of a Freecall 1800 03 03 03 number, to encourage free diagnosis and treatment of Donovanosis over the



phone, with no shame. This number will be aired on radio stations throughout the Cape to hopefully make it a well known and well used way for people to get rid of this nasty, yet easily treated STI.

A Course in Sexual Health for Health Workers

Apunipima coordinated the development and implementation of a course in Sexual Health for Health Workers, that is being delivered to rural and remote health workers by the Rural Health Training Unit in Cairns. This course is an audiographic course using telephone and computer linkups that enables the Health Worker to do the course without having to travel to Cairns. Eleven workers have completed phase 1 and reports so far have been very positive. The Australian National Training Authority in Canberra have reviewed the content of this course, and nominated it as a national best practice model. The Territory Health Service in Darwin have requested that they be able to adapt the course for their own health workers there. We are helping to make that happen - more recognition of the work Apunipima is doing. An information presentation package CD is being sent to similar requests from all over Australia.

Ian Steadman - Sexual Health Project Officer

More Health Worker Training

Apunipima funded further training called Workplace Training and Assessment, for our Sexual Health Workers in the North, to enable them to 'take charge' of the Course in Sexual Health, as much as possible. We would like to see Health Workers using it to train other Health Workers in their clinics, and to run their own workshops and education sessions in sexual health in communities.

As you can see it has been a busy year for the Sexual Health Program. Apunipima is committed to continuing to work with communities on these often difficult and sensitive issues. The challenge for us all is to keep talking and working together to find new ways to deal with sexual health, so we can look forward to a healthy and productive future for ourselves and for our future generations.

Helen Travers
Ian Steadman

Above: Poster produced by youth in Coen for the Young Persons Check, during Aaron Davis's Dynamic Poster Workshop.

Above Left: Donovanosis poster designed by the Northern Indigenous Sexual Health Workers Reference Group.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Hi-di! everyone. A special hello and thank you to all those young people who are trying hard and putting an endless amount of work into their communities to change and better the lives of our people for generations to come.

Firstly, I have been working to establish the once functional Cape York Youth Council. This is very important to the development of the young people of Cape York. As a young person, and one of the founding Youth Council members, I feel it is important for young people to have a forum to speak at a regional level. The Youth Council also provides a platform from which to develop leadership skills, to raise self-esteem and partake in personal development while developing an awareness outside of our own communities.

At present, I am looking at ways to bring three of our regional services in Cairns together to work on youth business, share information/resources and to plan and implement "Local Youth Action Groups". The vision is to empower young people by giving them the responsibility to run and develop their on own action plan on the ground, enabling them to lay the foundation for other's in their communities. I believe that this is in the best interests of our young people.

I have since developed the draft "Cape York Regional Youth Strategy", which includes a "Youth Participation Strategy" for the young people in communities. A Youth Support Group is being set up to progress this and to assist to develop resources and strategies.

I have travelled to various Youth Forums around Queensland, educating myself on how government processes work for young people. With all the changes this country and the world is going through, we are often left in the dark as young people and cannot grasp the opportunities being made available to us because we live in rural and remote areas. We are not any different to the mainstream and urban youths, our issues are the same, we only live in different parts of this country and not all people manage their problems/issues within their community the same way.

Achieving the best possible process for young people and a way to understanding how the 'big world' operates outside our own community, is the story I have started to create.

We cannot make big decisions without understanding the alternatives and the policies and guidelines, how we fit in and can access these resources. We rely daily on many of these resources. e.g. Centerlink, Education Queensland etc.

Louisa Miskin - Youth Project Worker

The "Cape York Youth Forum 2001" that I am proposing in our draft strategy is based on a vision. At present young people do not have a vision or set goals for their communities. Our youth remain in many ways the disadvantaged ones, yet it is only through them that we will see a clear vision of how they fit into their communities. How do young people want to fit in with the services in Cairns and other areas that are linked to the communities? Where do they see themselves and their community in twenty years from now? How are they going to achieve that and who should they be talking to in order for that to happen? Why do they need that change?

I am encouraging young people, parents, elder's, uncles and aunties to take interest. The time is right for the process we all have been waiting for. As young people we must see how important the change is, an evolution from elder's through to us, the next generation. Our present leaders have set the foundation for us to follow. We the young people must take a stand, up front, as future leader's.

I am looking forward to next year, as it brings many exciting opportunities for all of us and seek support from my fellow young country men and woman. Youth especially need the support of parents and grand parents, leader's, non-indigenous member's within our communities, families and friends to encourage our development.

We are laying the foundations of our future, leaders direction and example are essential.

Louisa Miskin
Youth Project Worker

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