

# CAMPFIRE

Welcome to another edition of Campfire, the Department of Health's newsletter for all Aboriginal Environmental Health practitioners.

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## National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference

John Perrett, Aboriginal Environmental Health Program. Department of Health

Over 160 delegates from around Australia assembled in Perth over the week of 16 to 19 September for the 12th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference. Delegates heard from a range of speakers including key notes given by Professor Johnathon Carapetis (Telethon Kids Institute) and Patricia Turner, CEO National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.



Besides the technical aspects, delegates also took advantage of visiting one of four activities - the Sims Metal facility in Kwinana, the Murdoch University's animal hospital, the Maalinup Gallery for a Noongar cultural experience or a walk around the Optus Oval and facilities. A National Award was presented to Emeritus Professor Ian Robertson for his work in dog health over many years and also to Ray Christopher, CEO of Nirrumbuk Environmental Health Services for his long-term commitment and leadership in Aboriginal environmental health in the Kimberley region.

For some the thought of addressing your peers can be a daunting task but congratulations must go to those who overcame their fears and presented on their work and pride in showing how they help their people in the remote communities.

The Environmental Health Directorate (WA Health) has recently relocated from Grace Vaughan House to 189 Royal Street, East Perth.

The Aboriginal Environmental Health Program can now be contacted on  
**(08) 9222 2000.**





"The conference was a great success and really showcased the diversity of this part of Public Health and the dedicated people who work in this profession. There were many excellent presentations by a range of people from community workers to medical researchers. The strength of the conference is that it gives the opportunity for Indigenous environmental health practitioners to tell their stories and to share in the rich knowledge from around Australia of best practices, successes and challenges."

- Jeff Standen, Chair, enHealth ERPATSIEH





On behalf of the Aboriginal Environmental Health team at the Department of Health WA, we would like to extend our acknowledgements to all the speakers and presenters who travelled near and far from around Western Australia to attend the NATSIEH Conference this year.

Our WA speakers included:

- William 'Chicky' Clements, Nirrumbuk Environmental Health and Services & Patrick Davies, Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services - *Working together and making change happen from the people*
- Vilma Fitzgerald, Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, WA - *How the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet contributes to the knowledge base for the environmental health sector*
- Tim Bond, Dean Winton and Pippa Broughton, Kimberley Population Health, WA - *You gotta wash ya face and hands to come to my place*
- Dr Kuruvilla Matthew, David Goodfield, Stewart Dallas, Martin Anda, Murdoch University, Mara West, Telethon Kids Institute, Mark & Barbara Brezger, Moerk Water Solutions, WA - *Safe drinking water for healthy Aboriginal communities: solar powered reverse osmosis water treatment: co-design with community to achieve an appropriate, cost-effective solution*
- Dr Asha Bowen, Telethon Kids Institute - *The SToP Trial: See, Treat and Prevent Impetigo and Scabies: a healthy skin program in the Kimberley*
- Lachlan Chapman, Michael Ryan, Stuart Martin and Sonny Mackay, Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, WA - *Live Deadly! Looking after yourself, your house and your community*
- Michael Mitchell, Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Services Metropolitan, WA - *The Wungen Kartup Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Service*
- Prof Jeanette Ward, Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum, WA - *Data-driven advocacy for regional environmental health*
- Robert Mullane, Department of Health, WA - *Taking health into the home - how improving the home environment can have a real impact on preventable disease and illness*
- Steven Kelly, Derek Councillor and Leslie Dann, Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation, WA - *Bundiyarra Environmental Health Team*
- Dr Melissa Stoneham and Scott MacKenzie, Public Health Advocacy Institute, WA - *#endingtrachoma - Live healthy in remote WA communities*
- Kim Merry and Bruce (Bluey) Stewart, Nirrumbuk Environmental Health and Services, WA - *New directions for health in the Kuntjunga Region*

*Living healthy. One goal, different paths*





Have you seen these?



Contact the Shire of Derby/ West Kimberley

## Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

Lachlan Chapman, Aboriginal Environmental Health Program. Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

Isaac Buckle, Aboriginal Environmental Health Field Support Officer for the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (SDWK), has recently received the 2019 Scholar of the Year award as part of Derby's NAIDOC celebrations. This was in recognition of the completion of his Aboriginal Environmental Health Field Support Officer Traineeship with the Shire inclusive of Certificate II in Indigenous Environmental Health. In addition to maintaining ongoing work with the Shire throughout his traineeship, he also enhanced his professional development by completing courses in Firearms and Gun Safety, First Aid, Mental Health First Aid and Dog Health.

Furthering his education from here is something that Isaac is open to exploring as he continues to be a fantastic example for young people in the Derby community. Isaac always takes a positive approach to his work and conducts himself in the field with a smile on his face which allows him to have a positive impact on the health and lives of people in community. SDWK are very proud of Isaac's achievement and look forward to his contribution to the team moving forward.



The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley's Aboriginal Environmental Health Unit has been working very hard on Trachoma prevention in many different ways by completing bathroom audits, installing mirrors, handing out soap and conveying the important message of washing your face and hands every day.

While we were doing all this great work we found that we could describe the hand and face washing process but for kids they needed to see it in action. So we searched and searched for something that would encourage kids to practice and then we found this....



This product is called Kiddisink and we also requested to have a little extendable mirror attached to ensure kids washed their faces. It is suitable for all children and the excitement of washing their hands in something bright and sized for them has been well received.

The sink is completely portable which is essential for our service. If you are considering this idea for your team then ensure you request the provider to install a mirror as washing faces is a big part of ensuring we have a big impact in reducing trachoma numbers in our communities.





## DOG HEALTH PROGRAM

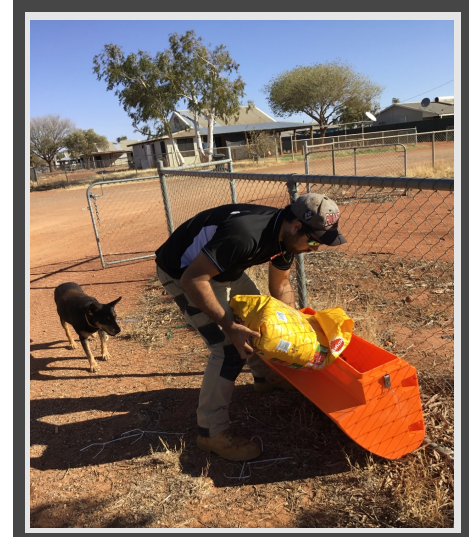
# Burringurrah Dog Feeding Stations

Lindsay Barker, Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation

The Burringurrah community, and community service providers approached the Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (CMSAC) to help out with the community dogs that were being left behind without food, when community members leave for holiday breaks.

CMSAC Environmental Health team came up with the idea of setting up mobile feeding stations around the community for the dogs to feed themselves.

The community and community service providers have all agreed that the feeding stations are a great success and have thanked CMSAC and the Environmental Health team.



# PTAC Environmental Health Program

Fiona Pemberton, Program Manager, Paupiyala Tjarutja Aboriginal Corporation (Tjuntjuntjara)

Tjuntjuntjara Community is a remote Aboriginal community in the Great Victoria Desert, approximately 660kms from Kalgoorlie in WA. In Tjuntjuntjara, we have a lot of very clever and sometimes hungry dogs. Protecting bins from dogs is a significant issue as they have found a number of different ways to knock the bins over and it's not an uncommon sight to see a tipped bin with rubbish strewn around by the dogs.



Our environmental health program has explored a number of different options over the years to counteract this problem including upright bin stands. These work well but are not always utilised fully by tenants, so the Environmental Health team have come up with a number of different solutions to protect the bins from dogs.



Our Environmental Health program also did a collaborative project with the Sport & Recreation program during the recent Trachoma Screening visit and encouraged tenants to paint their bins. The idea behind it was to reduce vandalism to the bins, to number them so that they were returned to the correct house and to make them easily identifiable. A big thankyou to all the staff and community members who assisted with the bin projects.



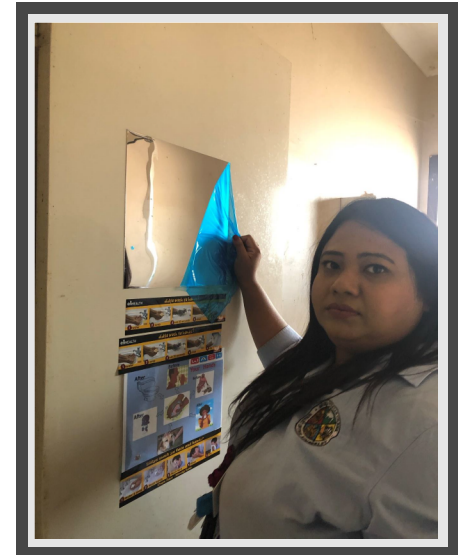
## Supporting Our Communities



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH  
REFERRALS**

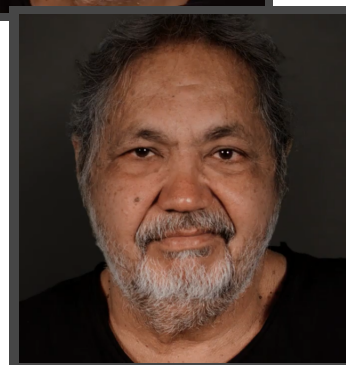
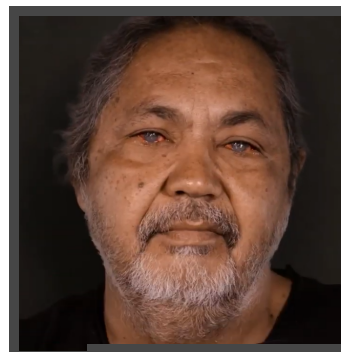
**Onike Williams, Aboriginal Environmental Health Program. Department of Health**

In other good news, the Shire of Halls Creek have been implementing regular activities in response to clinical environmental health referrals in their community. The Shire's very own Health Promotion Officer, Farrah Rummani has been conducting home health promotion and personal hygiene practices with community household residents. She managed to successfully run a health promotion session for the community which was attended by more than 20 people. Farrah also installed acrylic mirrors and replaced a few health promotion stickers and soap, she then gifted the community members with toiletries and handbags.

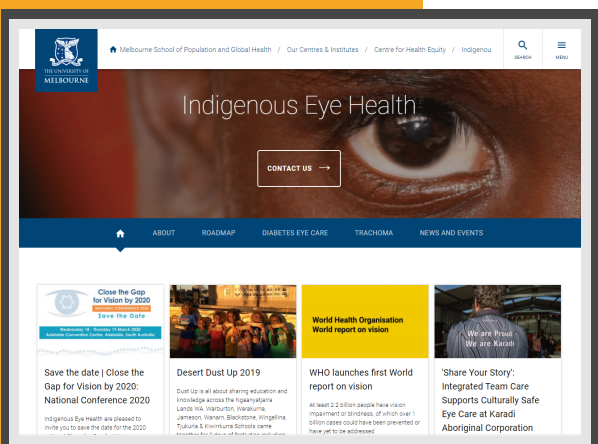


**Have you seen  
this?**

The team at PHAIWA have collaborated with the Nirrumbuk environmental health team and some Kimberley locals to develop a trachoma advert. It takes on both a negative and positive form and is designed to have some shock value while bringing awareness about trachoma to the community.



**National Healthy Skin Guideline:**  
<https://infectiousdiseases.telethonkids.org.au/resources/skin-guidelines/>



**Link to the Indigenous Eye Health website:**  
<https://mbspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/centre-for-health-equity/research-group/ieh>

**View the clip here:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=25&v=Z6gklmSWc4E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=25&v=Z6gklmSWc4E)



## #EndingTrachoma Update

Dr Melissa Stoneham & Scott Mackenzie, Public Health Advocacy Institute WA

The #endingtrachoma project has started to roll out the “hot spot” projects across the Goldfields and Midwest. We hope to get to the Kimberley in the near future.

We have coordinated 4 projects to date that cover 6 separate communities. To date, most of the hot spot projects have value added to the bathroom audit program. In some cases we have supported the AEHWs to audit people's private bathrooms and support with the delivery of free soap, towel hooks, mirrors and stickers that demonstrate how to wash hands and face.

In other communities we have coordinated the plumbing contractors employed by Housing (Dept of Communities) to visit the community while we are there to ensure issues identified from the audits are fixed. We also take the opportunity to have a chat with the householders about the importance of hand and face washing and check out whether they have a working washing machine and clothes line.

As an example, we recently rectified 88 plumbing issues for the 46 houses checked. Only four houses were missed due to not being occupied or people away. It was a great outcome for everyone.

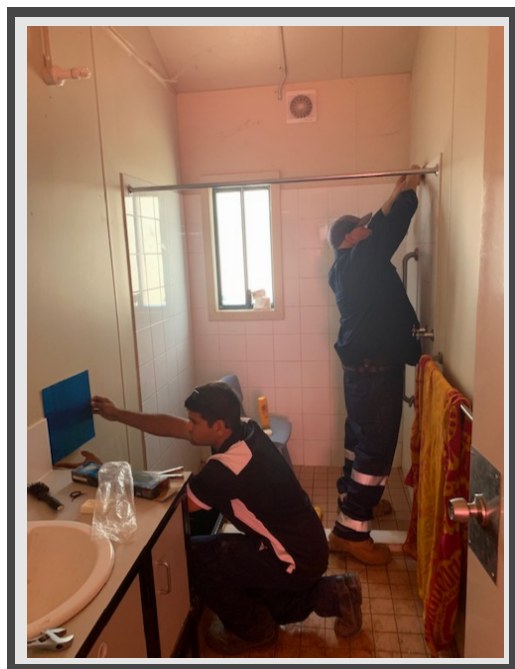
To add a bit of fun and to enhance engagement, #endingtrachoma we generally run our “giving back” event including the branded bouncy castle, water slide, as well as a trailer within an inbuilt BBQ, movie screen and wash hand basin. We generally get approximately 40 children and 30 adults attend.

As part of the event, we asked the children to wash their face before they went on the jumping castle. Similarly, we asked all community members to wash their hands at our wash hand basin with soap before they enjoyed a burger or sausage. These were great opportunities to increase awareness and skills around hand and face washing. These are some photos from some recent visits.

### Suprise!

Environmental Health Coordinator for Bega Garbarringu Health Service, Troy Hill was sent an appreciation letter for his teams work during their #endingtrachoma visit in Tjuntjuntjara. He said it was the first time in his 25 years of service that he's received appreciation in such a way. The letter was sent by community school teachers in Tjuntjuntjara expressing how much the kids loved the footballs and blow up slide the team brought out, so much the kids were asking about it all week! They are looking forward to seeing them again next year...

Well done Troy and the Environmental Health team at Bega Garbarringu Health Services!



For more information visit:

<https://www.phaiwa.org.au/endingtrachoma/>







**WA ABORIGINAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH**

## Upcoming Events

- The next meeting for the Goldfields Regional Aboriginal Health Planning Forum is to be held on Thursday 21st November 2019 at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Office
- The next Dog Health Program is scheduled for the 30th March 2020 - venue is to be announced.
- As you may already know, many Environmental Health services including the EHD will be closed over the Christmas/New Years period. Remember to take care of yourselves and others during this time and keep the messages of good health in your thoughts while you celebrate.
- The next meeting for the Midwest Regional Aboriginal Health Planning Forum is to be held in February 2020 - date to be announced.

## Movements

- Kiki Titus has left his role in Environmental Health at the Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service, we wish Kiki the best of luck for the future.
- Chris Rusten has been appointed a new role as the Aboriginal Environmental Health Coordinator with Ngaanyatjarra Health Service.
- Peter Wilden, a key member of the Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation's AEH team, is on extended sick leave. We wish Peter all the best in his ongoing treatments and convalescence.



On behalf of the EHD team, we wish one and all, a safe and happy time over Christmas. May you enjoy your time off with family and friends. We look forward to working with you all again in 2020.

