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giving sight



ABORIGINAL HEALTH COLLEGE

The recent establishment of the Aboriginal Health College at Little Bay, Sydney, has been a major step forward towards improving Aboriginal health and education in NSW.

The Aboriginal Health College represents the culmination of efforts by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) of NSW to create an institution that will benefit Aboriginal health by utilising Aboriginal educators to train Aboriginal people in healthcare. The College also serves to provide education and career opportunities for Aboriginal people.

BACKGROUND

- The Aboriginal Health College formally commenced educational delivery in 2003.
- A dedicated site for the college at Little Bay has allowed for a permanent, purpose built facility.
- The Aboriginal Health College is the long term vision of AH&MRC to provide culturally appropriate accredited education courses in Aboriginal health within an Aboriginal community controlled educational institution.



FIGURE 1: The Aboriginal Health College at Little Bay

ABORIGINAL HEALTH COLLEGE OBJECTIVES

- 1. Increase the number of Aboriginal health professionals who possess qualifications relevant to the needs of clients serviced by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and by the NSW Department of Health.**
These qualifications will span entry level qualifications through to university degrees and diplomas, for Aboriginal Health Workers, Nurses, and allied health professions.
- 2. Develop the professional skills of Managers, Supervisors, and Finance Administrators working within Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.**
These employees have to respond to the new and emerging requirements relating to business management, information management, accountability, planning, and external linkages and coordination.
- 3. Strengthen the governance capabilities of elected Aboriginal Community Controlled Boards/Governing Committees.**
There are tangible pressures on elected Aboriginal community members to respond to legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations; to provide strategic leadership to their organisations; and to articulate community needs and expectations.
- 4. Provide professional development opportunities to non-Aboriginal health professionals working with Aboriginal clients, families and communities.**
The principal occupational categories are General Practitioners, Nurses, and allied health professionals.



FIGURE 2: Her Excellency The Governor Prof Marie R Bashir, AC CVO and Sandra Bailey, CEO of AH&MRC with the Message Stick.

EVOLVEMENT OF THE ABORIGINAL HEALTH COLLEGE

- Persistence of the Aboriginal community and the commitment of the New South Wales Government through Landcom have resulted in funding and a 99 year lease for the College at Little Bay, Sydney.
- The building itself has been substantially funded by Landcom, with significant additional funding from the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
- The Institute for Eye Research has also been instrumental in supporting the development and the building of the Aboriginal Health College.

EYE CARE CURRICULUM

- Aboriginal Health College – “Eye Care Skills Set” Cert IV in AHW training
- The Community Level Eye Care Curriculum consists of teaching manuals covering topics such as anatomy of the eye; vision and visual acuity; school vision screenings; ocular diseases such as trachoma and diabetic retinopathy.
- The Aboriginal Health College formally commenced operation as a Registered Training Organisation in 2004 and since then has successfully delivered accredited educational programmes.
- The eye care course has been developed by the International Centre for Eyecare Education (ICEE), the College staff and Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC). The college recently had its first graduates to complete the course.
- At present the College has around 150 students and offers 14 qualifications in a range of areas, including: Eye Care, Primary Health Care, Sexual Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing, Drugs and Alcohol, Cancer Care, Management, Training and Assessment.

KEY COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS

- AH&MRC - the recognized peak body and voice of Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal health matters in NSW.
- Institute for Eye Research - guaranteed \$1 million per year for fifteen years for the running costs of the college.
- ICEE - developed the eyecare course curriculum
- Landcom (a NSW government corporation) provided substantial funding
- NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs provided additional funding