

An Australian Government Initiative



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INNOVATE

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

February 2018 – February 2020

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OUR VISION

To create empowering and collaborative opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations to influence the design and delivery of culturally sensitive health and wellbeing services, which are accessible, person centred and meet the needs of community.

MISSION

To close the gap in health by encouraging and fostering collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our organisation and among our health partners and community.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Welcome to our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)*. This RAP builds on the work done through our previous *Reflect RAP*, to further embed positive relationships, respect and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout our organisation.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the land that forms North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN) and their Elders past and present, and respectfully acknowledge the rich Aboriginal cultural heritage in our region.

Aboriginal people have had a deep connection with this region for many thousands of years. It is a connection that is living, vibrant, growing and integral to the health and diversity of our region.

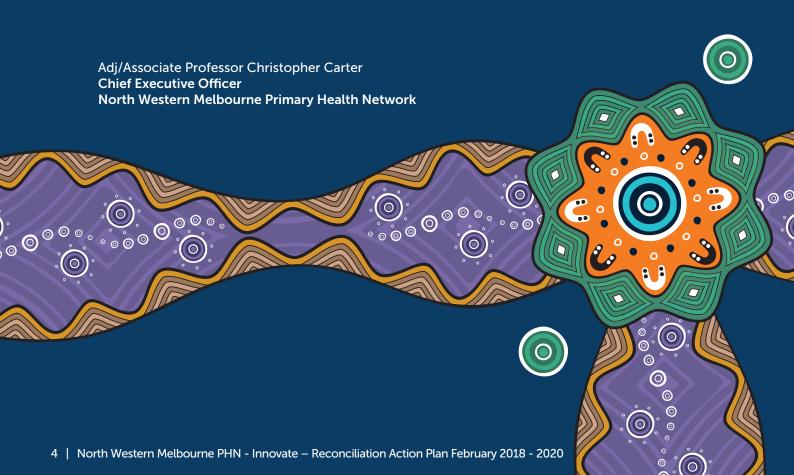
It is also a connection which is supported by significant recent growth in the number of Aboriginal peoples living in the north and western suburbs of Melbourne, with many strong and diverse Aboriginal communities across the catchment.

As these communities have grown, so too has the importance of improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in our overall vision to improve health outcomes for everyone across our region.

We know how important Reconciliation is to realising our vision, which is why we are strengthening our reconciliation commitment with this *Innovate RAP*.

Through this RAP we hope to strengthen partnerships with our local Aboriginal communities to better understand local health needs, and create respectful and collaborative relationships which will ensure we are commissioning culturally safe and appropriate services to meet these needs.

We acknowledge that there is a long way to go in both the process of reconciliation and to close the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal people. But we are proud to be making the journey; and hope this RAP, and our work, can go some way to smoothing the way forward.



OUR BUSINESS

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network's (NWMPHN) core business is to improve the health of all communities in our region, by strengthening primary health care and connecting services across the system. We are funded to improve health outcomes across the north western region of Melbourne.

Our role is to work with the identified state and national priorities and investigate the specific health needs of the population in our region. We work with our health and community partners to identify and analyse the key health issues in our region so that we can create shared priorities and goals and commission innovative services to achieve those goals.

We undertake an annual Population Health Needs Assessment (HNA) of our catchment which is the culmination of research, interrogation and analysis of health data relevant to the northwestern Melbourne region. This needs assessment informs our commissioned work and our activity work plans by identifying key health priority areas relevant to this region. Each priority area has its own unique set of activities which specifically address the needs of our community.

Our current identified priorities areas are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Suicide Prevention, Priority Populations, Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease and Families and Children.

A core component of our HNA is the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Needs Assessment which brings together all available demographic and health data to inform our consultation and commissioned activity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the catchment. Our current commissioned work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing includes: Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Suicide Prevention and Chronic disease management and support.

A key role of the PHN is to ensure that commissioned services are improving quality of care and individual health outcomes. As part of a commissioning framework the PHN monitors performance and evaluates service delivery outcomes. This ensures that the PHN is meeting its core responsibility of driving efficiency, effectiveness and quality of care.

Our organisation employs approximately 100 people and we are based at one central site, however much of our work is done in the community sector engaging and supporting health services. We currently do not directly employ any identified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff that we are aware of.

Our region

The North Western Melbourne PHN region covers 3,212 square kilometers, stretching from Richmond in the inner eastern suburbs past Bacchus Marsh in the west; from coastal Cocoroc in the south-west to Lancefield and beyond in the peri-urban north.

With an estimated population of 1,769,850 in 2017, it is a region of significant geographical, cultural and socioeconomic diversity – and includes several of the fastest-growing municipalities in Victoria.

NWMPHN is one of six PHNs serving Victoria, part of a broader network of 31 PHNs linking together across Australia.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Improving and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health has always been a core priority for NWMPHN. Its importance has been reinforced by major population health planning activities such as Closing the Gap in North Western Melbourne PHN, and articulated in our long term support for a range of activities to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We believe that having a strong and vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is crucial to the overall health of our region. Developing our first RAP, ensured that our focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing was also expressed in our internal organisational culture, planning and development. Building on the work and learnings from our Reflect RAP, we are continuing our reconciliation journey with the development and implementation of this Innovate RAP.

The RAP Working Group was established in 2014 and due to the growth of the organization, an expression of interest was held for new membership in mid-2016. There was significant interest from across the organisation which has resulted in different areas of expertise influencing the development of the RAP. The RAP Working Group met monthly in the early development of the RAP to learn from our Cultural Advisor and to engage in individual reconciliation through shared stories and deeper understandings of the reconciliation process. We currently have only one Aboriginal person on our working group and recognise that more work needs to be done to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on our Reconciliation journey.

A key role of the RAP Working Group is to champion the RAP across the organisation. This involved encouraging all staff to attend two consultations where the actions to reflect reconciliation were discussed and agreed upon. Updates on the RAP progress have been given at all staff meetings and RAP working group members continue to liaise with staff to ensure that the aims of reconciliation are reflected in all of the PHN work.

The current RAP working group members are:

- Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Di Kerr, our Aboriginal Cultural Advisor
- Our Deputy CEO, who is our RAP Champion
- Aboriginal Health Coordinator who is the RAP Coordinator
- Director of Primary Care Practice
- Manager of Planning Performance and Reporting
- Human Resources General Manager
- Program Officer, Health Literacy
- Program Officer, Children and Family
- Program Officer, Clinical and Community Engagement
- Program Support Administration Officer
- Communications Adviser.

LEARNINGS FROM OUR REFLECT RAP

Developing our initial *Reflect RAP* and working to incorporate the values it expresses into the fabric of our organisation has been a rewarding and enlightening process. The experience has taught us that there are a number of factors which influence whether a RAP will be successful or not. These include:

- Setting achievable outcomes
- Providing dedicated resources
- Maintaining continuity
- Keeping momentum in between major events
- Getting buy in at all levels of the organisation including at the executive level
- Providing ongoing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder representation
- Creating a defined process to feed RAP journey and learnings to senior management.

There have been a number of major changes since the development of our *Reflect RAP*, many of which have impacted both our existing RAP and our focus for our new *Innovate RAP*.

IMPACT OF REFLECT RAP ON ORGANISATION

The *Reflect RAP* has helped direct our organisation's work and engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in a range of areas.

Raising awareness

- The *Reflect RAP* was promoted through all staff meetings, internal newsletters and communications at our regular staff 'Lunch and Learn' events
- NAIDOC Week was celebrated through an internal morning tea, with a video montage of significant Aboriginal cultural, political and sporting events and a special presentation on the life of Aboriginal rights activist and local resident William Cooper
- National Reconciliation Week (NRW) was marked with articles in our newsletters discussing the importance of the week and encouraging our stakeholders to hold NRW events, as well as the inclusion of NRW logos in our email signatures and other communications
- NWMPHN held a National Close the Gap Day event and donated to organisers Oxfam, as well as supporting local health services to run their own National Close the Gap Day activities.

Recruitment and training and procurement

During the reporting period NWMPHN employed two Aboriginal Outreach Workers to improve access to health care for Aboriginal people in our region.

These positions were retained until 30 June 2016 when under the new requirements for PHNs we commissioned those roles out to the community sector.

We have also made ongoing changes to our recruitment processes to help ensure that any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed by NWMPHN will feel their cultural values are recognised, valued and respected.

- Personal details form has been updated to allow employees to identify if they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- All new positions advertised encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply.
- All new staff are offered cultural awareness training
- The organisation regularly contracts an Aboriginal catering company to supply food for our internal and external events.

Partnerships

During the reporting period NWMPHN was funded to provide care coordination and Aboriginal outreach support to eligible clients in our region. As part of this process referral pathways were developed with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) to ensure ease of referral and prompt response.

This partnership was developed by meeting with the medical team at VAHS and organising regular contact with their community support team to share resources to support client needs.

To strengthen this relationship, the NWMPHN CEO and executive also met with the CEO and management team at VAHS and agreed to work together on a range of activities including eHealth, practice support and education and training.

Internal engagement

Delivering on our RAP commitments has been a great opportunity to raise awareness across all of the organisation on the reconciliation journey. All activities have been received with great interest by the staff with significant attendance at all of our events.

In line with organisational growth an expression of interest was recently sent out for new members to join the RAP working group. The number of interested participants (15) indicates the high level of commitment within the organisation.



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RELATIONSHIPS

The core role of NWMPHN is to improve the health system to better meet our community's needs.

Building strong relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is important to NWMPHN to ensure we understand the specific health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in our region. The PHN recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations must inform our needs analysis and planning of services to ensure that there is a collaborative and culturally respectful approach to service design, delivery and evaluation.

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	 RWG with the inclusion of our Cultural Advisor oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP 	Mar 2018	RAP Coordinator
	 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG 	Feb 2020	RAP Coordinator
	 Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG 	Feb 2018	RAP Coordinator
	 Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation. 	Mar 2018, Mar 2019 Jun 2018, Jun 2019 Sep 2018, Sep 2019 Feb 2019, Feb 2020	RAP Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation	 Organise an internal event for NRW each year. Register our NRW event via Reconciliation 	May 2018, May 2019 May 2018, May 2019	Indigenous Health Program Officer Indigenous Health Program Officer
Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and	 Australia's NRW website. Publicise NRW through our internal newsletters. 	May 2018, May 2019	Communications Advisor
maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait	 Ensure our Working Group members participate in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May 2018, May 2019	RAP Coordinator
Islander peoples and other Australians.	 Support an external NRW event 	May 2018, May 2019	RAP Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
 beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement Utilise our existing relationships with the community sector and our sub-contracted agencies to further understand and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Utilise our existing relationships with the community sector and our sub-contracted agencies to further understand and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consult with and build on th expertise of our community contacts to support the development of our key 	engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres	Oct 2018	Deputy CEO
	the organisation to build awareness of local community groups and better engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Feb 2020	Aboriginal Health Coordinator
	and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future	Oct 2018	Aboriginal Health Coordinator
	• Utilise our existing relationships with the community sector and our sub-contracted agencies to further understand and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across our	Feb 2020	Aboriginal Health Coordinator
	development of our key activity, the population health	Nov 2018, Nov 2019	Aboriginal Health Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP	 Develop, implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders 	July 2018	Communications Advisor
to promote reconciliation across all aspects of our	 Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders 	Feb 2020	RAP Coordinator
work.	 Have clear links to our RAP on our NWMPHN website 	Feb 2018	Communications Advisor
	 Use internal news communication to raise awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and reconciliation 	Feb 2018, Aug 2018, Feb 2019, Aug 2019	Communications Advisor
	 Include introduction to the RAP and associated RA resources as part of staff induction process 	Jun 2018, Jun 2019	Human Resources General Manager
	• Promote actions relating to the RAP at internal staff meetings and through internal publications.	Feb 2018, Feb 2019	RAP Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Establish an Aboriginal Health Advisory Group.	 Consult with our key stakeholders, including the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), VAHS and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCHOs) to establish an Aboriginal Health Advisory Group 	Mar 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Support the work of the Advisory Group to influence the design and delivery of culturally sensitive health and wellbeing services that the NWMPHN commissions. 	Mar 2019	Deputy CEO



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RESPECT

NWMPHN recognises that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories and rights is integral to all of our core business activities. Respect for cultures and protocols is central to building collaborative and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, clients, communities and organisations which will in turn support our endeavours to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspectives in all our strategic and operational activities.

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Engage employees in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures, histories and achievements.	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for all our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business	Jul 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Investigate opportunities to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop a tailored cultural awareness training session which meets the specific needs of our PHN setting 	Jul 2018	Indigenous Health Program Officer
	 Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, Human Resources General Manager and the Senior Management Team to participate in a cultural immersion activity 	Sep 2018	Director Primary Care Practice
	 Promote the Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff 	Feb 2018	RAP Coordinator
	 Invite a local Aboriginal Elder or representative/s from an Aboriginal Cultural Group to provide an information session to all staff as part of our in-house "lunch and learn" professional development roster 	Oct 2018	RAP Coordinator
	 Organise and promote relevant workforces to participate in cultural awareness training opportunities – GPs, practice managers, allied health, mental health providers. 	Dec 2018, Dec 2019	Indigenous Health Program Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement	 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country 	Apr 2018	RAP Coordinator
	 Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships 	Feb 2018	RAP Coordinator
of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning.	 Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country on at least two significant events. 	Jun 2018, Jun 2019	Office Coordinator
	 Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings 	Feb 2020	Office Coordinator
	 Continue to display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our office 	Feb 2020	Office Coordinator
	 Display artwork from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that reflects our work and ensure art work is acknowledged appropriately 	Feb 2020	Office Coordinator
	 Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our reception areas 	Feb 2020	Office Coordinator
	 Continue to include an Acknowledgement of Country Statement in our email signatures, website and relevant office templates 	Feb 2020	Communications Advisor
	 Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings. 	Feb 2020	RAP Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	 Review and update HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	Dec 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week. 	Jul 2018, Jul 2019	Human Resources General Manager
	 Hold an internal NAIDOC Week event 	Jul 2018, Jul 2019	Indigenous health program officer
	 Support an external NAIDOC Week community event. 	Jul 2018, Jul 2019	RAP Coordinator



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OPPORTUNITIES

Creating and fostering new opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations is part of our everyday work. NWMPHN strives to create employment opportunities and create inclusive procurement pathways that encourage and promote engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses.

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace.	 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and retention strategy 	Sept 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Review and update HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace 	Sept 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities 	Feb 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development 	Jul 2018	Human Resources General Manager
	 Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media (e.g. Indigenous Employment Australia). 	Feb 2020	Human Resources General Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation.	• Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services 	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business 	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	Feb 2019	Deputy CEO



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Ensure that our Commissioning and Procurement policies are culturally inclusive.	 Provide opportunities for our commissioning team to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop the knowledge and capabilities required to effectively tender for contracts with our organisation 	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples/ consumers and carers to sit on commissioning panels 	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Provide opportunities for the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector to participate in our specific Aboriginal funded commissioning activities related to Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and other Drugs, and Chronic Disease 	Apr 2018, Apr 2019	Deputy CEO
	 Investigate opportunities to increase pro bono activities, through supporting the primary health care activity of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in our catchment. 	Feb 2019	Deputy CEO



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.	 RWG to collect data for the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire 	Jul 2018, Jul 2019	RAP Coordinator
	 RWG to seek internal approval to submit the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia 	Aug 2018, Aug 2019	RAP Coordinator
	 Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually 	Sep 2018, Sep 2019	RAP Coordinator
	 Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer. 	May 2018	RAP Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings through our external publication, "Primary Pulse" and on our website 	Feb 2018, Feb 2019	RAP Coordinator
	 Include a RAP update as a standing agenda item bi-monthly at senior leadership meetings 	Feb 2020	Director Primary Care Practice
	 Report on RAP updates through all management tiers and to the NWMPHN Board. 	Feb 2020	Deputy CEO

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14. Review, refresh and update RAP.	 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements 	Aug 2019	RAP Coordinator
	 Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement. 	Sept 2019	RAP Coordinator

ABOUT THE ARTWORK



The artwork depicts North Western Melbourne PHN's commitment to health and well-being outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The various pathways depict everyone's unique life journey.

The people sitting around the circles at the intersections; represents the organisation coming together to share, learn and talk about Aboriginal culture, history and stories.

The black and white hands and feet represent both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people coming together as part of Reconciliation.

The different circles depict the diverse communities, families, clans and service providers across the various regions in which the organisation operates/services.

Artist: Dixon Patten Tribes: Yorta Yorta and Gunnai

Contact details Name: Rosealie Vallance Position: Aboriginal Health Coordinator Phone: 03 9347 1188 Email: Rosealie.vallance@nwmphn.org.au



Designed by Aboriginal designer Dixon Patten from Bayila Creative www.bayila.com.au