

# Yarnin Together

Statewide Coordination Unit



Welcome to Issue 4 of Yarnin Together, an e-newsletter about the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program.

**This issue includes:**

Profiles from Daniel Morrison, Clinical Leader Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol, Mid North Coast Local Health District and, Aboriginal mental health trainees from Western Sydney and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts.

Congratulations to the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Training Program graduates of 2016 (six new completions, 69 traineeships completed since 2007).

News from the Charles Sturt University Djirruwang Program, the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW and the Ministry of Health.

Information about the Aboriginal Grief and Loss Train-the-Trainer sessions and the 2017 Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum.

The Statewide Coordinator, Tom Brideson, undertook site visits to 10 Local Health Districts and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network in the period October to December 2016. The meetings usually involve all the key people involved in the program including clinical leaders, trainees, line managers and mental health directors in some locations.

Tom received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the visits. Visits postponed from February and March will occur in the second quarter of 2017.

Tom's other major work in the second half of 2016 involved coordinating the revision of the practical guide, working closely with two consultants Vicki Stanton, Carol Watson and Robyn Owens, the Statewide Coordination Unit Administration Officer on what proved a complex task. Through his national role in advisory committees, Tom continued to contribute to development of the national approach to Aboriginal mental health and social



and emotional wellbeing.

Tom's extended absence in January, February and March while recovering from illness poses challenges and has meant that Robyn is juggling many tasks, while being as responsive as possible to emails and calls. Christine Flynn has backed up Robyn responding to some queries from the Mental Health Branch, Ministry of Health, in Sydney. Robyn and Christine look forward to Tom's return to work.



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## Congratulations to Training Program Graduates

Six trainees completed the Aboriginal Mental Health Training Program traineeships in December 2016, bringing the total number of traineeships completed since 2007 to 69.

Three trainees graduated the Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) course with distinction: Joanne Scoble, Peter Matsumoto and Stephen Ainsworth. Congratulations also go to trainee graduates Julieann Hall, Tracey Ryan and Kali Morgan. Notably, Joanne, Julieann, Peter and Stephen were also recipients of Dean's Awards in 2015. These are fantastic achievements.

The then Minister for Mental Health, Pru Goward MP, sent letters of congratulations to the graduands in December, welcoming them to the growing Aboriginal mental health clinical workforce.

We look forward to their contributions to Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing in the years ahead, in NSW Health or other organisations. Julieann now works for CentaCare Family Carer Mental Health Program working in partnership with Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Far West Local Health District.

L to R: Peter Matsumoto, Dylan Croall, Kali Morgan, Tracey Ryan, Naomi Stanley, Julieann Hall, Taslene Smith, Stephen Ainsworth





# NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program 1st Year Trainee: Gemma Garter

## Tell us about your mob?

My name is Gemma Carter and I am a Boorooberongal woman from the Dharug people of the Hawkesbury area.

I am the Aboriginal Mental Health Trainee of Western Sydney Local Health District at Blacktown Hospital. We look after the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Aboriginal Community. I have been in this role for 6 months and I am so grateful to have received such an amazing opportunity. The traineeship has given me a chance to learn, experience and grow within myself as a person as well as pursuing my passion within the Mental Health Sector in my local community.

## What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

In this opportunity I am immensely supported and encouraged by the LHD to complete my studies of a Bachelor Health Science – Mental Health degree through the Djirruwang program at Charles Sturt University and have been mentored by some of the most experienced and compassionate people in the field.

The acute crisis team and Sandra Kelty, the Aboriginal Clinical Lead of Blacktown Mental Health, have been assisting me to progress in my learning.

Sandra Kelty has mentored me to become a great clinician and support for our people by guiding and inspiring me to achieve and continue to achieve. Sandra Kelty is a great inspiration and a great advocate for this community, I will continue to follow in her footsteps.

The Blacktown and Mount Druitt Aboriginal community is the largest urban Aboriginal population in New South Wales. I have been a part of this community working and volunteering for many years which has opened my eyes to the different levels of trauma and support this community needs. Being given the opportunity to work with community as a Mental Health Trainee, learning, gaining important skills to make vital changes and to support the community I love so much has been the most rewarding part.

I am enjoying my new role working in Mental Health, working in the Community and all of my new learning experiences here at Blacktown and I am so appreciative of everyone who is assisting me now and will continue to assist me on my journey over the next three years.



Gemma Carter with Sione Feiloaktau Fetuani

## Yolanda Batterson

### Aboriginal Mental Health Trainee at Kempsey Community Mental Health Service Mid North Coast Local Health District

#### Tell us about your mob?

Hi everyone, my name is Yolanda Batterson, I am an Aboriginal woman who was born and raised in Kempsey, and my family's nation is Kamilaroi, but being born and growing up in Kempsey on Dunghutti land I have also been accepted as a part of the Kempsey Community, as I am well known in my community. My mother is Aboriginal and she was born in Moree NSW, my dad is non Aboriginal and he was born in Kempsey NSW, I have family in Kempsey and also in Moree.

#### What has been your career pathway to where you are now?

My working career started as a waitress in a popular café in Kempsey when I was sixteen years old, and from there I had just gotten so used to working and studying that I haven't stopped. I have worked in a variety of jobs, after working as a waitress I then gained my RSA and RCG, and obtained a job at the local RSL Club in Kempsey as a bar tender. I have also worked as an oyster farmer, a Trainee Aboriginal Liaison Officer at the local police station, I also worked as a case manager for the chronically ill and disability. I have also completed a range of certificates through TAFE; including are a Diploma in Community Services, a Diploma in Case Management and an Aboriginal Mentor's Certificate.

#### Describe yourself in three words?

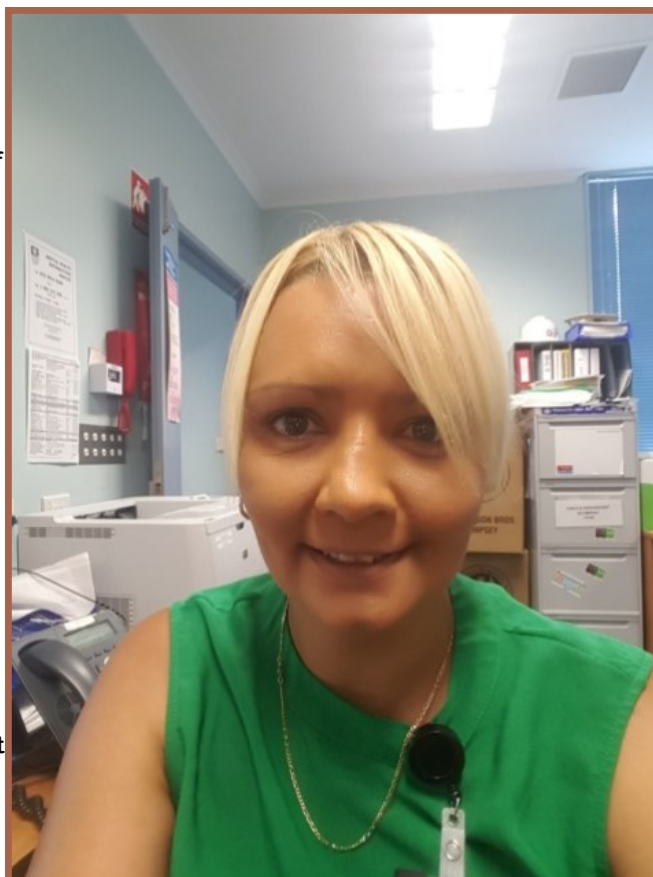
To describe myself in three words I would say I'm a motivated person that's always on the go, I always like to be and feel happy, and I'm good at listening to people when they need someone to talk to, in the good times and hard times. I am a very dedicated person to my family and to my job, I always like to be busy and I'm up for any challenges, I also play soccer for my local club at Willawarrin.

#### What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

The best thing I'm doing at this time in my life is my Traineeship, and learning all about mental health problems, issues, outcomes and medication, and completing all of my University residential schools. The other best thing I'm doing is providing and taking care of my family, as family means a lot to me.

#### What has been your motivation?

My motivation is my seven children: I have four girls and three boys, I also have a wonderful partner who helps me a lot, it hasn't been easy to study full time and work full time, plus attend residential school three times a year and play sports, but if you have a



supportive family who are able to help you through it all, that's when you know you can achieve anything.

#### What advice would you give to someone starting out?

For someone that's starting out on a Traineeship, my advice would be to keep calm, have good time management skills, and listen to direction, if you can do these, you can and will achieve everything you want in your life.





## Clinical Leader Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Services MNCLHD

### Daniel Morrison

#### Tell us about your Country and career pathway?

I am a descendent of the Murri Warri people from Brewarrina and I lived in Mt Druitt up until recently, where I have just moved to Port Macquarie to take up the role of Clinical Leader Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Services Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD).

I hold a Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) from Charles Sturt University's School of Nursing and Midwifery, a Post Graduate Degree in Indigenous Health (Substance Use) from Sydney University School of Medicine, a Post Graduate Degree in Health Service Administration from Latrobe University School of Public Health and a Masters in Health Service Management from the University of NSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine. I have extensive experience working within and across a number of different health settings that includes: Justice Health Forensic Network (JH), Local Health Districts (LHD), Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS) and Agency of Clinical Innovation (ACI)

#### Describe yourself in three words?

Tenacious, Driven, Passionate.

#### What is your favourite thing to do?

Playing indoor cricket and spending time with my family.

#### What do you most like about what you are doing now?

I get to lead and provide consultation and advice to



Daniel Morrison

other members of our organisation to ensure that we are aligning our selves with the Closing the Gap initiatives and the MNCLHD's strategic directions and vision.

#### Where do you see yourself going in your work?

I am a member of our Senior Management Leadership group, so I see myself becoming a Senior Manager of the MNCLHD as it has given great opportunities to grow and develop my leadership capabilities to become a great Aboriginal Leader of the future.

#### Any advice for someone starting out?

Be patient as it can be overwhelming at the start because "you don't know, what you don't know" and use all the resources that are available to you.

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The Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC) the state peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Related Services. Celebrating 30 years, AH&MRC continues to represent, support and advocate for the members and their communities on Aboriginal health at state and national levels which strengthen and sustain Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

The AH&MRC employs a State Mental Health Co-ordinator to advise and represent the AH&MRC, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and the NSW Aboriginal Health Partnership on issues related to mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW.

Following in Ann Baker's footsteps, I have recently been appointed as the State Mental Health Coordinator. I bring to the role fifteen years of working in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector, specialising in social and emotional wellbeing. Working for the local Aboriginal community of western Sydney, I was fortunate to experience how effective the principles of self-determination and community control are in achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal people.

AH&MRC has developed, over the years, a strong and respectful partnership with the Ministry of Health and I look forward to working collaboratively to build further on the expertise in the sector and deliver mental health programs and services that are culturally appropriate and responsive to the local needs of the Members and Communities.

Contact details: Leanne Fisher, 0292124777, [lfisher@ahmrc.org.au](mailto:lfisher@ahmrc.org.au), <http://www.ahmrc.org.au/>

## Charles Sturt University

Congratulations to all the students of the Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) who at the end of 2016 graduated, with the graduation taking place with a number of trainees graduating on the day. Three students on the day graduated from the programme with distinction. A special touch to the graduation ceremony was that the university supported Robyn McMillan (a Wiradjuri Elder, a CSU academic and a previous NSW Mental Health Trainee and graduate of the degree) to give them their testamur after their names had been read out to the Chancellor of the University. During the graduation ceremony the Discipline Lead and Director of the Djirruwang programme Faye McMillan was conferred with her Doctor of Health Science degree and became Dr Faye McMillan.

Wow, 2017 has barrelled in and we are now well and truly into the 2017 academic year. The Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) programme held its first residential school at the end of January 2017 and into February. Students in the programme came from across the country from WA, QLD, NT and NSW. Trainees came from across the state, and across all three years of the programme with mixed emotions of apprehension, excitement and nervousness about the upcoming year. The first residential school provided all students with the opportunity to become familiar with the Djirruwang team members, and the support mechanisms available to them across CSU. The Djirruwang team is looking forward to working with all the students and trainees in the programme, as well as the continued support and engagement from NSW Health and LHDs that support the trainees. The next residential will take place in April and run for 7 days, with the third and final residential school happening in August 2017. Happy New Year everyone.



**Pictured right:** Dr Faye McMillan Discipline Lead and the Djirruwang Director who graduated with a Doctor of Health Science with Mr Stephen Ainsworth (NSW Mental Health Trainee) who graduated with Distinction from the Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) at the Dec 2016 CSU graduation ceremony.

# Mental Health Branch

## Ministry of Health

The Mental Health Branch of the Ministry of health continues to provide significant support to the Aboriginal mental health workforce program.

We are missing Tom Brideson's leadership and extensive knowledge and wish him well in his recovery from illness. Thanks Robyn Owens who works enthusiastically to keep the coordination unit on track. Thanks also Allison White who chaired the last meeting of the reference group.

I continue to work on the revision of the Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. Soon we will reconvene the Expert Advisory Committee to consider the draft policy. Subject to consultation and Ministry approval, we aim to finalise the policy in mid-2017.

Other key program-related activities are:

- finalisation of the 2nd edition of the Practical Guide
- support for Donna Stanley and Len Kanowski, the trainers for the Aboriginal grief and loss train-the-trainer workshops in early April
- participation in 2017 Forum planning, supporting forum convenor Matt Trindall providing strategic policy advice on national reports and service development in NSW.

In other news relevant to the program:

- Marc Reynolds has moved to another position within the Ministry and I would like to thank him for his work in supporting the program since 2013.
- The new Aboriginal Health Impact Statement policy Directive has been released PD2017\_004, [http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2017/PD2017\\_004.html](http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2017/PD2017_004.html)
- The Mental Health Branch liaises with the Centre for Aboriginal Health on Aboriginal health matters, including Aboriginal people's access to public mental health services and the management of the Aboriginal NGO funding program.
- Welcome Leanne Fisher as coordinator of Aboriginal Mental Health in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, at the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC), a role funded by the Ministry of Health. The role provides a vital link between public and Aboriginal non-government services. We look forward to ongoing work with Leanne and AH&MRC.

Christine Flynn



Feel free to contact me for further information:

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## NSW Health Aboriginal Grief and Loss

Expressions of interest have been sought for participation in the Aboriginal Grief and Loss train-the-trainer sessions to be held in early April 2017.

This training aims to add value to the original training project by equipping more people to deliver the training in NSW in the future.

The training is targeted to Clinical Leaders (Aboriginal Mental Health) and other experienced mental health clinicians, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, with an interest in training others in both public and community sectors about the issues in and skills for dealing with Aboriginal grief and loss in communities. Train-the-trainer participants must be people employed in NSW health public mental health services.

The Ministry of Health funded the original package, piloting and a first round of training. The Institute of Psychiatry undertook the project for NSW Health, with input from an expert advisory committee. Two Aboriginal people Donna Stanley and Vanessa Edwidge co-delivered the training to 145 Participants in 2013 and 2014. Training manuals and associated DVD resources have been developed.

The training will run on 5-6 April and will be held in North Sydney.

You might be reading this after the EOI closing date of 6 March. If so, and you think the training might be right for you, there may still be places available. Please contact Donna Stanley, co-trainer, to find out more: [donna.stanley@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:donna.stanley@health.nsw.gov.au)





Health  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District



## SAVE THE DATE

### 2017 Aboriginal Mental Health & Wellbeing Workforce Forum

The Forum is hosted by South Eastern Sydney LHD in partnership with the AH&MRC



Bringing together Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing workers from Aboriginal community controlled health services, Aboriginal mental health workers in public mental health services and other people who support their work.

*'Looking back, looking forward'*

**The forum acknowledges and pays respects to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land.**

**14-15 June 2017**

**Novotel Sydney Brighton Beach**

Cnr The Grand Parade & Princess Street, Brighton-le-Sands, NSW

**Forum Dinner:**

Novotel Sydney Brighton Beach, 14 June 2017

**Conference Sub-Themes:**

- Justice system & mental health issues
- Suicide prevention
- Working together in partnership

**Exciting Keynote Speakers**

- Professor Lisa Jackson-Pulver, AM, Western Sydney University
- Joe Williams, Founder & International Speaker, The Enemy Within

**Registrations Opening Soon:**

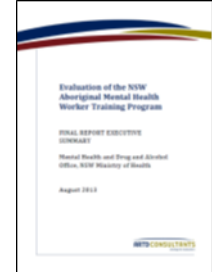
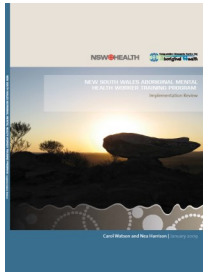
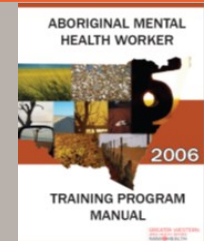
[conference@hotelnetwork.com.au](mailto:conference@hotelnetwork.com.au) to register your interest





# Yarnin Together

Publications – Sharing Our Success



Watson, Carol and Harrison, Nea (2009) *New South Wales Aboriginal Mental Health Worker Training Program: Implementation Review*. Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health and NSW Health

Watson, Carol and Harrison, Nea with Brideson, Thomas and Greenwood, Catherine (2010) *Walk Together, Learn Together, Work Together: A Practical Guide for the Training of Aboriginal Mental Health Professionals in New South Wales*. Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Jones, Carmel and Brideson, Tom (2009) 'Using policy and workforce development to address Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing', *Australasian Psychiatry*, 17:1, S72 – S74

Brideson, Tom and Jones, Carmel (2007) 'NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program', *Auseinetter*, Issue 29, No 2 pp 20 – 22

ARTD Consultants (2013) *NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Training Program Evaluation Report*. New South Wales Health.

Yarning Together, A periodical newsletter celebrating the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program, Edition 1, 2 & 3

## NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program State-wide Coordination Unit

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Most Publications above and the important  
Program Implementation Resource:

*Walk Together, Learn Together, Work Together*  
A Practical Guide for the Training of Aboriginal  
Mental Health Professionals in New South Wales

Can be sourced on the following link:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mhdao/workforcedev/Pages/aborig-mh-wrkforce-prog.aspx>

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