

# RESEARCH FORUM:

*Understanding Best Practice Research when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and people*

THURSDAY 7 August 2014

Figtree Conference Centre  
5 Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park

9.00am

REGISTRATION

9.30-10.15am

Welcome to Country

Welcome and Introduction

**Deb Tipper** - Facilitator, Project Officer CMHDARN

10.15-11.00am

Session 1

Keynote Address

**Mary Guthrie** - General Manager - Policy, Lowitja Institute, Melbourne

11.00-11.20am

MORNING TEA

11.20-12.30pm

Session 2

Examples From the Field:

- *SMART Across Cultures*

**Josette Freeman** - SMART Recovery Australia

- *Ngala Nanga Mai pARent Group Program - Social and emotional wellbeing*

**Michelle Jersky** - Project Officer, Ngala Nanga Mai pARent Group Program

**Sandra Murphy** (Bambi) - pARent Group participant

**Jennifer Winters** - Early Childhood Nurse Child & Family Health Team

**Lola Callaghan** - Aboriginal Health Education Officer, Child & Family Health

- *Together As Partners: An overview of an Australian Red Cross national social and emotional wellbeing program for young people living in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*

**Rachel Christie** - National Senior Project Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Programs, Australian Red Cross

12.30-1.15pm

LUNCH

1.15-2.45pm

Session 3

Our Healing Our Solutions: Sharing our Evidence

**Lindy Moffat and Caitlin Mullins** - Healing Foundation

2.45pm-3.00pm

Concluding Remarks and Evaluation

(See over page for full session details)



For more information on the project contact:  
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The Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Research Network is a collaborative project between Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) and Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC)

## SESSION 1:

### Keynote Address

Mary Guthrie - Lowitja Institute, Melbourne

Mary will discuss key aspects of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research methodology known as the Facilitated Development Approach, and explore the rationale and history behind the need for this. Her address will include examples where research knowledge has been effectively translated into evidence based practice and policy, identify potential barriers and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals in research and discuss the importance of ethics and current work that Lowitja Institute is undertaking around ethical practice.

## SESSION 2:

### SMART Across Cultures

Josette Freeman - Smart Recovery

This presentation will give an overview of the SMART Recovery programme and how it has been adapted for ATSI communities. This has taken time and collaboration with various aboriginal agencies. There are now ATSI specific SMART Recovery groups around Australia. I will explain where improvements are needed and also the benefits of having such a programme.

### NGALA NANGA MAI pARent group Program - Social and emotional wellbeing

Michelle Jersky - Project Officer, Ngala Nanga Mai

pARent Group Program

Sandra Murphy (Bambi) - pARent Group participant

Jennifer Winters - Early Childhood Nurse Child & Family Health Team

Lola Callaghan - Aboriginal Health Education Officer, Child & Family Health

The Ngala Nanga Mai (We dream) program is focused on improving the health and well being of young Aboriginal parents and their children in the La Perouse area, Sydney, New South Wales, by reducing the social isolation of this population group.

Ngala Nanga Mai has three main objectives:

- improve the health of young Aboriginal parents and their children
- facilitate return to educational opportunities with an aim to improve employment opportunities
- improve social connectedness.

### Together As Partners: An overview of an Australian Red Cross national social and emotional wellbeing program for young people living in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Rachel Christie - Australian Red Cross

The save-a-mate (SAM) Our Way program supports initiatives by regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across 12 locations in four Australian states and territories to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of their young people, with a particular emphasis on developing young leaders. In each community, SAM Our Way works alongside young people, families and local organisations to identify key wellbeing issues of concern to them and to build the resilience and capacity of young people to address these issues for themselves.

## SESSION 3:

### Healing Foundation - Our Healing Solutions

In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing has gained significant momentum since the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation in 2009. Healing is a relatively new and emerging concept within Australia.

The Healing Foundation plays a critical role in building the evidence base for healing programs that are informed by Indigenous concepts of wellbeing and that address the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cultural needs of our people. As we continue to build and strengthen this evidence base, we recognise the challenge now lies in bridging the gap between knowledge and practice in a way that improves the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Healing Foundation has begun to identify critical evidence in this area underpinned by the successful outcomes of more than 80 healing projects. This work has been underpinned by developing program logic structures, inclusion of trauma informed healing literature, and driven by local Indigenous communities enabling a localised response. This presentation will outline the emerging principles and elements involved in the delivery of a quality healing program and some of the promising practice in this area. This knowledge is drawn from the stories of hope, renewal and rejuvenation that can occur for people by participating in healing activities.

The presentation will include an exploration of:

- what healing is and how it creates change for people and communities
- the core elements of quality healing programs, and
- how healing enables people to engage with and make use of recovery and specialist services.

# Presenters

## MARY GUTHRIE

Mary belongs to the Wiradjuri people of Central Western New South Wales through her mother's side of the family. She has worked in Aboriginal affairs for the past 20 years, including 10 in Aboriginal health. In recent years, Mary worked in management roles at the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association and the Indigenous Allied Health Association, both in Canberra.

Mary has also worked in Aboriginal mental health and social emotional wellbeing for many years, including the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework for Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health 2003-2013; as the Aboriginal Co-ordinator, Auseinet (a former national project around promotion, prevention and early intervention for mental health) and as a program manager on a number of government programs particularly in relation to the Stolen Generations.

Mary's current role is General Manager - Policy, at the Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

## JOSETTE FREEMAN

Josette has an extensive background in Nursing and Counselling. Josette was a Clinical Nurse Specialist and then the Unit Manager on the Paediatric Oncology Ward at the former Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. She has worked in palliative care both at Canberra Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospice, St Vincent's Hospice. For the past 15 years she has also worked across all sectors of the drug and alcohol field including the Drug and Alcohol Program Unit ACT Health and the Alcohol and Drug Service at St. Vincent's Hospital.

Since 2002 she has coordinated and provided the SMART Recovery Facilitator training for the SMART Recovery Australia program which is now being delivered across various states and territories of Australia. She was involved in helping to develop an indigenous specific SMART Recovery program, works closely with the NSW Department of Corrective Services and the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice. Josette is a member of Drug and Alcohol Nurses Australasia, and sits on the Board of the Recovery Academy of Australia.

## RACHEL CHRISTIE

Rachel has over 10 years' experience working with marginalised communities in a number of countries including the Solomon Islands, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Myanmar and most recently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. Rachel has proven expertise in community development program design, evaluation and management, a background in health and social services and a Master of Development Studies from the University of Sydney. Currently working with Australian Red Cross Rachel has helped develop a national strategy for effective community engagement through the lens of inclusive community voice within a results based framework.

## LINDY MOFFATT

Lindy is a Wakka Wakka, Gumbaynggir and Dunghutti woman who works in Program Development at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation in Canberra. She has worked in the area of arts, higher education, counselling, mental health and domestic and family violence services. Lindy won the 2011 Dr Ross Ingram Memorial Competition, Medical Journal of Australia for her essay entitled "Mental Illness or Spiritual Illness: what should we call it?" in which she describes the grief and loss she experienced, the struggles caring for her son and the impacts of trans-generational trauma on Indigenous families and mental health. Lindy also presented at the World Hearing Voices Congress 2013 in Melbourne.

## CAITLIN MULLINS

Caitlin has over 12 years' experience providing residential, therapeutic and support services to children, young people and families with multiple and complex needs. Caitlin has spent most of her career working in not-for-profit organisations, specialising in the areas of youth homelessness, mental health, and trauma and abuse. Having lived and worked across Queensland, Caitlin has a special interest in the needs and aspirations of regional and remote communities. Caitlin is a provisionally registered psychologist and is currently completing her Master of Clinical Psychology at QUT.