

THE GOOD AND THE BAD OF THE INTERVENTION

Serious concerns about the Commonwealth 'intervention' into the NT were raised by various health services at AMSANT's 43rd General Meeting at Desert Park in Alice Springs last month, yet a general welcoming of the new resources and focus on primary health care was also encouraged by members.

Poor communications

Poor communications and a lack of feedback from the Commonwealth were the key issues raised during 'members reports' but so too was the difficulty some people are facing in feeding their families under the 'income management' or 'quarantining' provisions of the intervention.

Sunrise Health said that Centrelink didn't yet have the proper processes in place and many people in their region couldn't activate their food payments when they needed to: "It's a totally disempowering and humiliating experience for many people, some of who are having to fork out \$200 for taxis to go and buy their tucker."

Wurli Wurlinjang agreed: "There's lots of money being wasted on taxis and people waiting around for a long time to get their tucker. It's a pathetic situation in this day and age and I encourage everyone at this meeting to stand up and make a protest."

Many member services were pleased to report on the increase in workforce numbers resulting from the 'intervention' and their increased capacity to run health programs.

There was also a reported increase in the number of male clients accessing community controlled health services around the Territory, something AMSANT Acting Chair, **Stephanie Bell**, said was a very good development for our sector.



Eileen Bonny, Edie Holmes and Biddie Beasley from the Ampilatwatja Health Board were at the Desert Park meeting.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

AMSANT's Leadership Group has submitted its Strategic Plan 2008-2011 for consideration by Oxfam Australia, who have committed to partially funding the project for a three-year period.

Staff from AMSANT, our Member Services and Oxfam met for two days in Darwin in December to plan programs, workshops and career paths for our emerging leaders.

"The group has done a great job in deciding upon future directions for the development of our emerging leaders," says AMSANT EO, **John Paterson**.

"The support and flexibility of our Member Services has been crucial in this process as they recognise that we really need to identify and nurture strong leaders to ensure the future success of the Aboriginal health sector."

Patto says last year's week-long 'Kakadu Camp' was a great success in challenging people, building networks and setting future career

goals for the 40 delegates who attended.

"We're aiming for a similar workshop sometime this year so I encourage all interested people to get involved!"

AMSANT Leadership inquiries can be directed to **Sharon Manhire** at AMSANT on 8944.6666 or sharon.manhire@amsant.com.au

G A P ANALYSIS SURVEY

AMSANT is very keen to get your responses to the "Gap Analysis" survey we sent out to you recently. The survey will identify gaps in your core PHC services and enable us to prioritise services that need specific funding support. Phone **Simon Stafford** on 8944.6666 if you need any assistance.



AMSANT Acting Chair, Stephanie Bell, says she was very happy with the increased number of men attending AMSANT meetings. And here's proof ... the AMSANT blokes strike a pose at the Desert Park meeting.

PIRS MEETING A GREAT SUCCESS IN ALICE

*About 40 people from 17
Aboriginal health services
ensured the success of the
AMSANT PIRS Conference in Alice
Springs from 17-19 April.*

Other delegates attended from the OATSIH PIRS Funding Program, E-Health NT, TEDGPs, GPPCHNT, DHCS, SAMSIS, Menzies Health, Communicare and Ferret.

A strong link was drawn between the integrity of Patient Information Recall Systems and Quality Assurance programs such as ABCD, H4L and SDRF, using the KPIs and APCC as a means to develop effective primary and public health services.

A conference report with outcomes will soon be circulated to all Member Services, however some of the highlights and important issues to come from the conference were:

Presentations on the roll-outs of SAMSIS and the E-Health NT SEHR & SEMS program;

Presentation on the AMSANT Managed IT Network and how it now works effectively for the Nganampa Health Service;

Presentation of the OATSIH PIRS Funding Program followed by a discussion on the state of PIRS in the NT;

The need for ACCHSs to ensure that their

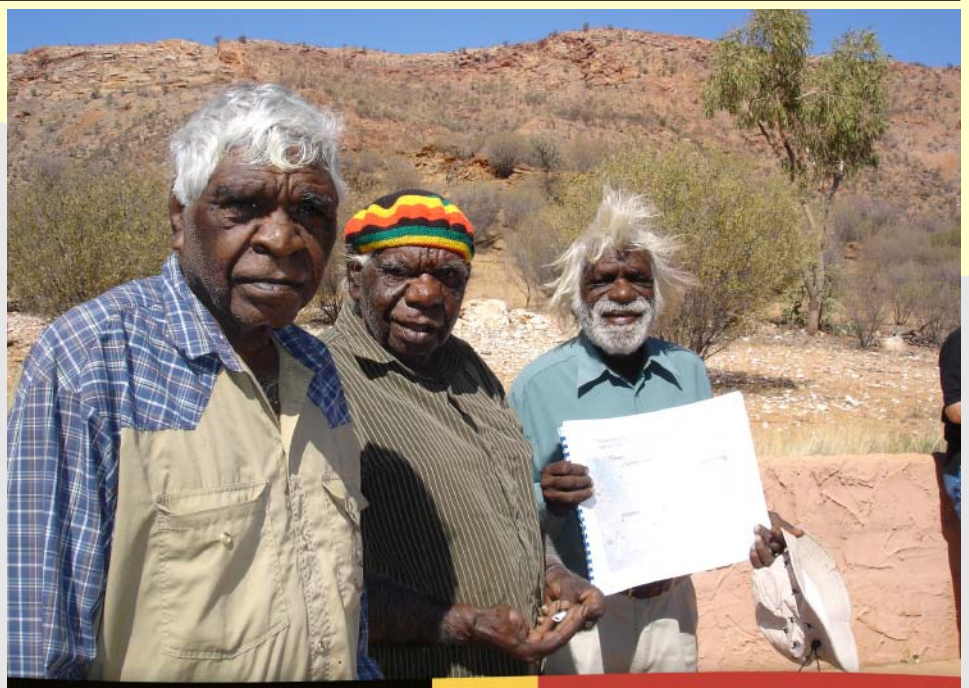
PIRS adheres to strong policies that ensure reports are an accurate reflection of health service delivery and outcomes;

The need for a NT coordinated approach to PIRS from the community controlled health sector;

The need for further development of 'care planning' and 'pharmaceutical modules' within PIRS.

Presentations from the conference have been sent to all participants. Any Member Services who were not able to attend the conference but would like a copy of the presentations on PIRS Data Cleaning, Sustainability, Electronic Progress Notes, PIRS/IT Policies and Procedures, Quality Assurance Programs or Medicare can e-mail greg.henschke@amsant.com.au or kaye.bransgrove@amsant.com.au for a copy.

All PIRS inquiries can be directed to **Kaye Bransgrove** (central region) on 8953.3551 or 0488.006.680 and/or **Greg Henschke** (Top End) on 0400.448.159.



MEN TALK UP STRONG FOR HEALTH AND COUNTRY

The Alyawarr Ingkerr-wenh Aboriginal Corporation has completed a five-year development program to better reflect the cultural, linguistic and family ties that connect the 3000 people in its region.

Board Members ... **Wally Morton** (Ampilatwatja), **Albert Bailey** and **Harold Nelson** (Urapuntja) ... went

to the AMSANT meeting to talk about the future of their health services, out-stations and community projects.

"Our regional integrity must be kept strong and our health services should be part of one region, as one people together," Albert told the AMSANT meeting.



WOMEN AT THE TOP

Helen Kantawara is the first female ever to be elected to be Chair of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice. The Arrente woman has been on the Congress Board for seven years and is seen

with Acting AMSANT Chair (and Congress Director) **Stephanie Bell** at the Desert Park, where she was roundly congratulated on her appointment by AMSANT members.

H4L CONFERENCE

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon joined AMSANT staff and delegates from around the country at the recent 'Healthy for Life' conference in Adelaide.

AMSANT's Alice Springs public health medical officer, Dr **Liz Moore**, says the key themes were health service infrastructure, the NT 'intervention', the need for increased mental health services and Aboriginal men's health programs.

Key speakers included **Amanda Hand** (Wurli Wurlijang), Dr **Andrew Bell** (Katherine West) and **Donna Ah Chee** (Congress) who discussed health information, improved service delivery and child & maternal health care.

The funding will be for the following purposes:

- For NACCHO affiliates (such as AMSANT) to scope the readiness of ACCHSs for accreditation and the level and type of support required;

- For AMSANT to provide accreditation support to ACCHSs;

- Provision of Quality Improvement and Accreditation Facilitators to individual ACCHSs to develop formal Accreditation Work-plans;

- Provision of Accreditation Grants to ACCHSs to undertake the accreditation process.

AMSANT is currently submitting to OATSIH for the accreditation scoping and support work components of the funding. A successful application will establish membership of a National Quality Network and will position AMSANT to support its membership with information, practical advice and workshops on accreditation and related service quality issues and hands-on assistance to achieve accreditation.

For more information on accreditation contact **Rob Curry** or Dr **Tanya Davies** at the Darwin office, or Dr **Liz Moore** or **Britt Puschak** in Alice Springs.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

A 2007–08 Federal Budget measure 'A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – Establishing Quality Health Standards' directs that all OATSIH-funded ACCHSs be accredited against Australian healthcare standards by June 2011.

This will be no straight-forward task, however, given the range of accreditation frameworks for organisational, clinical and other service delivery areas relevant to the sector and the work involved to achieve accreditation.

OATSIH has prioritised accreditation as a key issue for ACCHSs and has started a funding program over three years to assist organisations to become accredited.

STAFF ACCESS IMPROVED

The development of intranet services for the two pilot sites under the 'shared network project' is well underway at Nganampa Health Council and Katherine West Health Board.

The intranet will provide all employees with access to internal data resources such as policies, forms, contact lists and general information, which are usually found in a conventional intranet environment. It will also give access to calendars of events, collaborative workspaces (eg for the

management of meetings) and an enhanced data control capability, including document management.

The objective is to have a single framework for managing all non-clinical resources which is available to every staff member, regardless of their location.

SANTA TERESA GETS DATA-CENTRE

The 'shared network' (AMSnet) project is going gang-busters at the Ltyentye Apurte clinic as AMSANT staff continue to upgrade data management capabilities at Santa Teresa.

Santa Teresa has just moved from a local PIRS-server environment to a data-centre hosted service, thus drastically reducing its problems with PCs.

The clinic has finished its physical upgrade with building work completed late last year, new 'thin' client computers (secure and virus-free) installed in April and a 'virtual server' upgrade completed on time. The clinic's internet connection was also improved as part of AMSANT's work, with a new NextG service providing excellent connectivity.

FOR YOUR DIARY

AMSANT Committee Meeting,
face-to-face,
Friday 23rd May,
Gove.

AMSANT Committee Meeting,
face-to-face,
Friday 27th June,
Katherine.



DIESEL REBATES

If your Health Service is using diesel fuel for power generation or heavy transport (above 8 tonnes) you're probably eligible for a fuel rebate. Phone **Simon Stafford** at AMSANT on 8944.6666; he'll be able to arrange expert advice on this matter for our Member Services.



Juanita Heparra (Wurli Wurlinjang), Noeleen Andrews (Sunrise), Heather Campbell (Congress) and Audrey Tilmouth (Danila Dilba) enjoyed the crisp, fresh air at the Desert Park meetings.

NO SMOKING THIS PHAG

AMSANT's new Public Health Advisory Group (PHAG) has been set up to provide expert advice on public health related matters to the AMSANT Board and EO.

PHAG is chaired by AMSANT EO, **John Paterson**, and includes our two PHMOs,

Drs **Tanya Davies** and **Liz Moore**, KWHB Medical Director, Dr **Andrew Bell**, Congress PHMO, Dr **John Boffa**, AMSANT Programs Manager, **Rob Curry**, Public Health Support Officer, **Britt Puschak** and Policy Officer, **David Cooper**.

PHAG meets fortnightly and will help to strengthen AMSANT's capacity to respond to key medical and policy challenges.

For more information about PHAG contact any of the members, listed above.