

Caring for Our Community – working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers in providing cancer care training

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Background

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers:
 - Play a critical role in providing health care and support in their community.
 - Act as advocates and provide invaluable information and support.
- Cancer
 - Accounts for 20 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths.
 - Mortality rate is higher than for non-Indigenous Australians.
- Previous course provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers

Aim

- To increase health worker knowledge and confidence in:
 - Understanding cancer and cancer treatment
 - Screening and early detection of cancer
 - Prevention and healthy lifestyles
 - End-of-life care
 - Networking
 - Support services available for community members and health workers
- To develop networks amongst health workers caring for people with cancer

Consumer engagement

- This project reflected principles of:
 - Partnerships
 - Respect and dignity
 - Inclusivity
 - Improvement
- When planning:
 - Involve
 - Identify
 - Engage
 - Be guided by
 - Be inclusive
 - Provide cultural safety and appropriate information
 - Partner

Approach

- One Statewide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group
 - Advised on cultural considerations, course content and resources, preferred course locations and engagement and promotional strategies.
- Seven Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Groups
 - Informed the regional implementation and promotion.



Approach

- 154 health professionals supported the development and implementation of the course through participation in an advisory group, presenting, co-facilitating or promoting the courses.
- Reduced the duplication of programs within community, a partnership with Queensland University of Technology was developed for PEPA Queensland to deliver end of life / palliative care information.

Advisory Group Member Discussions

Advisory Group Member discussions focussed on:

- Men's and Women's business
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and visuals
- Welcome to Country and acknowledgements
- Warning statements
- Language, images, stories
- Content, knowledge gaps
- Yarning sessions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and resources

Advisory Group Member Discussions

Advisory Group Member discussions focussed on:

- Course locations
- Schedule
- Presenters
- Co-facilitators
- Promotional strategies
- Pilot review
- Who to involve
- Is a course needed in the community
- Application and bursary processes

Outcomes

- Nine Caring for Our Community courses were held between June 2017 and May 2018 across Queensland

Course Location	Date	Participants
Rockhampton	June 27 – 28, 2017	10
Napranum	October 10 – 11, 2017	11
Bundaberg	October 24 – 25, 2017	10
Townsville	November 21 – 22, 2017	6
Toowoomba	February 13 – 14, 2018	8
Cairns	February 27 – 28, 2018	24
Brisbane	March 6 – 7, 2018	9
Greater Brisbane (Springfield)	March 27 – 28, 2018	17
Mount Isa	May 14 – 15, 2018	13

Outcomes

- 108 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and health professionals attended.
- Nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Networks were established.
- 154 health professionals supported the development and implementation of the course.
- One State-wide Advisory Group informed the development, implementation and evaluation of the course.
- Seven Regional Advisory Groups informed regional implementation.

Evaluation

- Participants valued the cultural considerations embedded into the course, have gained knowledge and confidence, are more informed, and have taken the information back to their communities and workplaces.
- Almost 100 per cent of participants rated the content of the course sessions as being appropriate.
- 100 per cent of participants felt culturally safe and welcomed.
- Over 90 per cent of participants reported that they better understood their role as a health professional in cancer care, end-of-life care and in networking with other health professionals.

Feedback from participants

“I have learned more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in these two days, than I did in my entire health degree (where I had one elective).”

“The course needs to be ongoing to all communities to deliver so our people have more understanding and knowledge to feel assured that they have all the support and not to worry”

“I feel I can make a difference in helping my people and family”



Feedback from participants

“I now feel like I can talk with my patients and hope to give them a lot of information as they need.”

“Hold this course regularly for any new information and for the younger generation that will come on board as a Health Worker.”

“I found this information that I have learn about has given me an open mind about people with cancer, what they go through and the excellent services available for them to help and support them through their journey.”



Team learnings

- Cancer Council Queensland team members
 - Feel more confident
 - Feel more informed
 - Feel more connected
 - Are better able to support
 - Enjoyed the courses
 - Have since been invited to events and workplaces
 - Increased reach and access to services
 - Want to enhance the support they provide

Recommendations

- Cultural appropriateness and safety measures continue to be embedded into future programs.
- Additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers courses are required.
- Continue to be advised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives in the development of future information and education sessions.

Acknowledgements

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- Project Leadership Team.
- Members of the Statewide and Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Groups.
- Course presenters and co-facilitators.
- Participants who attended the courses who provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, clients, communities and family members.
- Cancer Council Queensland team members.

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