

My Life, My Lead

Implementation Plan Advisory Group (IPAG)

Consultation Notes

Shepparton – 24 April 2017

A range of face to face consultations, coupled with an online submission process, were established to hear from stakeholders and community on how to best address the social determinants and cultural determinants of Indigenous health.

The eleventh face to face consultation was held in Shepparton on 24 April 2017. Outcomes from the forum are below.

Session One – Social and Cultural Determinants of Health:

The first session focussed on what can be done to address the social and cultural determinants of health. The following themes were raised, including some suggested case studies to look at what is working well on the ground in regional Victoria.

Key Observations:

Racism

- Leadership across roles works well, examples include: sporting roles where individual and community aspirations are built and employment roles, where individuals undertake qualifications and drive others in community to achieve similar positive outcomes.
- Racism is a significant determinant for accessing services, such as healthcare and educational opportunities. Wrap around service partnerships are a good strategy in overcoming barriers.

Food Security

- Accessibility to fresh and nutritional food continues to be a priority – food sharing and food banks are regularly accessed throughout the region.
- Food, nutrition and community garden programs work well and provide a range of associated outcomes, these include: community and relationship building, budgeting and planning. Programs also provide access to affordable food.
- There are opportunities to develop food cooperatives to harness bulk buying power, however there is a risk that people see this as free, rather than a ‘buy in’ model.

Connection to family, community, country, language and culture

- Service delivery in the mental health space is best achieved through joint visits. There was an example of joint Aunt and Uncle visits to patients – the approach offers a supportive and safe environment for the patient and has led to positive outcomes.

- The model of providing outreach services directly in the community works well in a regional context.

Funding and Contracts

- Communities often have the solution to issues, and programs should be flexible to allow for communities to respond in a way that meets their needs.
- Short term funding arrangements make it difficult to hire and retain quality staff and can result in issues in service delivery and outcomes.
- Services are competing for ‘talent’, with individuals moving to (Melbourne or to Government roles) take advantage of employment opportunities. This can have an impact on professional working relationships and the quality of services delivered.

Trauma and Healing

- Trauma and healing is the largest determinant as it cuts across all others, and therefore if untreated, it can have a longstanding impact.
- Community has the skills to identify trauma, however there are little supports available to address healing, including through mainstream services.
- Trauma informed health care needs to be considered.

Employment

- There are many employment and training successes, and there is a need to focus on these to breakdown unfair stereotypes.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are often required to provide support outside of their formal role and outside of working hours and this is not acknowledged by employers.
- Organisations should focus on workforce development strategies; approaches should include recruiting the right people into positions, as recruitment of the wrong person can cause reputational damage to organisations, breakdown in relationships and stress for the individual.

Education

- The East Gippsland area is regarded as strong and proud. It supports children with individual learning plans, drawing on local resources and working with parents and communities to identify and implement local educational solutions.
- There are opportunities to work with young people and their families to identify and build their aspirations at a younger age – during late primary/upper high school.
- Principals lead the way in respect to cultural engagement and competence, student aspirations, cross-community engagement and driving change. Building on this, there

are opportunities in engaging with local communities during decision making processes.

- Suggestion to focus curriculum elements on ‘STEM’ Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, to enhance broader curriculum opportunities and improve career outcomes.

Session Two - Next iteration of the Implementation Plan

The second session was an open microphone format focussing on some ideas in developing the next iteration of the Implementation Plan. The following are a summary of these:

- A stronger focus on mental health – an example from Central Hume – male and female joint visits from Aunty and Uncle. The program provides early intervention and supports in a non-threatening way, allowing individuals to unpack issues in a safe space.
- There are opportunities to establish a true baseline on true advantage and disadvantage, this is important as there is concern that being unwell can be normalised.
- Aged care – the current focus on immunisation target is not broad enough. The sector needs to have an ‘Indigenous Business is everybody's business’ approach. In addition, there is a lack of Indigenous geriatric knowledge to inform future clinical.
- There is ongoing concern in the suicide rate of young men - it is important to have strong young men and provide supports where young people are “not in a good place”.
- Youth – it’s important to have a role modelling approach in all programs approach, such as Ambulance Victoria, where young people are being supported in health literacy and career decisions, this includes Ambulance Victoria accessing the school environment to provide positive role modelling.
- Cultural healing – health of the people versus the health of the land and understanding connectivity an ancient way of doing things.
- The new IP needs a national focus on cardiac arrest.
- Dental services remain to be an issue; issues include: impact on diet and wellbeing, establishing service delivery and access to services.