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**Evaluation of the North and
West Metropolitan Region
PCP Consortium Koolin Balit
Project**

Report on the mid-point evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Investment by the Victorian Government (through the Closing the Health Gap and Koolin Balit funding rounds) has enabled the four PCPs (INW PCP, HealthWest, NEPCP and HW PCP) to initiate and resource a sophisticated approach to building cultural competency in mainstream agencies across their catchments, thereby addressing key barriers to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people. The legacy of this investment is fundamental and sustainable change in over 20 mainstream organisations in the north and west metropolitan region, and beyond.

Context

Research and consultations undertaken in 2012 and 2013 as part of Closing the Gap found that the majority of mainstream agencies in the N&WMR were not culturally competent, and while a few agencies had taken practical steps towards addressing this issue, most agencies were only at the 'contemplative stage' of change or were unsure about how to begin.

These learnings inspired the N&WMR PCPs to conceptualise the 'Building Blocks for Cultural Competency' model and to determine that focused effort was needed to:

- Prompt and support mainstream agencies to build their cultural competence.
- Improve service coordination in two major areas where the outcomes for Aboriginal people are particularly poor, namely maternal and child health and post-release from prison.
- Strengthen and formalise relationships between mainstream agencies and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Koolin Balit funding received by the N&WMR PCPs in late 2014 enabled the partners to lead focused effort to:

- Promote an evidence-based process within individual mainstream agencies, to implement the building blocks to cultural competency, including: a Cultural Audit, an Action Plan, new and revised policies and procedures, a Reconciliation Action Plan, an Aboriginal Employment Strategy and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal clients, community, workers and organisations.
- Develop and roll-out the N&WMR Koolin Balit Building Blocks of Cultural Competency Toolkit (hereinafter referred to as the Toolkit), an online resource that contains a suite of tools, templates, information and training which individual agencies can use to progress their journey towards cultural competency.
- Facilitate relationships between mainstream agencies and Aboriginal organisations through focused partnership work, in particular: the Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership Group, the Strong Culture, Strong Future MCH Working Group and the North West Continuity of Aboriginal Health Care Working Group.
- Drive improvements in service coordination in the area of maternal and child health in the local government areas of Banyule, Darebin, Moreland and Nillumbik (Strong Culture, Strong Future Model). In particular, consulting and gaining input from Aboriginal people and working with consumers to inform service system changes.

- Research and map the post-release journey for prisoners, to inform collaboration and improve service coordination for this target group in 2016.

The partnership approach adopted by the four PCPs has enabled the sharing of resources, standardisation of key messages, economies of scale and minimised duplication of effort.

Mid-point Evaluation Findings

In early 2016, the N&WMR PCPs engaged an independent evaluator, Juliet Frizzell to conduct a mid-point evaluation of the Koolin Balit Project. The mid-point evaluation findings show the Project has delivered substantial outputs, achieved significant reach, and is having a real and sustainable impact within and between agencies in the North and West Metropolitan Region. Importantly, the Project is delivering on the Government's investment aims for Koolin Balit, in particular:

- Implementing culturally responsive pathways (1.1).
- Maintaining and improving data collection and analysis (1.2).
- Maximising professional development and employment pathways for Aboriginal people (1.5).
- Supporting partnerships between mainstream and Aboriginal community organisations and strengthening the community's role in planning, decision making and governance (3.1).

A brief summary of the mid-point findings¹ is presented below:

The Project has achieved significant outputs, including:

- The development and roll-out of the online Toolkit, which provides a central repository and clearing house for resources (developed by the Project and by third parties) to support mainstream agencies to put in place the building blocks of cultural competency. The Toolkit can be found at <http://inwpcp.org.au/toolkit-main-page/>
- A suite of tools, templates, information and resources developed by the Project, which can be used by individual agencies to support their journey towards cultural competency, including: a cultural audit tool, the *Asking the Question Training Package* (video, participant resource, trainers guide, PowerPoint and participant survey), the *Have you Asked the Question Promotional items* (booklet, mouse pad and stickers), the *Helping Your Organisation to Create a Welcoming Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Guide*, and *A Guide to Culturally Aware and Responsive Communication*, etc.
- A partnership model and resources to improve service coordination in maternal and child health for Aboriginal children and families (Strong Culture, Strong Future model), including: the 'Through Aboriginal Eyes' Orientation Tour model, a workforce professional development survey and associated training, the Welcoming MCH Environments Project, which includes a consumer audit of 23 MCH services, and the Aboriginal Birth Notifications Pathway Project.

¹ The findings in this section have been drawn from a range of reports and documents, in particular: the report NWMR Koolin Balit PCP Consortium Project: Workforce Cultural Competency Survey 2015 – Enhancing the capacity of Mainstream organisations in the N&WMR to provide high quality, culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community (2015), a list of other documents used to inform the findings can be found in Appendix 1 of the Report.

- A draft report that maps access to health and community services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people recently released from prison or on community corrections orders in Melbourne's west.
- A draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation. Unfortunately due to changes at the senior management level the mainstream agency which had agreed to trial the Model was unable to do so. NW PCP is currently negotiating with another mainstream agency that is interested in trialling the Model.
- Three partnership groups that bring together mainstream agencies and Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations, in particular: VACCHO, VAHS, VACCA, and VALS, to work collaboratively to "improve access to high quality services for Aboriginal Victorians".

These outputs directly contribute to the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.²

The Project has also achieved significant reach:

- Over 20 agencies in the catchment are actively engaged in building their cultural competency, all adding value to the government's initial investment by using their own funds and resources to implement change. For example a number of agencies have engaged external Aboriginal trainers to deliver cultural competency training, have delivered *the Asking the Question* training package to groups of staff, and/or implemented the Creating Welcoming Environments Resource Package across their sites, etc.
- There have been over 850 online views of the Toolkit which was only launched in late October 2015.
- Over 100 agencies have reported using at least one component of the Toolkit i.e. the *Asking the Questions Training Package*, the *Creating Welcoming Environments Resource Package*, etc. Agencies using these tools range from local, regional and statewide services, and include: 17 Councils, 10 community health services, hospitals including Werribee Mercy, Western Health and Peninsula Health, non-government organisations including YSAS, Women's Health West, Vincent Care, Salvation Army, Northern Support Services, Neami, McKillop Family Services and Melbourne City Mission, childcare centres, sporting bodies, carers organisations, networks, kindergartens and GP clinics. A full list of organisations can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

DHHS expressed concern that some of the project components had not yet been rolled out across the catchment. Once the initial work has been finalised and evaluated there is an opportunity for the 4 PCPs to address this concern by extending and expanding key aspects of the project across the N&WMR during the second half of 2016.

This level of 'reach' directly impacts on the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.³

² ACIL Allen Consulting. *Attachment 1 Koolin Balit 2012-2022 vision, objectives and Koolin Balit investment focus and aims*. Page 2.

³ *ibid.*

A comparison of baseline and mid-point data⁴ shows that the Project is having a real and sustainable impact within mainstream agencies:

- 54% of agencies have conducted a Cultural Audit and implemented an Action Plan.
- 45% have developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), up from 10% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- One-third of agencies have developed an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, up from 10% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- 95% of agencies provided cultural competency / responsiveness training to staff, up from 65% (INWPCP 2013) and 78% (NEPCP 2012).
- 88% of agencies believe that every client of the service is asked the question, up from 65% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- 98% of agencies believe they have a welcoming environment, up from 66% in 2013 (INW PCP).
- 98% of agencies reported having cultural protocols in place to acknowledge traditional owners of the land, up from 68% in 2013 (INW PCP).
- 80% of respondents had partnered with an Aboriginal organisation in the past two years for the purpose of delivering specific programs.
- 70% of agencies employ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- 52% of agencies have a priority of access policy for Aboriginal clients, up from 41% (NEPCP in 2012) and 46% (INWPCP 2013).

The improved cultural competency of mainstream agencies contributes to the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.⁵

Conclusions

Unlike one-off projects and programs that finish when the funding ceases, evidence shows that the work of the N&WMR PCPs will have a legacy beyond the employment of the Project Coordinators and the project work. The Project legacy includes a comprehensive Toolkit and resources for building cultural competency, as well as fundamental and lasting change within organisations, and sustainable improvements in the service system through better service coordination and partnerships, particularly in the area of maternal and child health.

The government's investment has been multiplied through parallel investments of time and resources by many individual agencies. For example, the *Asking the Question Training Package* funded by Koolin Balit, has been used to deliver training to hundreds, if not thousands of staff across the catchment and beyond, using agency time and resources. The capacity and knowledge built through the delivery of this training not only provides a more accurate picture of service access patterns by Aboriginal people

⁴ Thirty (30) agencies from across the catchment areas responded to the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey administered by the four PCPs. Respondents came from all 12 local government areas and from a range of service types (community health, hospitals, councils, housing services, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and women's health). As noted in the report an accurate and comprehensive baseline data set measuring cultural competence was not established until the Koolin Balit project (September 2015). As such, the comparison between baseline and mid-point data made in this section has been done by comparing the 2015 survey results with the baseline data collected by NEPCP (2012) and INW PCP (2013) where comparison can be made i.e. the same question or very similar question was asked.

⁵ *ibid.*

(Investment Aim 1.2), but also ensures that when Aboriginal people do access mainstream services they receive appropriately targeted support to meet their needs (Investment Aim 1.1).

Evidence also shows that significant action is occurring in the catchment to implement the building blocks of cultural competency. With the Project not due for completion until the end of 2016, further improvement can be expected. This will be measured when the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey is re-administered in September 2016.

The findings of the evaluation also suggest there is room for further targeted work to build the cultural competence of mainstream agencies across the PCPs' catchments. In particular, there is an opportunity to:

- Undertake further developmental work to strengthen mainstream agencies ability to recruit, employ, retain and develop Aboriginal people in a variety of roles, not only designated Aboriginal positions or teams. The findings of the Project show that just 44% of agencies have a specific Aboriginal Employment Strategy and 40% do not have a strategy or were unsure (16%). Aboriginal people also tend to be employed in designated Aboriginal positions or teams, rather than in a variety of positions across an organisation.
- Broaden the implementation of the Strong Culture, Strong Future MCH model to other MCH services in the catchment, particularly through the Councils in the west. In fact, the underpinning principles of this approach could be expanded to agencies providing early years services more broadly.
- Strengthen engagement with Aboriginal people, families and communities through the co-design and implementation of continuous improvement processes for obtaining feedback from Aboriginal service users as a means of ensuring services are culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal service users, for inclusion in the Toolkit.
- Promote the use of the Toolkit and its resources to build cultural competency to other mainstream organisations within the N&WMR PCPs' catchment and market the Toolkit to mainstream agencies outside the N&WMR.
- Trial and evaluate the draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation. Unfortunately due to changes at the senior management level the mainstream agency which had agreed to trial the Model was unable to do so. NW PCP is currently negotiating with another mainstream agency that is interested in trialling the Model.
- Implement a consistent data set and system for measuring change and progress in building the cultural competence of mainstream agencies.
- More effectively promote and communicate the project successes and outputs, in particular the Toolkit and the Strong Culture, Strong Future model.

Mid-point recommendations

Recommendation 1. The Strong Culture, Strong Future model is expanded to include the MCH services in other local government areas, and/or is replicated in other parts of the catchment, in particular the local government areas in the west region that have high numbers of Aboriginal families with children in the MCH cohort.

- Recommendation 2. Funding is sought to build on the preliminary work that has been undertaken by the Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership Group and VACCHO that is aimed at supporting mainstream organisations to build their capacity and capability to employ and retain Aboriginal people. Once the developmental work is complete, the material should be translated into appropriate resources and tools, and incorporated into the on-line Toolkit.
- Recommendation 3. The N&WMR PCPs Consortium explore opportunities for communicating and promoting the project successes, in particular partnership work, the Toolkit and the Strong Culture, Strong Future model.
- Recommendation 4. The N&WMR PCPs Consortium continue to build on the relationships which have been established with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (VACCHO, VACCA, VAHS, VALS, etc).
- Recommendation 5. The N&WMR PCPs continue to implement their original proposal to extend the learnings and outputs of the project components across the N&WMR catchment during 2016.
- Recommendation 6. The HW PCP continue to seek a suitable agency willing to trial and evaluate the draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation.

1. Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the mid-point evaluation of the North and West Metropolitan Region (N&WMR) PCPs Consortium Koolin Balit Project (hereinafter referred to as the Project).

The North and West Metropolitan Region PCPs Consortium is a partnership between:

- Inner North West Primary Care Partnership (INW PCP).
- HealthWest Primary Care Partnership (HealthWest).
- North East Primary Care Partnership (NEPCP).
- Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership (HW PCP).

A mid-point evaluation was conducted in April 2016, by Juliet Frizzell, a consultant with over 25 years' experience evaluating Aboriginal health projects and programs. The evaluation methodology involved:

- A desk top review of Project documents and data. A full list of documents reviewed for the evaluation can be found in Appendix 1 of this Report.
- A detailed review of the online N&WMR Koolin Balit Building the Blocks of Cultural Competency in the North West Toolkit (the Toolkit) at <http://inwpcp.org.au/toolkit-main-page/>
- Structured interviews with key stakeholders, including the Koolin Balit Project Coordinators (Tania McKenna, Sally Berger, Jasmine Kildea and Carl Broman), the Executive Officers from the PCPs, the Closing the Health Gap Partnership Manager Joanne Atkinson, mainstream agencies that have been involved in the Project, and Amanda Allen-Toland, Izabela Andersen and Kate Jarvis from DHHS North and West Region.
- Researching two case studies.

A full evaluation of the Project using the Project Evaluation Framework will be completed at the end of the Project.

2. Context

Each of the four PCPs received Closing the Health Gap funding from the Department of Health in 2011, to conduct catchment specific projects. These projects involved consultation, research and engagement with the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal organisations and mainstream services to identify gaps in cultural competency and barriers to service coordination. The findings of this work indicated that the majority of mainstream agencies in the N&WMR were not culturally competent, and while a few agencies had taken practical steps towards addressing this issue, most agencies were only at the 'contemplative stage' of change or were unsure about how to begin. In response, the PCPs tackled this problem, by placing Closing the Gap and building cultural competence on the agenda at both governance and operational levels.

The learnings from the Closing the Gap projects culminated in the PCPs' conceptualisation of the 'building blocks for cultural competency model' and determining to focus effort in improving services coordination in the areas of maternal and child health and post-release services for prisoners.

In 2014, the PCPs were successful as a partnership in securing Koolin Balit funding to build on and expand the outcomes of the initial work. In particular:

- To progress work around the 'building blocks for cultural competency' with the development of the Toolkit and associated resources, tools, templates and training).
- To broker partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to support the Project, and progress the vision and aims of Koolin Balit.
- To address service coordination issues in the areas of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and post-release services for prisoners, where statistics show the health needs of Aboriginal people are not being met.

The Victorian Government invested \$1.374 million in this work between 2011 and 2016. This includes:

- The Closing the Gap projects which were undertaken from 2011 to 2014. The INW PCP and HealthWest received \$250k for Closing the Health Gap projects, and the other two PCPs received \$125k each over 2 years. [\$750,000]
- The N&WMR Koolin Balit Project was funded in late 2014 for the period until December 2016 at \$624,000.

The focus of both sets of funding has been:

- Capacity building - Supporting mainstream agencies to provide high quality, culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community, by implementing the building blocks of cultural competency.
- Service coordination - Enhancing service coordination between mainstream agencies and Aboriginal community organisations by facilitating partnerships and collaborations.

While capacity building and service coordination projects do not have the immediate throughput that governments tend to seek from their investment, what is unique about the approach of the PCPs is that:

- The Government's investment is sustainable once the funding ceases.
- The Project has conceptualised and created a legacy product in the Toolkit (audit tools, training modules, and resources) for building cultural competency informed by Victorian Aboriginal people.
- The mainstream agencies that have participated in the Project have added significant value to the government's initial investment, by contributing their own time and resources.

The Project's focus on capacity building and service coordination means that the government's investment is sustainable once the funding ceases, and there is significant value-add from mainstream organisations investing their own money and time.

3. Overview of the PCPs Koolin Balit Project

3.1 Project Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- Increase the capacity of mainstream service providers and their workforce to engage with and meet the needs of Aboriginal people.
- Facilitate stronger links and relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services across the N&WMR in order to establish an innovative culturally responsive care pathway.
- Engage Aboriginal people in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all components of the project.
- Improve access to the range of universal, mental health and other support services for Aboriginal people leaving prison (post-release), by improving the coordination and integration of services
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of each component of the project, utilising a participatory action research approach, to build an evidence base and regional approach.

3.2 Project Components

To achieve the objectives, the PCPs established a project governance and management model, and lead responsibility for specific components of the Project.

- The INWPCP was responsible for leading activities across the region to support cultural competency within mainstream organisations, support the employment of Aboriginal staff and improve service coordination between mainstream and Aboriginal services.
- The NEPCP was responsible for leading activities to improve the cultural competence of universal Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services to work with Aboriginal families and carers. These activities aim to improve access to MCH services and outcomes for Aboriginal consumers, support MCH workforce capacity building and support strong Aboriginal organisations. The NEPCP had conducted this work in collaboration with Aboriginal organisations and consumers.
- HealthWest was responsible for leading activities that coordinate a collective response for the continuity of care for Aboriginal people post prison release or on community care orders in the West.
- The Hume Whittlesea PCP was responsible for leading activities to increase the cultural competence of mainstream Boards of Directors in the context of their constitutional and governance obligations and therefore lead its Executive Team(s) to develop sustained processes and protocols for delivering health services to Aboriginal people.⁶ This project is referred to as the Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation.

⁶ North and West Metropolitan Region PCP Consortium Project: Evaluation Framework. Page 3. (2015).

3.3 Project Activity

The Project is comprised of three key activities⁷:

i. Implementing the building blocks of cultural competency

This component of the Project aims to engage and support mainstream agencies to implement the building blocks of cultural competency, including:

- cultural audits, welcoming environment audits and Action Plans
- workforce development such as cultural awareness training for staff and professional development around 'asking the question'
- data collection and analysis
- relationship building between ACCHOs and PCP member agencies
- community consultation and engagement

ii. Enhancing capacity and moving to the next level of cultural responsiveness

This component of the Project aims to develop resources and supports that enhance the capacity of agencies which have already made substantial progress towards becoming culturally responsive (i.e. agencies that have completed cultural awareness training, cultural audits etc), including:

- workforce development tools and advanced cultural responsiveness training for people who supervise or work closely with Aboriginal staff including an on-line package
- assistance to develop an Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- formally engaging Boards to take on a leadership role in Aboriginal health
- policy and procedures, etc.

iii. Enhancing Service Coordination for Aboriginal people leaving prison

This component of the Project aims to implement service coordination practice standards, in order to improve the coordination and integration of services for Aboriginal people post-release from prison.

A Project Governance Structure was put in place, and Project Coordinators were employed by the INW PCP, NEPCP and HealthWest to lead activity around their allocated project area.

3.4 Project Evaluation

At the commencement of the Koolin Balit Project an Evaluation Framework based on the Project's Program Logic was developed by the partners. The aim of the Evaluation Framework⁸ was to guide the Consortium in assessing and demonstrating outcomes of the Project. The Project Coordinators are responsible for collecting data related to their individual project activities and developing evaluation reports. A list of evaluation reports reviewed for the Mid-point evaluation can be found in Appendix 1 of this Report.

⁷ Koolin Balit Implementation Plan (September 2014)

⁸ North and West Metropolitan Region PCP Consortium Project: Evaluation Framework (2015)

The evaluation questions outlined in the Evaluation Framework are:

- To what extent did member agencies across the N&W MR participate in project activities conducted by the N&W MR PCP Koolin Balit Consortium?
- To what extent did agencies report improved knowledge and understanding of the health pathways for Aboriginal people and access points for intervention?
- To what extent did agencies implement partnerships and service coordination strategies to improve the continuity of care for Aboriginal people?
- To what extent did agencies enhance their capacity to provide culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community?
- To what extent did agencies demonstrate improved accessibility to the Aboriginal community?
- To what extent did Aboriginal people experience improved service delivery?
- To what extent were the N&W MR PCP Koolin Balit Consortium resources, reports and models used/adopted by member agencies?
- To what extent was the N&W MR KB Consortium project implemented as planned and in accordance with agreed activities and outcomes?
- How were Aboriginal people involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the project?
- To what extent have agencies participating in the project activities developed processes to review, monitor and improve the quality of services provided to Aboriginal community members.
- Has the project led to greater ongoing service collaboration between mainstream and Aboriginal agencies?
- Have advocacy activities positively impacted on the provision of health and human services to Aboriginal people?
- Is there a need for further resources and activities to sustain the project outcomes?

A consistent data set and system for measuring change in cultural competence across the catchment was not established until the implementation of the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey as part of the Koolin Balit Project (September 2015). While some baseline data measuring organisations' cultural competence was collected by the NEPCP (2012) and INW PCP (2013) this information:

- was only collected by these two PCPs and is not catchment wide,
- was not consistent, each PCP asked different questions,
- differed from the dataset used to measure cultural competence in the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey administered in September 2015.

As such, the evidence used to measure impact at the mid-point, should be treated with some caution, although comparisons with 2012/2013 data have been made where possible. A more accurate and illustrative picture of the impact over time can be drawn, from the data collected when the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey is re-administered in September 2016.

4. Project Output and Outcomes

This section of the report provides an overview of the significant outputs and outcomes produced by the Project. Detailed information about these and other outputs can be found in the relevant evaluation reports (see Appendix 1 of this report for a list).

4.1 Implementing the Building Blocks of Cultural Competency

The Koolin Balit Building the Blocks of Cultural Competency Toolkit can be found at <http://inwpcp.org.au/toolkit-main-page/>.

The Toolkit provides member organisations with resources to support:

- Improvements in data collection practices and processes.
- Improving cultural competency through environmental audits and cultural audits.
- Workforce recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees.
- Cultural models of support for Aboriginal employees.
- Fostering partnerships between mainstream organisations and Aboriginal organisations.
- Culturally appropriate communication and developing targeted resources.
- Cultural competency quality improvement processes.
- Aboriginal employment and training opportunities and programs.
- Policy templates and examples.



Significant resources developed by the Project which can be found in the Toolkit, include:

- A Cultural Audit Tool.
- The *Asking the Question Training Package*, comprising a video, participant resource, trainers guide, PowerPoint and participant survey.
- The *Have you Asked the Question? Promotional items* (booklet, mouse pad and stickers).
- The *Helping Your Organisation to Create a Welcoming Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Guide*.
- *A Guide to Culturally Aware and Responsive Communication*.

What does the mid-point evidence tell us?

Data from November 2015 to March 2016 indicate that there were 854 visits to the Building Blocks of Cultural Competency website (Toolkit). Unfortunately, detailed information on page hits and downloads was not available for the mid-point evaluation.

The Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership Group was convened for the Project. The Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnerships Group⁹ expanded to include 9 new organisations in 2015. These organisations participated in Cultural Competency training delivered by VACCHO as part of the Project. Feedback from the Chairperson and participants indicate the group is working well and is regarded as valuable by participants.

"Even though our organisation is well down the track, we find the meetings very valuable. It provides us with an opportunity to share information, pool resources and get guidance about the next steps" Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership Group member

Other comments from organisations involved in implementing the Building Blocks of Cultural Competency can be found below.

"In 2012 Twedde released its 'Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Families, their communities and Aboriginal Peak Bodies' set the organisations good intentions for acknowledging the past and present traumas of the aboriginal community and in providing better access to services. Whilst this statement was an important acknowledgement of the need to address the issues of disadvantage and poorer health outcomes for Aboriginal people, there was a need to propel the intentions into a plan for action. Our participation in the 12 month Koolin Balit funded program has been a key enabler in our developing a plan to create meaningful changes for Aboriginal children and their families. The project has been instrumental in providing our organisation with support and practical resources for building our capacity to work with Aboriginal children and their families" Sue Wilson, Manager Clinical Integration & Innovation, Tweedle

"Moreland Council has worked with the YMCA, which operates our leisure centres to deliver 'Asking the Question' training to a group of 12 YMCA coordinators and site managers. This training was delivered by AJ Williams and was well received. Council has recently employed two young Indigenous trainees as a part of the ongoing traineeship program. The two young trainees work in administration at the Hadfield depot and at the Oxygen Youth Centre in Coburg" Moreland City Council

"We delivered Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training in Nov 2015 for 76 staff – feedback received from staff was positive and they reported an increased awareness and understanding about ways they can embed cultural respect and understanding into their work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" Darebin Community Health

Case Study: Diabetes Victoria

"It was the funding we received for the Aboriginal Cultural Audit that really helped us kick-start many new initiatives, plus create a greater awareness and interest from our staff in Aboriginal health and culture" Dr Martin Plowman Health Promotion Officer, Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity Program, Diabetes Victoria

In 2013 the INW PCP as part of its Closing the Gap Project provided funding for Diabetes Victoria to undertake an Aboriginal Cultural Audit (auditing is a key first step in the building blocks to

⁹ Membership: VAHS; Moreland council; Moonee Valley council; Cohealth; Nillumbik Health; Darebin Community Health Service; HealthWest; NEPCP; Diabetes Victoria; Australian College of Optometry; Regen Uniting; Odyssey House; Merri Health; Melbourne PHN; St Vincent's Hospital; Twedde Child and Family Services; Brimbank Council; Women's Health West; NEAMI; Vincent Care; Melbourne Health

cultural competency process). Community Solutions conducted the audit in collaboration with Diabetes Victoria's newly formed internal Diversity Working Group. After the completion of the Audit in mid-2014, the Diversity Working Group developed an Aboriginal Action Plan that identified clear objectives for the next 2-3 years. This allowed Diabetes Victoria to extend and enhance its existing Aboriginal programs while also initiating major new initiatives across the organisation.

Since the start of 2015 many of the objectives identified in the Aboriginal Action Plan have been met, including:

- Launch of the Feltmum® diabetes in pregnancy add-on for Feltman®.
- Inclusion of a 1-hour Aboriginal and CALD presentation in our New Starter Induction, compulsory for all new Diabetes Victoria staff.
- Launch of Diabetes Victoria's first Acknowledgment and Welcome to Country Guidelines.
- Adoption of an Acknowledgment of Country email signature for all Diabetes Victoria staff.
- Development of Acknowledgment of Country room reference cards.
- Adoption of Acknowledgment of Country in major public events held by Diabetes Victoria.
- Addition of an Aboriginal "button" to the Diabetes Victoria website.
- Increased number of Aboriginal stories published on Diabetes Victoria social media.
- Launch of an Aboriginal and CALD e-Training module for all Diabetes Victoria staff.
- Position descriptions made more culturally inclusive and sensitive for Aboriginal people.
- Inclusion of an Aboriginal case study (fictionalised) in a diabetes handbook for mental health professionals.
- Observation and celebration of major events in the Aboriginal calendar including Close the Gap Day, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.
- Delivery of regular Aboriginal cultural awareness and cultural competency presentations to staff across Diabetes Victoria's three main work sites (City, Campbellfield and Geelong).

In addition to these achievements Diabetes Victoria is currently working on a number of other objectives from the Aboriginal Action Plan, which are due for completion in 2016. These include:

- Development of a Diversity and Inclusion Framework to coordinate and guide Diabetes Victoria's CALD, Aboriginal and Diversity policies.
- Making Diabetes Victoria's public spaces show respect to Aboriginal people through the inclusion of Acknowledgment plaques, flags and other appropriate measures.
- Inclusion of Aboriginal cultural activities in type 1 diabetes camps.
- Starting an Aboriginal type 1 diabetes support group.
- Inclusion of a minimum number of Aboriginal stories and images in their media, information and messages.
- Training for relevant Diabetes Victoria teams to "Ask the Question" about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestry.
- Liaising with Primary Health Networks and pharmacies to encourage them to be welcoming to Aboriginal clients through the inclusion of Acknowledgment plaques, Aboriginal diabetes resources, flags and other appropriate measures.

As can be seen from the activity listed above, Diabetes Victoria has invested a significant amount of its own funding and human resources to implement the building blocks of cultural competency. By leveraging off the government's initial investment in the Toolkit, Diabetes Victoria has value added to the Closing the Gap and Koolin Balit funding many times over.

When interviewed for this Report, Diabetes Victoria staff indicated that it plans to deliver the *Asking the Question* training to all call centre staff using the DVD, PowerPoint presentation and booklet from the Koolin Balit Tool Kit website at <http://inwpcp.org.au/resources/closing-the-health-gap-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people/asking-the-question-training-package/>

Diabetes Victoria also emphasised the value it places on its participation in the Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership.

The following data was sourced from a number of reports, including the:

- *2012 NEPCP Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey: A Report on the Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey Distributed to North East Primary Care Partnership Member Agencies* (18 member agencies of the North East Primary Care Partnership completed 500 responses).
- *Closing the health Gap Inner North West Region; Profile Report* (2013) – 79 respondents from 11 organisations in the INW PCP catchment responded.
- INW PCP. *NWMR Koolin Balit PCP Consortium Project: Workforce Cultural Competency Survey 2015 – Enhancing the capacity of Mainstream organisations in the N&WMR to provide high quality, culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community* (2015) – 30 agencies responded.
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (September 2015).
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (March 2016).

Key findings:

The findings in the *NWMR Koolin Balit PCP Consortium Project: Workforce Cultural Competency Survey 2015* indicate that:

- **80% of responding agencies have engaged in formal activities to improve cultural competency** in their service delivery to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community:
 - Over half the respondents had completed a Cultural Audit and Action Plan.
 - 45% have a Reconciliation Action Plan.
 - 33% have developed an Aboriginal Employment Strategy.
 - 20% reported that no action had been taken.
- **90% of respondents indicated that cultural awareness training was provided** to staff and delivered by a professional Aboriginal consultant:
 - 40% of agencies provide this training annually.
 - 60% provide this training on an ad hoc basis.

This represents an improvement on the findings of the INWPCP research conducted in 2013. Where only 64% agreed with the statement that their organisation provided ongoing training and professional development at least annually for cross cultural communication and culturally competent practice for working with ATSI people, and 15% of respondents stated they had never had the opportunity to undertake this kind of training. Similarly, the NEPCP research conducted in 2012 found that approximately 50% of respondents had never received any training in this area. Only 28.7% of respondents had participated in Aboriginal cultural awareness training within the last 2 years. Of those who had received training, 157 of the 230 respondents stated that there had been input from the local Aboriginal community in the session/s.

- **87% of respondents indicated that staff are required to ask all service users if they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**
 - More than half of respondents had provided training to staff on 'Asking the Question'.

- 40% indicated that they had implemented processes to ensure that this data was being collected appropriately.

There has been an improvement in Asking the Question, as findings from the INW PCP research in 2013 show that 50% of respondents (direct staff) felt it was difficult to ask every client on every occasion, and 59% of direct service staff were confident that every client was asked the cultural descent question. 77% indicated that there was no regular (at least annually) training provided, with 61% of direct service staff stating that they have never attended a training session. 34% of staff stated that their organisation has posters, flyers, brochures of other information made easily visible to encourage people to identify their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Similarly, the findings of the NEPCP research show that in 2012, 65% of respondents stated that their service always asked clients whether they were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, 35% of respondents only asked sometimes, or were unsure that their service undertook this process.

- **The majority of services providers are aware of the significance of providing a culturally welcoming environment** and had taken active steps to implement this, with 96% of respondents stating that culturally welcoming symbols were prominently displayed.

This represents an improvement on the 2013 research findings of the INW PCP, where 71% of respondents reported that reception areas and waiting rooms in their organisation were family friendly, 66% stated that ATSI flags, posters and locally developed art work were prominently display, and 20% stated their organisation provided reading material that is relevant to ATSI people.

- **Less than one-third of agencies indicated that they had implemented a formal process of some kind to ensure input from the Aboriginal community into organisational decision planning and decision making.**
- **97% of all agencies had implemented a policy to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land.**

This is a substantial improvement on the findings of the NEPCP research in 2012, where respondents were asked whether their agency had a policy to invite a local Aboriginal Elder to give a Welcome to Country at the commencement of major public events. Only 13% responded with 'Yes, always', 20% said 'sometimes', 11% 'never' and the majority 55% were 'not sure' if their agency had a policy.

- **60% of agencies provided programs targeted towards the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.**
- **80% of respondents had participated in joint projects with Aboriginal Community Organisations within the past two years.**

This is an improvement on the baseline from 2012, where the NEPCP found that when it came to the formalization of partnership structures and processes with Aboriginal organizations and services, the majority of respondents (54%) were actually unsure as to whether any partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understanding existed with Aboriginal organisations and services.

- **More than 60% of agencies supported staff to attend community cultural events and celebrations.**

This represents a substantial improvement on the situation in 2012, where NEPCP respondents were asked if they are encouraged to attend important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events only 34% said they were encouraged to do so. Sixty four percent of respondents felt they were either not encouraged or only sometimes encouraged to attend important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.

- **Half the respondents had a priority of access policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users.**

There has been some improvement in this area. In 2013, the INW PCP found that 45% of direct service staff stated that their organisation did have a priority of access policy, 34% were unsure if these policies existed and 20% did not have a policy.

Similarly, in 2012, the NEPCP found that 42% of respondents stated that their agency intake and assessment processes recognize Priority of Access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Nearly 60% of respondents stated their agency either did not prioritise Aboriginal clients, priority of access processes were makeshift, or they were unsure whether prioritization occurred.

- **70% of respondents reported employing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.**
 - 20% of respondents were unsure how many Aboriginal staff were employed at their agencies.
 - 50% of respondents had implemented specific policies/procedures to support Aboriginal recruitment. However, comments indicated this was only for particular Aboriginal identified positions or teams, not all positions being advertised.
 - 40% reported having a policy for Aboriginal staff to take cultural / ceremonial leave.
 - 25% had a policy in place for Aboriginal staff to receive culturally responsive supervision.

This compares to NEPCP research in 2012, which showed that the majority of respondents either do not have or are unsure of whether their agencies have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, an Employment policy targeting the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or if their agency has current trainees through the Closing the Health Gap or other grants programs. Eleven respondents did note their agency does have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy and eight indicated an Employment Policy that includes the encouragement of the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Fourteen respondents also noted that their agency currently employees trainees under the Closing the Health Gap or other grants. A number of respondents also stated that their agency is already planning to look at these areas of employment or are currently formulating work in this area. Eight respondents noted that they are currently planning or undertaking work to employ trainees under the Closing the Health Gap or other grants.

- **Over 40% of respondents reported that they have a process for obtaining feedback from Aboriginal service users.**
- **40% of respondents had utilised the 'Asking the Question' training package.**
- **28% had used the Welcoming Environments Guide and 8% had used the graphic design elements.**
- **80% of respondents stated that they would like further cultural competency support.** The highest identified support needs included providing support to Aboriginal staff, obtaining consumer feedback and recruiting Aboriginal staff

4.2 Enhancing capacity and moving to the next level of cultural responsiveness

Led by the Strong Culture, Strong Future Working Group¹⁰ this component of the project has achieved the following:

- Joint advocacy on the Out of Home Care Guidelines and Education State Early Childhood Submission.
- Improved understanding of VAHS services through Working Group membership and Through Aboriginal Eyes' Early years Orientation Tour Project.
- Advocacy on CDIS implementation and VAHS trial at CDIS Pilot site.
- An increase in referrals made by universal MCH staff to Aboriginal-specific services.
- Information provision to universal MCH services, including significant dates and information.
- Relevant flyers for Aboriginal community events, training opportunities, newsletter distributed.
- Implementation of a Workforce Professional Development Survey and provision of training on self-identification and welcoming environments at each LGA MCH Team Meeting (80+ MCH staff).
- Self-identification Resource Pack implemented across the 4 LGAs at 50+ MCH centres.
- Opportunity to attend Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder training in July. Potential for MCH FASD activity.
- Welcoming MCH Environments Project: Consumer Audit to occur of 23 MCH services across the 4 LGAs including feedback on universal MCH brochures to



¹⁰ Membership of the Strong Culture, Strong Future MCH Working Group:

- LGA of Banyule-MCH Coordinator
- LGA of Darebin-MCH Coordinator
- LGA of Moreland-MCH Coordinator
- LGA of Nillumbik-MCH Coordinator
- CtHG Partnership Manager (Chair)
- VAHS, Manager of Women and Children's Team

make them more inviting to Aboriginal families. Consumers have been recruited to conduct the auditing in each MCH service.

- Aboriginal Birth Notifications Pathway project, which aims to find solutions to include VAHS in pathway due to a systems issue related to legislative requirements that only LGAs are notified of a birth.

DHHS expressed concern that the roll-out of this project had been limited to four local government areas only (two PCP catchments) and had not been extended across the N&WMR. Given the mid-point findings have highlighted the significant successes of this component, serious consideration should be given to expanding the Strong Culture, Strong Future model once it has been evaluated, to include other Council MCH services and/or replicating the model in other parts of the N&WMR, particularly in the west.

Case Study: Through Aboriginal Eyes' Early Years Pilot Orientation Tour Project

"I learnt a lot about providing culturally safe places for Aboriginal people to access. It opened my eyes to how complex this issue is and how much discrimination goes on"

The NEPCP as part of the Koolin Balit Project developed and trialled the Through Aboriginal Eyes' Early Years Pilot Orientation Tour model. The aim of the trial was to address key findings of the *NEPCP Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey* undertaken in 2012, in which the majority of respondents reported:

- A 'very low understanding of a variety of key knowledge areas that relate to working with Aboriginal people and communities'.
- 'Little or poor knowledge' of Aboriginal Community Controlled agencies/programs within the NEPCP catchment.¹¹

The 'Through Aboriginal Eyes' pilot project aimed to provide mainstream workers with a better understanding of the various early years programs and services that currently exist for Aboriginal community members within Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal-specific programs at mainstream services. By improving knowledge of Aboriginal-specific and universal service options, it was envisaged that workers would incorporate service choice into their work practice and offer both Aboriginal-specific and mainstream relevant service choices to Aboriginal consumers.

The Orientation Tour was organised for the 11th February 2015 with capacity for 18 participants. There was significant demand with over 100 people missing out on a place.

The Orientation Tour was hosted by two Aboriginal guides, and planned in consultation with Babarrbunin Beek, the Minajalku Healing Centre, the Aborigines Advancement League and Yappera Children's Service.

DATE:
Wednesday
11th February 2015
9.30 am- 4.00pm

Tour Starts at Bus Stop 1:
Babarrbunin Beek Gathering
Place, 7000 Highway Avenue,
Caroline Street, West Heidelberg
(Parking available onsite)

Who should attend?

- Service providers who work in Early Years programs or have an Early Years focus, that engage with or are likely to come into contact with Aboriginal children and their families/careers within their roles.
- The Bus Tour may be relevant to: ChildFIRST and family service professionals, Early Years staff including Maternal and Child Health nurses, Midwifery and Day Care staff, Pre-school Field Officers, Inclusion Support Facilitators and early years planning staff, Early years and allied health staff in schools.
- Other staff that engage with or are likely to come into contact with Aboriginal children in their Early Years and their families/careers.

To RSVP please email:
sally.berger@chcs.org.au
by 30th January 2015.
For further information about the Bus Tour please contact Sally Berger on 9450 2416

Note: Numbers are limited and preference may be given to agencies who service the City of Boroondara, Boroondara and Heidelberg.

¹¹ NEPCP Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey: A Report on the Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey Distributed to North East Primary Care Partnership Member Agencies (2012) page 24.

Results of the Orientation Tour Participant Feedback Survey showed that there were significant increases in knowledge of Aboriginal Community Controlled and Aboriginal-specific services and programs by those participating in this project. There were also substantial improvements in worker knowledge of key concept areas, including but not limited to:

- the Aboriginal concept of family and community,
- the impact of history, trauma and current racism on interactions with mainstream services, and
- the importance of cultural safety when working with Aboriginal community members.

Feedback indicated that participation in the Orientation Tour provided valuable insights into the value of culture and recognition of the role media and society have in developing negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people and that this project experience - visiting Aboriginal spaces and hearing about services from passionate community workers, challenged and changed participants' previously held views of Aboriginal people.

A number of participants also stated via email feedback that they had made contact with a number of the Aboriginal agencies that presented during the orientation tour which demonstrates the on-going impact of the project. The evaluation also found that participants were able to take the learnings from the orientation tour and disseminate these within their agencies through a variety of methods, including: presentations at a team/staff meeting, a report back to their team, sharing the resources with colleagues, displaying the posters, emailing brochures and developing a folder of information to share with other workers.

What does the mid-point evidence tell us?

The following data was sourced from the following key reports:

- NEPCP. *Have you Asked The Question? Evaluation Report* (2015)
- NEPCP. *Through Aboriginal Eyes' Early Years Pilot Bus Tour Project Evaluation Report* (2015)
- NEPCP. *Strong Culture, Strong Future Action Plan* (2015-2016)
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (September 2015)
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (March 2016)

Evaluation of this component of the Project shows:

- Over 400 *Have you Asked the Question? Resource Packs* have been distributed across the N&WMR, Victoria and interstate.
- The Strong Culture, Strong Future Working Group is reportedly working well. The Manager of the Women's and Children's Unit at VAHS has recently taken over responsibility for chairing the Group.
- MCH Nurses have participated in professional development activities, including Cultural Awareness Training.
- The four participating MCH services have embraced the opportunity to improve and are actively engaged in building their cultural competency.
- The Orientation Tour model provides a cost efficient and effective approach to building cultural knowledge and understanding.

- Project work has been well received by the organisations, the MCH nurses and the statewide MCH Nurses Network.

4.3 Enhancing service coordination for Aboriginal people leaving prison

Work completed to date includes:

- Partner engagement.
- Mapping and analysis of the continuum of care for prisoners released from prison.
- Preparation of a mapping report with recommendations for the next stage of the project.

What does the mid-point evidence tell us?

While the Project Mapping Report was still in draft at the time this report was prepared, it was evident from consultations with the Project Coordinators at HealthWest, that there is ample opportunity to improve service coordination, build cultural competency and enhance partnership engagement in this area. These activities which are planned for 2016 if implemented are likely to improve access for Aboriginal prisoners to support services post-release.

4.4 Summary of mid-point findings

The mid-point evaluation findings show the Project has delivered substantial outputs, achieved significant reach, and is having a real and sustainable impact within and between agencies. Importantly, the Project is delivering on the Government's investment aims for Koolin Balit, in particular:

- Implementing culturally responsive pathways (1.1).
- Maintaining and improving data collection and analysis (1.2).
- Maximising professional development and employment pathways for Aboriginal people (1.5).
- Supporting partnerships between mainstream and Aboriginal community organisations and strengthening the community's role in planning, decision making and governance (3.1).

A brief summary of the mid-point findings¹² is presented below:

The Project has achieved significant outputs, including:

- The development and roll-out of the online Toolkit, which provides a central repository and clearing house for resources (developed by the Project and by third parties) to support mainstream agencies to put in place the building blocks

¹² The findings in this section have been drawn from a range of reports and documents, in particular: the report NWMR Koolin Balit PCP Consortium Project: Workforce Cultural Competency Survey 2015 – Enhancing the capacity of Mainstream organisations in the N&WMR to provide high quality, culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community (2015), a list of other documents used to inform the findings can be found in Appendix 1 of the Report.

of cultural competency. The Toolkit can be found at <http://inwpcp.org.au/toolkit-main-page/>

- A suite of tools, templates, information and resources developed by the Project, that can be used by individual agencies to support their journey towards cultural competency, including: a cultural audit tool, the *Asking the Question Training Package* (video, participant resource, trainers guide, PowerPoint and participant survey), the *Have You Asked the Question Promotional items* (booklet, mouse pad and stickers), the *Helping Your Organisation to Create a Welcoming Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Guide*, and *A Guide to Culturally Aware and Responsive Communication*, etc.
- A partnership model and resources to improve service coordination in maternal and child health for Aboriginal children and families (Strong Culture, Strong Future Model), including: the 'Through Aboriginal Eyes' Orientation Tour model, a workforce professional development survey and associated training, the Welcoming MCH Environments Project that includes a consumer audit of 23 MCH services, and the Aboriginal Birth Notifications Pathway Project.
- A draft report that maps access to health and community services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people recently released from prison or on community corrections orders in Melbourne's west.
- A draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation.
- Three partnership groups that bring together mainstream agencies and Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations, in particular: VACCHO, VAHS, VACCA, and VALS, to work collaboratively to "improve access to high quality services for Aboriginal Victorians".

These outputs directly contribute to the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.¹³

The Project has also achieved significant reach:

- Over 20 agencies in the catchment are actively engaged in building their cultural competency, all adding value to the government's initial investment by using their own funds and resources to implement change e.g. a number of agencies have engaged external Aboriginal trainers to deliver cultural competency training, have delivered *the Asking the Question* training package to groups of staff, and/or implemented the Creating Welcoming Environments Resource Package across their sites, etc.
- There have been over 850 views online of the Toolkit which was only launched in late October 2015.
- Over 100 agencies have reported using at least one component of the Toolkit e.g. the *Asking the Questions Training Package*, the *Creating Welcoming Environments Resource Package*, etc. Agencies using these tools range from local, regional and statewide services, and include: 17 Councils, 10 community health services, hospitals including Werribee Mercy, Western Health and Peninsula Health, non-government organisations including YSAS, Women's Health West, Vincent Care, Salvation Army, Northern Support Services, Neami, McKillop Family Services and Melbourne City Mission, childcare centres, sporting bodies,

¹³ ACIL Allen Consulting. *Attachment 1 Koolin Balit 2012-2022 vision, objectives and Koolin Balit investment focus and aims*. Page 2.

carers organisations, networks, kindergartens and GP clinics. A full list of organisations can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

DHHS expressed concern that some of the project components had not yet been rolled out across the catchment. There is an opportunity for the 4 PCPs to address this concern by extending and expanding key aspects of the project once they have been finalised and evaluated across the N&WMR during the second half of 2016.

This level of 'reach' directly impacts on the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.¹⁴

A comparison of baseline and mid-point data shows that the Project is having real and sustainable impact within mainstream agencies¹⁵:

- 54% of agencies have conducted a Cultural Audit and implemented an Action Plan.
- 45% have developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), up from 10% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- One third of agencies have developed an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, up from 10% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- 95% of agencies provided cultural competency / responsiveness training to staff, up from 65% (INWPCP 2013) and 78% (NEPCP 2012).
- 88% of agencies believe that every client of the service is asked the question, up from 65% in 2012 (NEPCP).
- 98% of agencies believe they have a welcoming environment, up from 66% in 2013 (INW PCP).
- 98% of agencies reported having in place cultural protocols to acknowledge traditional owners of the land, up from 68% in 2013 (INW PCP).
- 80% of respondents had partnered with an Aboriginal organisation in the past two years for the purpose of delivering specific programs.
- 70% of agencies employ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- 52% of agencies have a priority of access policy for Aboriginal clients, up from 41% (NEPCP in 2012) and 46% (INWPCP 2013).

The improved cultural competency of mainstream agencies contributes to the achievement of most of the Victorian Government's stated investment aims for Koolin Balit 2013-2015.¹⁶

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Thirty (30) agencies from across the catchment areas responded to the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey administered by the four PCPs. Respondents came from all 12 local government areas and from a range of service types (community health, hospitals, councils, housing services, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and women's health). As noted in the report an accurate and comprehensive baseline data set measuring cultural competence was not established until the Koolin Balit project (September 2015). As such, the comparison between baseline and mid-point data made in this section has been done, by comparing the 2015 survey results, with the baseline data collected by NEPCP (2012) and INW PCP (2013) where comparison can be made i.e. the same question or very similar question was asked.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Unlike one-off projects and programs that finish when the funding ceases, evidence shows that the work of the PCPs will have a legacy beyond the employment of the Project Coordinators and the project work. The Project legacy includes a comprehensive Toolkit and resources for building cultural competency, as well as fundamental and lasting change within organisations, and sustainable improvements in the service system through better service coordination and partnerships in the areas of maternal and child health and post-release services for prisoners.

The investment by government has been multiplied through parallel investment of time and resources by many individual agencies. For example, the *Asking the Question Training Package* funded by Koolin Balit has been used to deliver training to hundreds, if not thousands of staff across the catchment and beyond, using agency time and resources. The capacity and knowledge built through the delivery of this training not only provides a more accurate picture of service access patterns by Aboriginal people (Investment Aim 1.2), but also ensures that when Aboriginal people do access mainstream services they receive appropriately targeted support to meet their needs (Investment Aim 1.1).

Evidence shows that significant action is occurring in the catchment to implement the building blocks of cultural competency. With the Project not due for completion until the end of 2016, further improvement can be expected. This will be measured when the Workforce Cultural Competency Survey is re-administered in September 2016.

Despite the realised and expected achievements, reach and impact, evidence shows that there is room for further targeted work to build the cultural competence of mainstream agencies across the PCPs' catchments. In particular, there is an opportunity to:

- Undertake further developmental work to strengthen mainstream agencies' ability to recruit, employ, retain and develop Aboriginal people in a variety of roles, not only designated Aboriginal positions or teams. The findings of the Project show that 44% of agencies have a specific Aboriginal Employment Strategy and 40% do not have a strategy or were unsure (16%). Aboriginal people also tend to be employed in designated Aboriginal positions or teams, rather than in a variety of positions across an organisation.
- Broaden the implementation of the Strong Culture, Strong Future MCH model to other MCH services in the catchment, particularly through the Councils in the west. In fact, the underpinning principles of this approach could be expanded to agencies providing early years services more broadly.
- Strengthen engagement with Aboriginal people, families and communities through the design and implementation of continuous improvement processes for obtaining feedback from Aboriginal service users as a means of ensuring services are culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal service users, for inclusion in the Toolkit.
- Promote the use of the Toolkit and its resources to build cultural competency to other mainstream organisations within the N&WMR PCPs' catchment and market the Toolkit to mainstream agencies outside the N&WMR.

- Trial and evaluate the draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation.
- Implement a consistent data set and system for measuring change and progress in the building the cultural competence of mainstream agencies.
- More effectively promote and communicate the project successes and outputs, in particular the Toolkit and the Strong Culture, Strong Future model.

5.2 Recommendations

- Recommendation 1. The Strong Culture, Strong Future model is expanded to include the MCH services in other local government areas, and/or is replicated in other parts of the catchment, in particular the local government areas in the west region that have high numbers of Aboriginal families with children in the MCH cohort.
- Recommendation 2. Funding is sought to build on the preliminary work that has been undertaken by the Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnership Group and VACCHO that is aimed at supporting mainstream organisations to build their capacity and capability to employ and retain Aboriginal people. Once the developmental work is complete, the material should be translated into appropriate resources and tools, and incorporated into the on-line Toolkit.
- Recommendation 3. The N&WMR PCPs Consortium explore opportunities for communicating and promoting the project successes, in particular partnership work, the Toolkit and the Strong Culture, Strong Future model.
- Recommendation 4. The N&WMR PCPs Consortium continue to build on the relationships which have been established with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (VACCHO, VACCA, VAHS, VALS, etc).
- Recommendation 5. The N&WMR PCPs continue to implement their original proposal to extend the learnings and outputs of the project components across the N&WMR catchment during 2016.
- Recommendation 6. The HW PCP continue to seek a suitable agency willing to trial and evaluate the draft Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Learning Model for mainstream Boards and their organisation.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1. Evidence used in the evaluation

List of evidence and source documents used in the evaluation:

- ACIL Allen Consulting. *Implementation of Koolin Balit Action Plan 2013-2017* (2015).
- HealthWest. *Aboriginal Health Hospital to Community Pathways Project Report* (2015).
- HealthWest. *Report: Mapping access to health and community services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people recently released from prison or on community corrections orders in Melbourne's west* (DRAFT 2016).
- INW PCP. *Closing the Health Gap Inner North West Region: Profile Report* (2013).
- INW PCP. *Inner North West Metropolitan Region: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Health Consumer Perspectives Project* (2013).
- INW PCP. *NWMR Koolin Balit PCP Consortium Project: Workforce Cultural Competency Survey 2015 – Enhancing the capacity of Mainstream organisations in the N&WMR to provide high quality, culturally responsive and respectful services to the Aboriginal community* (2015).
- INW PCP and VACCHO. *A Guide to Culturally Aware and Responsive Communication* (2015).
- INW PCP. *Asking the Question: Are you (or is the person) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin? Training Resource* (2014).
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report January to June 2013*.
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (September 2015).
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Progress Report and Financial Acquittal* (March 2016).
- N&WMR PCP. *North and West Metropolitan Region PCP Consortium Project: Evaluation Framework* (2015).
- N&WMR PCP. *Koolin Balit Implementation Plan* (2014).
- NEPCP & VAHS *"Have you Asked the Question?" Self Identification Project Evaluation Report* (2015).
- NEPCP. *NEPCP Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey: A Report on the Working with Aboriginal People and Communities Survey Distributed to North East Primary Care Partnership Member Agencies* (2012).
- NEPCP. *How to use the 'Have you asked the Question? Resources Toolkit* (2015).
- NEPCP. *Strong Culture, Strong Future Action Plan* (2015-2016).
- NEPCP. *Through Aboriginal Eyes' Early Years Pilot Bus Tour Project Evaluation Report* (2015).

Appendix 2. List of organisations which have used one or more of the resources developed by the N&W MR PCP Consortia¹⁷

Active Medical
Albanycare 7 Day Medical Centre (Queensland)
Annecto
Annie Dennis Children's Centre
Austin Health
Australian College of Optometry
Banksia Palliative Care
Banyule Community Health
Baptcare
Basketball Victoria
Breast Screen Victoria
Bridgehaven
Bubup Wilam Children's Centre
Cancer Council Victoria
Care Connect
Carers Victoria
Children's Protection Society (CPS)
City of Ballarat MCH staff
City of Banyule
City of Brimbank
City of Darebin
City of Glen Eira
City of Hobsons Bay
City of Kingston
City of Knox
City of Maribyrnong
City of Melbourne
City of Melton
City of Moonee Valley
City of Moreland
City of Wyndham
City of Yarra
cohealth
Darebin Child Care and Kindergarten
Darebin Community Health
Deano's Chiro
Department of Health and Human Services DHS Grampians
Department of Health and Human Services North and West
Diabetes Victoria
Dianella Community Health
Djerriwarrh Health Service
Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)
Evans St Clinic (Sunbury)
Gambler's Help Northern
Gap Rd Medical Centre (Sunbury)
Girraway Consulting¹⁸
Goodstart Early Learning Centre Bundoora
Gower Street Kindergarten

¹⁷ This list has been collated from organisations involved the use of the Koolin Balit Toolkit, organisations listed in Berger, S. VAHS & NEPCP "Have you asked the Question? Self Identification Project Evaluation Report 2015 and other Consortia projects.

¹⁸ Girraway Consulting developed a training package using the 'Asking the Question' training resource which has been delivered to numerous health and community agencies.

Hellier Street Children's Centre
Inner North West Melbourne Medicare Local
Interact Australia
ISIS Primary Care
Job Co
Kalparrin Early Intervention Centre
Life Without Barriers
Lifeworks
McKillop Family Services
Melbourne City Mission
Melbourne Counselling Service
Melbourne Health
Mercy Hospital for Women
Merri Community Health
Moira Shire Council MCH
NEAMI
NEPCP Governance Group
Nillumbik Community Health
Nillumbik Shire Council MCH
Noah's Ark
North and West Metropolitan Region Department of Education and Training
North Western Melbourne PHN
Northern Aged Care Assessment Service
Northern Psychology Clinic
Northern Support Services
Odyssey House
PANDA National Perinatal Depression Helpline
Peninsula Health
Peter Mac Cancer Centre
Playgroup Victoria Inc
ReGen Uniting Care
Relationships Australia
Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS)
Salvation Army
Scott St Clinic (Melton),
Services Connect, North East
Shire of Nillumbik
Southern Cross Care
St Vincent's Hospital
Sunbury Community Health
Sunshine City Medical
The Clinic (Sunshine)
The Royal Women's Hospital
Tweddle Child and Family Health Services
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Eastern
Victorian Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Coordinators
Vincent Care
Waratah Special Development School
Watervale Medical Centre
Werribee Mercy Hospital
Westcare Clinic (Melton)
Western Health
Whitelion
Women's Health West
Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS)