

**Department of Human Services
Health Development Section, Public Health Division**

PROJECT BRIEF

Expression of interest conducting a nutrition needs assessment in Victorian Indigenous Communities.

1. Introduction

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the nutritional health of the Koori community. Significant effort is being given to the development of a strengthened and co-ordinated public health nutrition program in Victoria. An important component of this will be the development of a co-ordinated response to the public health nutrition needs of Indigenous Victorians.

Recent work has been done at a National level to progress towards improved nutritional health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This is reported in three documents:

1. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Nutrition Strategy (NATSINSAP) and Action Plan 2000 – 2010 (See Attachment One).
2. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Nutrition Strategy and First Phase Activities 2000 – 2003.
3. Nutrition in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – An Information Paper written by the NH&MRC.

In order for Victoria to improve the nutritional health of Victorian Aboriginal peoples there first needs to be an understanding of the specific health and nutrition needs of various Koori communities within Victoria.

It is acknowledged that there is a lack of data relating to the nutritional health of Victorian Indigenous people, especially in urban areas. In addition, the opportunities and the barriers to healthy eating for Victorian Kooris have yet to be identified. Access to such information will enable sensible and appropriate planning to occur as well as provide a platform from which to argue the needs for additional nutrition and health services.

With the funding available, two Koori co-operatives will commence a nutrition needs assessment. The results from these first two nutrition needs assessments, will form the basis for planning for future service delivery and subsequent needs assessments in other co-operatives.

2. Project Aim

To examine Koori nutrition needs using a Victorian Koori Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool.

3. Project Objectives

1. To identify the nutrition needs and issues of the Koori community.
2. To identify what nutrition, research, resources and services are currently available to the Koori community.
3. To make "practical recommendations / a plan of action" for a way forward for the community to improve the nutritional health of all.
4. To make recommendations about the gaps in nutrition research, resources and services needed to improve the nutritional health of Koori people.
5. To consider the recommendations from NATSINSAP and to identify how they are relevant to or need to be modified to fit the needs of the selected community.

4. Rationale

The extremely poor health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is well known. Compared to the rest of the population in Australia they experience higher rates of morbidity and mortality as a result of nutrition related disease. This is apparent at all stages of life and manifests in diseases such as cardiovascular disease, non-insulin dependant diabetes mellitus, obesity and hypertension. In addition, poor nutrition has a significant impact on maternal health, low birth weight, poor growth during childbirth and incidence of iron deficiency anaemia.

It is a real imperative to establish a health and nutrition strategy that is self-determining for Koori people. A first step towards developing a Victorian strategy is to determine the specific nutrition needs and issues of Koori communities across Victoria. It is intended that this initiative is the first stage of a longer-term plan.

Nutrition needs assessments conducted within local communities are seen as a valuable method of identifying this information. The results from the needs assessments will be made available to both the community and to local, State and Commonwealth Governments.

This is a new initiative to begin to respond to the issue of nutrition and healthy eating promotion in the Koori community.

5. Intended Audience for Nutrition needs Assessment

1. The Koori community from which the nutrition needs assessment was undertaken.
2. Non-Koori organisations in the surrounding geographical area, which may have a potential role in the delivery and co-ordination of programs and services, aimed to improve the nutritional health of the Koori people.
3. Local, State and Commonwealth Government who have a role in funding services and programs, which promote improved nutritional health of Koori people.
4. Non-Government organisation with a potential role in funding or an interest in Koori health and nutrition.
5. Organisations with a role in developing or providing training to Koori health workers.

6. Guidelines for Methodology for the Nutrition Needs Assessment

- Use the nutrition needs assessment tool that has been developed specifically for Victorian Indigenous communities. (A separate project funded by the DHS Public Health Division).
- Talk with key people in the Koori communities to identify the opportunities and the barriers for public health nutrition programs in the community.
- Decide on a method to ensure as many individuals/families within the selected community have a chance to participate in the nutrition needs assessment.
- Contact both Koori and non-Koori organisations in the surrounding geographical area which may have a potential role in the delivery and co-ordination of programs and services aimed to improve the nutritional health of the Koori peoples.
- The method used needs to ensure community participation, strong ownership and be of practical relevance to the community.

7. Achievements

The successful organisation will have the responsibility to ensure that the achievements of this project listed below are in a format that is immediately usable by the Koori community.

Achievement 1:

Description - A written summary (plus a copy on disc - microsoft word) of the nutrition needs assessment including:

- a summary of the nutrition needs and issues
- current nutrition programs and services offered in the community
- Koori specific nutrition resources currently used by the community
- gaps in the nutrition services and programs needed by the community
- a description of how the recommendations from NATSINSAP needs to be modified to suit the community

Achievement 2:

Description - a plan of action for the way forward to improve the nutritional health of this community.

8. Selection Criteria for the Koori Organisation

- A recognised Koori co-operative or a Koori specific health service.
- An interest and a commitment to improving the nutritional health of Koori people.
- Capacity to conduct needs assessments including data collection and interpretation.
- High level of written and verbal communication skills.
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief and required outcomes.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Management

The Department of Human Services will be the contract manager of the project. A Department of Human Services project manager will be identified for the day-to-day management issues.

Koori Nutrition Needs Assessment Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group will be formed by the Health Development Section, Department of Human Services, that will provide the consultant with advice on various project issues, including communication with regional staff and other key partners, budget issues and project accountability. The Group will read and provide comments on early and final drafts of Achievement 1.

The Project Advisory Group may include representatives from VACCHO, the Department of Human Services Koori Human Services, Health Development and Public Health Nutrition Program as well as representatives from the Koori co-operative. The members of the group will decide the frequency with which this group will meet when the project commences.

The Koori Organisation

A representative from the Koori organisation undertaking this project will be required to enter into a Funding and Service Agreement with the relevant Regional Office of the Department of Human Services.

A representative(s) from the Koori organisation will need to attend Project Advisory Group meetings to provide project updates and an early draft version of the printed document (Achievement 1).

10. Budget

Funds of up to \$20,000 are available to each Koori organisation undertaking this nutrition needs assessment.

11. Timeline

From the time the Koori organisation receives the Koori specific Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool, the local nutrition needs assessment should be completed within 4 to 6 months (completion includes a final report and the plan of action for the “way forward”).

12. Submissions

- Written submissions are required. Please fill in the attached form (Attachment 2).
- Potential organisations that are short listed within this process may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to a panel selected from the Project Advisory Group.
- Supply three copies of written submissions.
- Closing date for submission is Monday 26th March 2001 @ 5:00pm.
- **Submission to be forwarded to:**

**Veronica Graham
State Public Health Nutritionist
Health Development Section
Public Health Division
Department of Human Services
Level 16, 120 Spencer Street
Melbourne, 3000.**

**Phone (03) 9637 4047
Email: veronica.graham@dhs.vic.gov.au**

