

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

**PROJECT BRIEF
Expression of interest for Developing a Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Needs
Assessment Tool.**

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.
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.

To ensure consistency of information collected there is a need to develop a tool that can be used by all Victorian Aboriginal organisations undertaking nutrition needs assessments. This tool, once developed will be trialed by three Victorian Aboriginal organisations within three Victorian Aboriginal communities in three different geographical locations.

2. Project Aim

To develop a Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool.

3. Project Objectives

1. To develop nutrition needs assessment tool suitable for use by the Victorian Aboriginal community.
2. To provide initial support to the three Victorian Aboriginal organisations, which will be trialing this nutrition needs assessment tool.

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. The development of a Victorian Aboriginal specific needs assessment tool will be invaluable in ensuring information is collected in a consistent manner.

With the funding available, three Victorian Aboriginal cooperatives will commence a nutrition needs assessment. The results from these first three nutrition needs assessments, will form the basis for planning for future service delivery and subsequent needs assessments in other cooperatives.

5. Intended Audience for Nutrition needs Assessment

1. Initially the audience will be the three Victorian Aboriginal organisations, which will be trialing the use of the tool.
2. Potentially the tool may be of interest to other Victorian Aboriginal organisations as well as non-Victorian Aboriginal organisations that may play a role in promoting improved nutritional health.

6. Guidelines for Methodology for the Nutrition Needs Assessment

Such general guidelines for the method include:

- Examine the available literature.
- Speak with other organisations already working in the area of Indigenous nutrition.
- Consult with key people/organisations within the Victorian Aboriginal community to ensure the format of the tool is appropriate.
- Conduct a small “test-run” of the tool with at least ten Victorian Aboriginal people before it is submitted. The reason for this is to ensure the format of the tool makes sense and is clear.

7. Achievements

Achievement 1:

Description – A Victorian Aboriginal specific nutrition needs assessment tool. The exact format of the tool will be determined as a part of the process. The aim is to ensure the tool is appropriate for direct use by the Victorian Aboriginal community as well as gather the information needed.

8. Selection Criteria for the Victorian Aboriginal Organisation

- A relevant tertiary qualification in dietetics or nutrition. Additional knowledge and experience in public health nutrition would be an advantage. Note: if your organisation does not have a person with these qualifications, a partnership could be formed with local expertise.
- Demonstrated ability in the development of tools for use in nutrition needs assessment/nutrition research.
- Demonstrated capacity to work effectively with Victorian Aboriginal people and organisations would be considered an advantage.
- 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.

Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group will be formed by the Food and 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 the Department of Human Services Koori Human Services, Health Development and Public Health Nutrition Program as well as representatives from the Victorian Aboriginal co-operative. The members of the group will decide the frequency with which this group will meet when the project commences.

The Successful Organisation

A representative from the Victorian Aboriginal 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 Victorian Aboriginal 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 \$10,000 are available to develop this nutrition needs assessment tool.

11. Timeline

This Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool needs to be completed within 2-3 months. This is important, as there will be three Victorian Aboriginal organisations waiting to use this tool to conduct nutrition needs assessments in their local communities.

12. Submissions

- Written submissions are required to include the following sections: Project Title, Project Timeline, Budget Justification, References, Expertise of the person/persons to be directly involved in the project is required (including two relevant referees).
- 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:**

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