

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

PROJECT BRIEF

Development of a Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Training Program

1. Introduction

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the nutritional health of the Victorian Aboriginal community. Significant effort is being given to the development of a strengthened and co-ordinated Victorian Public Health Nutrition Program. An important component of this will be the development of nutrition training to meet the needs of Victorian Aboriginal people.

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.

NATSINSAP specifically identifies the need to increase the capacity of the Australian Aboriginal nutrition workforce both in terms of trained Aboriginal people and training for other non-Aboriginal health workers.

Recent activities in Victoria, including the development and piloting of a Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool, have also highlighted the need for additional nutrition training for Aboriginal health workers and others working with Victorian Aboriginal people.

The development of a Victorian Aboriginal nutrition training program is an important first step in responding to this need.

2. Project Aim

To develop and pilot a nutrition training program adapted from the existing Aboriginal nutrition programs that will improve and strengthen the nutritional capacity of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

3. Rationale

The extremely poor health status of Aboriginal people indicates that they are the most disadvantaged population group in Australia. 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, Type 2 diabetes mellitus, obesity and hypertension. In addition, poor nutrition has a significant impact on maternal health, low birth weight, poor growth during childhood, infections, oral health, renal disease and iron deficiency anaemia.

NATSINSAP has identified Aboriginal nutrition training as an action area. Several of the main issues identified were the insufficient numbers of skilled and supported Aboriginal workers, lack of defined career paths and opportunities, current accredited health worker and related training programs without a strong nutrition component and the limited current accredited nutrition training opportunities.

In addition, to build on the information, interest and community felt need for nutrition training created by the nutrition need assessments currently underway, an obvious next step is to develop the nutrition workforce of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

4. Intended Audience for the Nutrition Training Program

1. Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal organisations which may have a potential role in the delivery and co-ordination of programs and services, aimed to improve the nutritional health of Victorian Aboriginal people.
2. Local, State and Commonwealth Government who have a role in funding services and programs, which promote improved nutritional health of Victorian Aboriginal people.
3. Non-Government organisation with a potential role in funding or an interest in Victorian Aboriginal health and nutrition.
4. Organisations with a role in developing or providing training to Victorian Aboriginal health workers.
5. Victorian dietitians and nutritionists working with the Victorian Aboriginal community.

5. Guidelines for Methodology for the Nutrition Training Program

1. Review existing local and interstate nutrition-training programs designed for Australian Aboriginal health workers looking for best practice models and processes to adapt for use in Victoria.
2. Interview Victorian Aboriginal organisations and other key informants for their recommendations on key nutrition training issues amongst Aboriginal people.
3. Collate information and make recommendations to the Project Advisory Committee regarding a model for the delivery of the nutrition training.

4. Finalise and document all components of the Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Training Program.
5. Pilot and review key elements of the nutrition-training program as negotiated with the Project Advisory Committee.
6. Provide final documentation and resources for the Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Training Program.

6. Project Implementation

Submissions are sought from organisations or partnerships including a Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and other institutions as required to provide relevant expertise in public health nutrition and education/training.

A lead agency amongst the partnership will be identified to be responsible to the Department of Human Services.

7. Products

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

Product 1:

Description – a review of the best practice nutrition training programs and processes.

Product 2:

Description – a summary of recommendations from organisations and key informants about the most effective methods, content, etc for the nutrition education of Aboriginal people.

Product 3:

Description: - an adapted Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Training Program to create Aboriginal Nutrition Workers (written plus a copy on disc - microsoft word) including program considerations of:

- Deliverer of the program; considering the role of nutritionists
- Format including recommended hours of training
- Content; see items below for possible inclusion
- Methodology
- Venue of the program
- Cost of implementation
- Target audience
- Association with the Koori Health Promotion short course

Items to be considered for inclusion in the nutrition-training program:

- Education on the Nutrition Needs Assessment Tool
- Education on the development of local implementation plans
- Public health nutrition as a major feature
- Strategies to ensure improvement and sustainability of the program
- Consideration of a cultural awareness and workplace trainer component

Product 4:

Description: - a report of the pilot and reviewed components of the Victorian Aboriginal Nutrition Training Program

8. Key Selection Criteria

The partnership of organisations must share the criteria described below:

- An understanding and commitment to improving the nutritional health of Victorian Aboriginal people
- Public health nutrition expertise
- Training expertise
- Capacity to undertake the methodology described above (section 5)
- High level of written and verbal communication skills
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief and required outcomes

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Management

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

Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group will be formed by the Health Development Section, Department of Human Services, that will provide the partnership 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.

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

The Partnership

A lead agency within the partnership undertaking this project will be identified and will be required to enter into a Funding and Service Agreement with the relevant Regional Office of the Department of Human Services.

Individuals representing the partnership will need to attend Project Advisory Group meetings to provide project updates and an early draft version of the printed document.

Bimonthly progress reports will be provided to the project manager.

10. Budget

Funds of up to \$50,000 are available to the consultant undertaking the development and implementation of the nutrition-training program. The budget for this project must include salaries, travel, administrative costs, printing, piloting and implementation costs.

11. Timeline

It is anticipated that this project will span approximately 12 months. The timelines will be negotiated with project manager.

12. Submissions

- Written submissions are required. Submit a project plan with the following headings of: objectives, strategies, milestones, timelines, and expertise.
- Supply three copies of written submissions.
- Closing date for submission is Monday 18 March 2002 @ 5:00pm.

Submission to be forwarded to:

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

Phone (03) 9637 4154

Email: kathy.mcconell@dhs.vic.gov.au