

Aboriginal Health Unit – Muru Mittigar Healthy Workers Initiative

Description

The Aboriginal Health and Health Promotion Units tailored the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative, a program that aims to address lifestyle-related risk factors for chronic disease for local cultural and resource centre Muru Mittigar. The initiative supports businesses by providing the tools, resources and support to address six health focus areas such as healthy weight, physical activity, healthy eating, smoking and diabetes prevention.

Muru Mittigar, a not for profit organisation which seeks to advance Aboriginal culture, and in particular the Darug culture, improve economic and social capacity of Aboriginal people. Muru Mittigar provides a wide range of services to support local Darug people and the wider Aboriginal community by employing over 50 Aboriginal people.

The Centre provides

- A unique meeting place for sharing cultures
- Training and employment in Natural Resources Management
- Mine and broad acre land rehabilitation
- Retail shop selling local products
- Cultural renewal opportunities, and
- Financial counselling and interest free loans

Objectives and Aims

- To improve knowledge of healthy eating and strategies to improve diet to reduce risk of chronic disease
- To increase awareness and action among staff around the importance of personal health and wellbeing
- To support and assist staff to make a quit smoking attempt

Achievements

- Provided healthy lifestyle education sessions on topics such as the 'Healthy Food Pyramid' and the 'Get Healthy Coaching Service'
- Conducted brief interventions with 50% of participants for smoking cessation. Of this 26% referrals were made to the Aboriginal Quitline.



- Conducted over 30 Type 2 diabetes health checks with 20% of participants being referred to the Get Healthy Coaching Service
- A local personal trainer provided weekly group physical activity sessions
- Muru Mittigar implemented a Healthy Catering Policy and a Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- The staff conducted a weight loss competition with a reduction of participants' BMI of 8.5%. This is a positive step to reducing a major risk factor in chronic disease

Planned Improvements

- Capacity building; mentoring sessions were conducted with project champions to ensure project sustainability.
- Promotion of the Get Healthy at Work Website.
- Continued promotion of the Get Healthy Coaching Service and the Aboriginal Quitline to existing and new staff.

Service Outcomes

Outcomes for the employees of Muru Mittigar include:

- Improved eating habit
- Improved physical activity
- Reduction in smoking
- Improved general health and wellbeing

Fast Facts on Muru Mittigar

- Darug language is used by the Traditional Custodians of our area
- Muru Mittigar means 'Pathway to Friends' in the Darug
- Visitors can learn Darug traditional ways and participate in hands-on experiences, such as boomerang throwing and didgeridoo workshops.

Fast Facts of staff profile

- 70% of the organisations staff identified as Aboriginal
- Staff are predominately blue collar workers
- 70% are adult male
- 16% of participants made a quit attempt
- 20% of participants joined the Get Health Coaching Service
- 40% participated in weekly structured exercise at lunch