



Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm

Communique of Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Enhancement Work

Recruitment of a permanent body of staff to the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) was finalised in early March 2020.

The NBHF Team includes Ms Lefan Jard (Service Manager), Mr Adrian Baxter (Community Liaison Worker), Ms Charmaine Barratt (Community Liaison Worker), and Ms Wynetta Rix (Support Worker).

A summary of recent work to enhance the NBHF as a culturally based healing program includes:

COVID-19 Response

The NBHF COVID-19 Management Plan is being developed and focuses on keeping clients, staff and the community safe through targeted infection control procedures relevant to the program and facility.

The plan addresses facility and in-vehicle physical distancing, handwashing and hygiene, facility and equipment cleaning and sanitisation, and monitoring of symptoms.

All NBHF staff have completed Infection Control training.

NBHF Programs

NBHF conducted an internal review of past programs based on the NBHF Model of Care, Living Web developed by Ngunnawal Elder Roslyn Brown, client feedback forms, and research published by the Healing Foundation.

An enhanced program model has been developed for endorsement by the NBHF Advisory Board and planning for 2020 Day Programs is underway.

The enhanced program incorporates key elements to support NBHF clients make ongoing and meaningful changes in their lives:

- Social and Emotional Wellbeing counselling provided by Aboriginal counsellors
- Alcohol and Other Drug Recovery groups
- Cultural Development celebrating the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Owners of the ACT and surrounding regions
- Creative Arts
- Foundation and Core Skills development supporting pathways to employment

- Access to accredited Training and Education qualifications and study support
- Physical Wellbeing activities centred on fostering connection to country
- Aboriginal Horticulture and Land Management Skills development
- Living Skills development supporting healthy families and communities
- Engagement with local Elders at beginning and conclusion of 10-week Programs

Exploring Virtual Program Delivery

In the wake of the Orroral Valley bushfires, heavy localised rainfall and COVID-19 restrictions on non-essential gatherings, NBHF has been impacted by intermittent closures of the facility since December 2019.

To prevent the suspension of programs in the event of future severe weather or public health emergencies, ACT Health Directorate will invest in ICT equipment (iPads/laptops or tablets) to support NBHF programs to be delivered remotely. ICT upgrades to the NBHF are underway and will support the roll-out of this initiative.

Procurement to establish a panel of local therapeutic service providers is in the final stages of completion. NBHF will work with providers to develop options for virtual program delivery to complement the enhanced NBHF Day Program.

Community Liaison Services

Throughout closure of the facility, NBHF has continued to provide intensive community outreach and liaison services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. Referral clients have received direct support to engage with other services such as:

- Canberra Relief Network providing access to emergency food relief;
- Winnunga Health Service;
- Gugan Gulwan;
- ACT Community Services Directorate;
- ACT Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug services;
- ACT Supreme Court Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List;
- Weigelli Centre; and
- Child and Youth Protective Services.

During this time, NBHF has assisted the community by delivering hand hygiene kits to Winnunga Health Service; coordinating food, clothing and hygiene hamper collections and delivery; sourcing essential household items for clients in social housing; providing exceptional circumstance transport; and visiting detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Adult Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit.

Demand for NBHF Services

In the period from March to June 2020, NBHF received and assessed 29 new referrals, and provided community outreach and liaison services to over 40 individuals including previous program participants.

Age data for this period indicates strongest demand for services among those aged 36 and over, representing 50 per cent of new referrals.

Increasing NBHF services to young people in the 18 to 26 age group remains a priority. Around 20 per cent of new referrals were in this age group.

Gender data for new referrals indicates higher demand among males (19 total) comparative to females (10 total).

The most active referral sources for the NBHF are the Alexander Maconochie Centre and ACT Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug services. NBHF is working closely with these teams to provide holistic, wrap-around services.

Communication and Stakeholder Relations

NBHF has worked hard to expand local networks and foster relationships with interested stakeholders in the ACT and surrounding regions.

This work has been guided by the Living Web model and consultation with local frontline Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Workers across a range of sectors.

We will continue to seek opportunities to share, listen and work in partnership with community and other service providers to enhance the NBHF as a culturally based healing program.

If you would like to engage with NBHF please contact the Service Manager (Ms Lefan Jard) at NBHF@act.gov.au.

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