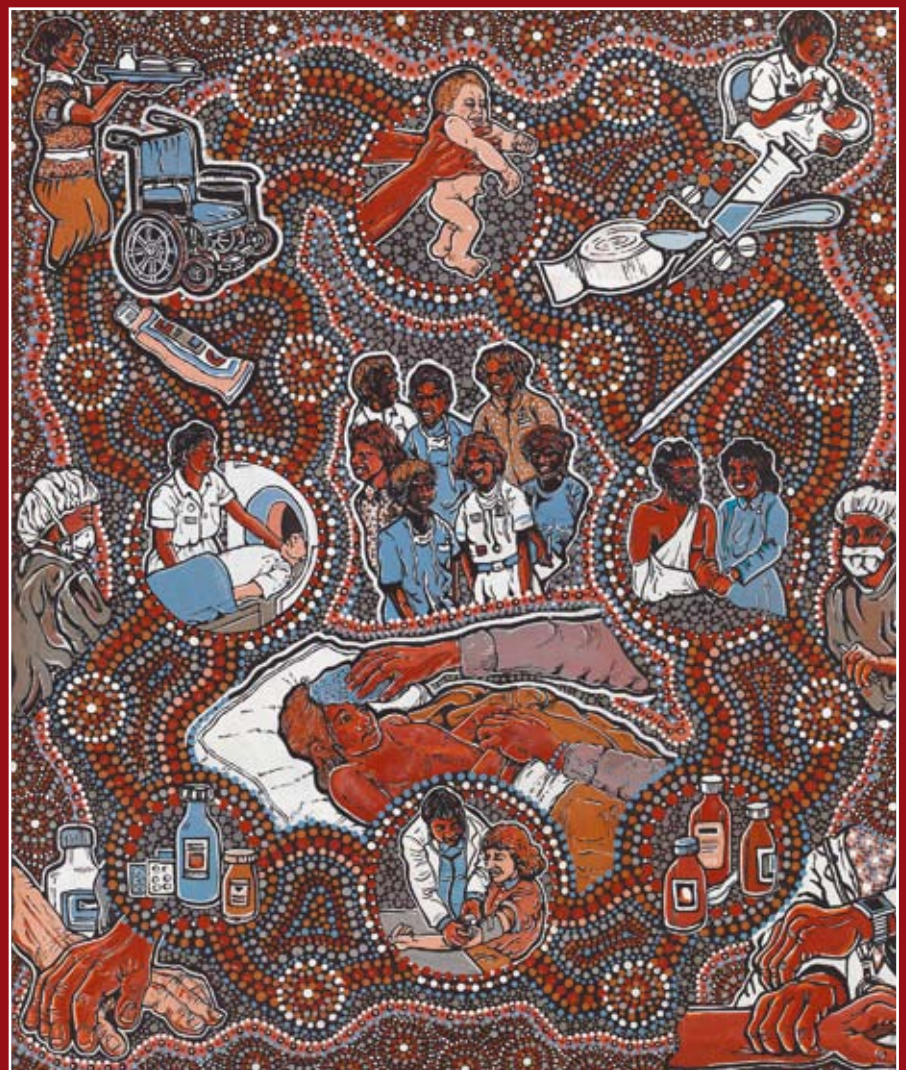


Report on the Aboriginal Students' Residential Workshop KATCH (Koori Action Towards Careers in Health)

10 to 14 March 2008



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Cover art by Danny Eastwood

Executive Summary

Koori Action Towards Careers in Health 2008 (KATCH), was an initiative developed to support the NSW Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy. This strategy aims to improve Aboriginal health by providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to gain education and employment opportunities in nursing and midwifery. This strategy aims to achieve a qualified and competent Aboriginal workforce to meet the health needs of and to improve the availability of health services for Aboriginal people in NSW.

KATCH was designed as a pilot project to engage, motivate and challenge Aboriginal students to consider a career in health. The students' evaluation responses indicate the KATCH experience was challenging, rewarding and motivating. In addition, the students considered that their stated needs for more meaningful information, education and knowledge about a range of health careers and opportunities to attain them were met.

The KATCH residential workshop was attended by 27 students from 12 high schools in Sydney's west and south west. Throughout the workshop Aboriginal health practitioners, academics and educators shared their personal journeys to achieve their career goals. In discussions about their roles education was emphasised as the key to achieving goals and dreams. Information about school subject choices, multiple pathways into a wide range of health careers and the availability of scholarships and cadetships were important components of the workshop program.

At the conclusion of KATCH sixty percent (60%) of the students requested on-going support and guidance from several Area Health Service staff. They listed their career interests as Midwifery (6 students), Nursing (5), Childcare (3) and Medicine (2). This result supports findings in the literature^{1, 2} about the influence of residential workshops in motivating and supporting Aboriginal students to pursue further study for health careers.

It is essential to recognise that this workshop was a pilot project intended to inform future strategic decisions and that it provided a starting point for some students who will require immediate and on-going support if they are to become the health professionals of the future.

The success of residential workshop was due to the commitment, professional generosity and willing participation from volunteers, supervising teachers, the Daruk Elders, the staff of Brewongle and members of the KATCH working party.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Department of Education and Training (DET), the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and Department of Health (DoH), work together to follow up those students who attended KATCH and who expressed an interest in a career in health.
2. Promoting careers in health to Aboriginal students, parents and communities continues in schools, at career seminars/expos and information sessions as well as promotion of the financial assistance available through the NSW Health Nursing and Midwifery Office (NaMO)
3. DET and DoH encourage and support links between schools and Area Health Service Aboriginal Employment Coordinators as key contacts and facilitators for work experience and work placement for careers in health.
4. The KATCH pilot, as a model for future health career residential workshops, be promoted and shared with interested tertiary organisations such as the Indigenous Outreach Office at the University of Western Sydney, to maximise the opportunities afforded by a university environment.

The KATCH pilot achieved its goals in terms of increased student interest in careers in health and forms a useful blueprint for future programs that can target Aboriginal secondary students interested in careers in health and have a positive affect on the future Aboriginal health workforce.

Introduction and Background

Koori Action Towards Careers in Health 2008 (KATCH) was a pilot project developed to support the NSW Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy 2007 - 2010. This strategy aims to improve Aboriginal health by providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to gain education and employment opportunities in nursing and midwifery. This Strategy aims to achieve Aboriginal representation in the health workforce of at least 2% overall, with individual Area Health Services' workforce proportionately reflecting the local Aboriginal population figures. The end point of this strategy is to ensure that there will be a competent workforce to meet the health needs of Aboriginal people and to improve the availability of health services for Aboriginal people in NSW.

A workforce analysis by NSW Health highlighted low application rates from Aboriginal people in Western Sydney for Enrolled Nurse and undergraduate nursing and midwifery cadetship programs. The Trainee Enrolled Nurse and cadetship programs are funded by NSW Health, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the NSW Premier's Department and Cabinet to support Aboriginal people entering nursing and midwifery.

Included in the NSW Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal nurses and midwives was a commitment to deliver a residential workshop targeted to Aboriginal students in schools in Sydney's west and south west. The concept of the workshop was generated from the success of three Wagga Wagga Koori Health Careers Residential Workshops (WWW) held between 2002 and 2004. These workshops were attended by 144 Aboriginal students from 28 schools across rural and remote NSW. Short and longer term outcomes of these workshops included a significant number of participating students completing Year 12 then entering and graduating in a range of health related professions.

Process

The KATCH 2008 residential workshop was a pilot program within the NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy 2006 – 2009, with funding allocated for the venue, student accommodation, catering, transport, meetings, stationery, travel and consultant's fees. An Aboriginal registered nurse was the Project Officer on secondment to the Nursing and Midwifery Office and the WWW project coordinator acted in a consultant capacity to provide guidance and assistance in coordinating the project.

Establishment of a working party of key stakeholders

A working party was established under the auspices of NSW DoH in May 2007 to develop an Aboriginal Residential Workshop.

The Nursing and Midwifery Office (NaMO) NSW Health convened the working party whose membership comprised representatives from:

- NSW Health Workforce Development and Leadership Branch
- NSW Health Aboriginal Workforce Development Branch
- The Department of Education and Training
- Aboriginal Education and Training and Western Sydney School Education Directors
- Sydney West and Sydney South West Area Health Services
- TAFE NSW
- The University of Western Sydney.

Valuable advice and support was received from the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLO) from DET South Western Region, the Aboriginal Education Consultants (AEC) and the Aboriginal Education Coordination Group (AECG) representatives.

Planning meetings

The working party met regularly from late May 2007 to plan the workshop which was initially scheduled for September 2007. In response to advice about increased student workloads in the second half of the school year, which were likely to impact on student attendance, particularly for Year 12 students with HSC commitments, the workshop was rescheduled for early in March 2008.

Advice from DET recommended that this first Sydney workshop should be open only to students in Years 10 – 12 and targeted to those who had already indicated some interest in health careers. All applications required the support of the student's school Principal and identification by students as Aboriginal was to be made clear under the determination used by DET. The selection criteria for applicants were developed by the working party.

Assistance was sought from DET specifically for guidance to target appropriate schools and potential students, to ensure legal and supervision issues were appropriately addressed and to liaise within the local education system. Key elements in the program were provided by the Mt Druitt School Education Area Director who contributed valuable advice regarding student supervision needs, legal considerations, transport logistics and promotion of the event at schools within the specified region.

Development of resources

An information kit for distribution to schools was developed in consultation with DET that included a promotional flyer and student application pack with selection criteria, permission notes, student participant medical history and emergency contact forms. A student workbook was developed containing the program, evaluation sheets, a diary for note taking and sections for students to record their goal planning strategies to take back to school.

Presenter information packs were developed providing suggestions for session content and delivery formats suitable for Year 10 - 12 students and emailed to all presenters. Criminal record and working with children

clearance checks were undertaken for all working party members and presenters, appropriate security arrangements investigated, caterers and bus operators contacted and quotes obtained.

Selection of venue

'Brewongle', a Western Sydney DET training facility for environmental education and field work opportunities for students, teachers and the community was finally selected as providing a quiet, informal bush alternative to mainstream learning environments. It offered access to experienced DET residential school educators, local Elders, bush medicine education and cultural pursuits on site.

The opportunity to take students away from school routines and other distractions to experience cultural activities (perhaps new to them) was anticipated to have a profound impact on many of the students and maximise the opportunities for reflection and learning.

To ensure that students and parents were fully aware of the code of behaviour expected at KATCH, a list of 'rules and student responsibilities' was drawn up and included in application packs for students and parents to consider and sign.



Original Brewongle School Building circa 1878

School and university involvement

In December 2007 letters were sent via the DET to high schools in Sydney west and south west, describing the opportunities offered by KATCH and asking School Principals and Careers Advisers to promote the workshop to their students and encourage applications. This mail out was repeated in early February 2008. Information about KATCH was also advertised on the DoH website and in a

fortnightly e-news letter to school Principals. Principals were asked to review their students' applications and recommend attendance by early February. Schools were requested to arrange for a teacher, career adviser or Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA) to accompany their students and assist in supervision and participate in the running of the workshop for their own professional development.

A total of 37 applications for the 40 funded places were received by NaMO.

Invitations were sent to the UWS asking representatives from a range of health disciplines to consider the support they may offer KATCH, particularly in Nursing, Midwifery, Medicine, Allied Health and the Social Sciences.

Elders' involvement

For the success of the Workshop the Elders spoke with the students about the opportunities KATCH would offer, and explained that they needed to show respect for the Aboriginal presenters in their roles as health professionals and respect their standing in the community. When the Elders performed the Welcome to Country at the beginning of the workshop, they spoke of these issues and emphasised why it was important for the students to benefit from the opportunities provided by the workshop, the significance of their education and the future roles they could have in improving health care services for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal organisations

Other Aboriginal organisations invited to participate included the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) and the Australian Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC). The local Land Council, Koori Radio, SBS Message Stick and local media were contacted and advised about KATCH and invited to promote the event.

Risk Management

Risk management plans for every program activity across the week were developed by the working party and approved by DET and NSW Health, utilising Brewongle activity templates with additional plans to cover the visit to UWS.

Workshop Program

The development of program framework was guided by the KATCH Strategy objectives, recommendations and experiences from WWW, advice and guidance from DET and findings in the recent literature.

A substantial part of the program focused on introducing and emphasising aspects of the students' Aboriginal cultural heritage and linking with the important healing and caring tradition of their culture. The students and their families identified varying degrees of involvement with their local Aboriginal communities, culture and practices. In addition, some students' families may have relocated from rural, remote areas or interstate for family, economic or education reasons.

To ensure program content would meet student needs and expectations they were asked to write 100 words in their application outlining their reasons for wanting to attend KATCH. The responses primarily focused on the students wanting more knowledge / information about a range of health careers to help decide which most interested them. The workshop included this information within the program sessions.

A key aspect of this model involved, wherever possible, local Aboriginal nurses, midwives, doctors and other health professionals as presenters and role models. Aboriginal professionals and academics from western Sydney were invited to talk about their experiences and how they achieved their career goals.

The program was developed to provide meaningful learning experiences with a mix of presentation styles and delivery methods to meet students' learning needs. Visual learners benefited from the posters, displays, booklets, brochures and workbooks, while the auditory learners benefited from the Q & A sessions, stories and discussions. The kinesthetic learners benefited through the daily team activities, hands-on experiences, use of role play and art and craft activities.

Opportunities were provided for students to express knowledge and experiences in artwork using traditional symbols.

KATCH was officially opened with a welcome from local Aboriginal Elders and the Hon Paul Lynch MP Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health).



The Hon Paul Lynch MP Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health) with Daruk Elders at the opening of KATCH.



Minister Lynch addressing the students

Themes for the program were:

- About Me
- Careers Available
- Action Planning for my own Career and
- Clinical Skills and Traditional Skills

A visit to the University of Western Sydney's Hawkesbury Campus was included to give students the opportunity to meet faculty staff and students and experience 'hands on' clinical skills in the teaching lab. This visit was followed by a traditional 'bush tucker and bush medicine' discovery walk through the Brewongle environment led by Bundeluk, a member of the Daruk people. Three 'drawing debrief' sessions were included in the program to provide alternative modes for students to express their experiences and contribute to the evaluation process.

KATCH, MARCH 10 - 14, 2008. RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP PROGRAM

TIME	MONDAY 10	TUESDAY 11	WEDNESDAY 12	THURSDAY 13	FRIDAY 14
	Theme: About Me	Theme: Careers Available	Theme: Action Planning for My Own Career	Theme: Clinical Skills & Traditional Skills	Pack up belongings
7.30	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST 7.00 - 7.30
8.30	Fitness Fun	Fitness Fun	Fitness Fun	8.40 board bus to UWS	7.30 - 8.30 Students' Final debrief & evaluations
9.00	Staff and WP arrive and set up	'Team Building' BEC	'Team Building' BEC	9 - 9.45 UWS Nursing Lab 1: Clinical Skills	8.30 all students walk up to Brewongle Hall
9.30	ID Photos (Sandstone Classroom) Students select career of interest	VET Career Pathways YB. Achieve a qualification while still at school.	VET Career Pathways YB. Achieve a qualification while still at school.	9.45 - 10.30 Medical Skills Presented by medical staff.	9am SHARP Buses depart for schools.
10.00	Photos & AM SIP + CRUNCH	AM SIP + CRUNCH	AM SIP + CRUNCH		
10.30	'Josie's Story' (Demountable)	'Josie's Story' (Demountable)	Aboriginal Nurses' & Midwives' Stories of their journeys.	AM SIP + CRUNCH	Working Party Debrief
11.00	Attendance register. Hand prints on banner. Sign the Camp Rules. Tent allocations. Name tags Teams	Continue as above	Shane William's Story.	UWS Student Supports if unable to do at Expo.	
11.30	Auntie Edna Watson - Welcome to Country & Aboriginal Peoples' Story & Uncle Wes Marne	WS AMS Aboriginal Health Current Programs - talks & demonstrations	As above.	Bus returns to Brewongle Collect Bundeluk @ Richmond Station en route	
12.15	NaMO Welcome - Susie Lang, Paul Lynch Minister for Aboriginal Affairs LUNCH with Elders, Core of Life team	LUNCH with Presenters	LUNCH with Presenters	LUNCH at Brewongle	
1.00	Respect for KATCH Camp. Week's Program Description.	Mini Health Careers Expo in Hall. Career displays, meet practitioners, visit displays.	1. Review knowledge & impressions of health careers. Have my ideas changed this week? How? Why?	1 - 2.30 Bundeluk's Bush Medicine / Bush Tucker Walk	
1.30 - 3.00	'Core of Life' Part 1 (Demountable)	As above.	2. Review Career Goals - What I want to achieve	2.30 - 3pm SIP + CRUNCH	
3.00 - 3.30	SIP + CRUNCH	PM SIP + CRUNCH	PM SIP + CRUNCH	DEBRIEF EXPERIENCES	
3.30 - 4.30 / 5.00	'Core of Life' Part 2 till 5pm Men's /Women's Health groups, Effects of D&A	As above... 4PM Student help pack up Expo.	3. How to achieve my goals: tools I need, where to find them, supports. Prepare for UWS visit tomorrow.	4: Students complete their plans to achieve personal goals	
5.00	Free time. Help dinner setup	Debrief Day's Events. Dinner setup.	Free time. Help dinner setup.	4.30 Free time till Dinner	
5.30	DINNER 5.30 - 6.00	DINNER 5.30 - 6.30	DINNER 5.30 - 6.30	DINNER - 5.45 until 9pm	
6.00	Day 1 Drawings Feedback: Student impressions of health profs roles; their career goals. /MW	Present ID Pouches. Storytelling with Uncle Wes Marne - Campfire / Sandstone Classroom.	Day 3 Drawings & Feedback: Artistic expressions of careers	Student presentations. Awards. Cultural Dance Guest Speakers	
7.00	Cultural Dance				
8.30	SUPPER. Lights out by 9.30pm	SUPPER. Lights out by 9.30pm	SUPPER Lights out by 9.30pm	SUPPER Lights out by 9.30pm	

Evaluation

KATCH evaluations were compiled from responses to surveys from the 3 stakeholder groups (i.e. the participating students, the Aboriginal presenters, and the working party members together with the volunteer supervising teachers) against the stated objectives and intended outcomes of the workshop using the following methods:

1. Student responses

- A daily survey asked students to rate each session together with any comments.
- Students participated in a series of workshops midweek to review their knowledge and impressions of health careers and whether their ideas had changed during the week, and if so, how and why. They then commenced planning their own pathways to achieve their stated goals.
- After dinner midweek in a Drawings and Feedback session the students were invited to express the impact of their KATCH experiences and what they had discovered during the week using paints, crayons or

pencil on paper. Photographs of two artworks with the students' descriptors of their artwork are provided on page 16.

- A questionnaire was developed for the final morning in order to assess whether the students' responses to statements about their workshop experiences supported the KATCH aims and objectives.

2. Presenter, Working Party member and Teacher responses:

- After the workshop the presenters were contacted by email and invited to complete a survey asking for constructive comments about their workshop experiences to help shape future events for Aboriginal students. The response rate was low.
- Similarly, the working party members and teacher supervisors were asked to share their thoughts and experiences for inclusion in the evaluation report. Their responses and suggestions will be of value for future undertakings.



Students and their artwork – putting their experiences on canvas

Outcomes

The success of KATCH is evidenced by many positive evaluations and constructive comments from the key stakeholders and these findings are listed under each KATCH stage.

1. KATCH Preparation

Promotion and attendance

Despite active promotion of KATCH to schools within the specified geographic region over a period of 7 months, a total of 37 applications (for a maximum of 40 places) were received from 15 schools. However, five of these were withdrawn before the Workshop, four students failed to join the bus bringing students from their schools, and one student became ill and returned home the first afternoon, leaving a total of 27 students from 12 schools who attended the entire workshop.

In retrospect, as identified in the stakeholder comments, any more students of the years 10 -12 age group would have overloaded the venue. On reviewing the responses in the student evaluations it was clear that one or two, despite stating appropriate reasons for wanting to attend, had possibly misjudged the purpose of the workshop, but persevered and completed the program. The high schools represented are listed in the Table below:

Project organisation and coordination

The appointment of a consultant with previous relevant experience provided an important link between NaMO and the other agencies involved with the planning and delivery of KATCH.



"Hunting Fish" Anastasia Stewart from Airs High School

STUDENTS ATTENDANCE FROM THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS	TOTAL FROM SCHOOL	YEAR AT SCHOOL		
		TEN	ELEVEN	TWELVE
Airds High School	9	7	1	1
Cranebrook High School	1	1		
Chifley Senior College Senior Campus	2			2
Greystanes High School	1	1		
Jamison High School	2	2		
Kingswood High School	2		2	
Liverpool High School	2	2		
Moorebank High School	1		1	
Nepean High School	3	1	2	
Pendle Hill High School	1		1	
Seven Hills High School	2	2		
Sir Joseph Banks High School	1	1		
TOTAL STUDENTS ATTENDING	27	17	7	3



This painting from Airds High School tells of the great things at KATCH

Planning

The working party responses indicated degrees of satisfaction with the overall process and recommendations were provided to help plan future events, including that the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved. Involvement of the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and the Aboriginal Education Unit earlier in the planning stage is essential to ensure their knowledge and expertise influence the content and delivery of workshop activities.

2. KATCH Implementation

The program delivered a range of positive experiences to the students and was rated as 'good' or 'excellent' by the majority. Their feedback identified issues relating to requests for more space and comfort during presentations. An information session for lead agencies and time for effective communication with the presenters leading up to the event could enhance program quality and scope.

A commitment from DET to provide and support appropriate numbers of staff for student supervision during and after workshop hours for future residential workshops will be needed for any future programs. Benefits for supervising staff include unique professional development opportunities and the chance to continue to support student motivation when back in the school environment.

3. KATCH Evaluations

Responses and evaluations by all stakeholders indicate the KATCH program, activities and experiences were challenging, rewarding, motivating and educational and met most students' stated needs for more meaningful information, education and knowledge about a range of health careers.

The student perspective

The student surveys and comments indicate the initial objectives of KATCH have largely been met for those genuinely interested in pursuing a career in health and provided 'food for thought' and broader knowledge about career opportunities in health for those who may still be "unsure about the profession" or "how to go about finding out", "didn't know what questions to ask at school", are "inspired to think more about my career path now" or who simply "want to become someone who inspires other people".

On Day 2 the 27 students were given the opportunity of having their photo taken against a background of the health profession that most interested them, for use as a KATCH ID badge. Their career interests are listed on page 19 and compared with Day 4 when 16 of the 26 students provided their names and career interests for follow up contact at school with their career adviser and the Nurse Initiatives in Schools Manager.



Students at work!



- By Day 4 the number of students interested in becoming Midwives had fallen from eight to six with a corresponding fall in Childcare Workers from five to three. However three students were now interested in becoming RNs with another two interested in becoming ENs.
- In all a total of three students identified interest in gaining RN qualifications and 6 identified interested in Midwifery.
- Following the presentations about Medicine from a Professor and undergraduate student at UWS, two students identified an interest in Medicine.
- While the interest in a range of other health professions reduced, that may be related to a particular discipline not able to be represented, or there were students who were interested but did not want to give their names for follow up support.

Each day the students were asked to rate from 'excellent' to 'poor' the individual sessions in that day's program. The majority completed these evaluations and rated the activities as either 'good' or 'excellent'.

- The 'Welcome to Country' and 'Welcome to KATCH' by the Elders and the Minister received the highest rating, closely followed by the 'Core of Life' and 'Women's health' sessions on Day 1. Comments during the week from students indicated they understood the meaning of 'Respect' a lot more after the Elders talked about having respect for KATCH, the standing of health professionals in the community and what they had to say, and the meaning of having respect for themselves in the way they behaved and took the opportunities offered during the week.
- On Day 2 'Josie's Story' about her journey to gain a Masters degree and employment at Westmead Children's Hospital received the highest rating of

the day, followed by 'Western Sydney Aboriginal Medical Service' staff talk about the service and their roles and the campfire under the stars after dinner at which Elder Uncle Wes Marne told stories of the dreamtime and the Daruk people. The impact on the students of having the opportunity to meet and talk with Aboriginal professionals is demonstrated in the comment "The idea of people being able to do some work placement in Children's Hospital with Josie is great". "I absolutely loved the dreamtime stories with Uncle Wes and it was a good change to hear these stories" seems to support observations that for many of the students this experience was also an introduction to their Aboriginal culture and heritage.

- Students' comments about the mini health Expo included "it was fully sick" (colloquial for best, good, very best); "I really enjoyed the talk from the Paramedics" and "It was awesome, I really did like how the day was set out and how it turned out".



Ambulance Officers at the Mini Expo



The UWS nursing laboratory

- On Day 3 'Shayne Williams' talk' about how his grandmother delivered the Aboriginal women's babies in her home in Armidale and his life journey to academic success scored the highest rating with students. Comments included "Shayne Williams really inspired me and made me cry...it was so inspiring and uplifting". Closely followed were the daily team building exercises, the VET pathways session, the afternoon sessions reviewing the knowledge they had gained during the week and the drawings and feedback activity in the evening.
- On Day 4 the visit to the clinical skills teaching laboratory at the University of Western Sydney enabled the students to meet academics from the Campbelltown and Richmond campuses to hear about Nursing, Midwifery and Medicine, experience how clinical skills are taught, and the KATCH dinner were rated the highest for the day. A highlight was witnessing one of the students' amazement to discover a shared home and language with one of the inspiring UWS lecturers "so far away from home in the Torres Strait" as both had moved from their communities to seek greater educational opportunities.

On the final morning a questionnaire was used to evaluate the students' experiences of KATCH. The survey was returned by only 16 students, who indicated that attending the workshop had enabled them to:

- find out what they wanted to know about a range of careers in health and what subjects to choose for a career in health
- find out about the VET in Schools program and how to get a qualification whilst still at school and where these can lead
- find out about university entry pathways and the supports available to them
- find the support materials (booklets, flyers, pamphlets) helpful
- improve their understanding about the differences in Nursing, Midwifery and other health professions
- enjoy the cultural activities in the program and that the time allowed for each session was 'about right' or 'too much'
- meet the many qualified Aboriginal people working in health professions and felt encouraged by hearing the presenters' stories

- 15 of the 16 students 'completely' enjoyed being on a university campus and looking around the teaching lab and now had a better understanding about university entry and the different courses leading to careers in health.
- 14 of the 16 now knew about the scholarships and cadetships available and how to apply for them.

Students commented on which parts of KATCH were the most interesting for them and these comments indicate that the program was motivating:

- "The fun, interesting educational ones"
- "Midwifery UWS"
- "I loved Uncle Wes' dreamtime stories and the VET courses available while still at school and a session on how to achieve my goals".



Working on artistic expression

Some responses indicated empathy with the presenters' lives and stories:

- "All of the presenters were saying how even though they didn't have a lot when they were young they still succeeded"
- "I enjoyed Shayne Williams he was inspiring and emotional and you can tell he really cared about what he was saying".

Working party members and key stakeholder perspectives

Every member of each group was invited to respond to the evaluation questionnaire about the impact and outcomes of KATCH, both from their organisation's perspective and their own personal, professional perspective. Nine of the 15 working party members, two DET supervising teachers and two ACLOs responded. A summary of the representatives key stakeholder comments follows.

SWAHS

Increasing the potential pool of qualified Aboriginal people in the workforce by raising the profile of health careers to Aboriginal secondary students will assist in achieving target numbers for potential employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal health care workers as indicated in the Workforce Strategy Development Plan 2006 – 2010. Identifying local students wishing to pursue a career in health and the opportunity to develop stronger links and maximise opportunities to assist them, their parents and school career advisers with guidance and effective planning strategies to achieve their goals is a critical element in this important strategy.

NaMO

The immediate outcomes were certainly very pleasing and validated the effort, however the project was one of high challenge and cost, so consideration of future workshops would be dependent on the follow up outcomes from this workshop and the commitment (in real terms) from other agencies. The experience was exhausting, fulfilling and a huge learning curve.

NSW Department of Health Workforce Development and Leadership: Aboriginal Workforce Development Unit:

The Unit is in a position to continue work on the VET in Schools program. Discussions with the Nurse Initiatives in School Program Manager and the Department of Education staff identified the opportunity to develop a strategy to assist students to enter a career in health and use VET in Schools as a platform to identify subjects and further explore Traineeships and Cadetships.

Supervising teacher:

The students would return to school more focussed on their goals, in particular the ones who knew they were interested in a career in health. A visit from a school staff member from each of the participating schools, even if for only a couple of hours, would help consolidate this and they would be able to easily remind students of the KATCH camp and use it as a motivation to stay focussed.

The Aboriginal working party member perspectives

To ensure the outcomes and processes were relevant and appropriate for everyone who participated in the project, members were asked to comment from their Aboriginal perspective on their thoughts and experiences.

Responses included:

- felt able to assist the students and engage them in alternative activities during the breaks
- would have liked to see and hear from more Aboriginal nurses
- had an opportunity to learn more about the VET in schools program and what's available for Aboriginal students
- great just being involved and to see these sorts of things happening for Aboriginal people. They certainly would not have happened until recent times.
- had an opportunity to learn more about VET in schools and what's available for Aboriginal students.

When asked if, from their Aboriginal cultural perspective, there was anyone else who should have been involved and the cultural / strategic importance of including these people, responses included the following comments:

- Daruk (the local Aboriginal Medical Service) needed to be more involved and more community input
- There could have been a female Elder involved with the cultural activities, to complement Bundeluk.



Hard at work having fun with paint!



A very attentive audience.



Learning the dance

Responses to questions about the planning of KATCH included satisfaction with the planning and organisation processes as they were “collegial, inclusive and participatory and the lessons from this project will improve any future planning”. The venue was considered appropriate

by some, but a little remote for parents wishing to attend the dinner and a number of presenters and parents did get lost, despite maps and directions being provided. Considerations for the future might include a UWS campus to provide a ‘taste’ of university life and maximise opportunities for staff and undergraduate students to participate in the program, alternatively another cultural facility providing team building and leadership programs and experienced on site staff.

The workshop program was described variously as a “an ambitious but comprehensive program that demonstrated great thought, imagination, flexibility and planning” together with suggestions to reduce the week to a 2 day weekend program tailored to interested students, especially more suitable for Yr 12 students; strategies to divert some students using the camp as a means of avoiding school for a week; the need for more ‘hands on’ teaching of topics rather than simply ‘listening’ and opportunities to introduce conflict resolution, anger management and decision making skills.

The Aboriginal presenter perspective

Suggestions for future events included the need for more support from regional DET teams especially from those that had students attending; roles and responsibilities at the workshop need to be clarified; ensure presentations are kept to time so others are not cut short; and more community and student involvement in the planning stages.



More from the Mini Expo: University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Nursing, Midwifery & Health



Students at the KATCH Mini Expo



Preparing the Marquee for dinner



Australian Hearing Services



Presentation of Certificates



Preparing the Marquee for dinner



One last group photo before goodbye!

References

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