



FESTIVAL OF CONTAGIOUS IDEAS 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES
HEALTH INNOVATION
Symposium 2016

Preventive Health

Partners in improved developmental outcomes South Western Sydney Local Health District

Challenge

The project aims to close the gap in Aboriginal health outcomes through culturally appropriate services, within the community that are specific to this Aboriginal population. The Gudaga Study, (McDonald et al 2003) evidences the emergence of delays in Indigenous children's language acquisition, fine motor development and cognitive skills at three years and prior to school entry, and declines in personal/ social development compared to non-indigenous peers. This study also identifies key risk factors of this vulnerable community including decreased access to health care, exposure to trauma; single parent families, decreased education status and experience with mental illness.



Solution

The partnership between South West Sydney Local Health District and Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation aimed to place allied health services onsite to engage the local Indigenous community, develop sustainable



partnerships between the District and Tharawal, and access a population who were without access to mainstream services. A three and a half year partnership has seen services evolve into onsite speech pathology clinics and multidisciplinary intervention services based within the preschool. These services develop holistic programs for families and teachers to implement activities emphasising skills required for literacy and learning.

Results

Results of the services have demonstrated strong engagement of the community, improved knowledge and identification of children with developmental needs and use of techniques that promote language and learning. There was a reduction of access issues for families due to

transport, location or reluctance to access unfamiliar services as they are based on respected and accepted sites. Pre and post testing of children has demonstrated individual improvements with skills that are predictors of learning and literacy.

Acknowledgments

Tharawal AMS

