

Today LHAC is going to talk about health services and initiatives that are in place for our Aboriginal community.

Next week is NAIDOC week. NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Close the Gap

The lack of equity for our first nation people is recognised as a national issue and in 2007 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) implemented Closing the Gap initiatives which aim to reduce disadvantage with respect to ATSI life expectancy, child mortality and a range of issues around education, employment and housing.

Cycles of trauma, violence, grief and loss can only be healed with support, time and respect which the entire community has a role and responsibility in. Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing is at the core of the healthy community, and we all require to close the gap.

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders have less access to essential health services than other Australians. Too often they don't get the health care they need, when and where they need it. A particular problem facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is the relative lack of access to primary health care. Primary health care aims to prevent disease from occurring in the first place, or to detect it early. As a result, illnesses that could be prevented become chronic problems.

LHAC would like to share with our community some of the health services available to our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

TELKUNA (healing) CLINIC

The Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Lands Council (DLALC) hosts the Telkuna clinic to the Aboriginal community but is inclusive to anyone who may be more comfortable accessing health care from DLALC premises.

ALL these services are free and at no cost to patients. This initiative is in its infancy stages with more services planned to being added as it grows.

Some of the services available currently:
GP Clinic

Dr Marion Magee heads up a team of GP's and other practitioners who make themselves available at Telkuna. No appointments are required to see a GP every Saturday morning from 9:30 am onwards. There are volunteers assisting with transporting people to appointments if needed.



Drug and Alcohol

Thursdays from 10 am Fred Carberry, a drug and alcohol worker is available for a yarn.

Midwife

The MLHD has also provided midwife, Bianca Lopez (nee Atkinson), who provides Maternity services and support two days a month. These referrals are made by TELKUNA to Bianca.

If you want any further information about TELKUNA please give DLALC a call 03 5881 4891.

MLHD Deniliquin Community Health

These services are currently provided by Jill Owens, the Aboriginal Health Education Officer based in Deniliquin but also covering Hay, Barham, Jerilderie, Finley, Tocumwal and Berrigan Hospitals. Jill has an important role to ensure the health and well-being of Aboriginal members in our community are addressed.

Jill provides emotional, social and cultural support for patients and their family to ensure they are participating in decisions about their care. She can advocate on a patient's behalf and ensures that culturally sensitive service is provided. Jill can help with access to health and other supports, travel to appointments.

Jill works in partnerships to ensure there is cultural engagement for the Aboriginal Community to access a range of services.

48 Hour Follow Up

This is to provide support to patients who have been in hospital for things such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or kidney disease. Once a person has left hospital, there will be a check in on their well-being within 48 hours of discharge. Ongoing health needs can be identified and services put in place to support the patient's recovery and prevent unnecessary admissions.

Aunty Jeans Program

This is a community program for Aboriginal people with/or at risk of chronic illness. The program includes health assessments, information, exercise, healthy eating and fun activities. Foot Care and Smoking Cessation are also focused on. Other service providers such as diabetes educators, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and respiratory services staff can also provide services and information if required. This program is usually run weekly at Community Health, but due to Covid has been restricted.

For more information on these services call 1800 249 645. Jill Owens can also be contacted directly on 5882 2913 or Mobile 0477764219 for access or more information.

Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services

The team at Cressy Street include nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, Aboriginal mental health workers and psychiatrists. Access to a range of services, across all ages are available.

One particular service that needs to be highlighted is Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People (SMHSOP)

Clinicians focus on people over 65 or Aboriginal people over 50 who are at considerable risk of multiple complex health issues and includes older people who reside in nursing homes and their families and carers.

Access to all these services is through Accessline 1800 800 944

OTHER SUPPORTS

Brother to Brother (1800 435 799) is Australia's first 24-hour hotline supporting Aboriginal men through the Covid pandemic. Staffed by Aboriginal men, including elders, this is a culturally safe service where Aboriginal men are able to discuss relationships, family violence, parenting and any other issues that Aboriginal men may require support in.



MARATHON HEALTH

Integrated Team Care Program

This is a program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people who need help to access services consistent with their GP management plan. If you have a chronic disease, you are eligible for referral. The program can assist you with coordinating your health care and facilitating services such as specialist or allied health services and transport.

To find out if we can support you please call 1300 402 585 or speak to your GP or visit TELKUNA CLINIC and have a chat to a health worker there. Y

You can also contact Viney Morgan Aboriginal Medical Service – 03 5869 3343. They will provide your details to a Care Coordinator, who will contact you to make a time to see you. Together the doctor and the Care Coordinator will support you and help you improve your health and wellbeing.