

NATIONAL OBESITY TASKFORCE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORKSHOP

ADELAIDE, 10, 11 SEPTEMBER 2003

OUTCOMES



“A good day for us is when no-one dies”

PREPARED BY:

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on behalf of the workshop participants

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INTRODUCTION

A group of health workers, researchers and policy developers from across Australia were invited to participate in a National Workshop to provide input into the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council's (AHMAC) National Obesity Taskforce. The focus of the workshop was to identify priority actions needed to address overweight and obesity in the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population**.

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Branch of the Department of Health in Western Australia organised this National Workshop on behalf of the National Obesity Taskforce. The outcomes of the workshop are to go directly to the National Obesity Taskforce for consideration and input into their national strategies and final report.

The workshop was designed to have a **strong focus on practical actions and solutions**. There were some 30 community leaders and other professionals from across Australia, who have been working in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition and physical activity, including obesity. The job of this working group was to capture practical actions to address overweight and obesity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

SETTING THE WORKSHOP CONTEXT

The workshop participants discussed the overall issue of obesity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Significant concern was expressed at the chronic state of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health, and the profound impact this was having on peoples lives, life-expectancy and quality of life. There is frustration at the lack of change and the lack of response to what is seen as an urgent issue.

“A good day for us is when no-one dies. Blokes I grew up with are on dialysis”

Several key points were raised during the discussion, which helped to define the context of the workshop. These included:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must develop a culture and mind-set of self-empowerment and self-determination. While there exists a mentality of waiting or relying on Government for help, little meaningful progress can be made;

“By thinking the only way to solve problems is through the Government, we are disempowering ourselves. Part of the way forward is becoming self-reliant. Expand and adapt. Look at what's happening in Cape York”

- Look at the broader issues of community health and quality of life;

“We're about getting the community up and running”

- Emphasis must also be given to preventative measures – not just addressing and responding to symptoms;

“I don't wait till someone comes knocking at my door and tells me what to do. Put aside what we used to do, some of the answers are out there.”

Consideration must be given to the broad cultural diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and programs must always take into account cultural values;

“I'd like to hear government using the same language as our people”

- There was a very strong feeling that people did not want pilot projects or one-off funding schemes;

“No pilot programs. No short term, one off programs”

- Participants agreed workshop recommendations are to be used at two levels: to inform the National Obesity Taskforce; and for political advocacy by participants.

“Members wear other hats and can use this for advocacy”

- Workshop recommendations encompass a whole of government approach described as a ‘Broad Frontal Approach’:

“BROAD FRONTAL APPROACH needs a bit of subtly as well as a bull-dozer”

WORKSHOP DESIGN and PROCESS

The workshop was designed to be highly participative, a practical action orientated event. The workshop provided considerable opportunity for all to participate and contribute their expertise, experience and ideas.

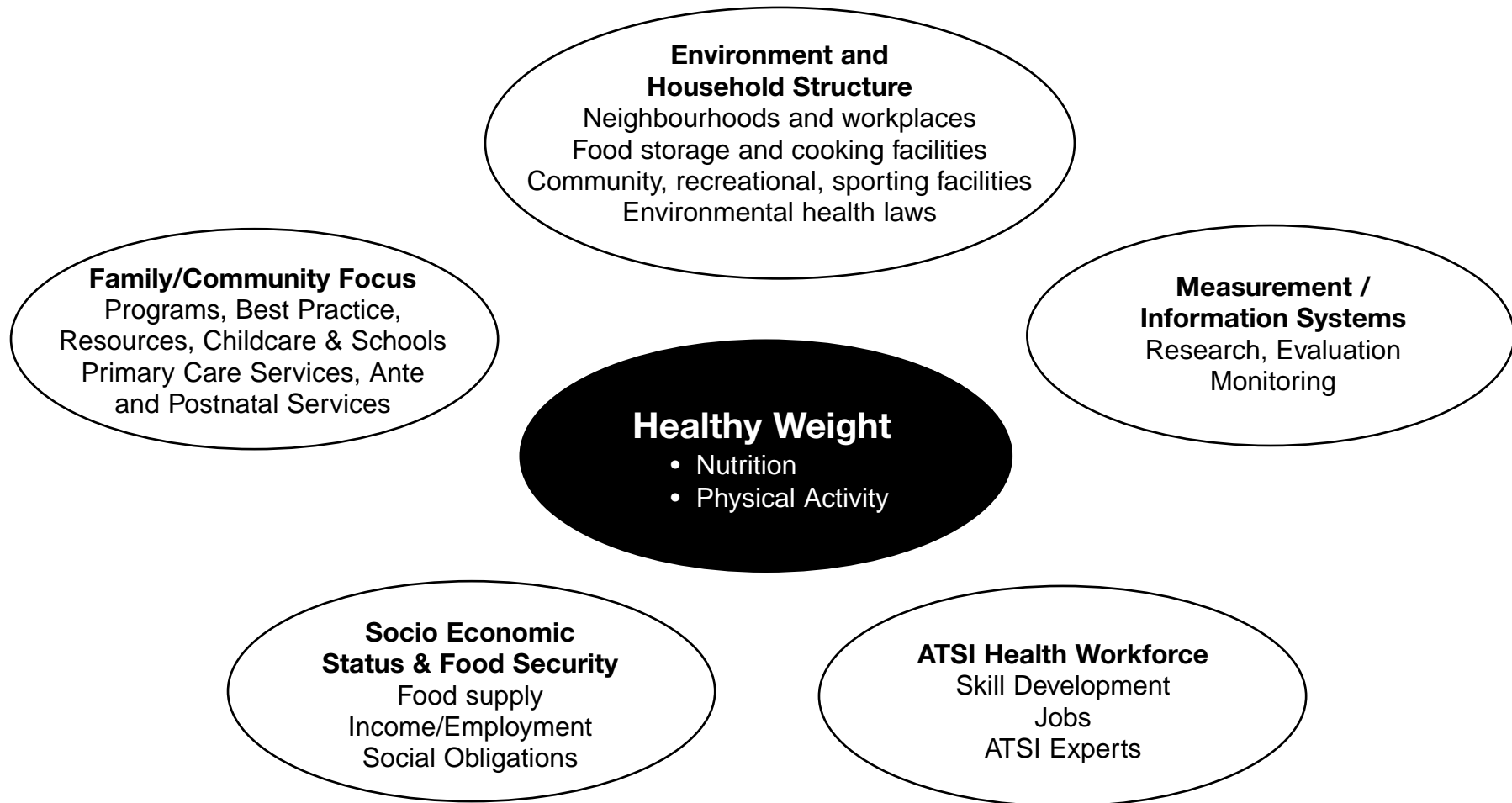
“I'm here because I was asked to get information, extend my knowledge and give whatever I can give”

(See Attachment 1 for workshop program and design).

The workshop process allowed people to discuss the full range of issues and debate out the recommendations. In addition, participants had the opportunity to share about their projects and programs – and to relate their success and failures.

The workshop process, and participative style was acknowledged and appreciated by the participants.

NATIONAL OBESITY TASK FORCE ATSI WORKSHOP PRIORITY AREAS



WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

10 PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

These key principles underpin all workshop recommendations:

1. Ensure actions align with relevant national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategies. (i.e. National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health etc.)
2. Support implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (including FoodNorth);
3. Support the development and implement of National Physical Activity Plan that fully recognises the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
4. Aboriginal health impact assessments of all social policies are conducted (eg. GST impact on price of healthy food, build on NSW review/benchmark);
5. Support a community development focus, training and retaining people, identify and build on knowledge, skills, experience and resources of the community;
6. Ensure that programs / strategies address the continuity of care, and the notion of the continuum of care (including promotion of healthy lifestyles, intervention and post intervention care);
7. Community initiatives need to be driven by the community;
8. Actions are required across the community, regional, state, national levels; this needs a collaborative, whole of government approach;
9. Ensure that legislation and regulations, (national, state and local), provide the framework that ensures safe, convenient, and attractive physical neighbourhood environments that enable active living;
10. Facilitate community ownership and capacity to enable local people and community groups to identify and tailor responses to address their active living and nutritional needs.

OVER-ARCHING RECOMMENDATION

To ensure the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorses, prioritises and supports actions that will reduce overweight & obesity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKFORCE

Principles to underpin recommended actions:

Increase the availability of appropriate accredited on site / local training and professional development

- Increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals in accredited training and professional development
- Ensure alignment with the objectives in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework (May 2002).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Incorporate nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight as core components of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker training (consistent with national guidelines within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Competencies Review);
- Develop a nationally accredited professional development program on physical activity and nutrition and deliver to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, other relevant stakeholders (community development officers, sport and recreation officers, store workers, education staff, social and emotional well being centre staff, Aboriginal resource officers, registered nurses etc.) and community members across Australia;
- Increase the number of permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker positions (at all levels) across government and non-government agencies.
- Increase number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals in specialist positions in nutrition and physical activity;
- Create systematic and structured career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health professionals, with appropriate remuneration;
- Develop and implement strategies to attract male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers;
- Develop a catalogue of current nutrition and physical activity related training programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Regularly review and disseminate;
- Develop key competencies for physical activity workers (build on the sport development officer competencies);
- Establish a national organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health professionals to provide ongoing support, networking, information sharing and professional development including training and education.
- Increase capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-health workforce to promote nutrition and physical activity. Example: develop and conduct retail training for store managers, establish national corporate partnerships to expand retail industry skills base.

2. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Principles to underpin recommended actions:

- Actions align with related strategies around social, emotional and physical well being, food supply, workforce, housing etc, (ie. National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health etc)
- In rural and remote areas and urban communities work with identified community members.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure to undertake the priority actions
- Primary care professionals – up-skill in the area of nutrition and sport and physical activity related to social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. Overweight / Obesity is associated with a range of health conditions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Make existing nutrition and physical activity resources, kits, and programs available for communities to adjust to their needs.

Children

- Promote breastfeeding
- Support implementation of antenatal and postnatal services, eg Strong mothers Strong babies, Ngua Gundi Program (Rockhampton, QLD);
- Develop curriculum to include nutrition, physical activity and sport on a daily basis;
- Promote Indigenous Games resources for teachers (they facilitate social and emotional health and are easily adopted outside of school);
- Provide nutrition and food safety guidelines for tuckshops, school canteens, after / before / vacation school care (including child care) to support school curriculum;
- Provide physical activity and sport guidelines for after / before / vacation school care (including child care) to support school curriculum;
- Prepare and distribute culturally appropriate weight and obesity treatment guidelines for health professionals (include social and emotional wellbeing support for families (eg. counselling);
- Implement Growth Assessment and Action (NT) programs nationally;
- Provide oral health checks, education, and dental treatment services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Adults

- Develop and implement Indigenous specific programs (eg Healthy Weight Program (QLD) and adjust mainstream programs to ensure cultural appropriateness in the treatment of overweight and obesity,
- Relevant health services to offer weight treatment programs including social and emotional wellbeing support through counselling;

3. SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS & FOOD SUPPLY

Principles to underpin recommended actions:

- Access to healthy, good quality, affordable food, and safe drinking water is a basic human right
- Stores are essential services as well as enterprises

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Governance

- Educate and increase awareness of regulations and practices (eg fair trading, Food Act, registrar of Aboriginal corporations, state/territory registrars meet Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) requirements);
- Apply and enforce regulations across the board with no exemptions for remote stores;
- Develop and implement governance training for store owners and committees;
- Ensure community access to regulated financial services, such as face-to-face banking (eg rural transaction centres);
- Implement compliance and monitoring practices;
- Collect current information on policy and good practice and disseminate to stakeholders.

Supply chain

- Develop and implement national standards for: transport, store infrastructure, training, health and nutrition policies, and cold chain management etc;
- Undertake feasibility study on subsidies (eg freight, food, health hardware, infrastructure) for remote locations;
- Develop and implement urban area strategies e.g. urban planning regarding shops, home deliveries and transport;
- Undertake feasibility study on leveraging economies of scale.

Healthy food availability

- Identify and make available core healthy foods including take-aways in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stores / shops;
- Develop strategies to promote healthy foods in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stores / shops.

Economic issues

- Engage agencies such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to provide advice on food supply and pricing issues;

4. MEASUREMENT / INFORMATION

Principles to underpin recommended actions:

- The role of research is to empower the community, not the research;
- Research should build the capacity of the community to conduct and utilise research for themselves;
- Consultation models are culturally appropriate, eg. listening tables, citizens panels and deliberation groups;

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

National Surveillance

- Develop an appropriate national standard set of social and environmental indicators relating to body fat (eg. number of Indigenous Health Workers, accessible local / community sporting facilities, fruit and vegetable intake, storage facilities, sales / consumption of fast foods);
- Develop and implement an appropriate national standard set of body fat indicators for children and adults (eg. anthropometric (height, weight, girth), clinical (BP, glucose, point-of-care), and breastfeeding)
- Identify existing data collection systems, processes and stakeholders in order to incorporate standard measures into appropriate data collection systems.

Local Data Collection

- Develop and apply a “data collection” training package and mentoring system for health workers to include the following:
- Data collection that is clearly understood and agreed by community and community members
- Data collected is consistent with national indicators, where appropriate
- Feedback / reporting is included as standard practice and clearly understood and agreed by community and community members
- Identify, employ and train dedicated local workforce (eg. local info. teams)
- Identify and engage accessible mentors for local information teams

Information management / sharing

- Use the following for information management and sharing:
 - National Public Health Partnership’s (NPHP’s) National Public Health Information Group (NPHIG)
 - National Health Information Management Group – IS and IT
 - Consult / liaise with NAGATSIHID (National Advisory Group for ATSI Health Information and Data)
- Identify and collate existing and historical data (potential role for Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Aboriginal Health)

Process evaluation

- Provide assistance (expertise, human resource and financial) with process evaluation (e.g. process evaluation organisation / person);
- Use NPHP’s process evaluation proforma.

Action research

- Identify active living needs, planning and activities to promote healthy lifestyles
- Research needs of obese people across the continuum of care. (eg: post care following significant weight loss which includes surgery and related services (ie. counselling). Consider Medicare payments for individuals choosing this option).

5. ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Principle to underpin recommended actions:

- A cross government approach is used to coordinate local implementation, which includes establishment and maintenance of partnerships with the community;
- Recreation, fitness, sports, active living, parks arts / culture all contribute to social and emotional well being, enhanced quality of life, fine motor skill development, health and weight control.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Engage relevant “service industries”* in a national approach to coordinate the provision of programs and services that improve the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to participate in an active living lifestyle;
- Promote and distribute the National Indigenous Housing Guide to ensure the improvement of household environment design, construction and maintenance of appropriate food storage, preparation & cooking facilities;
- Develop a system for of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce to participate in the national review of the application of public health and environmental health laws to of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Implement appropriate community training to ensure the knowledge and skills are available to use and maintain household appliances. (eg. white goods training package), use a coordinated and consistent approach;
- Fund adequate numbers of appropriately trained Environmental Health Officers within communities to ensure access to safe water and food supply;
- Develop and offer culturally appropriate education in food preparation and storage for community members.

* Relevant National, state, regional and local “service industries” include:

(Food suppliers, Environmental Health Departments, Public Health Departments, Housing and Community Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Education Departments, State and local government planning departments (Urban, transport, School, Open space & Recreation), State and local transport departments, Physical Activity Sport and Recreation Industry, Arts, Non Government Agencies (Heart Foundation, Universities, Sport and Recreation Facilities)

Attachment 1. Workshop program and design

NATIONAL OBESITY WORKSHOP

Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Wednesday 10th – Thursday 11th September 2003

*Setting the Agenda for Action to address Obesity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander People and Communities*

PURPOSE:

The focus of the workshop will be to make recommendations on action to be taken to address overweight and obesity in the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population**. This National Workshop to provide input into the Australian Health Ministers Action Council's (AHMAC) National Obesity Taskforce.

LOCATION:

Adelaide has been chosen as the location. The venue is Domain Room, Marion Cultural Centre, Oakland Park, South Australia.

AUDIENCE:

We are designing a workshop that will have a **strong focus on practical actions and solutions**. We are inviting 25 - 30 professionals and community leaders across Australia, chosen for their reputation for sound practice and outcome focus. The job of this working group is to capture practical actions to address overweight and obesity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PRE-CONFERENCE PREPARATION:

- A member of the organising team will contact all participants by phone prior to the Workshop for a preliminary briefing.
- Formally prepared presentations are not necessary, however, you are asked to share your skills and experience. You may be able to show a couple of overheads, power point slides or copies of resources or examples of your work.

OBESITY WORKSHOP PROGRAM

In simple terms, the first day is discussion about projects and programs from around Australia. The evening and second day is summarising the best 'on-the-ground' projects and developing the recommended practical actions.

DAY 1 Wednesday 10th September 2003

8:30am Coach departs Flag Haven Marina Inn for venue

8:45am Arrival / Registration

***Welcome and Overview Section** - This section sets the context for the workshop as part of the National Obesity Taskforce process with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The workshop style as informal, interactive, practically focused and engaging.*

9.00am Welcome and overview

- Traditional land-owners welcome
- Welcome and background to the workshop, design and outcomes – briefing on how the outcomes will fit into the National Obesity Taskforce by David Filby

10.00am Creating the workshop

- Introductions from workshop participants

10.30am Morning tea

10.45am Creating the workshop continued

- Setting the context and outcomes for the workshop – workshop facilitators

12.00pm Lunch at the Marion Cultural Centre's Signature Cafe

***Presentations / Idea Section** – Opportunity to talk about new and innovative approaches from around Australia. Participants will share a mixture of practical approaches, overview topics and inspiring ideas. This section is designed to create a catalyst to stimulate new thinking about the possibilities for tackling obesity issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. An idea generating session – with lots of practical examples and real opportunities discussed. Participants will focus on successful practical approaches - together with critical success factors and pitfalls. The focus will be on interactive discussion.*

1.00pm Briefings and workshop discussion

- Workshop and group discussions on the prevention and management of over weight and obesity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What's happening, what is working, what is not, and why?
- Throughout the afternoon, discussions will be interspersed with a series of brief and interactive presentations from practitioners and community leaders on back ground issues, relevant research and case studies of projects from around Australia.

6.00 pm End session. Coach return to accommodation.

7.30 pm Dinner at the Salt Wine Bar and Bistro.

- Just a short walk from the Flag Haven Marina Inn at the Holdfast Shores Marina, this will be an opportunity for informal discussion on the day's presentations and further discussion on practical actions, solutions and case studies.

DAY 2 Thursday 11th September 2003

8:30am Coach departs Flag Haven Marina Inn for venue

8:45am Arrival / Registration

- Brief recap on the discussion and deliberations from Day 1.

***Round Table Section** – This section of the workshop will explore the issues and ideas to include in recommendations to the National Obesity taskforce. This will be a working session – where practical ideas, approaches and actions will be discussed — Key target areas will be defined, with new actions and priorities identified.*

9.30am Facilitated Round Tables Section

Participants will be asked to look at issues and opportunities for action, within the topic area at the table they have selected to sit at, in the framework of the national obesity taskforce (adapted for this workshop – refer attached map):

- Environment and Household Structure
- Family / Community focus
- National /state measurement/information systems
- ATSI Health Workforce
- Socio economic status & Food Security

10.45am Morning tea

11.00am Report out from Round Tables

- Brief presentations (10 minutes) from each working group to summarise key recommended practical steps and actions to be forwarded to the AHMAC National Obesity Taskforce.

12.00 noon Overall Summary

- Overall summary and action from here.

1.00 pm Close

REPORT

A report on the outcomes of the workshop will be prepared and distributed to participating members and the National Taskforce.

***The facilitation team** is Leanne Woods and David Beurle – They are assisting with preparation prior to the workshop in the agenda development and process design. Their role includes facilitating throughout the workshop. The facilitation team will be in contact with each participant prior to the workshop.*