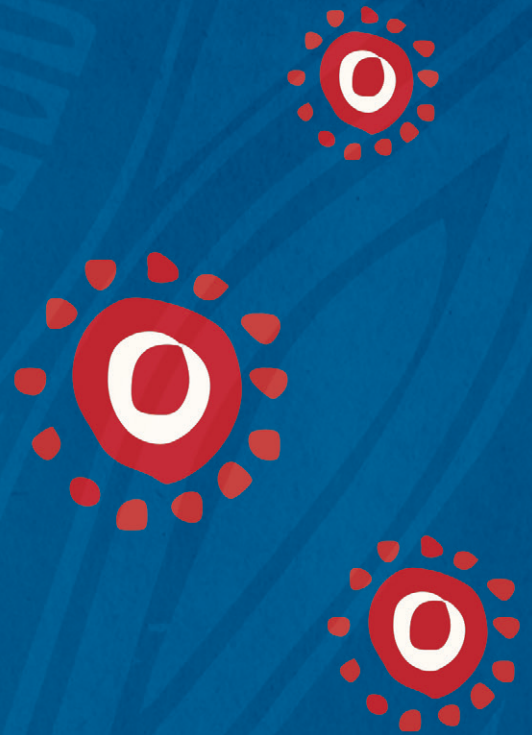


Weenthunga Health Network



2015 - 2016
Annual Report

President's Report

I have been privileged to be the President of the Weenthunga Health Network since January this year. Prior to this, Weenthunga's President was Rebecca Crawford – a dedicated Aboriginal Community Development Worker. I would like to acknowledge Rebecca's strength and her amazing contribution as President. Rebecca has recently moved to NSW to be closer to her family.

I have very much enjoyed working with my colleagues on the Weenthunga Committee of Management. The Committee sets the strategic direction, strategic goals, the financial plans and the policies of the Weenthunga Health Network and monitors the operations of Weenthunga.

The operational leadership role in Weenthunga is shared by a First Australian and Australian. The Executive Officer Lin Oke and the Health and Education Consultant Steff Armstrong work two-way – sharing their knowledge and experience to broaden and strengthen their decision-making and leadership.

This way of working together is based on trust – trust between the Committee of Management and the staff. The model of governance fosters trust in all Weenthunga's work: trust between the Executive Officer and the Health and Education Consultant; trust between the Committee and their Weenthunga members; and trust gained from partners or young people with whom Weenthunga works.

I look forward to the year ahead, where the Weenthunga Health Network will work together on strategies to address the inequities in First Australian and Australian health in Victoria.

Terori Hareko-Samios
President

Weenthunga Committee of Management

Following last year's AGM, new Committee members Brenda McDermott, Desley Slade and Melissa Deacon-Crouch joined the Committee of Management and the Office Bearers were elected: Terori Hareko-Samios President, Brenda McDermott Deputy President and Carol Mioduchowski Treasurer. During the year Kevan Horder was appointed to the Committee.



Rebecca Crawford
President until January

Profession: Aboriginal Community Development Worker, Dental Health Services Victoria.
First Australian: Barkindji woman from western region Darling River, NSW.



Terori Hareko-Samios
President from January

Profession: Social Work Masters student, Team Leader, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Cohealth.
First Australian: Papua New Guinean / Torres Strait Islander descendant.



Brenda McDermott
Deputy President

Position: Indigenous rural health policy and research
First Australian: Palawa (Tasmania).



Carol Mioduchowski
Treasurer

Profession: Podiatrist, North Area Health.
Manager – Barwon Health Community Healthand Rehabilitation services. Australian.



Desley Slade
Committee Member

Position: Health Services Quality and Infrastructure
First Australian: Gamilaroi - NSW.



Kevan Horder
Committee Member

Position: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Outreach Worker
First Australian: Kooma and Guamú descendant SW Queensland.



Melissa Deacon-Crouch
Committee Member

Profession: Registered Nurse and Midwife
La Trobe University Senior Lecturer; LRHS BNBM Coordinator Australian.



David Menzies
Committee Member

Profession: Manager Quality Systems and Health Partnerships at Fitness Australia. Australian.

Governance and Operational Model

Weenthunga's governance is one of First Australian leadership whilst emphasising First Australian and Australian collaboration. First Australians are the decision makers as they collaborate and share with the Australians in Weenthunga. The Committee of Management will always comprise a majority of First Australians, and the position of President can only be held by a First Australian. The model underpins Weenthunga's operations, as we acknowledge the value of combining First Australians' knowledge, experience and skills in working with First Australian organisations, communities, health services and people, with the Australians' knowledge, experience and skills in the health system and services and organisational management.

Weenthunga's Aims and Objectives

The Weenthunga Health Network aims to contribute to strategies to improve the health and well-being of First Australians in Victoria. To achieve this aim, Weenthunga's primary focus is to contribute to:

- improving the uptake of health careers by First Australian school leavers; and
- improving the knowledge, competencies and collaboration of the Victorian health workforce working with First Australians, better equipping health workers to provide culturally sensitive services.

Executive Officer's Report

Capacity building and sustainability for Weenthunga was a major goal for 2015-2016. Weenthunga's small team of part-time staff working from various locations in Victoria needed an efficient 'virtual office'. Options were carefully researched and key features ascertained for a virtual shared filing system. At the same time Weenthunga asked *Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)* if there was a possibility of Weenthunga being housed at VACCHO.

Both of these wishes have become a reality. Weenthunga's Network Development Manager works from a desk at VACCHO and staff have access to a secure section VACCHO's cloud based IT system, with opportunities for regular face to face team meetings. Weenthunga is very appreciative of the support of Jill Gallagher and her team of staff at VACCHO who have made us so welcome.

Discussions were held with Victorian and Australian Government health workforce personnel to highlight Weenthunga's continuing endeavours.

It has been another great year working in tandem with Steff Armstrong and our small staff team as well as with Weenthunga's Committee of Management – wonderful committed health professionals with busy work and personal lives who generously give of their time.

Lin Oke
Executive Officer



Above: Steff Armstrong, Health & Education Consultant; Terori Hareko-Samios, President and Lin Oke, Executive Officer

Health and Education Consultant's Report

With the evaluation of the "Girls Resilience" program in Bendigo completed, key elements were reported on at our AGM. Key elements were the girls feeling valued and supported, and that they were inspired by other First Australian women. It has been this network in Bendigo that has seen a number of health and educational professionals, students and their families working together to increase the number of First Australian girls following health pathways. This year's work has resulted in stronger networks and understanding of the values of connecting within these community networks.

Weenthunga's Health Days "Women's Talk" have continued to change and bring the much needed conversations between First Australian health professionals and students. At the beginning of 2016, three more young women who had attended a health day in 2015 were accepted into health courses at La Trobe University, Bendigo.

Young Women Choosing Health Study Guide was completed and launched on line. I wish to thank Tracy Smith and Jackie Taylor for their support in writing this resource.

The two-way model of operating in Weenthunga has meant another wonderful year of working in a respectfully and rewarding manner. I wish to thank the board, Tracy, Mel, Sarah, Sam and Lin on their support and reciprocity in the space.

Stephanie Armstrong
Health and Education Consultant

Weenthunga Staff

Another sustainability strategy was to consolidate staffing positions to establish a more substantive position of Network Development Manager. Tracy Smith and Sam Corrie were sincerely thanked and farewelled early in 2016, and Sarah Stoller was appointed in March as Network Development Manager. Weenthunga's part-time staff work flexibly to be available as the capacity is required.

The Weenthunga staffing team now comprises:

- Lin Oke, Executive Officer
- Steff Armstrong, Health and Education Consultant
- Melanie Dooley, Finance and Business Manager
- Sarah Stoller, Network Development Manager
- Stuart Peace, Communications and Membership Coordinator.

Treasurer's Report

In 2015 - 2016 Weenthunga continued to deliver outcomes beyond expectations for a small and growing network. Weenthunga's core business activities have grown and its profile has been raised significantly. Weenthunga's resources have been used predominately on staff which underpins the strong emphasis on relationships in our vision and mission.

Weenthunga's relationships with our generous philanthropy donors makes Weenthunga's work to meet our objectives possible. We would like to thank the Trusts and Funds which have taken this opportunity to engage with a First Australian-led organisation. The unique and important relationship with philanthropy is recognised by Weenthunga's Committee and staff. This relationship is discussed in more detail in Relationship with Philanthropy on page 5 of this report. We would also like to thank the individuals who have given personal donations to support Weenthunga financially and we appreciate your assistance to achieve our vision.



The organisation targets our expenditure to achieving successful outcomes. The surplus of \$100,128 for 2015-2016 has provided certainty of operations for the near future whilst we pursue other funding avenues to maintain sustainability in the longer term. There are no outstanding liabilities for Weenthunga.

I would like to thank Melanie Dooley for capably looking after a number of business functions and preparing our financials, and Lin Oke for her direction of Weenthunga.

Carol Mioduchowski
Treasurer

Note: a full copy of the audited financial statements, provided at the AGM, are available on request from members.

Prudent financial management strategy of the Weenthunga Health Network

Weenthunga continues to successfully receive support from philanthropy whilst it pursues core funding from government. As there is no certainty in the level of funding obtained each year, it prudently manages its expenditure to ensure there are sufficient funds retained in reserves to meet core operating costs for 12 months ahead.

	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016
Financial Report						
Income	4,640	33,023	76,584	85,631	212,198	52,499
Expenditure	(9,738)	(5,546)	(28,425)	(68,736)	(103,723)	(147,637)
Retained earnings	4,738	22,739	70,898	87,793	196,267	100,128

Weenthunga's Financial Supporters 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016



The Towards a Just Society Fund
A sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation



Australian Communities Foundation sub funds:

- Fairer Futures Fund
- Sunning Hill Fund
- Nicholas R Taylor Fund

Weenthunga's Members

Weenthunga's membership has grown steadily to 315 by the end of June 2016 – with 24% of members being First Australians. This is a significant indicator of value when compared to the percentage in Victoria's health workforce which might be about 4% (in the public hospitals it known to be 0.16%).

Weenthunga's members come from a great diversity in health roles, including: Aboriginal Health Project Management; Aboriginal Health Research; Aboriginal Hospital Liaison; Audiology; Chiropractic; Community Development; Dental Therapy; Diabetes Education; Dietetics; Exercise Physiology; Fitness Training; General Practice; Health Education; Health Services Management; Health Promotion; Indigenous Healthy Lifestyle Work; Medical Specialty; Medicine; Mental Health Work; Midwifery; Neuropsychology; Nursing; Nutrition; Occupational Therapy; Optometry; Osteopathy; Pharmacy; Physiotherapy; Podiatry; Public Health; Psychiatry; Psychology; Social Work and Speech Pathology.

Relationship with Philanthropy

Weenthunga relies on the generous support of a number of philanthropic donors for our core operations. We know that goals are achieved and great changes can be made when philanthropy works effectively in partnership with Aboriginal organisations. We would like to highlight an example of such a relationship, with our long term philanthropic supporters *Towards a Just Society Fund*, which is based on trust. This trust allows us to support our girls when they need it most and in flexible ways. The members of *Towards a Just Society Fund* have provided Weenthunga with a bursary, which has been drawn on frequently throughout the year. This allows us to support the girls with what is most needed, when it is most needed. Relationships are incredibly important in Aboriginal culture. The way of working is in many ways as important as the end goal. We acknowledge *Towards a Just Society Fund* and the relationship they have built with Weenthunga. This unique relationship and their bursary and other funding support underpins the success of our work in Bendigo.



Above: Aunty Kath sharing story and song with young women

Awards

The Weenthunga Committee and staff were very proud of two of their Weenthunga colleagues who were honoured during the year with significant awards:

Fellowship in Indigenous Leadership

Terori Hareko-Samios was acknowledged as an Emerging Leader for 2015-2016 by the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership. The Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership fosters leadership, providing exceptional people with the support they need to achieve their vision for their communities.

IAHA Award

Lin Oke received a Commitment to Indigenous Health Award at the Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) Conference 2015. This was awarded to an individual who has demonstrated commitment and contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through allied health.



Above: Terori being congratulated by Genevieve Timmons, Rebecca Crawford, Steff Armstrong and Lin Oke



Above: Lin and other recipients of IAHA Awards

HIGHLIGHTS OF WEENTHUNGA'S WORK

Weenthunga Health Day: Women's Talk

In August 2015 Weenthunga hosted a Melbourne health day at which young women enthusiastically participated in a day full at the Royal Children's Hospital (morning) and at VACCHO (afternoon). We would like to thank VACCHO and the Royal Children's for their support.

The girls heard interesting presentations from First Australian health workers. The girls heard from a variety of presenters including: Nicole Cassar (VACCHO's Director of Sustainability); Kerrie Thomsen (Occupational Therapist); Toni McLaughlin (Regional University Manager); Nina Kirby (ATSI outreach worker); Cindy Scott, Cheryl Bamblett and Margaret Davidson (Aboriginal Koori Maternity Service); Terori Hareko-Samios (Co Health TL & AHPACC worker); Tanika Meeks (Medical Scientist specialising in pathology) Sharni Wearne & Graeme Kington (Medibank Indigenous Health Employment National Reconciliation Plan); Stephanie Blyth (Chiropractor); Selena White (Aboriginal Family Support Coordinator); Tanya Druce (Speech Pathology) Liz Phillips (Health promotion); and Marley Stewart and Pam MacCalman (Nurse Cadetship Program). Natalie Ironfield and Samantha Paxton also conducted a cultural identity activity with the girls.

We would like to thank all of our presenters for their amazing contribution on the day helping to make the day a great success and to inspire the next generation of health workers.



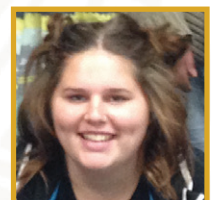
Study Guide: Young Women Choosing Health

On 1 June 2016 Weenthunga launched the Young Women Choosing Health Study Guide at VACCHO. Following on from the health days, in September 2014 Weenthunga produced a short video called "Young Women Choosing Health" aimed to engage discussion around health careers for Middle and Senior Secondary (Years 9 to 12) First Australian female students. The video is on Weenthunga's website so it can be seen by a wide audience of First Australian students – to capture their interest and to illustrate good online resources which showcase health careers.

The video draws on the strength of telling story as part of Aboriginal culture. Danika is a high school student who attended the Weenthunga 'Womens Talk' Health Day in Melbourne. During this event she listened to a group of inspiring First Australian women working in a variety of health fields. She was given the opportunity to talk with them and other students on the day and now reflects on what this day provided and how she can seek further information on choosing a career in health.

The Study Guide is designed to facilitate discussions led by teachers who are advising and supporting Aboriginal students with career choices and relevant subject selections as they pertain to the broader health industry.

The Study Guide is downloadable from Weenthunga's website as either a digital or printable booklet version.



Girls Resilience Program Participants Start University

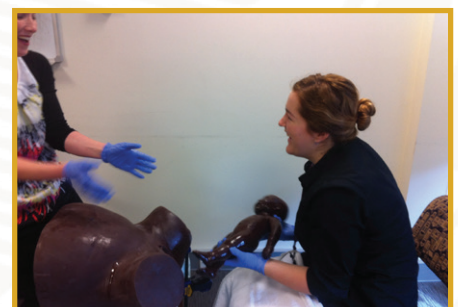
Our programs that support young women are designed to increase the number of First Australian school leavers to uptake a career in health. This is one of Weenthunga's primary aims, and the Girls Resilience Program helps us achieve that. We are very proud of all our program participants, and would like to make special mention of the four young women who have moved onto the first stage of their health related careers this year.

Three students have commenced studies at the La Trobe University School of Rural Health in Bendigo: Skye Anderson has started a Diploma of Health Sciences; Georgia Radford a Bachelor of Nursing / Bachelor of Midwifery; and Charmaine Emily-Rose Gray has commenced a Bachelor of Applied Science leading into Occupational Therapy. Maryanne Thalasinios has started her traineeship in Aged Care.



Assisting with Work Experience

Weenthunga members help organise work experience for students – like Maya who was billeted in Melbourne whilst she experienced the work of midwives at the Royal Women's Hospital.



Relationship with VACCHO

Weenthunga became 'roomies' with VACCHO when the new Network Development Manager started in March 2016. VACCHO and Weenthunga had morning tea to welcome Weenthunga to the VACCHO office in Collingwood, and our President Terori Hareko-Samios gave a short speech. The Network Development Manager has a workstation in the VACCHO office, Weenthunga staff have access to their meeting and training rooms, and share a secure section of VACCHO's cloud based IT systems. The co-location of Weenthunga and VACCHO offers a number of great opportunities for collaboration. Both organisations will benefit, share information, and look to work in complementary ways. These opportunities may include for example: the promotion of the excellent VACCHO cultural safety training through Weenthunga's networks; and presentations by VACCHO staff at Weenthunga health days. Sarah Stoller, Network Development Manager greatly values the opportunity to work alongside VACCHO staff and is keen to further forge relationships and explore avenues of further collaboration which will address Weenthunga's two key objectives.



Above: Terori, with Sarah, thanking VACCHO

Evaluating Weenthunga's Networking Model - The Girls Resilience Project

At Weenthunga's Annual General Meeting in November 2015, Natalie Moxham from Leanganook Yarn presented the findings from their evaluation undertaken throughout 2015. Those at the AGM were left very moved by the insights that Natalie shared, and very proud of the work that Weenthunga is doing. To quote two of the young women:

'I gained confidence and became stronger, I would never have done the things I've done without the confidence and strength that was given to me by Weenthunga.'

'I had always struggled with not being as dark as others, I'm fair skinned but working within the realms of Weenthunga they helped me to learn that's ok, I'm still a strong Koori woman.'

The Evaluation also provides some feedback on what can be done to make our work sustainable. The full Evaluation Report is now available to read on our website.

Our sincere thanks are extended to Leanganook Yarn for their comprehensive and unique evaluation, to the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation for their generous funding of the project, and to the many girls, mothers, aunties and health professionals who gave of their time to participate in the evaluation.



Strengthening Weenthunga's Capacity and Effectiveness in 2016 - 2017

In 2016-2017 Weenthunga aims to increase our capacity and effectiveness through:

- Growing our membership
- Gaining core funding from Government
- Expanding the Girls Resilience Program into other locations within Victoria
- Growing and building on our partnership with VACCHO
- Holding an Indigenous Health Leadership Dinner to celebrate 5 years of the network
- Providing leadership in Victoria in fostering collaborative planning of how to effectively implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula in Victorian health courses.



Weenthunga Health Network Inc
Level 13, 257 Collins Street Vic 3000

ABN: 95 615 678 762

Weenthunga Health Network Inc has ATO Income Tax Exemption and DGR status.

Weenthunga means 'hear / understand' in Woiwurrung, language of the Wurunjeri people of the Kulin Nation

Weenthunga artwork by Shawana Andrews 2010: Connecting Through Conversation: the flames represent the campfire, a focal point for sharing knowledge and listening. The circles represent communities, which have an abundance of knowledge to share.

First Australians is our preferred term for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – regardless of where they live and avoiding the implication of non-entities for others.

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