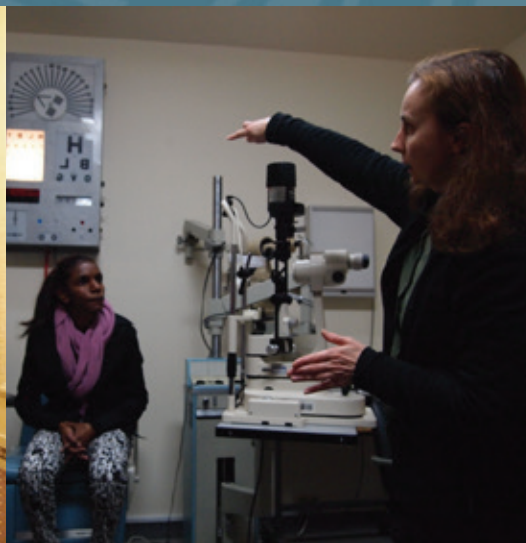




Weenthunga

Health Network



Annual Report
2013 - 2014



President's Report

I have been in this fantastic role as President of the Weenthunga Health Network since late October 2013. I say fantastic as it is wonderful to be part of the Weenthunga team guiding the Network as it grows and develops – like an infant building on its new found experiences, growing its skills whilst being encouraged by its family of elders and mentors.

I do wish to pay tribute to Kelli McIntosh, my predecessor – the visionary First Australian OT who, with her friend and collaborator, Lin Oke, established Weenthunga back in 2010. Kelli and her family have moved to Broome – and Kelli is now pursuing a medical career. We acknowledge and thank Kelli for all her enormous voluntary endeavour to ensure that Weenthunga's roots were well grounded, that Weenthunga was well connected and accepted by significant Elders and Leaders in Indigenous health in Victoria. Kelli also played a central role in ensuring that Weenthunga was acknowledged as an important contributor at a state level by the key national Indigenous health associations with whom Weenthunga now has strong connections.

It has been a pleasure to work with my colleagues on the Weenthunga Committee of Management, reviewing Weenthunga's goals, setting our annual objectives, monitoring Weenthunga's progress in achieving these objectives, whilst being cognisant of the financial realities.

One of our great pleasures this year was having Aunty Joy Murphy accept our invitation to be a Patron of the Weenthunga Health Network.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable collaborative partnership of our Health and Education Consultant, Steff Armstrong and Lin Oke, our Executive Officer. Together, these two leaders, have demonstrated the potential and the benefit of First Australian and Australian collaboration, of 'two way talk'. I am proud to know that the Weenthunga Health Network's governance model of First Australian leadership integrated with collaboration with Australian colleagues is being showcased and promoted by other organisations.

It is incredibly reassuring and gratifying to receive very significant financial donations from philanthropic bodies who believe in Weenthunga's vision and objectives. Likewise, to have donations from individual members of Weenthunga, is such a strong statement of endorsement of our endeavours. My Committee members and I are very appreciative.

We see the year ahead as one of consolidation, ensuring the sustainability of the Weenthunga Health Network's contribution to the strategies addressing the inequities in First Australian and Australian health here in Victoria.

Rani Lawler

Executive Officer's Report

It has been such a pleasure continuing to forge a great working relationship with Steff Armstrong – working together to progress the work to meet Weenthunga's objectives. Equally, it has been such a pleasure to work with new staff this year, as due to the belief of our grantees and donors, we have been able to employ some very effective staff who have contributed to Weenthunga's capacity: Melanie Dooley, Finance and Administration Manager and Arkeria Armstrong, Project Officer. We have also greatly benefited from the contributions of Kate Freeman our Volunteer Project Officer.

Weenthunga's Committee of Management have provided great leadership this year. They are a great group to work with and I would like to acknowledge the contribution of each of them: Rani Lawler, President; Rebecca Crawford; Deputy President; Carol Mioduchowski, Treasurer; Karen Hill; Terori Hareko-Samios; Delyth Lloyd.

The Weenthunga Health Network is demonstrating how, by engaging like-minded, passionate, people in health, we can collaboratively contribute to strategies contributing to equity in health for all Australians. We know that our way of working, First Australians collaborating with Australians, is key to Weenthunga's successes thus far. First Australians bring particular knowledge, experience and skills in working with First Australian organisations, communities and people, with Australians bringing knowledge, experience and skills in the health system and services and organisational management. To others it may appear inefficient, resource heavy, but we have learnt that it is most effective and contributes to sustainable progress.

During the year there have been many opportunities to capitalise on our network of health practitioners, calling on some to assist others, or to introduce members and others to enhance sharing of knowledge and contacts. Through networking we have introduced students to mentors in their chosen health profession, have facilitated collaboration between health practitioners keen to see advances in Indigenous health and have introduced First Australian and Australians in particular health professions in Victoria.

I look forward to our year ahead consolidating Weenthunga's capabilities.

Lin Oke



Brief History

Weenthunga Health Network was formed and incorporated in 2010. The early development of Weenthunga was underpinned by pro bono work and a loan from Koori Occupational Therapy Scheme (now repaid). With further funding from a range of philanthropic sources and donations, the Weenthunga Health Network continues to build its capacity and meet its objectives.



Weenthunga's aims and objectives

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

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

Weenthunga Committee of Management



Rani Lawler

President

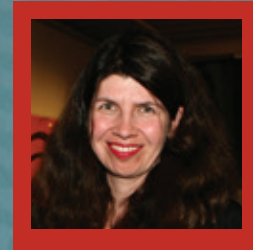
Profession: Podiatrist
First Australian: Torres Strait Islander descendant



Rebecca Crawford

Deputy President

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



Carol Mioduchowski

Treasurer

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



Karen Hill

Committee member

Profession: Nutritionist and PhD candidate (sports nutrition and exercise metabolism)
First Australian: Torres Strait Islander descendant



Delyth Lloyd

Committee member

Profession: Mental health researcher and project manager at the University of Melbourne
Australian: Welsh. Lived in Australia since 2001



Terori Hareko-Samios

Committee member

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

The Committee has met five times during the year to, initially confirm Weenthunga's objectives and endorse the operational plan for the year, and then to monitor its performance and financial management. The Committee actively engaged in planning and contributing to Weenthunga activities during the year.

Weenthunga's Governance Model

Weenthunga's governance is a First Australian-led model which emphasises First Australian and Australian collaboration. The Committee of Management comprises a mix of health practitioners and a mix of First Australians and Australians. The position of President can only be held by a First Australian and there will always be a majority of First Australians on the Committee.

Weenthunga membership

Weenthunga Health Network welcomes First Australians and Australians in health roles who wish to contribute to better health and well-being of Victorian First Australians and their communities.

Weenthunga has a very inclusive approach to membership – accepting people in any health role, as the current membership attests - our membership of First Australians and Australians is drawn from the fields of: 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 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; Speech Pathology.

Membership has steadily grown during the year from 188 to 216 with 53 Full Members and 163 Associate Members. Weenthunga anticipates many more health practitioners will join Weenthunga as it becomes better known.

Health and Education Consultant's Report

As Weenthunga's Health and Education consultant I have continued to consolidate the work that began in 2012- 2013 by assisting in having our second Weenthunga Health Day: Women's Talk on the 9th August, 2013. By providing opportunities such as these allows us to continue to focus on young First Australian school girls who are beginning to decide if they will take a health pathway.

By the end of 2013 I was meeting regularly with six to ten students, either individually or in small groups. In mid December I provided an opportunity for the girls and their families to come together to be a part of a yarnning session called "Pamper & Present". Events, where community members can come together and relax as part of their health & well being, is essential.

An initial meeting of four senior women instigated discussions around how they can be advisors around Weenthunga's work with students in Bendigo, but also as mentors and a support to me.

In October 2013 I received a Fellowship as an emerging Indigenous leader in Victoria. This has provided me with both financial assistance and human resources to continue my role in working with young women and their families. The role of supporting young First Australian women to see health as a career choice has continued to increase.

More schools in Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat were contacted in early 2014 so as to extend the Weenthunga network and provide links to the health area. "Sista's day out" and Youth Radio "Koorie Grapevine" allowed for new connections and the spreading Weenthunga's key messages.

Steff Armstrong

The Weenthunga Committee congratulates Steff Armstrong on receiving an Emerging Indigenous Leader Fellowship to contribute to her work with Weenthunga



Finance and Administration Officer

I was appointed Weenthunga's contract Finance and Administration Officer in July 2013. This role has provided support to other staff, improved communications with members, and aided in good financial governance. In particular, in the 12 months to June 2014, the following efficiencies have been made:

- Weenthunga's financial transactions are now recorded using MYOB software, enabling better record keeping, ease of reconciliations, and quarterly reports prepared for the Committee of Management;
- A template for Weenthunga's eNews has been established, and monthly newsletters are emailed to all members, stakeholders and interested parties. The newsletter, whilst in electronic form, is in a format that prints well and can be left in office staffrooms and on noticeboards;
- Weenthunga's website continues to be updated with information and resources for the benefit of members as well as the public;
- A "filing cabinet in the cloud" is being utilised, referred to internally as "Weenthungaonline". This provides a means of communication between staff and shared filing of resources, working documents and contacts. It is intended to extend the use of "Weenthungaonline" with the Committee of Management, providing them with a "cyber office space" in which to work.
- Members have been able to book for Member Meetings via an online registration system called Trybooking. Trybooking captures the necessary data from attendees, and provides a means of communicating last minute information to all attendees prior to the event.
- Financial delegation, policies and procedures have been established.

I am pleased to be able to contribute to the increase in activity in Weenthunga.

Melanie Dooley



Weenthunga's Staff

Lin Oke - Executive Officer

Steph Armstrong - Health and Education Consultant

Melanie Dooley - Finance and Administration Manager

Arkeria Armstrong - Project Officer

Kate Freeman - Volunteer Project Officer





Treasurers Report

2013-2014 has seen Weenthunga further evolve to a vibrant power house of activity. In this steady growth we have continued to work on our governance structures to ensure that we have a framework that we can continue to build capacity, meeting our vision and mission and ensure sustainability in an ongoing and measured way.

Of our \$85,631 income this year, \$79,500 was from philanthropic trust grants which have allowed us to take on projects, meet objectives and continue with measured steps to build the organisation.

We would like to thank these generous organisations who have supported this opportunity to engage with young First Australians to look at health careers as an option. We have also had a number of individuals who have given personal donations as well and we thank these individuals, who support Weenthunga financially and in the vision.



Our expenditure of \$68,736 was primarily spent on staffing costs, project activities and small costs for administration infrastructure, website and accounts support. We are very grateful that for a modest fee we are able to use workstations and meeting rooms in the Australian Psychological Society's offices.

Sustainability of Weenthunga has been a key feature of this financial year. This year we have been able to maintain finances with portioning a small amount of resources to ensure further staffing support.

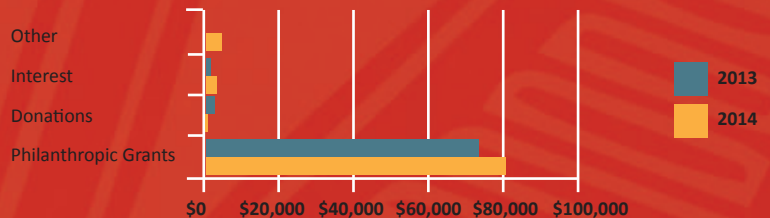
There are no outstanding liabilities for Weenthunga. A surplus of \$16,895 was recorded for 2013-2014 which we are pleased to say will be rolled over into further project and development work for the organisation.

Carol Mioduchowski

Note: the Audited Financial Report 2013-2014 is available to members in the members' section of the Weenthunga Website

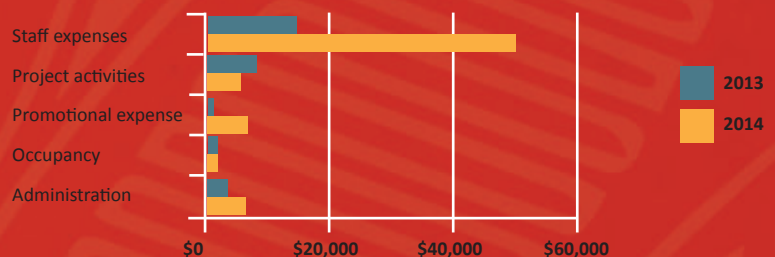
Weenthunga Income

	2013	2014
Philanthropic Grants	\$73,450	\$79,500
Donations	\$2,010	\$900
Interest	\$1,124	\$2,150
Other	\$0	\$3,081



Weenthunga Expenditure

	2013	2014
Administration	\$3,491	\$6,011
Occupancy	\$1,296	\$1,235
Promotional expense	\$720	\$6,324
Project activities	\$7,942	\$5,108
Staff expenses	\$14,976	\$50,058



Weenthunga's financial supporters 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014



The Towards a Just Society Fund
Australian Council of Social Education



Alf and Meg Steel Fund

EM Horton Fund

Beecher Family Fund

Fairer Future Fund



Weenthunga's Patron

Joy Murphy Wandin is a Senior Wurundjeri elder of the Kulin Nation here in Victoria. She has given the traditional welcome to country greeting at a number of Weenthunga events and meetings as well as to many distinguished visitors to Melbourne where she says in the Woiwurrung language "Wominjeka Wurundjeri Balluk yeammenn koondée bik" (Welcome to the land of the Wurundjeri people).

Born in Healesville, Joy Murphy Wandin's family never left Wurundjeri land and she is the great-great niece to William Barak, the last traditional ngurungaeta of the Wurundjeri-willam clan.

In 2002 Aunty Joy was awarded the Victorian Aboriginal Women's Award for being involved with Aboriginal Issues for thirty years. In 2006 she was made an officer of the Order of Australia "for her service to the community, particularly the Aborigines, through significant contributions in the fields of social justice, land rights, equal opportunity, art and reconciliation".

Some other roles include an honorary Professor at Swinburne University, Chair of the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development at the Victorian College of the Arts University of Melbourne, Board member of Fraynetwork Multimedia (Sisters of Mercy), Co-Patron for Keeping Koori Kids in Catholic Education and Patron for Parliament of World Religions. Joy is also an Ambassador for BreastScreen Victoria, Australia Day Victoria and an Animis Ambassador for Zoos Victoria. In the past she has been a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, a member of the Victoria Police Ethical Standards Consultative Committee.

The Weenthunga Committee of Management is deeply appreciative of Aunty Joy giving her patronage to Weenthunga.



Working to achieve Weenthunga's objectives in the year 2013/2014



WEENTHUNGA HEALTH DAY: Women's Talk

On 9th August, 2013, First Australian girls from four different schools in Melbourne and Bendigo got together to learn about health careers. The students included boarders from Darwin and Swan Hill.

The girls came to hear First Australian women, working in a range of health professional roles, provide insight into their careers. The day started off at the Royal Children's Hospital, with energetic warm up games, provided by Erin from Reconciliation Victoria. The first speakers included Terori Hareko-Samios, an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer at the Women's Hospital; Sharon Mongta and Rebecca Crawford from the Wadja Clinic and Erin Lowrie, an Occupational Therapist, all from the Royal Children's Hospital; and Karen Hill, a Nutritionist doing her PhD in Sports Nutrition.

After lunch at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, the girls were treated with a welcome to country from Aunty Joy Murphy, who spoke of her connection to the land, and her need to give back to the community. They then heard stories from Denise McGuinness, comedian and Community Services manager at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service; Michelle McMahon, Social Worker and PhD student; Amanda Ryan and Faye Clarke, Nurses from the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative; and Dr Chantelle Stubna.

The girls learned about the qualities that are needed for working in health care, such as being passionate and wanting to help others. The speakers told of their own experiences of being leaders in the progression of Aboriginal health care, and the importance of paving the way for future First Australian health professionals. Messages of persistence and determination arose frequently throughout the day, with speakers sharing stories about their own struggles with education, and how they came through in the end. Advice to not listen to people who say you can't do it, and to keep going through open doors were additional messages of positivity. The girls were given lots of advice on supports for going to university. They were shown a variety of options that would enable them to get in to their desired course.

At the dinner in the evening, the girls were able to speak informally with the guest speakers and ask any questions they had. They also heard from an Australian speech pathologist, and motivational singing from Miss Naidoc 2013. Feedback from the girls included that the day helped them feel more determined to become what they want to be, and that there are lots of ways to get where you want.





“Building Resilience in First Australian school girls” project in Bendigo

The Helen McPherson Smith Trust provided a grant to support a pilot project in Bendigo aimed at building resilience in First Australian school girls. This project has been steered by Stephanie Armstrong, Weenthunga’s Health and Education Consultant.

Stephanie has forged supportive relationships with a number of girls and their mothers and aunties, encouraging them to see post-secondary education possibilities with an awareness of the range of health careers possible.

To support this process, a local network of supporters spanning the gaps between school, TAFE and university and local First Australian community groups, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and mainstream health services has been established. The Australians in the network are gaining a greater understanding of culturally safe ways of working with First Australians.

The First Australian girls involved in the program are building strength, resilience and confidence, with the aim that they will make post school choices of higher education. Some will choose health careers which ultimately will contribute to better health services for First Australians.

Initially, this project was going to focus on supporting First Australian students in year 11 and 12. While a number of students from this age group were involved, it was decided that a focus on younger high school students would also be beneficial as they are still planning for VCE and if they can be linked into networks early this may enhance their opportunities (i.e. meaningful work experience) and influence the direction they take with their subject choice for years 11 and 12.

Five of the students are now aiming at a career in health and four of these attended the Weenthunga Health Day to hear from First Australian women in health roles. This furthered their network and linked them in with First Australian women working in a range of health roles, such as medical, allied health, management and administration.

Many First Australian girls are isolated in their school environment, as they are often the only First Australian student in their classroom. This project has created opportunities for the students to network with each other and to engage in peer support. They have learnt of the importance of health, being healthy, self-care and care for their community. They are taking responsibility for their own learning and understanding that there are many different avenues and journeys that can be taken to achieve a rewarding career.

This project has also benefited a number of Australian clinicians and leaders in the health sector as they have learned from the project leader about working “two ways”, cultural safety and how to create environments in mainstream organisations in which First Australian students and health professionals can excel. The strengths that come with First Australian identity have also been reinforced to Australians in the network along with the resilience of the girls involved in the project.

Presentations and Participation

By organising presentations and discussions for our members and other health practitioners we are working towards achieving a key Weenthunga objective: improving the knowledge, competencies and collaboration of the Victorian health workforce working with First Australians, better equipping them to provide culturally sensitive services.

At last year’s AGM Professor Ian Anderson, Assistant Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Higher Education Policy) and Director Murrup Barak – Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development, lead a discussion on the topic: Issues confronting First Australians whose appearance is not strongly Aboriginal.

Weenthunga staff members Arkeria, Steff and Lin provided a poster presentation at a National Indigenous Women’s Health Forum and participated in the discussions with First Australian and Australian women from around Australia.

Rebecca Crawford, Deputy President and Lin Oke, Executive Officer, presented at an Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers Forum.

Lin was a co-presenter in a workshop for occupational therapists: Working with and Learning from First Australians. Steff and Lin participated in a Melbourne University seminar: Closing Credibility Gap and attended the university’s Narrm Orator.

Rani Lawler, President and Lin Oke, Executive Officer, were guests at the signing of the Statement of Intent by Indigenous Allied Health Australia and Allied Health Professions Australia in Parliament House on 20 March 2014. The allied health associations are committed to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by year 2030. They contend that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to equitably access allied health services that are available, affordable, acceptable and appropriate and provided by allied health professionals who are both culturally responsive and clinically competent.

Weenthunga’s plans for 2014/2015

1. Continue to seek funding (from government and philanthropic sources) for core collaborative job sharing between First Australian and Australian staff and essential underpinnings to be able to efficiently and effectively operate in a sustainable way.
2. Extend to other regional communities, plans developed by Weenthunga’s Health and Education Consultant to address the objective: improve the uptake of health careers by First Australian school leavers.
3. Continue to assist members improving their knowledge, competencies and collaboration when working with First Australians and being able to provide culturally sensitive services by adding to the members’ resource library on the website, informing them of relevant educational events and holding members’ meetings and discussions around relevant topics.
4. Implement the capacity building plans developed by Weenthunga’s Executive Officer to enhance membership recruitment, promotional and publicity activities, stakeholder engagement and the sustainability of the Weenthunga Health Network.



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 – avoiding the implication of non-entities for others.

Graphic Design: Dixon Patten, Yorta Yorta and Gunnai