



Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION | ICN 7823



BOARD COMMUNIQUÉ

ISSUE 12, February 2015

Board Meeting Wrap

The following topics were discussed at the last Congress Board of Directors Meeting held 26 February 2015:

- Review of Congress' Social and Emotional Wellbeing Service
- New appointments to Executive Management
- Update on Alice Springs After Hours General Practice
- ANFPP National Workshop in Alice Springs
- Senate Inquiry into Health
- Substance abuse and after-hours youth services
- Male and Female Health Subcommittees
- Memo Club alcohol management strategies
- Expanding Intensive Family Support Service
- Update on Temporary Beat Locations
- Developments at Congress clinics in Alice Springs
- Human Resources developments
- Current research projects
- Governance priorities

The next Board Meeting will be held **Thursday 23 April 2015**.

Review of Congress' Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Service

In June 2014, Congress commissioned an independent review of the Congress Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Service to consider and recommend structural and procedural changes in order to optimise Congress' service delivery model and enhance client services.

The recommendations made by the review have been accepted by Executive Management and the Board.

Key recommendations include:

- Standardisation of practice and outcome measures for all services
- The implementation of the 3 streams of care approach across all of SEWB and not only within a single program
- Develop clearer and more consistent understanding of cultural safety Develop a central intake model, appointment system and on-call service Develop client advisory and feedback mechanisms

A SEWB Review Implementation Committee has been established to ensure the implementation of recommendations.

New Appointments to the Executive Management Team

Since the last board meeting there has been two new significant appointments to the Executive Management Team.

Tracey Brand, a local Arrernte woman with multiple masters' degrees was appointed to the position of General Manager Alice Springs Health Services Division.

Kim Mannering, former HR Manager for Central Land Council, has been appointed as the General Manager Human Resources. Kim comes to the position highly qualified.

Update on the Alice Springs After Hours General Practice

The Alice Springs After Hours General Practitioner service is operating successfully and is well utilised by the Alice Springs community.

After-hours services will be maintained by the Department of Health (DoH) through existing arrangements with Medicare Locals until 30 June 2015.

According to DoH, new funding arrangements will be transitioned from 1 July 2015 to ensure continuity of after-hour service provision in the community.

Congress will push to ensure that this important service is maintained so as it can continue to provide a much needed service to the Alice Springs community.



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ANFPP National Workshop in Alice Springs

The first ever national Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) workshop was held in Alice Springs over three days in February 2015.

The workshop was attended by staff from each ANFPP service location; from Congress' own Family Partnership Program team, Wuchopperen Aboriginal Health Service in Cairns and Wellington Aboriginal Health Service.

The workshop aimed to build on the concept of a 'community of practice' allowing each site to share its learnings including outcomes and data issues, and to discuss the role of the national leadership group, and possible new sites.

Congress is in discussions with the commonwealth Department of Health about the further rollout of the Australian Nurse Family Partnerships Program to high needs remote communities in central Australia.

Senate Inquiry into Health

Congress CEO Donna Ah Chee and Chief Medical Officer Public Health, John Boffa, recently presented to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into Health in Canberra, elaborating on key points made in Congress' submission to the inquiry, highlighting the importance of the role of Aboriginal community controlled health services.

The committee will provide a final report in respect of health policy, administration and expenditure to the Senate on 20 June 2016.

The workshop aimed to build on the concept of a 'community of practice' allowing each site to share its learnings including outcomes and data issues, and to discuss the role of the national leadership group, and possible new sites.

Congress' submission is available for download at www.aph.gov.au.

Possibility to expand the Intensive Family Support Service

Congress has been invited through a direct tender process to submit a tender for the expansion of the Intensive Family Support Service into Santa Teresa and Ntaria.

Congress will now consider the complexities of providing a service that will inevitably involve an association with the removal of at-risk children by the NT Department of Children and Families.

After Hours Youth Services

Insufficient after hours support for at-risk young people in Alice Springs has been a key matter of concern for Congress and other local agencies for the past year.

More than 12 months ago, Congress wrote to Minister Lambley warning that at-risk young people had been placed at additional risk of serious harm as a result of the government's decision to defund Congress' After Hours Youth Service which was believed to duplicate the government's own Youth Service Outreach Service (YSOS).

When the government defunded its own YSOS service six months later, Congress went public highlighting the hypocrisy of the decision given the original duplication of service argument and again warning that young people would be further placed in harm's way as a result.

Following a recent tragic death of a 12 year old boy in Alice Springs as a result of chroming which occurred in the "After Hours" time slot, Congress along with CAYLUS and other local agencies, wrote to Minister Elferink regarding the contribution of a lack of After Hours youth services to such a tragedy. The letter also highlighted the warnings that Congress has previously made to government.

The tragedy attracted national media coverage, especially through the ABCs JJJ program and significant public attention and during this time, the Government, through the Chief Minister, announced \$4 million would be invested over 4 years in youth service across the NT. The funds were to be allocated by regional coordination committees.

At a recent NGO forum held by the Chief Minister, Adam Giles, Donna Ah Chee persuaded the Chief Minister that some of these funds should go towards re-establishing an after-hours youth service in Alice Springs and not be subject to decision making by committee.

Congress will continue to play an active role in the rollout of this funding and the establishment of the after-hours youth service to ensure that sufficient and effective support is provided to young people in Alice Springs.



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Strategies to manage alcohol consumption at the Memo Club in Alice Springs

Congress, Centrecorp and Memo Club management continue to work closely together to support the responsible service of alcohol at the Memo Club in Alice Springs.

Memo Club management have agreed to discontinue the sale of take-away alcohol in spite of the cost to their license. They have also implemented a range of strategies to promote the responsible service of alcohol.

They have agreed to use onsite breathalysers in the near future to enable management and staff to test patrons who appear to be over the limit if there is any doubt.

At such a time that the financial viability of the club is secure, management will consider the option to enforce policy to restrict the sale of alcohol to patrons unless they are purchasing a meal. The club has also agreed to trial a policy of one drink per person until 2pm to stop supply to people who may be drunk but do not come to the bar.

Given the contested nature of community views on alcohol consumption, Congress will survey its members to obtain their feedback on the appropriate alcohol policy balance between prohibition on the one extreme, effective regulation and harm minimisation in the middle and complete de-regulation at the other extreme.

Promoting a well-managed, social club with good amenity and responsible service of alcohol fits within the current policy platform but support for this will be part of the survey of members.

This survey is currently in development and will assess preferences ranging from prohibition, regulated supply to unregulated supply.

Update on Temporary Beat Locations (TBLs)

In the past month, NT Police have partially removed TBLs across Alice Springs due to the high cost of resources assigned to these and police dissatisfaction with the role, and as result, there has been a notable increase in displays of public drunkenness and increases pressure placed on emergency services.

Congress has publicly expressed concern regarding the move and a lack of alternative mitigation.

Congress supports a decision to replace the TBL strategy with photo-licensing at the point of sale which restrict the sale of takeaway alcohol to Aboriginal people living on alcohol prohibited areas as currently occurs through the TBL strategy.

The Police agree that TBLs have been proven to reduce consumption and harm but that resources are presently insufficient to support the strategy, however, it expects a new wave of recruits to arrive by April at which time full TBLs will resume. This delay is not acceptable to Congress and advocacy on the issue will continue to restore full TBLs until an alternative is in place.

Consultation carried out as part of the Alice Springs Alcohol Management Plan, has found that there is strong, broad community support for TBLs or alternatively, photo-licensing at the point of sale.

Chair of the Alice Springs Alcohol Reference Panel, Damien Ryan, has publicly expressed his concerns at the demise of TBLs and advised that he will raise the matter directly with the Minister for Police.

Male and Female Health Subcommittees

Male Health and Women's Health are critical issues for the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs and have always required separate and distinct gender specific governance processes in accordance with traditional cultural norms.

Historically, effective cultural leadership in these important areas have relied on the Alukura Cultural Advisory Committee which is made up of women from all parts of Central Australia and the Male Health Reference Group for Ingkintja.

In the past, there has been no formal relationship with the Congress Board for these committees in spite of the strategic nature of their roles.

Given the governance reforms that have occurred at Congress it was deemed appropriate to make these important functions formal subcommittees under the Congress Board thereby replacing both the Alukura Cultural Advisory Committee and the Male Health Reference Group.

The existence of the Alukura Cultural Advisory Committee would require a transition arrangement and a formal proposal will be put to the April board meeting in relation to proposed membership of the Women's Health Subcommittee in order to seek appropriate continuation of some of the existing members in addition to the female Board members.

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Clinics Subcommittee Report

The Congress Clinics Subcommittee provided an update on recent developments at Congress clinics in Alice Springs against strategic priorities.

At the Alukura Women's Health Clinic, an appointment system is set to commence from Monday 2 March 2015. A comprehensive communication strategy has been rolled out to inform Alukura clients of the change.

At the Congress Clinic, plans to expand the dental clinic have been certified and currently out for select tender.

To address increasing demand for Congress' pharmacy, the Congress Clinic will be investing in an Automatic Tablet Dispensing & Packing (Webster) Machine. A demountable will also be installed as a temporary expansion of the Pharmacy and will accommodate the Webster machine.

At Ingkintja Male Health Clinic, plans for an external review to inform ongoing improvements have been proposed by management. The Clinics Subcommittee has also proposed that a Male Health Subcommittee be established to provide the review with insight into the health and wellbeing needs of the males accessing Ingkintja services.

Research Subcommittee Report

The Research Subcommittee has provided an update regarding the Economic Evaluation of Congress, the evaluation of the Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) and participation in various research projects.

The objectives and scope of the Economic Evaluation of Congress model to be carried out by Professor Leonie Segal of University of South Australia have been agreed.

Prof Segal will work with a health economist responsible for the economic evaluation of the Queensland Institute of Urban Indigenous Health to further develop the proposed methodology of the evaluation.

An evaluation of IFFS has identified key issues in child protection in Central Australia, most notably, the severity of child neglect and the low rates of out of home care in spite of the high rates of substantiated neglect.

Due to the severity of the issues identified by the evaluation, a workshop will be held for the Congress Board to examine models of family support service delivery, in advance of a joint workshop to be held with Anglicare.

In regards to research projects, Congress has developed a Register of Research Projects.

For more information regarding Congress participation in current research projects contact Congress' Continues Quality Improvement staff on (08) 8958 4882.

Governance Subcommittee Report

The board has endorsed recommended priority tasks to be carried out in 2015.

Such tasks will include:

- reviewing potential updates to the Congress Rule Book
- improving access to information regarding membership for Aboriginal people living in remote service areas
- the appointment of non-member Directors
- the incorporation of the current process for the election of Directors into the constitution in order to ensure improved clarity of process for the benefit of members.

Human Resources Subcommittee Report

Key developments within Congress Human Resources function have focused on developing the Congress workforce, improving the delivery of HR services to staff and the recent successful outcome of Congress' Enterprise Agreement bargaining process.

Plans to establish a Workforce Development Plan to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people at Congress are currently in progress. The Aboriginal Staff Advisory Committee has provided input into this plan.

The plan is expected to be presented to Executive Management for review by June 2015 following an initial presentation to the Congress Aboriginal Staff Advisory Committee for its review.

In regards to service provision, HR Administration system, ConnX has been rolled out to employees, allowing staff to self-manage their HR life-cycles and allowing HR to focus its resources into more strategic tasks such as workforce development.

In regards to the outcome of Congress' Enterprise Bargaining process, staff voted in favour of the proposed agreement which was implemented on 26 January 2015, to remain until 30 June 2017.



END