



BOARD MEETING WRAP

Werte!

The following topics were discussed at the last Congress Board of Director's Meeting, held on 23 August 2018:

- Congress Northside Clinic
- Update – 127 Todd Street (formerly the Memo Club)
- Early Childhood Learning Centre and Childcare Centre Accreditation
- Corporate Business Plan 2018-19
- Supporting reduced trading for liquor outlets
- Submission on National Tobacco Strategy
- Thank you and farewell to Eric Brown
- Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee Report
 - » External Auditor Appointment
 - » Medicare Incentive Update
- Governance Subcommittee Report
- Research Subcommittee Report
- Clinics Subcommittee
- CEO's Report to the Board
 - » COAG Health Council meeting in Alice Springs
 - » Child and Families Tripartite Forum
 - » Health Care Homes
 - » HTLV-1 Forum
 - » Literacy for Life Program
 - » Tackling Indigenous Smoking program refunded for 3 years
 - » Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption

Congress Northside Clinic

At the time of the August Board meeting, the new Congress Northside Clinic was approaching completion, and it has since opened successfully.

The community was invited to join the Board and walk through the state-of-the-art facility prior to its opening at a Community Open Day on Saturday 8 September 2018. The event was well attended, with lots of families visiting and giving the new clinic the thumbs up.

The clinic is a further step in the Board's plan to provide smaller clinics located closer to where clients live in order to promote greater self-reliance and easier access to primary health care. The benefits of this were evidenced in the recent evaluation of Congress' clinics at Sadadeen and Larapinta (opened in 2016) which showed that smaller multidisciplinary teams providing services to a population of less than 2000 people do deliver greater continuity of care, improved access and chronic disease outcomes.

The Northside Clinic opened to provide care on Wednesday 12 September 2018.

Update – 127 Todd Street (formerly the Memo Club)

Following finalisation of the purchase of the former Memo Club site at 127 Todd Street, a project control group has been established including the General Manager Business Services and Director representative, Graham Dowling. This group will continue to meet regularly throughout the design, planning and construction of the project. The Board agreed to approve the budget, project plan and timeframes. The Board continues to endorse the use of Aboriginal businesses for the development, and where that is not possible to give preference to businesses who engage Aboriginal staff.

Early Childhood Learning Centre and Childcare Centre Accreditation

Recently, both the *Arrwekele akaltje irreyeye amperre* Early Childhood Learning Centre (ECLC) and *Ampe Kenhe Apmere* Congress Childcare underwent their assessment and ratings visit from the regulatory Authority (Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT).

The ECLC achieved a rating of "Exceeding"



Pictured: Congress Chair, William Tilmouth with Northside Clinic Manager, Catherine Hampton

across four of the seven quality areas under the National Quality Framework. This rating places the ECLC in the category of services who go beyond the requirements of four of those quality areas in providing quality care and education to the families and children they care for.

Congress Childcare achieved a rating of "Working Towards" which puts the centre in the category of services who provide a safe education and care program, with one or more areas identified for improvement.

Teams for both centres are to be congratulated on their achievements.

Corporate Business Plan 2018-19

This document provides a road map towards meeting strategic objectives, and details actions and performance indicators. The plan has been developed having regard to the new Strategic Plan, which is currently being finalised. Some of the key focuses of this plan are around community engagement, staff turnover, expansion, strategic asset management and environmental health. The Board approved the 2018-19 Business Plan.

Supporting reduced trading for liquor outlets

Police auxiliaries have recently commenced operations in Alice Springs but may not be present at liquor outlets full time. The NT Liquor Licensing Commission has been monitoring this situation and will be conducting a hearing in Alice Springs. Congress' proposed position is if police cannot man outlets full time then the opening hours of outlets should be reduced and even a small reduction will be effective in reducing alcohol related harms. Opening hours of 2pm to 9pm are therefore proposed for Saturdays consistent with other days (current Saturday opening hours are 10am - 9pm). The Board agreed to support the recommendation to write to the Commission to seek reduced trading hours for alcohol outlets of 2 - 9pm on Saturdays

Submission on National Tobacco Strategy

The Board was presented with an outline for the proposed submission on the National Tobacco Strategy. This submission was supported and will be provided to the Department of Health. The submission is available [on our website](#).

Thank you and farewell to Eric Brown

The Board noted that the General Manager Business Services, Eric Brown finished up with Congress on 31 August 2018. He was acknowledged as a great asset for Congress and his departure is a huge loss. The Board offered their best wishes and support to Eric and his family.

Eric thanked the Congress Board of Directors for their support and expressed his appreciation and the great enjoyment he has had whilst working at Congress.

Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee Report

The Board noted the report of the Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee, which met on 13 August 2018.

External Auditor Appointment

The selection process for the appointment of an external auditor was conducted recently. The invitation went to six firms and had detailed criteria to be met, including working well with an Aboriginal community controlled health organisation. BDO were selected as the successful candidate and were approved by the Board. They will now be recommended to members at the 2018 AGM as Congress' external auditors for 2019-2023.

Medicare Incentive Update

Broadening the Medicare Remuneration program to include nurses as well as other clinicians is considered a critical move to assist with staff retention and increase Medicare income.

Commencing 1 October 2018 this program be piloted within Congress. The Board approved an amendment to the current policy to include nurses who will be entitled to a 5% incentive for completing Medicare claims. The incentive will apply to all clinical staff, ensuring the scheme is equitable.

Governance Subcommittee Report

The Board noted the report of the Governance Subcommittee, which met on 31 July 2018.

The Congress Board of Directors approved the redrafted Proof of Aboriginality policy and the revised Application Form for Proof of Aboriginality. The updated form is available [on our website](#).

Research Subcommittee Report

The Board noted the report of the Research Subcommittee, which met on 30 July 2018.

The Board endorsed recommendations from the research subcommittee related to Congress' research goal of 70% internally driven, 30% externally driven research projects. This 70:30 goal is based on the principle that the majority of research that Congress undertakes should be community-led.

There will be a moratorium on new research applications from external researchers for the remainder of this year (to be reviewed in 2019). Additionally, there will be a focus on completing current projects for the remainder of 2018 and building the internal systems that will enable research to be better managed in the future. Internal research projects will continue to be developed as they give the most return to Congress in terms of research translation. Progress towards the 70:30 goal should continue to be monitored at each Research Subcommittee meeting.

The Board also agreed to participate in a workshop to commence planning and development of the Congress Research Strategy 2019-2023 based on the principles of Doing It Right, Working Together and the NHMRC six core values. The new Research Strategy will also be used to inform future research of the Central Australia Academic Health Science Centre.

Clinics Subcommittee Report

The Board noted the report of the Clinics Subcommittee, which met on 1 August 2018.

The Congress Board of Directors noted the briefing by the Chief Medical Officer Public Health and the General Manager Health Services on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS is an important initiative for Aboriginal people. It was accepted that the key role that Congress needs to play is supporting all of our clients with functional disability to be properly assessed and referred for final assessment by the National Disability Insurance Agency for eligibility for the NDIS. This is a really critical role which will ensure that Aboriginal people get access to the resources they are entitled to under the NDIS. As part of increasing our capacity in this key area Congress is working with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health in an effort for Alice Springs to become a trial site for the employment of Local Area Coordinators to assist people in the pre-assessment phase including in the development of NDIS eligible plans. This could be a very important development that would help to address some of the key barriers identified in the Barkly trial of the NDIS.

In terms of being a provider of services, Congress is keen to support other providers to play this role such that Congress would only become a provider of last resort. We hope that other Aboriginal organisations will take on this role. Congress is also working in partnership with PATCHES Paediatrics from Perth who plan to establish themselves in Alice Springs and Central Australia more broadly as a major provider of services under the NDIS. This enables Congress to focus on the assessment process and leave the other really important role of service provision to people accepted on to the NDIS to other providers.

CEO's Report to the Board

The Congress Board noted the Chief Executive Officer's Report which included an update on the following key matters.

COAG Health Council Meeting in Alice Springs

Australia's Health Ministers had their first ever Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council meeting in Alice Springs on 1 and 2 August 2018. It was also the first time COAG invited Aboriginal leaders to participate directly in COAG and have the opportunity to present to and engage with Australia's Health Ministers on Aboriginal health.

The meeting was very effective in developing a deeper partnership between Aboriginal health leaders and Health Ministers. It was clear that the Health Ministers were impressed at the optimistic, solution focussed presentations put forward. Possibly the most important outcome was a commitment by COAG to meet annually with Aboriginal health leaders so there can be accountability at this level for progress in Aboriginal health. This has been something that Congress, AMSANT and NACCHO have been seeking for more than two decades and is a major step forward in the development of a true partnership at the national level.

Child and Families Tripartite Forum

The first meeting of the Tripartite Forum was held which focused on the preliminary issues and processes including approval of terms of reference. The forum

comprises 11 representatives, including seven from the community sector – the majority are Aboriginal people.

It is hoped that the Forum will be able to achieve a genuine partnership approach to addressing the key recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT including a joint investment strategy from both levels of government.

Health Care Homes

After a long delay in getting the computerised risk stratification tool for patient enrolment to work accurately with Communicare, Congress has been able to enrol our first clients at Amoonguna, which has been our test site. The first group of clients who have been through the risk stratification process have been determined as "Tier 3" or high-risk clients. It has become clear that this tool is weighting social determinants and the capacity to self-manage more highly than the number of chronic diseases a patient has, and how controlled those diseases are. This works in favour of disadvantaged people and is a really important development in needs-based funding within the Australian health system. There are still some issues. The key challenge now will be to enrol sufficient patients between now and the end of December and to ensure that all of the remaining issues with the software are ironed out.



Pictured: Australian Health Ministers and Aboriginal health leaders at the COAG Health Council Indigenous Roundtable in Alice Springs.

Picture courtesy of Federal Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt (twitter)



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Featured artwork: Gwen Gillen, *Land & River, My Home Place* acrylic on linen, 300 x 905 mm,
2016 Courtesy Tangentyere Artists

HTLV-1 Forum

On 28 and 29 August 2018 in Alice Springs, a Collaborative Forum on HTLV-1 was convened by the Central Australian Academic Health Science Centre and the Australian Government Chief Medical Officer. The forum included Congress Chief Executive Officer and Chief Medical Officer Public Health, Aboriginal leaders, community and patient representatives, researchers, representatives from Aboriginal community-controlled health services, clinicians, public health officials, and representatives from Commonwealth and State and Territory health departments.

The forum reaffirmed the importance of Aboriginal leadership in this process and will continue to work collaboratively to integrate community priorities, research findings, and clinical and public health guidelines into a coordinated approach to HTLV-1 in Australia.

Literacy for Life Program

The Literacy for Life Foundation have been successful in securing \$500 000 funding from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to extend the program into several remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia. Initial consultation has occurred with the Mpwelarre Health Board. They were given the first option of going ahead with the program now that it has been funded but a community site is still to be agreed based on community need.

Tackling Indigenous Smoking program refunded for 3 years

The vital Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) program has been funded for a further three years. An important change in the program is that clinical positions will no longer be funded and the program will focus on health promotion activities and supporting clients to access clinical services when they attempt to quit.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption

Congress Director Sheralee Taylor and CEO Donna Ah Chee gave evidence to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption by teleconference from Alice Springs on Tuesday, 14 August 2018.

All of the issues in the Congress submission were presented with a strong focus on the need to strengthen prevention services and programs and address the social determinants of intergenerational trauma. One of the Committee members, the Hon Warren Entsch, was clearly very focused on adoption as the best solution but Congress were able to get onto the public record everything that is needed to prevent most of our children ever getting to this point.

Congress AGM - Save the Date

It's nearly that time of year - the Congress Annual General Meeting (AGM) is fast approaching.

Save the date for Thursday 29 November 2018, 10.30am 32 Priest Street, Alice Springs.

Keep an eye out for the agenda and further details in the October Communiqué.

Proof of Aboriginality applications

Please be reminded that requests for Proof of Aboriginality are only able to be assessed by the Congress Board of Directors at our scheduled Board meetings.

Update your details

It is important that we have the right details recorded in our membership register so that we can contact you the right way, and for accountability.

These are separate to your clinical records at Congress. Because your privacy is important to us, we never access your medical records for membership business.

You can help us make sure your details are up to date by emailing membership@caac.org.au or calling Congress' Membership and Client Engagement Officer on 8951 0904.

Remind your friends and family too!

The next meeting of the Congress Board of Directors will be held on 4 October 2018

