

New Fitzroy Valley Health and Wellbeing Project Working Group

COMMUNIQUÉ

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February 2022

INTRODUCTION

The *New Fitzroy Valley Health and Wellbeing Project Working Group* (Working Group) is overseeing a project to establish a dedicated Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) to deliver primary health care services in Fitzroy Crossing.

At a community meeting held 18 August 2021, community members endorsed the project aim:



That a new ACCHS be established to deliver primary health care services in Fitzroy Crossing with an interim ACCHS to be operationalised by 2023 and a full ACCHS to be operationalised by 2026.

The Working Group is committed to establishing a strong, independent and effective ACCHS that will provide quality primary health care services. The new service will enable enhanced leadership and advocacy on Fitzroy Valley health issues, and expansion of a skilled and sustainable local Aboriginal health workforce. Ultimately this will lead to overcoming the health inequalities experienced by Aboriginal people of the Fitzroy Valley and achieve health outcomes equal to all Australians.

It is essential that Fitzroy Valley communities are involved and engaged in decision making and the Working Group are therefore responsible for guiding, directing, advising and making key decisions until a Board of Directors is elected at the inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM).

OUTCOMES OF THE WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD 15 FEBRUARY 2022

At the third meeting of the Working Group held 15 February 2022, the Working Group welcomed new stakeholder members from the Australian Government Department of Health. The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS), the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) and the Australian Government Department of Social Services were also in attendance.

As requested by Fitzroy Valley communities, KAMS are supporting the Working Group by providing secretariat, project management, leadership and advocacy. The collective expertise, skills and experience of the KAMS Board and KAMS Executive Management Team has been harnessed to ensure this new service is strong, independent and effective. The Working Group acknowledge and value this support.

At the meeting, the Working Group discussed strategic planning and the model of care for the new ACCHS. The unifying ACCHS model of care provided by the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) (below) was discussed. This model of care sits within a broader context of culture, family, community, country, language, and physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. There are four pillars to this model of care: community engagement, an Aboriginal workforce, a multi-disciplinary team approach, and cultural safety. As a result of these discussions, the Working Group agreed to convene a community meeting, subject to COVID-19 pandemic, to engage Fitzroy Valley communities in further discussion about the objectives and the model of care of the new ACCHS.

AHCWA facilitated a second workshop with the Working Group to discuss the formal establishment of the ACCHS governance structure. The Working Group have determined that this will be under *the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act) and they are currently drafting the Rule Book.

The Working Group aim to achieve incorporation in the coming months so that the inaugural AGM can be held in July 2022.

Whilst standing independently, it is envisaged that the ACCHS will apply to become a member of KAMS, AHCWA and, through AHCWA, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). These peak organisations will support the ACCHS with their strong governance and policy development and influencing capacity.

Building understanding, support and ownership from Fitzroy Valley communities is best achieved through encouraging and promoting community-led content. A graphic designer has been engaged to support the Working Group to create a new logo, brand and style guide for the ACCHS.

The Working Group continued discussions about the land and asset strategy for the interim and permanent ACCHS, as well as staff accommodation. They will continue to progress these items at the next meeting as well as other strategies including funding, workforce, and quality and compliance.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the Working Group please contact the Interim Co-Chairs, Mr Joe Ross or Ms Delvene Green via email fvhwp@kamsc.org.au.