

Media Release

For Immediate Release

27 June 2022

## **“Growing Together as Fathers, Providers & Protectors” – Apunipima Men’s Health Summit**

From Monday 13 to Friday 17 June, males from all over the Cape descended on Elim Beach Camp Ground near Hope Vale for a Men’s Health Summit hosted by Apunipima Cape York Health Council’s Social & Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team. The event focused squarely on men’s health, with four nights of camping giving the men an opportunity to relax and connect with other men from across the Cape in a remote location free of many of the distractions of regular daily life.

The Summit was attended by men from Mapoon, Napranum, Aurukun, Mossman Gorge and Wujal Wujal.

The theme for this year’s Summit was ‘Growing Together as Fathers, Providers and Protectors,’ with guest speakers, discussions and activities centred around men’s business and how to be the best men they can be for their families and for their communities.

The program was structured to present different topics to the men daily to promote conversation throughout the day and into the night. Some of the key themes to come out of the week were, looking after yourself, providing a safe place for men in community, talking about and sharing your problems and being good male role models for both your own kids and others in community.

“We planned to have all the heavy conversations in the morning, and then have the cultural activities after lunch so the guys could get out and explore the country,” said the Summit’s Project Officer and local Traditional Owner, Kurtis Gibson.

After dinner each day, the men retired to their camp groups to discuss the day, with yarning guided by guest speakers and Apunipima staff.

“The nightly yarning sessions were a brilliant strategy by Apunipima because being around the campfire is not only healing, it’s about connection. When you’re sitting around the fire you feel the connection, not only back to country but to one another,” said guest speaker Randall Ross, who guided several of the campfire yarning circles.

MC for the week was one of FNQ’s funniest comedians, Sean Choolburra who kept everyone laughing throughout the week. Also speaking throughout the summit was BBM Cairns’ National TalkBlack radio host Trevor Tim, former NRL players Davin Crompton and Brenton Bowen and others including academics, motivational speakers and health industry professionals.

The guest speakers shared the microphone with Apunipima staff, who presented on various men's health topics to promote the services that Apunipima has available to men in community. Apunipima's Health Promotion crews also presented on some of the key health issues facing Cape York's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

One of the key goals of the Summit was information gathering. According to Apunipima Learning and Development Educator, Ian Ludwick, the men provided information that will be used to assist Apunipima for future planning regarding service delivery and health programs.

"We were able to identify potential deficiencies in our service using the feedback and through discussions held with the men over the week. We looked at barriers to men's health, cultural safety, and got guidance on where men feel most safe having their health checks," Ian said.

Another key outcome for Apunipima was the enjoyment factor, with SEWB Program Coordinator Bernard David stressing the importance of everyone – staff included – enjoying themselves. "On top of the health aspect we wanted everyone to go home relaxed, refreshed and rejuvenated and all reports so far have been that everyone enjoyed themselves. A few of the guys also mentioning that they felt a sense of healing and that a weight has been lifted off them so that's fantastic."

Kurtis agreed with Bernard, highlighting that feedback at the event from the participants and staff was that the Summit was well-received, with several participants indicating they're keen to come back to the event if it's held next year.

"It's safe to say, the guys took a lot out of it and found it very helpful as a safe space to unwind and discuss ways to improve their health. Men's health is a topic that often doesn't get discussed, or gets pushed down the priorities list. We want to change that and hopefully some of the discussions that we've had this week will be the foundation for further progress in the men's health space back in community," Kurtis said.

- ENDS -

#### About Apunipima

*Apunipima Cape York Health Council is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. We provide comprehensive Primary Health Care and Social Emotional Wellbeing Services to eleven Cape York communities.*

#### Media Contact

Tyrel Collins  
Marketing and Communications Manager  
Apunipima Cape York Health Council  
07 4037 7249  
communications@apunipima.org.au