

# CONNECT

Issue 7  
December 2019

# with RESPECT

Artwork by Shakara Montalto, Gunditjmarra

## WELLNESS GARDEN AIDS RECOVERY

**Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Health's Wellness Garden was officially opened on November 27, following an outpouring of support from the local community.**

The garden will support recovery and further improve the experience for patients, their families and the wider community and was designed by world renowned local garden designer, Jon Coe.

The garden features many plants of Aboriginal significance, including a range of culinary and medicinal herbs that are a selection of bush tucker species. These plants are clustered near the future platypus seat and Aboriginal artwork that will also feature in the garden.

Christine Wittkopp, Nurse Unit Manager, said the benefits are immeasurable.

**“The garden provides patients and their families with a safe space to take time out from the ward, breathe the fresh mountain air and spend quality time with their loved ones,”** Wittkopp said.

The garden has been built entirely on donations, following a campaign from the Eastern Health Foundation. Mr Coe was instrumental in the development, donating his time, experience, connections and items.

“This has been a wonderful community engagement project. Without everyone's contribution, the project would not be what it has become.” Wittkopp said. 🍀



*Nurse Unit Manager Christine Wittkopp and garden designer, Jon Coe.  
Credit: Rob Carew, Mail Newspapers .*

## ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER (MENTAL HEALTH) TRAINEESHIPS

**Eastern Health has successfully secured two of the ten Aboriginal Health Worker (Mental Health) traineeship positions available across Victoria.**

Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, the traineeships are one of many initiatives designed to increase the Aboriginal Workforce within the public mental health sector while also increasing culturally safe and inclusive mental health care for Aboriginal people.

This initiative is a first for Victorian Clinical Mental Health Services. At the end of the period, trainees will become qualified mental health clinicians equivalent to nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists. Throughout and after the traineeship, trainees will be able to guide service activities in becoming more culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, families and staff.

A Mental Health Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team has been formed to provide

clinical leadership and support throughout the traineeship.

One of the 2019 trainees, Mena Love, is thankful for the opportunity.

“Doors have opened, trust is beginning, self-determination is happening, relationships have been built and I stand tall and strong in this role knowing I am advocating and helping my mob, but also helping my workplace to be culturally safe,” Mena said.

Elizabeth Brown, who joined Eastern Health in the Aboriginal mental health traineeship in August said the role is extremely fulfilling.

“My greatest goal is to help improve the current health and social issues people face day to day and to work as part of a team that provides great results. I strongly believe that there is a need for better health and social services in both Government and Non-Government sectors. I would love to be a part of a service who delivers innovative programmes to those who are in need, especially to the community, inpatient units and correctional facilities,” Brown said. 🍀



*Mena Love and Elizabeth Brown*



Eastern Health is committed to achieving equality in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous Australians.

**easternhealth**

## HOSPITAL OPENS WOMINJEKA ROOM



TOP: The Wominjeka room provides a welcoming environment.

BOTTOM: Aunty Joy (centre) pictured with representatives from Eastern Health, Monash University and Deakin University.

### Aboriginal staff and students attending Box Hill Hospital will now have access to a dedicated, culturally safe space thanks to the introduction of the hospital's Wominjeka Room.

The room was officially opened in October and has been designed to create a practical, useable and welcoming space for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students.

Aunty Joy officially opened the room and artwork by Nathan Patterson, a proud Wagiman living on the south coast of Victoria, was unveiled on the day.

The room was made possible thanks to funding from Monash University and Deakin University. 🌐



Eastern Health celebrated Christmas with more than 200 clients from our Aboriginal Health Team and the Oonah Health and Community Service Aboriginal Corporation, formerly known as Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association (HICSA) on Wednesday 11 December. The annual event is a highlight on the calendar for both organisations. 🌐

## FAMILY SPORTS DAY 2020

As part of our commitment to Closing the Health Gap, Eastern Health will host the Closing the Health Gap Family Sports Day on Sunday 1 March 2020, 9.30am-3.30pm at Don Road Sporting Complex, Healesville.

On the day, Eastern Health staff will play a friendly game of netball and football against some of the best Aboriginal sporting talent in Melbourne's east.

The event will also feature interactive information stands, face painting, a petting zoo, jumping castle, running races, giveaways, show bags and more.

The community is invited to come along and enjoy a great day out for the whole family.



For further enquires or to express your interest in joining a team or volunteering your time, please go to [www.easternhealth.org.au/ctgsportsday](http://www.easternhealth.org.au/ctgsportsday) 🌐



## ABORIGINAL HEALTH TEAM

Eastern Health's Aboriginal Health Team is a community-based service based in Healesville that is accessible by Aboriginal people and their families living anywhere in Eastern Health's catchment.

It provides a range of services that are available on-site in Healesville and through home visits and outreach support. These include:

- 🕒 **Primary health care:** health checks, nursing support and general health information and education.
- 🕒 **Case management and advocacy:** care planning, case management, referral and advocacy for other services.
- 🕒 **Social and emotional wellbeing:** counselling services, school-based programs and education support.
- 🕒 **Home and community care:** domestic assistance, property maintenance and social events.



The Aboriginal Health Team is located at 377 Maroondah Highway, Healesville and is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm. Phone 5957 1100 or email [AHTIntake@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:AHTIntake@easternhealth.org.au)



Explore Aboriginal cultures, histories, ideas, opinions and Treaty in Victoria. Visit: [deadlyquestions.vic.gov.au](http://deadlyquestions.vic.gov.au)

5 Arnold Street Box Hill  
Victoria 3128 Australia  
T 1300 342 255 [easternhealth.org.au](http://easternhealth.org.au)

**easternhealth**