



FIRST PEOPLES'  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING

# Annual Report



2018 | 2019

# Acknowledgement of Country

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands we live and work on.

We acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations and pay our respects to elders past and present.

We acknowledge and pay respect to all of our Community members, our patients, our Board and our staff, and to everyone who has contributed to our organisation.

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# A message from our Chairperson

Many of our nation's First Peoples are flourishing due to strong connections with family, community, culture and country. This strength has given rise to a strong sense of social and emotional wellbeing among many within the Victorian Aboriginal community. Whilst there are countless positive examples, a significant proportion continue to suffer from complicated health issues that are connected to experiences of grief, loss, discrimination and trans-generational trauma.

State government data consistently demonstrates a substantially higher hospital admission rate for mental health reasons in the Victorian Aboriginal population when compared to non-Aboriginal people. A worrying trend sees Aboriginal Victorians twice as likely to be diagnosed with either depression or anxiety compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Despite being the focus of specific Federal and State government policies, the health outcome gap continues to widen as Aboriginal Australian health gains are persistently outpaced by improvements observed in the non-Aboriginal population.

Subsequently, it is vital that improved access to timely, integrated and culturally responsive primary health services for Aboriginal Victorians can be achieved.

As Chairperson of Access Service for Koories trading as First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing, it is my absolute privilege to contribute to the 2019 FPHW Annual Report. Reflecting on my first 6 months as FPHW Chairperson, it has been an immensely enjoyable experience and I thank my fellow Directors for the opportunity to serve in this position. During the infancy of our service, the Chairperson role could be described as somewhat demanding and has been well served by my predecessors Prof Karen Adams and Karinda Taylor. However, in truth this could easily be said of many of the foundational roles within FPHW. The responsibilities of the Chair position have since evolved and notably eased for which I am grateful.

FPHW is continuing to perform well against our strategic priorities in the second year of our Strategic Plan 2018–2023. My tenure to date has overseen the continued growth of our reputable brand, resignation of our inaugural Chair Prof Karen Adams, recruitment of our esteemed CEO Karinda Taylor, appointment of additional high-calibre

individuals to our all Aboriginal skills-based Board of Directors, employment of talented clinical and non-clinical staff, establishment of a second clinic in Frankston and the continued delivery of high quality trauma-informed health care to our valued community.

Drawing from the collective experience, skillset and expertise of the Board of Directors, FPHW continues to demonstrate our commitment to excellent leadership, transparent governance and sheer ingenuity in the primary health care sector. The Board has focused on building our clinical and cultural profile via honest community engagement, frank discussions with State and Commonwealth politicians and fostering relationships with key local stakeholders. By striving to improve physical, social, cultural and emotional wellbeing we can make a significant contribution to reduce the incidence, severity and duration of illness in our People, their families and communities.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their support and unwavering commitment to excellence. On behalf of the Board I thank our members, executive, clinical and non-clinical staff for your ongoing dedication to the FPHW family. To FPHW members, this is your organisation. We encourage your continued participation to help shape our vision. I must make special mention of Erin Manderson, Karinda Taylor, Dr Peter Walsh and Prof Karen Adams whose

knowledge, mentoring and friendship I have grown accustomed to and could not do without. Your passion and dedication to generate real change in the primary health care space for our First Peoples is truly awe inspiring. Together our efforts are helping to ensure the ideas of holistic, culturally safe, timely, affordable and responsive care are being championed.

FPHW is at the forefront of transforming the prevailing landscape of primary health care for our First Nations individuals, families and communities in metropolitan Melbourne. I believe we are well placed to achieve immediate action across the health promotion, early intervention, treatment and recovery continuum.

Dr Reece Lancaster  
MBBS, BMSc, MPsy



Dr Reece Lancaster  
Chairperson

# A message from our CEO

I'd like to acknowledge the Traditional owners of the lands where we deliver health and wellbeing services to First Peoples' across greater Melbourne and pay my deepest respects to the staunch Elders that have come before us and acknowledge young and emerging Aboriginal leaders setting new standards, accountabilities and creating pathways that our ancestors can be proud of.

What a time to be involved with First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing (FPHW) with so much positive change. I'd like to express my gratitude to our Chairperson, Dr Reece Lancaster and Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to become the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing. An important part of the CEO role has been to work closely with the Executive Management Team to oversee the restructure of Access Services for Koories to develop an entire service delivery model of care which saw the establishment of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing, a trauma informed, culturally safe primary health clinic. The organisation has been through

huge strategic and operational changes over the last 12 months to ensure we are delivering the best quality primary health care to our communities. Since our transition to FPHW we have increased Aboriginal employment by nearly 300% on the same residual funding first provided to Access Services for Koories Ltd nearly 10 years ago.

To say the last 12 months has seen a huge amount of change, opportunities, rewards and challenges would be an understatement. We have completely restructured our strategic plan and business model, reviewed and revised the organisation's constitution including the membership to be more inclusive of the communities we serve and developed an employment plan with a emphasis on staff's professional development to ensure our entire staffing is focused on achieving their career aspirations and therefore continuously improving the care we offer as a team.

2018-19 really was a year of reviewing, evaluating, consulting, restructuring and establishing the organisation to ensure we are best placed to make a significant contribution to closing the health gap. The next 12 months will be focused on growth, strengthening and

consolidating our systems of care, strategic and clinical governance and workforce development and retention.

This can only be achieved with three key factors;

- 1) continuously improving the high quality trauma informed primary health care we have become renowned for delivering,
- 2) maintaining and continuing to build strong partnerships with other Aboriginal led organisations and mainstream health and social services across greater Melbourne and
- 3) gaining support and securing additional funding from relevant local, State and Commonwealth government bodies.

I wanted to take this opportunity to make mention that it is an absolute honour to be part of an organisation that truly places first peoples' health and broader wellbeing at the centre of what we do. Our entire team has never lost sight of the organisation's vision and we are achieving this by challenging the status quo. We have challenged the way Aboriginal health is delivered to communities across greater Melbourne to make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Creating change by way of raising the bar on the standard of care expected, and more importantly deserved in Aboriginal health, has unfortunately, not come easily. It's through the unique leadership, knowledge and expertise of our skills-based Board of Directors and Executive Management Team, particularly Dr Reece Lancaster, Erin Manderson and Dr Peter Walsh, that we can be proud of what we have achieved to date. I am personally and professionally grateful for the support and strength the entire team has given me.

Mrs Karinda Taylor  
BNurs, DipMid  
CEO, First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing



Karinda Taylor  
Chief Executive Officer





# Our logo



## FIRST PEOPLES' HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The beautiful artwork for our logo was designed by Mikaela Egan, a Muthi Muthi / Gunditjmara woman. We cannot thank you enough.

Australian First Peoples' culture is the oldest continuing culture on the planet more than 60,000 years old. To sustain our culture over this time we supported the holistic health of our people through wellbeing and medicine practices handed down through oral traditions. The brutal colonisation of Australia interrupted this practice through an attempt to remove our culture from our ancestors and consequent generations.

However, we are a staunch and strong people, surviving and continually recovering from this appalling history.

Tea tree, or burgan in the Woiwurrung language of the Melbourne area, is our logo and one small part of our age old surviving and continuing holistic wellbeing and medicine practice. The leaves are used by First Peoples across Australia to strengthen spirit and for its anti-fungal and antibacterial properties. This medicine has been adopted more widely by settler Australians and internationally.

We humbly pay respect to the wisdom of our ancestors and commit to First Peoples' healing ways that continue to strengthen our spirit, people, community and country.

Koorie  
Prints



### Mikaela Egan

A proud Muthi Muthi/Gunditjmara woman on her fathers side and Anglo Australian on her mothers side. Mikaela grew up in Mildura and has been living in Melbourne for 10 years. She is an artist/photographer and Aboriginal health promotion officer. "I have a great love for creating and capturing moments in time. I put passion and soul into all areas of my work and I love working in my community to help create healthier lives for our mob. I believe that we can truly set an example by being the change we wish to see in order to achieve better outcomes for our people."

# Our Vision

The First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing strategic plan was endorsed by the Board of Directors in July 2018 and reflects the goals of service delivery that meets the diverse health and wellbeing needs of First Peoples,

ensuring the right people and skills, community engagement and cultural healing ways and best practice in innovation, governance, risk management, financial accountability and evidence gathering.

## Our Vision:

Healthcare that meets Australian First Peoples' health and wellbeing needs

## Our Purpose:

To provide services that meet the health and wellbeing needs of Australian First People



# 2018–2019 Board of Directors

Thank you to our Board of Directors who contributed to the success of our organisation in the 2018 – 2019 financial year and established First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing as Melbourne's newest Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in 16 years.

- Professor Karen Adams
- Ms Jacara Egan
- Dr Reece Lancaster
- Mrs Karinda Taylor

and support from

- Tim Flowers
- Kip Gabriel



# 2018–2019 Staff Members

Thank you to our staff for all of their wonderful work and for supporting our patients to achieve incredible health outcomes.

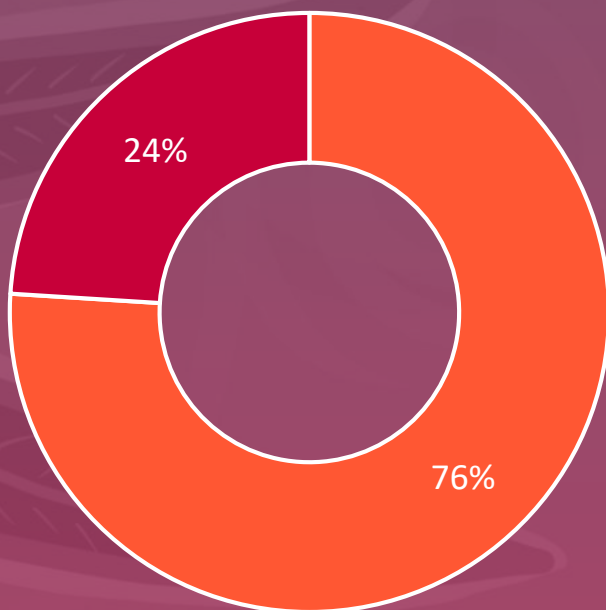
- Tarlee Atkinson
- Lisa Briggs
- Edel Conroy
- Jadalyn David De Busch
- Sara Day
- Harry Douglas
- Eva Hudson
- Rheearnah Kennedy
- Dr Catherine Lazaroo
- Erin Manderson
- Jimi Peters
- Gerrit Pruis
- Stevie-Lee Ryan
- Jack Stevens
- Karinda Taylor
- Corree Thorpe
- Robbie Thorpe
- Dr Peter Walsh



# Our Workforce

We are proud of all 17 employees of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing during the 2018/2019 financial year and their individual contribution to shaping the future of this organisation. First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing developed a Workforce Development Strategy that we hope to fully implement in 2019/2020

■ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff



# Redesigning access

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing grew out of Access Services for Koories, an organisation with a ten-year history of increasing access to health care for

Indigenous people in the north west of Melbourne. Founding Member of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing, Jimi Peters (Former Chief Executive Officer of Access Services for Koories Ltd) worked with the Board of Directors to revisit the constitution, the organisational membership, the vision and purpose.

In November 2018, we established a Medicare funded bulk billing clinic in response to an increasing demand for

primary health care availability in urban Melbourne and opened to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families, 5 days per week.

We were the first Aboriginal health service in Melbourne to offer after hours appointments, opening after hours 3 days per week.



Jimi Peters  
Founding Member



# First Aboriginal Health Service in Melbourne to open in 16 years

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing located in Thomastown and Frankston was the first new Aboriginal Health Service to open in Melbourne for over sixteen years on November 1 2018 .

The clinic opened to meet the unmet demand for culturally safe Aboriginal health care to Melbourne's Indigenous population. The service grew from Access Services for Koories, an organisation with a ten-year history of increasing access to primary care for First Peoples in the north west and of Melbourne.

It was evident that Victorian First Peoples were missing out on quality primary health care services. National Key Performance Indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care reported that Victorian First Peoples have the lowest rates of preventative health assessments completed in comparison to any other state or territory (AIHW, 2017).

We acknowledge the staff who persisted in what was an incredibly difficult time and built the clinic up from the inside, with long days and after hours to make today's comprehensive and trauma informed primary health care service a reality for so many patients who deserve such wonderful care. Thank you Stevie-Lee Ryan, Jack Stevens, Dr Peter Walsh, Erin Manderson and Tarlee Atkinson.

# A message from our Medical Director

It has been a genuine privilege to be asked to be part of the First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing team as both a GP and as Medical Director.

In just over a year our service has grown to be the trusted home of hundreds of patients across our two sites at Thomastown and Frankston. Our team, including our Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Aboriginal Nurses, GPs, Clinical Psychologist, Medical Administration and Psychiatrist work together like I have never seen elsewhere in primary health.

Our unique model of trauma informed, culturally appropriate, integrated primary health care has been refined through continuous quality improvement cycles, to become what we believe is among industry best practice and represents a paradigm shift in Aboriginal health in Victoria. This work and its refinement have only occurred through the input of the whole FPHW team and it has been an honour to work with such dedicated people. We have received an amazing amount of

positive patient feedback from patients, community members, visitors and workers from other organisations about the friendly, calm, safe, welcoming environment and team and about the experiences patients have had. Starting from scratch, growth in patient numbers has been rapid and this growth has accelerated further, with Frankston now rapidly expanding too.

We have several new staff waiting in the wings to meet the projected demand over the next year and have many staff members about to embark on, or actively engaged in further study in health, in line with our detailed Aboriginal workforce development strategy.

One of our focusses this year has been to build productive partnerships with both Aboriginal and mainstream organisations to be able to provide our patients with genuinely comprehensive care, offer support and address the social determinants of health. These partners now number in the dozens and together we have achieved outcomes for patients far greater than what we could have achieved individually. This work has included family violence support,



dentistry, child protection and preventing child removals, paediatric services, pharmacy support, employment services, court representation, acute mental health support, housing and homelessness support, legal advocacy and AOD support work. We thank all of you for your dedication and look forward to continuing and strengthening our relationships.

I would like to thank our CEO and former Chairperson Karinda Taylor for her support, leadership and vision throughout the year, especially the sometimes-tumultuous founding stages, as well as Chairperson Dr Reece Lancaster and all our directors for providing support and guidance throughout the year. It is incredible to be able to access the wisdom of more than 100 years of combined experience of these amazing Aboriginal health professionals. I would also like to thank Executive Director of Primary and Population Health and Strategy, Erin Manderson for her vision, counsel, phenomenal work rate, and ability to multitask and solve virtually any problem. Special mention also must go to Aboriginal Health Practitioner Stevie-Lee Ryan who I have had the privilege of working alongside in almost all the hundreds of clinical sessions I've been involved in this year, her dedication and compassion changes lives. And to Jimi Peters for both his vision and courage to make First Peoples'

Health and Wellbeing possible.

It has been a privilege to be so trusted by so many people in the community and for us to be part of journeys where we see striking improvements in people's physical and emotional health as well as extraordinary amounts of personal growth and self-belief. We look forward to being able to provide this level of care to many more people into the coming year.

**Dr Peter Walsh**  
**Medical Director**  
BSc(Hons), BMBS, DCH, PhD  
FRACGP



**Dr Peter Walsh**  
**Medical Director**



Before



After



Before



After

# Accreditation

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing was awarded with clinical accreditation within 6 months of opening. We were assessed under the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 5<sup>th</sup> Edition standards and were accredited by AGPAL. The team were very proud to receive this accreditation, which recognises First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing's commitment to delivering safe and high quality healthcare to our patients.

Accreditation allows:

- Reduction of business risk
- Education and engagement of staff in the provision of quality service
- The creation of a culture of quality
- Patient expectations to be met through enhanced patient focus
- Access to the practice incentive program (PIP) eligibility
- CPD points and hours for practice managers and practice nurses participating in accreditation
- Compliance with regulatory requirements and national standards.
- Promotion of quality and safety of the standard of service provided to patients and the wider community
- Confidence to be instilled for patients and/or consumers



**Accredited  
General Practice**

# Ken Wyatt – the Minister for Indigenous Health visits FPHW



# Remaining open on 26 January public holiday

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing believes that celebration of our national identity on the anniversary of the arrival of the first fleet is neither inclusive, nor respectful of Australia's First Peoples and directly impacts on the health and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



To be acknowledged and respected is vital to being truly healthy and well and as such, First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing will not be participating in this day as a national holiday and will be open for business as usual. We are excited to continue to work with our patients to improve their health, wellbeing, fitness and resilience.

# Our patients, our Community

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing prides itself on confidentiality and privacy. All participants in our fitness series featured here have signed a photography consent form and are not necessarily current patients of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing. We would like to thank all of our patients with genuine deep respect and gratitude that you chose to attend our health and wellbeing centre. From the feedback we have received, we believe that you too have seen the incredible outcomes that we have witnessed. We look forward to growing with you, your families and your bubs over time.

We would also like to thank our 1500 Facebook and Instagram followers, and 500 Twitter followers for engaging with us throughout this exciting year.

In summer and autumn we held a series of weekly fitness events, an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy the sunshine and participate in some healthy activities. With great turn outs each week, the sessions were enjoyed by all. Thank you to Jacara Egan who hosted these sessions before she joined our Board of Directors.



# Our financial position

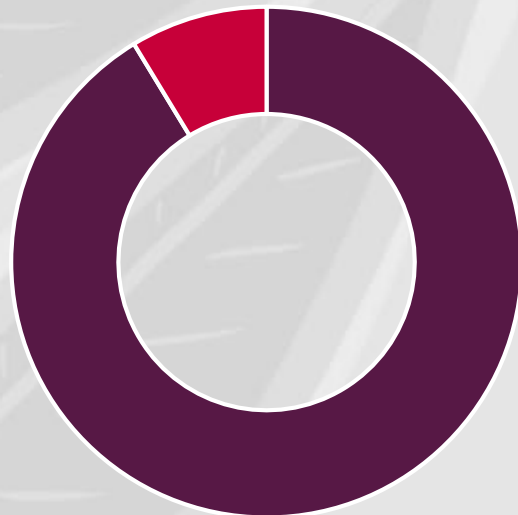
Transitioning from an IAHP funded service to deliver outreach support to patients across Melbourne to opening a trauma-informed comprehensive primary health care service with the same amount of funding required careful financial consideration. Many systems were introduced to the organisation to increase efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

The Department of Health granted us with the 19.2 Medicare exemption which allowed us to build a financial model of funding focused around Medicare income.

We are proud to have finished the financial year with a surplus which reflects the enormous additional amount of pro-bono hours and dedication of the staff involved.

We would like to especially thank Belinda Chung for her hard work, dedication, kindness, honesty and generosity as our independent, external bookkeeper.

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing warmly thanks the generous donations made by Community members, external supporters and onlookers.



■ Expenditure ■ Surplus

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Revenue	1,053,428	736,889
Other Revenue	6,496	7,946
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,059,924</b>	<b>744,835</b>
Operating expenditure	949,644	711,784
Depreciation	18,177	24,995
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>967,821</b>	<b>736,889</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>92,103</b>	<b>7,946</b>