



Mornington Island Health Council

COMMUNITY . KNOWLEDGE . HEALTH



Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019 -2024

Kuba Gununa Mirrithin
“Good Gununa Medicine”



“We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and pay our respects to them and to Elders past, present and future.”



Purpose of the Mornington Island Health Strategy

The Mornington Island community vision has always been to have a safe, thriving and healthy community.

We had our third Mornington Island Health Summit in August 2018, where major issues were raised that will need a concentrated effort by community, Health Council, Mornington Shire Council, and all health providers. This also means that a long term plan must be developed that is community-driven and delivered collaboratively to achieve some in-roads into the long standing health issues that have been raised continuously over many years.

For this reason, this document will become our Bible for the next five years, to guide our community in the right direction to improving our health status. This journey will require all in the health space to be committed to our Mornington Island Health Strategy, to be open minded to all options; to hear what the community is saying; and be prepared to do the hard yards.

We as a community fully recognise that we cannot do this alone and need the professional expertise to ultimately ensure Mornington Island is a healthy community. The discussions around health service delivery, accountability and the progress of our Health Strategy must be had on an ongoing basis, to ensure we stay on track.

It will be important for all parties to understand the community's aspirations through the elected leadership of this community, which embeds health and the needs of families in all of their core decisions. This Strategy document must withstand the inevitable turnover in staff, and particularly those responsible for health service decision making.

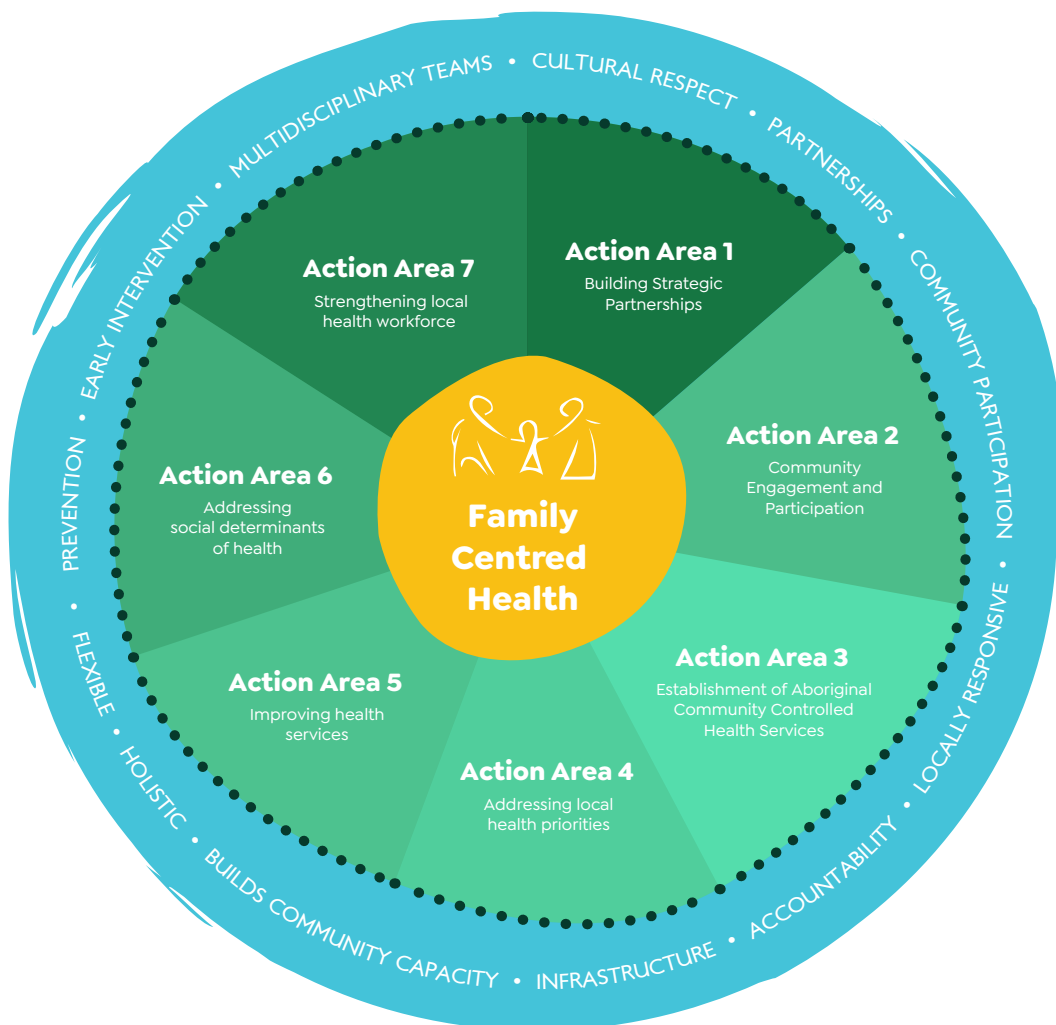
There will be many challenges to face, however as Chairperson of the Health Council, I have faith that this document is a good starting point that will bring us together to work toward a common goal. That is, to realise our vision of having a safe, thriving community for our children to enjoy through their life's journey.

Susan Sewter

Chairperson, Mornington Island Health Council



Our Approach



Community Governance

On behalf of the Mornington Shire Council ('Council'), I'm pleased to endorse the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024, which highlights the important health issues impacting the lives of Mornington Island people. The health and wellbeing of our community remains one of our highest priorities, so it is critical that our community has confidence that our health services are working well and that our people are living longer, healthier lives.

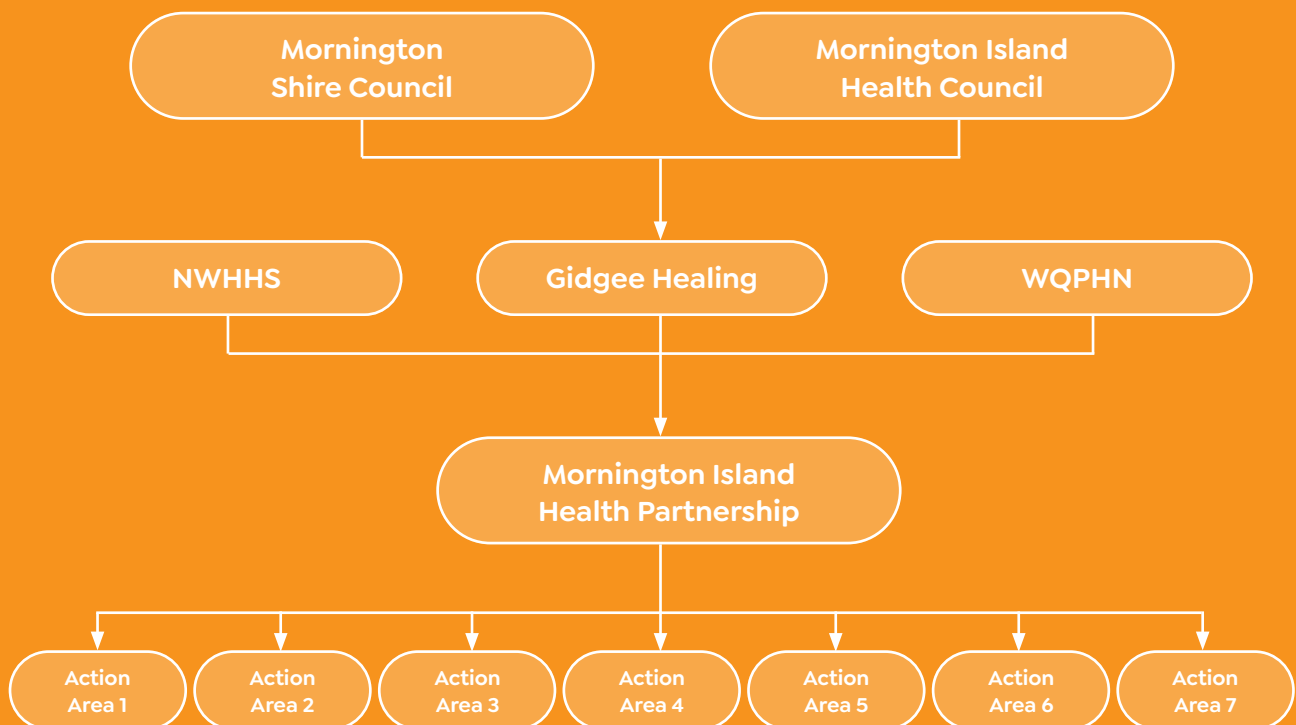
The Mornington Island Health Strategy is an important step toward ensuring our hopes and aspirations for a healthy community are realised. I look forward to what it can achieve for the longer-term health outcomes for the Mornington Island community.

Bradley Wilson

Mayor, Mornington Shire Council



Governance Structure



Introduction



Renee Blackman

Chief Executive Officer

Gidgee Healing



**Gidgee
Healing**

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service, Gidgee Healing understands the importance of engaging effectively with the Mornington Island community to ensure local people are well informed and are able to actively participate in the planning and delivery of their health services.

Gidgee Healing has worked closely with the Mornington Island Health Council in recent years and is encouraged by its longstanding commitment to ensuring health services are responsive to the needs of Mornington Island families; are accessible to those who need them most; and are achieving what they are there to achieve. The Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019 - 2024 provides a blue-print from which government, health service providers and other key stakeholders can work collaboratively to achieve the priority Action Areas that have been identified by the Mornington Island people. Furthermore, the significance of this Plan should not be underestimated, as it represents the first locally-developed health strategy across the Lower Gulf region to be formally endorsed by both Community, Government and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector. For this reason, Gidgee Healing is very pleased to lend its full support to the implementation of the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024, and will continue to work in partnership with the Mornington Island Community, and our health service partners, to address these important community-identified health issues.



Lisa Davies-Jones

Chief Executive

North West Hospital and Health Service



North West
Hospital and Health Service

It is very exciting for the North West Hospital and Health Service to move into the implementation phase of the Lower Gulf Strategy on Mornington Island. The Lower Gulf Strategy is a collaborative solution to improve services to the Lower Gulf region, ensuring we are meeting the specific needs of the Mornington Island community. The improved services have been designed in consultation with our patients and their families, the wider community, the Mornington Island Health Council and the Mornington Shire Council. As a partnership which helps direct people to comprehensive primary health care and preventative care, and provides seamless referral pathways for specialist care, the strategy is already showing encouraging results, such as a lessening of acute presentations at the Mornington Island Hospital.

As we transition Community Health Services to community control, via Gidgee Healing, we also want to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed within health services on Mornington Island. As with any ground-breaking strategy, there are challenges however the partners are communicating with each other, working together to build the best health service for Mornington Island. The community's wishes are a priority for us. We can't go anywhere, or achieve anything without that important community partnership. We are all talking as partners - the North West Hospital and Health Service, Gidgee Healing, the Western Queensland Primary Health Network, the Mornington Island Health Council, and the Mornington Shire Council. We are all working together for the best health outcomes for the people of Mornington Island.



Stuart Gordon
Chief Executive Officer
**Western Queensland
Primary Health Network**



The Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) has welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the people of Mornington Island, through the Mornington Island Health Council and the Mornington Shire Council, to support the development of the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024. WQPHN acknowledge the essential cultural knowledge and strength within this unique community and the importance of ensuring this is integrated into health service planning, design and delivery. As an organisation that does not directly deliver primary care services, but commissions or purchases these services from other entities, our role is linked to achieving better coordination across providers, more targeted and responsive services, and tailoring primary care based on evidence on what is needed and what is working well. We are committed to enabling an Aboriginal Community Controlled approach and highly value our Tripartite Agreement with Gidgee Healing and North West Hospital and Health Service in an authentic cooperation that aims to put the needs of Mornington Island families at the centre of care.

We strongly support the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024. It is a practical guide that can ensure organisations are in strategic alignment with the important action areas identified as priorities by the Mornington Island Health Council. It will also ensure health service providers and other key stakeholders work in collaboration, as we bring into line collective approaches that will result in better health, empowerment and wellbeing outcomes for the Mornington Island community.



“Our health system should not be a complicated maze that we get lost in.”

Community Member
Mornington Island Health Summit 2018

Health Status of the Mornington Island Community

The Mornington Island community is one of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia, with residents experiencing a high level of illness, disease and exposure to health risk factors. While obtaining reliable health data can be difficult for a community of this size and level of remoteness, the following statistics reinforce the significance of the health disparities impacting our community and the Lower Gulf region; highlighting the importance of adopting a planned and collaborative approach if we are to improve the health of our people:

- The **second highest mortality rate** in Queensland; ¹
- The highest morbidity rates for Indigenous people in Queensland, with particularly **high rates of preventable chronic disease**; ¹
- The **second lowest life expectancy** in Queensland; ¹
- The **second highest rate of Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations** in Queensland, when compared with other comparable regions; ²
- 53% of Indigenous pregnant women **smoked during pregnancy**, compared to 21% women across all of Queensland; ³
- **Highly significant social and economic disadvantage**, with 100% of the Mornington Island population falling into Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged) on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Disadvantage; ⁴
- The average age of the Mornington Island population is **27 years**, compared to 37 years for Queensland; ⁵
- Approximately **30%** of the population is under the age of **14 years**, as compared to only **18%** of the population aged over **50 years**; ⁵
- Approximately **30% of children** on Mornington Island were identified as **developmentally vulnerable** on two or more domains on the Australian Early Development Census in 2015; ⁴
- The **second-highest lower-limb amputation** rate in Australia; ⁶
- The region has the **second-highest risky levels of alcohol consumption** in Queensland; ¹
- **61% of 15-19 year olds** on Mornington Island **are not earning or learning** (working or in any form of study); ²
- The region has the **second highest suicide rate** in Australia. ⁷

¹. Chief Health Officer Report, Health of Queenslanders 2018 ². Public Health Information Development Unit. ³. Queensland Health Perinatal Data Collection, Statistical Services Branch, Department of Health. ⁴. Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Regional Profile - Mornington Local Government Area. ⁵. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census. ⁶. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. ⁷. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Mortality Over Regions and Time 2012-2016.

Foundations for a Healthy Community

- Adopts a **family-centred, strengths-based approach to care**, and is underpinned with the knowledge that greater benefits can be realised if health services are coordinated around the needs of the family, rather than a discipline-specific, fragmented and episodic approach.
- Centred around the importance of describing our health in the context of **body, mind and place**.
- Promotes **cultural respect**, ensuring that the rights, views, values and expectations of Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander people are respected in the delivery of health services.
- Values the effectiveness of **community-controlled** health services in providing locally-responsive, appropriate and accessible health services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- Actively **engages with the Mornington Island community** to ensure their participation in the planning and evaluation of health services, respecting and aligning our approaches with the Mornington Island Service Delivery Model.
- Strongly commits to supporting and promoting the employment, training and professional development of a **local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health workforce**.
- Aims to ensure that health services are **accessible and appropriate** for the Mornington Island community, as well as being systemised and **grounded in best evidence**.
- Recognises that health services need **to be holistic** in nature, and places great importance on the connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry and family and community wellbeing.
- Adopts an increased focus on **prevention, early intervention** and the improved management of chronic disease.
- Utilises a **multi-disciplinary, team-based approach** to address the complex health needs of individuals and families.
- Recognises the importance of cross-sectoral approaches to address the **social determinants** of health to affect real change in health status, including employment, education, housing, economic and environmental factors that influence health and wellbeing.
- Supports the **flexible** delivery of health services that can be provided in a variety of community-based locations, including increased home-visiting services.
- Fosters the importance of **partnerships** between community, government and non-government agencies to achieve improvements in health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- Actively employs strategies for building community capacity and the importance of drawing on **local expertise** to respond to health needs.
- Includes **accountability** measures to ensure that our progress in addressing local health priorities can be monitored and reported.
- Considers the **optimisation of building, technology and other infrastructure** on Mornington Island to support integrated care and patient centred pathways of care.



Action Area 1: Building Strategic Health Partnership

- Establish the Mornington Island Health Partnership comprising the Mornington Island Health Council (MIHC), Mornington Shire Council (MSC) and representation from leading health providers including Gidgee Healing (Gidgee), Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN), North West Hospital and Health Service (NWHHS), Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and North West Remote Health (NWRH). This will also require collaboration with partners from other sectors, to collectively progress the priority health issues on Mornington Island.
- All members of the Partnership formally commit to the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024, noting the commitment to operationalising agreed action areas to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategies.
- MIHC to host a community event to formally launch the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024 to promote the collaborative effort to addressing important health issues, while also harnessing greater awareness and understanding of health at the local level.
- Partners to develop an annual Implementation Plan for each of the Action Areas, to identify the specific activities required to achieve the objectives of the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024, including timelines and responsibilities.
- Partners to convene quarterly meetings to review the progress of the Implementation Plan, and six-monthly meetings to review the progress of the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024 to provide feedback to community on achievements, challenges and any issues of importance that may require further discussion.
- Partners commit to adequately resourcing the Strategies, including the coordination, monitoring and review of progress against each Action Area.

**“Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is yet to come,
all we have is today, so let’s begin.”**

Community Member

Mornington Island Health Summit 2018

Action Area 2:

Community Engagement & Participation

- Implement a sustainable and effective community engagement process that underpins health service planning, delivery and review; recognising the importance of meaningful community engagement to ensuring our health services are responsive, culturally appropriate, accessible, and well-utilised by the community they are designed to support.
- Utilise the skills, experience and knowledge of the MIHC to actively engage the community in regular discussions around local health priorities; particularly as they relate to strategies for engaging different population sub-groups i.e. men, women, elders, young people, children, young families and pregnant mothers.
- Health services to provide quarterly reports to MIHC and the community to ensure a shared understanding of key health issues, and any current activities and/or initiatives, to enable the community to be informed participants in health planning and evaluation activities.
- Provide information and education to MIHC and the broader community around local health priority areas, to enhance health literacy and build the capacity of MIHC and the community to inform, advocate and advise on health-related matters. Improving the health literacy of the community will also increase the uptake and accessibility of services.

Action Area 3:

Establishment of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

- Support the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector in recognition of its demonstrated effectiveness in providing appropriate and accessible health services to Aboriginal communities.
- Establish governance structures and processes to ensure the Mornington Island community has mechanisms available to inform and influence the delivery of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services at the local level.
- Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to lead and manage the implementation of primary health care services on Mornington Island.
- Implement local strategies aimed at encouraging the Mornington Island community to enrol as a Gidgee Healing client, to facilitate access to integrated and comprehensive Primary Health Care services, including eligibility to Closing The Gap and other benefits that would otherwise be unavailable to Mornington Island residents.



Action Area 4: Local Health Priority Areas

1. Child and Family Health

- Parents, carers, and the broader community are provided with health education and guidance on maternal risk factors (smoking, alcohol consumption, mental health and maternal nutrition) as well as breastfeeding, immunisation, nutrition, hearing health and strategies for managing behavioural issues.
- Utilise the Child and Family Health Framework developed by the Western Queensland PHN, and endorsed by Gidgee Healing, NWHHS and other health partners, to guide the implementation of universal health services that meet the needs of children and families on Mornington Island.
- Develop parenting support and intervention programs for young mums, and families with older children who need support managing challenging behaviour.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive hearing health strategy for Mornington Island children to reduce incidence of middle ear infections and associated hearing loss.

2. Health Promotion and Prevention

- Develop a locally-relevant health promotion and social marketing strategy targeting the whole community, as well as specific population sub-groups, to address risk factors for health; promote engagement with health services and complement the clinical services and supports that are available.
- Deliver locally-tailored education activities to enhance local understanding of good nutrition, smoking cessation, exercise and physical activity, as well as information on other important health priority areas, to encourage healthier behaviours, improve uptake of services and encourage greater self-management.

3. Social and Emotional Wellbeing

- Support community-driven initiatives that promote social and emotional wellbeing through connections to languages and culture, and that help to keep Mornington Island culture strong.
- Continue support for counselling, health promotion and early intervention services to promote social and emotional wellbeing amongst Mornington Island people, particularly as it relates to young people.

4. Mental Health

- Implement a systematic and integrated approach to the prevention and management of mental illness on Mornington Island.
- Strengthening and supporting mental health and SEWB teams to provide early intervention, screening and referral through culturally competent clinical care
- Strengthen the capacity of local community members to respond and support the wellbeing of individuals and/or families affected by mental health issues in times of need i.e. Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid, conflict resolution, suicide prevention awareness etc.
- Establish clear processes to help families/carers to support people through the mental health system, including how to recognise the signs, who to see, how to access, and support options available to them.
- Undertake a community-wide cross-agency review of mental health services on Mornington Island to identify current capacity, key issues, service gaps and future workforce needs. This review should look across the whole continuum from non-clinical to more acute and complex needs, and include healing approaches.
- Develop a strategy to improve access to community based mental health services that are delivered in a culturally safe manner, with a greater focus on wellness and healing.
- Develop and embed collaborative care approaches between mental health services and other sectors (social, community, police and justice) to strengthen the collective response at the local level; enhance protective factors; and promote mental health and wellbeing.



“We need to ask people what works for them.”

Community Member

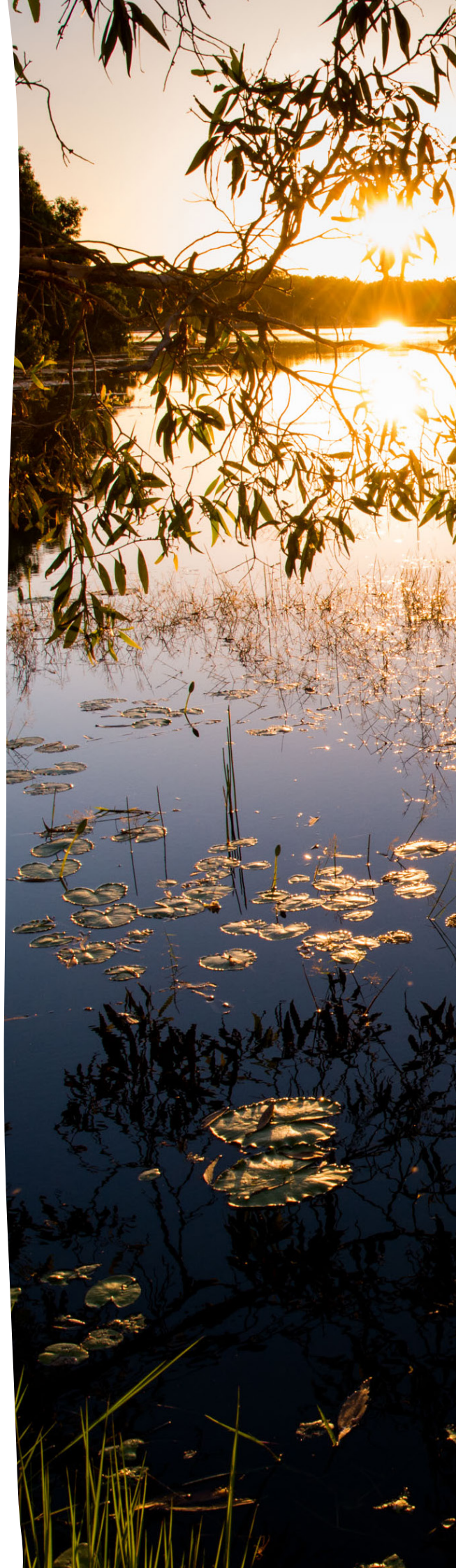
Mornington Island Health Summit 2018

5. Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs

- Undertake and review of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs services currently available on Mornington Island with a view to introducing strategies that improve accessibility, responsiveness and effectiveness of support services available at the local level. This review should consider the significant impacts that the misuse of alcohol (home-brew), marijuana (gunja) and volatile substances are currently having on individuals and families, including mental health, relationship breakdown, family violence, public nuisance, and interactions with the criminal justice system;
- MIHC and health partners to actively participate in the review of the Alcohol Management Plan on Mornington Island (within scope of practice) to evaluate and determine the most effective strategies for protecting the health, wellbeing and safety of Mornington Island residents;
- Develop and implement programs to reduce the level of smoking in the Mornington Island population, giving consideration to a multi-pronged approach that includes promotion, prevention, brief interventions and treatment options.

6. Sexual Health

- Develop community led, culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health information to enhance health literacy, prevent infectious disease and unplanned pregnancy.
- Identify strategies to ensure sexual and reproductive health services are available, accessible, non-judgemental and customised to local needs.
- Increase access to screening, testing and treatment for STIs, HIV and viral hepatitis screening in primary health care settings and promoting treatment as prevention, including pregnant women i.e. Young Person's Health Check.
- Identify strategies to reduce infectious syphilis and eliminate congenital syphilis on Mornington Island.
- Improving the delivery of relationships and sex education programs for children and young people, including school-based settings and youth disengaged from school.



7. Oral Health

- Identify strategies for improving the visiting frequency and accessibility of oral health services for all Mornington Island residents, including school dental and adult services, by addressing barriers to timely dental care, including the cost, availability and with consideration of the complexities of providing oral health services in very remote locations.
- Develop and implement sustainable oral health promotion and prevention programs that are integrated into primary care screening and management, recognising that chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and oral disease share a set of common risk factors;
- Integrate oral health promotion within existing early childhood, schools and out-of-home care settings;
- Work with the Shire Council to undertake a feasibility into the fluoridation of the local water supply recognising the significant contribution this can provide as part of a highly effective preventative measure to support better oral health outcomes.

8. Chronic Disease Management

- Implement a systematic approach to the identification, prevention and management of chronic illness.
- Plan and deliver community screening events and other interventions targeting specific family and population sub-groups e.g. men, women, youth, geographic locations etc
- Promote uptake of the annual health check and any required follow up medical specialist and/or allied health services, particularly those at risk of chronic disease.
- Promote the benefits of Mornington Island community members enrolling with Gidgee Healing and establishing an ongoing relationship with their primary health care service, to optimise access to care and self-management, particularly those with chronic conditions.
- Ensure active recall and engagement for all people with chronic disease to ensure they are being reviewed regularly and any adverse issues are being identified and managed early.
- Identify strategies for improving access to specialist services and referral pathways, including improved utilisation of telehealth to reduce existing barriers to access
- Identify local strategies for increasing the participation of Aboriginal men in addressing their physical, social and emotional wellbeing.
- Prioritise prevention and/or early intervention measures for those at-risk of developing renal disease and/or needing dialysis in the future are identified and well supported by the local health service providers, and other visiting specialists.
- Advocate for supported dialysis services to be made available at the local level, by firstly engaging in further discussions with the Mornington Island community to jointly identify solutions to this long-held priority health issue.
- Identify the key challenges and focus on finding practical solutions to improve the treatment options available at the local level (i.e. equipment, workforce, specific skills/expertise, training)

“At the end of the day, it’s up to us, as individuals.”

Community Member

Mornington Island Health Summit 2018

9. Aged Care

- Enhance the range of services and/or supports available to enable elderly people on Mornington Island to live out their lives as independently, culturally secure and comfortably as possible. This will include consideration of increased access to home-visiting services, mobility-related home modifications, domestic support, meal preparation and/or increased access to transport services;
- Acknowledge the social isolation that can occur with ageing, and actively seek to ensure all Elders on Mornington Island receive an Older Person's Health Check each year; and are provided better access to social, cultural and emotional supports.
- Review the palliative care services currently available to Mornington Island residents and identify strategies for ensuring our people receive culturally appropriate care for the end stages of life.



**“Some blokes are too frightened to go
to the hospital.”**

Community Member

Mornington Island Health Summit 2018



Action Area 5: Improving Health Services

- Community leaders and health partners continue to advocate through government and political channels for adequate resourcing to support the establishment of capital infrastructure to support the sustainable delivery of health services on Mornington Island.
- Maximise the effectiveness of the electronic patient information system.
- Provide information and guidance to community around the benefits of My Health Record, including information on their rights to choose what information is uploaded to this record, and encourage uptake by all Mornington Island residents.
- Improve the use of technology to increase the uptake and utilisation of telehealth services on Mornington Island where possible, to reduce the requirement to travel away from “country” and family for extended periods.
- Ensure existing local health and social care infrastructure is fully utilised and contributing to better health outcomes
- Strengthen the cultural capability of all health services being delivered by ensuring all health staff employed on Mornington Island participate in the local cultural orientation program delivered by Mirndiyan Gununa Aboriginal Corporation.
- Make better use of current health data sets to strengthen our capacity to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Mornington Island Health Strategy 2019-2024.
- To identify and incorporate strategies to recognise and respect traditional health practices.

Action Area 6:

Health Workforce

- Develop an integrated workforce strategy for the North West region, to create pathways for those on Mornington Island who may be interested in pursuing a career in health (medicine, AHW/AHPs, nursing, allied health, health administration, other).
- Increase access to high quality training pathways for Aboriginal Health Workers/Practitioners, to be delivered in the North West region.
- Work alongside training/education providers to review the feasibility of establishing school-based traineeships on Mornington Island, to provide young people with local options to pursue their interests in a career in health.

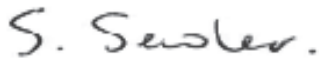
Action Area 7:

Social Determinants of Health

- Work collaboratively with cross-sectoral partners to identify local strategies to addressing the social determinants such as housing, employment and education which are critical to improving the health of the Mornington Island community.
- MIHC and health partners to support the Mornington Shire Council to advocate for additional housing on Mornington Island to address the chronic overcrowding of our homes, in recognition of the impact this has on the health of our families and our community.
- Actively explore and support strategies that improve environmental health, particularly those linked to housing for health, animal welfare, dust mitigation, quality of drinking water, and waste management.
- Improve food security through access to an affordable, healthy fresh food supply.



Mornington Island Health Partnership



Susan Sewter
Chairperson
Mornington Island Health Council



Bradley Wilson
Mayor
Mornington Shire Council



Renee Blackman
Chief Executive Officer
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