



WATHAURONG ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVE

Acknowledgement To Country:

I would like to pay my respect to the Traditional Owners of the land I work and live on, the Wadda Wurrung people,

I acknowledge and pay respect to the Elders, both past and present and all the members of the Aboriginal community. I'm thankful to have the opportunity to walk alongside and be part of their journey.



Artwork by Tracey Watts

WATHAURONG BACKGROUND

- Located in Geelong
- Formed by community in 1978 and formally registered in 1980
- Consists of 25 clans (family groups) that form part of the Kulin Nation of Aboriginal People
- The boundaries span the coastline from the Werribee River to Lorne Peninsula and inland north of Ballarat
- One of the largest Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) in regional Victoria, servicing the largest Victorian Aboriginal population outside of Melbourne.
- The aim was to improve community well-being and build the capacity of the community to control its own affairs and achieve self- determination.



Wathaurong Maternal Child Health Background

From 2022 - May 2024 - Wathaurong Maternal Child Health service was delivered in collaboration with the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) MCH team.

- Service Agreement
- Two MCH nurses employed by COGG - provided both a Universal and Enhanced program to the local Aboriginal community.
- Wathaurong CDIS



Our Goal

To establish an independent Maternal Child Health Service, led by an Aboriginal Organisation.

WHY?

- **Self Determination**
- **Closing the Gap**




What is Self determination :-

- *In 1972, the Federal Government adopted the policy of 'self-determination' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*
- *Self-determination is the right of Indigenous Australians to make decisions on issues relating to them and to manage their own affairs.*
- *It was a significant shift and it recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had a right to be involved in decision making about their own lives.*



▶ Closing the Gap

▶ ‘...when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services, better life outcomes are achieved.’ - ‘National Agreement on Closing the Gap’



*Welcome Boorai to Country
May you grow strong
in your identity & culture*

purebody
100% organic
designed in australia
made in australia

In May 2024 Wathaurong's first independent Maternal Child Health program was established.

The program plays a crucial role to help provide better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by:

- Giving them choice and accessibility to their local Aboriginal community and organization
- Smooth transition from their pregnancy/birth with the Koori Maternity Service (KMS) to MCH
- Tailored support to the unique needs of the families



- Enhanced programs offering intensive support for families at risk and experiencing vulnerability
- We aim to provide a service that is culturally sensitive and inclusive and strives to promote cultural connections within the community.
 - Examples: Placenta garden, photos on the Boorai tree in the possum skin, Milla Milla playgroup program
- Support relationships between mainstream MCH services and other providers. We work together to provide integrated, coordinated support and referral pathways for Aboriginal families and children.
- Self-determination and empowerment - a core principle in delivering this program.



What is Cultural Safety?

- Use of language - Boorai, Yarning, Nyatne
- Listening
- Acceptance and Non-judgemental
- Validation
- Connection to Culture
- Included and Represented
- Respect

WATHAURONG
Aboriginal Co-operative
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH SERVICE
Growing up Strong & Healthy Boorai Visits

HOME VISIT
The nurse can come to your home if you like to have a yarn about safe sleeping, feeding bub and any other supports that you may need.

2 WEEKS
You will usually see the nurse in her office from now on. You will yarn about feeding, bub's safety and supports available for you and bub.

4 WEEKS
At visit 3 you will yarn about how you are going, feeding, bub's safety and extra supports you may need.

8 WEEKS
At visit 4 you will yarn about bub's immunisations, feeding, sleeping and supports for new parents and if you would like to join a parents group.

4 MONTHS
At visit 5 you will yarn about your bub's new skills, also how bub is growing, feeding, sleeping and any extra supports that you may need.

8 MONTHS
At visit 6 you will yarn about bub's teething, feeding, and sleeping. It's also a good time to talk about how bub is hearing, communicating and moving around.

12 MONTHS
At visit 7 you will yarn about the next lot of immunisations, what your bub is eating now they are !! How you can make your house more child friendly and what social activities you'd like to be involved in.

18 MONTHS
Visit 8 gives you a chance to yarn about how bub is feeding, sleeping and teething. This is also a chance to look into playgroups and supports available to you.

2 YEARS
At visit 9 you can have a yarn about the food your boorai is eating, sleep routines and enrolling into kinder.

3.5 YEARS
At the final MCH Growing Strong and Healthy check (needed for Centrelink) you will yarn about safe car seats, eyesight check, caring for teeth and kindergarten information.

Now that you have finished your MCH Growing Strong and Healthy checks, Remember to book in every 12 months with your doctor for your Aboriginal health check.

MCH Line - 24 hours phone 13 22 29
To make an appointment - Call your local council.
For information and locality guide:
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood

Artwork done collaboratively by Kezza Black, Ebony Micky & Chris Whitworth



Our Team:

- ❑ 1 EFT
- ❑ Two part time MCH Nurses
- ❑ One Aboriginal Health Worker



Role of the Aboriginal Health Worker

Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs) play a vital role in providing culturally safe and inclusive healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

They do this by:

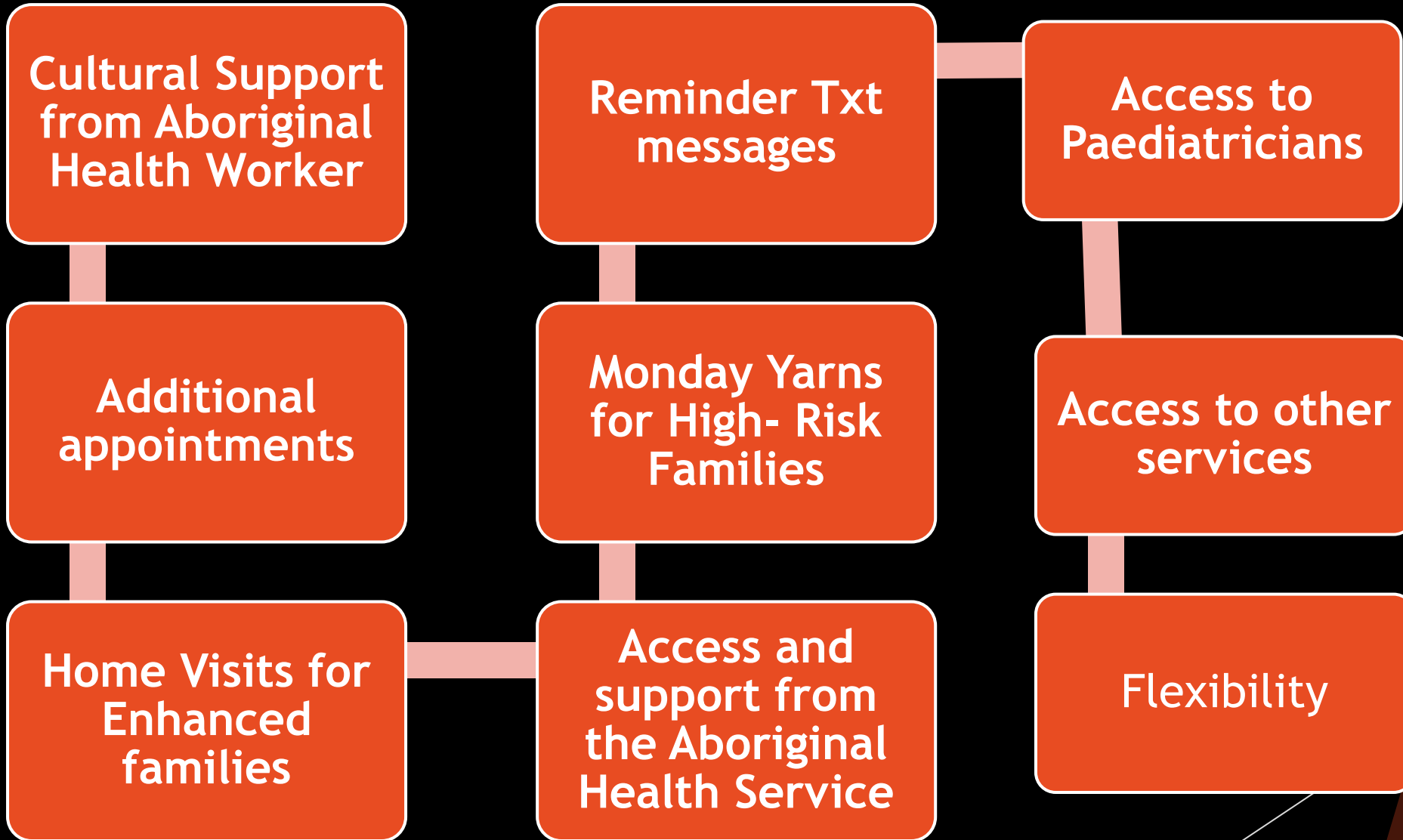
- Providing Cultural Support
- Assist in navigating the health care system
- Arrange appointments and reminders
- Support with financial aid and items
- Conduct Health Assessments
- Link in with Community events

Enrolments in Wathaurong MCH - 2023 - 2024

- **Universal - Total number of records 51**
- **Enhanced MCH - Total number of records held 45**



What Do We Provide



Linking Into Other Services

❑ Internal referrals -:

- Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)
- GP appointments
- Housing
- The Koorie Families as First Educators (KFFE) program.
Designed to support Aboriginal families in nurturing their children's early learning and development.

❑ External referrals -:

- First 1000 days
- OOHC
- Sleep and Settling
- Empowerment Program for young mums
- Early Parenting Centre Barwon Health
- Meli
- Perinatal Mental Health Service (PIHMS)

Impact on Families

- **Culturally safe and appropriate environment**
- **Link in with community and community events**
This is an important way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to retain cultural beliefs and identity.
- **Kinship care**
The kinship network is the way Aboriginal society maintains high quality relationships.

Franks C & Curr B (1996) explain this as follows:

Kinship relationships can be likened to the most intricate tapestry you can imagine. The sharing of the responsibilities and obligations ensures that functional Aboriginal culture survives; that it is successful is demonstrated in the fact that it has survived and functioned for tens of thousands of years...



Relationship with City of Greater Geelong Maternal Child Health Service

We continue to have an Ongoing contract and work in collaboration with City of greater Geelong which includes:

Service Agreement - this includes COGG MCH nurses covering for Wathaurong MCH planned leave.

Memorandum of Understanding

**Regular communication between services
- scheduled meetings**

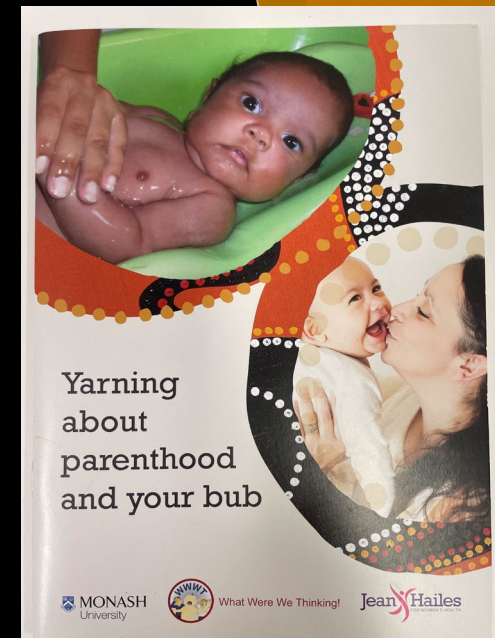
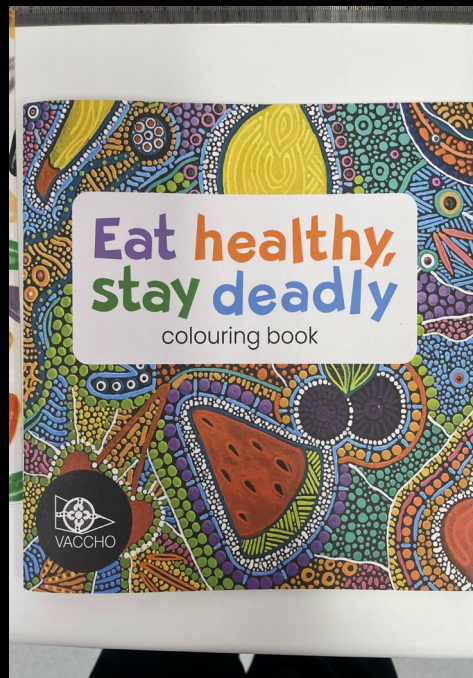
Clinical supervision - MCH nurses continue to receive clinical supervision and professional development days with COGG

Resources:

VACCHO

(The Victorian Aboriginal Community
Controlled Health Organisation)

www.vaccho.org.au





Nyatne

(Thank you)



• Boorai Anastasia