



11–14 March 2008

Alice Springs NT

GOOD TUCKER—GOOD HEALTH

CONFERENCE EVALUATION AND REPORT

Funded by Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Health

Report from Conference Management Committee

June 2008

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1 Executive summary

The National Nutrition Networks 2008 Conference was held in Alice Springs from 11–14 March 2008.

The conference was a gathering of more than 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others working together in many different ways and settings across Australia to improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was an opportunity to share good practice and learn from each other.

The timing of the National Nutrition Networks conference was ideal for encapsulating new ideas and the commitment to clear actions required to improve nutrition and food security that informed the response to the 'Close the Gap' campaign, as well as other advocacy opportunities and the future of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan 2000–2010 (NATSINSAP).

The title of the conference was 'Good Tucker – Good Health'. The concurrent sessions within the conference program are consistent with the following NATSINSAP themes:

- food supply in remote and rural communities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce
- nutrition issues in urban areas
- family focused maternal and child nutrition
- 'Good Tucker – Good Health' programs that promote good nutrition and healthy weight and other life stages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- 'good practice' programs that help build healthier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities.
- other topics.

The following findings and recommendations are based on feedback from the Conference Management Committee, Conference Recommendations Committee and from conference delegates completing the evaluation questionnaires.

Feedback from delegates is limited to the 30% of delegates that completed the full conference evaluation questionnaire. From these, most delegates (29%) came from Queensland, followed by South Australia (19.4%) and New South Wales (16%).

Many delegates felt that the conference was very inspirational and informative. The recommendations process was noted to provide more meaning to the conference, with delegates believing that the recommendations put forth will assist and contribute to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia in the future.

1.1 Key findings

Attendance and overall comments

- The conference attracted 207 delegates with representation from all states and territories and, although not formally evaluated, a significant number of those attending were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- All papers presented at the conference were delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, consistent with the conference core values and principles. This was noted to be a strength of the conference.

- 62 delegates (30%) completed the full conference evaluation, of whom less than half (42%) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is not representative of the overall conference attendance.
- Of the responses received, 34% of delegates were employed by government departments and 31% by non-government organisations. Most responders worked in a rural and remote setting, with 10% working in an urban setting.
- This was the first Nutrition Networks Conference for most respondents.
- Sixteen attendees received assistance to attend the conference, seven of which were concurrent session speakers who received full financial assistance for their registration fees, travel and accommodation as required. A further nine delegates, four of whom were concurrent session speakers, received partial financial assistance towards their conference expenses.

Conference organisation

- The most frequent means of finding out about the conference were by email and through the workplace.
- Most delegates were happy with organisational aspects before the conference such as accessing information and submitting abstracts, although the short lead-in time and initial confusion about needing to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to present, were raised as issues.
- Most responders believed the conference assisted them with networking, and most delegate expectations of the conference was to share information and hear about projects and programs that were happening around Australia.
- More than 95% were happy with conference organisation, registration, and at least three-quarters of the delegates found the handbook excellent and very useful.
- Areas for improvement:
 - One of the main criticisms was about the lack of variety of the food available. People were not satisfied with sandwiches alone.
 - Most delegates believed the overall cost of the conference was satisfactory although a few people thought it was far too expensive, especially when it is held in a 'remote area'.
 - Delegates had to leave the conference early because of availability of flights from Alice Springs.
 - Need to involve local nutrition networks.

Conference program

- All responders noted they had learnt about new programs, resources and ideas, with most saying these were relevant to take back to their communities/workplaces.
- 98% of the delegates enjoyed the plenary sessions/speakers. Delegates reported that the presentations were excellent, very informative and thought provoking. Most delegates enjoyed Tom Calma, Olga Havnen and John Tregenza, especially coming from a political perspective. Some delegates believed that John Tregenza's work with the communities needed to be acknowledged, supported and assisted by other agencies and government.
- It was noted that Kerry Arabena was a fantastic and 'deadly' MC.
- 93% of responders indicated that the conference met their expectations, with others commented it had *exceeded* their expectations with a great mix of plenary speakers, sessions and workshops.

- A large percentage of delegates believed that they had a better understanding of government and non-government policies and initiatives and the importance of keeping nutrition in the focus and to develop nutrition as a priority.
- More than 90% of respondents to the questionnaires found all concurrent sessions useful and relevant. The most useful themes were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Food supply in rural and remote communities'. The most relevant themes to delegates were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Communicating and disseminating "good practice" in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives.'
- Less than 10% of respondents had any negative feedback, i.e. the session was not useful nor relevant.
- Other comments:
 - Moving between each presentation was fantastic.
 - A lot of the presentations were rushed and many of the slides went so quickly that it was too difficult to take notes! Would be nice to have access to presentation slides (so that we can get the maximum amount of information from each presentation).
 - Not enough spoken about the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders taking responsibility for their health issues.

Media

There was significant media interest in the conference, with estimates that, apart from local interest in Alice Springs, more than 50 separate radio interviews were conducted with reporters from areas like Darwin, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Perth and Broome. According to Marshall Wilson, media advisor from NRMA, this is thought to be associated with an interview by Sharon Laurence with Fran Kelly on the ABC's AM morning program on the opening day.

Social program

Most delegates enjoyed the conference dinner, although some mentioned that it would have been better if there was entertainment, i.e. traditional music, dancing. The flour drum stove cooking on Wednesday night was a hit, with delegates thoroughly enjoying themselves. They believed it was a fantastic way to get to know other delegates and a very unique idea to take back to their communities.

Recommendations process

The conference generated an enthusiastic response to the recommendations process. The Conference Recommendations Committee collated a set of over 80 recommendations from delegates, providing a useful overview of people's thinking on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition and affirming both the current and future direction of NATSINSAP.

Some responders noted that the recommendations process was a great process, as was the opportunity to feed into the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Equality Summit at Canberra the week following the conference.

Networking

Six state and territory-specific networking workshops were held. Some jurisdictions already have formalised region-specific networks involving government and non-government nutrition staff, and hold regular meetings for communication and professional development. Networks are less formalised in other jurisdictions, but this meeting has prompted more concentrated effort in some places.

Future nutrition networks

Participants voted unanimously for the continuation of the National Nutrition Networks Conference every two years with sufficient lead-in time and funding for project officer.

Future of NATSINSAP

The recommendations that were proposed by conference delegates generally affirm the previous priorities of NATSINSAP and validate the current action areas for the future.

Indigenous HealthInfoNet

The nutrition section of Indigenous HealthInfoNet was launched and promoted in a plenary session at the conference. Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet director Neil Thomson ran a HealthInternet café at the conference and subsequently all conference delegates have received email communication about the availability of the site, in particular the supported discussion board.

1.2 Recommendations for future National Nutrition Networks Conferences

Future of NATSINSAP

One of the priority recommendations from conference delegates relates to the future and applicability of NATSINSAP:

Progress NATSINSAP, in line with current government policy and 'Close the Gap' led by the federal government, in partnership with state governments and community controlled organisations, recognising the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban, rural and remote communities.

This would be achieved by establishment of a national nutrition function with responsibility for the evaluation and revision of NATSINSAP, development of new goals and targets, securing funding for the next phase and leading implementation with accountability to the relevant government departments and AHMAC.

The NATSINSAP, or equivalent strategy, is strategically positioned to oversee the future of the Nutrition Networks Conference. This is supported by delegate recommendations to continue NATSINSAP and embed the future of the conference into the national strategy.

Future of the Nutrition Networks Conference

One of the unanimous recommendations put forward by the conference delegates under the NATSINSAP priority area 'Communicating and disseminating good nutrition practice' was:

Explore and secure funding options to ensure continuation of a biennial National Nutrition Networks Conference that enables networking and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others working in food and nutrition programs and related areas, and to ensure the conference is accessible to all.

Conference organisation

Success of the conference is attributed to the organisational skills of the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), the Conference Management Committee (CMC) and the Conference Project Officer. It is recommended that the conference management services of National Rural Health Alliance are engaged for future conferences.

- Participants voted for the continuation of the National Nutrition Networks Conference (NNNC) every two years with sufficient lead-in time and funding for project officer.
- Recommend a longer lead-time to the conference, for example up to 12 months; with employment of a project officer for 2-3 days per week for the first 6 months then 4-5 days per week for the following 6 months.
- Engage the conference management services of National Rural Health Alliance to work with local nutrition network and conference management committee.

- Ensure the CMC has a broad mix of national representation, predominantly Indigenous representation, along with local nutrition network involvement.
- Keep the costs for delegates to a minimum, and ensure that concessional rates and financial assistance are available.
- Consider sponsorship, and other funding models (e.g. environmental health model) to keep costs affordable and accessible for all. The NATSINSAP Project Officer will develop recommendations for a sustainable model for future Nutrition Networks Conferences for consideration by the NATSINSAP Steering Committee in the next three months.
- Ensure that all papers are presented by Indigenous people, unless exceptional circumstance. Make use of audiovisual and other technology to ensure Indigenous voice.

Media

In future, a minimal level of media training should be given to those tasked with selling the all-important messages. When dealing with media the most important element is to know the subject/topic and be prepared to speak with confidence off-the-cuff and at short notice.

Evaluation methodology

A mix of written and oral evaluation methods is recommended for future conferences to ensure greater representation of feedback.

Recommendations process

This was seen as a valuable component of the conference; however it is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of the sub-committee members are more clearly defined at the outset for future conferences.

Networking

- Ensure that there is greater inclusion and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutritionists/workers in both new and existing nutrition networks (state/territory and national).
- Make greater use of the *HealthInfoNet*, or other communication methods, for regular discussion, contact and support.
- Broader involvement of sectors and agencies beyond health agencies.

2 National Nutrition Networks Conferences—introduction

The National Nutrition Networks Conferences have a strong track record as successful national initiatives for focusing attention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition issues and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples involved with food and nutrition programs. The gathering in Alice Springs in March 2008 was the first National Nutrition Networks Conference since Cairns, which was held in 1999. The first Nutrition Networks Conference was held in Darwin in 1992 and was initially organised as a local in-service meeting involving professional people interested in Aboriginal health and nutrition. Prior to this meeting, there was an idea of inviting Aboriginal people working in their communities to find out about what they were doing. Information about this meeting was distributed throughout the Northern Territory, resulting in approximately 75 people attending. This included people from interstate as well as the Northern Territory. As a result of the large amount of interest shown, and the scope of the issues raised, a national conference was planned. Since then National Nutrition Networks Conferences have been held in Townsville, Qld (1993), Coffs Harbour, NSW (1994), Broome, WA (1995) and Adelaide, SA (1997). The 2008 conference was funded by OATSIH and administered by NRHA.

In the nine years since the last conference, many things have progressed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition, including the release of the NATISINSAP – a national framework of seven action areas to address in improving access to affordable healthy food for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The National Nutrition Networks 2008 Conference was held in Alice Springs from the 11–14 March 2008. The title of the conference was ‘Good Tucker – Good Health’.

The concurrent sessions within the conference program were under the following conference themes:

- food supply in remote and rural communities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce
- nutrition issues in urban areas
- family focused maternal and child nutrition
- ‘Good Tucker – Good Health’ programs that promote good nutrition and healthy weight and other life stages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ‘good practice’ programs that help build healthier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities
- other topics.

These conference themes were consistent with the seven key action areas of NATSINSAP that have had major activity over the past four years.

As in previous years, the National Nutrition Networks Conference was a gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others working together in many different ways and settings across Australia to improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was a wonderful opportunity to share good practice, network and learn from each other.

At the National Nutrition Networks Conference held in Cairns in 1999, participants assisted in formulating the key actions that now form part of NATSINSAP. The 2008 National Nutrition Networks Conference in Alice Springs again brought together people from across Australia to re-visit NATSINSAP, to identify progress, gaps and articulate clear actions for the future. It was a unique opportunity to advocate strongly for the critical role food and nutrition issues have in ‘Close the Gap’ in Aboriginal health. Throughout the

course of the conference, delegates contributed their ideas and recommendations, which were taken to the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Equality Summit in Canberra the week after the conference. The timing of the National Nutrition Networks Conference was ideal for encapsulating new ideas and commitment to clear actions required to improve nutrition and food security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2.1 National Rural Health Alliance

The National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) were contracted by OATSIH to manage all aspects of the conference planning, organisation and registration. The conference management services they provided included:

- project planning, including developing a conference timeline
- budget and financial management, including working with the Conference Management Committee to develop the conference budget
- coordination of the development of the conference website, which was the primary source of information for the conference as well providing the site for on-line registration
- liaison with the conference venue including meeting room arrangements and food and beverage
- liaison with other venues for the social program if required
- coordination of display spaces at the conference venue
- liaison with speakers regarding provision of their abstracts, papers, audiovisual requirements and biographies for introductory purposes
- registration of delegates, both on-line and manual
- compilation and printing of the conference handbook
- audiovisual requirements, including liaison with audiovisual equipment supplier
- coordination of conference materials, including satchels and name badges
- liaison with confirmed sponsors to ensure they receive their sponsorship entitlements
- liaison with a supplier(s) to provide accommodation and travel arrangement options for delegates
- attend the conference and manage/supervise all the administrative and logistical arrangements
- staff the registration desk at the conference
- follow-up the payment of all accounts.

2.2 Conference Management Committee

A Conference Management Committee (CMC) was established by Julie-Anne McWhinnie (NATSINSAP Project Officer from July–December 2007). Previous NNN CMC membership has been host state specific, and mainly non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutritionists. This time it was decided to try a different CMC model, by seeking national representation and maximising Indigenous membership. Since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce is small in all states and territories except Queensland and Northern Territory, this proved difficult. Julie-Anne talked to many different nutritionists (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander at the state and local levels) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs). Members were selected with the aim of getting a mixture of representation and experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition issues in rural, remote and urban settings from all perspectives, including those from practitioners on the ground through to a more academic, research and public health perspective. Hence there were not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutritionists and nutrition workers, but health

workers working in nutrition, lecturers, researchers and those working at a more state-wide public health or national level.

The CMC met fortnightly for the six months prior to the conference (sometimes weekly), and were responsible for forming the financial assistance and recommendations sub-committee.

The CMC members were:

Julie-Anne McWhinnie
National Senior Project Officer
NATISINSAP (July–Dec 2007)
Nutrition Manager, Heart Foundation
(Jan 2008 to present)
VIC

Denise Burdett
Executive Assistant
NACCHO – National Aboriginal Community
Controlled Health Organisation
ACT

Maureen Chamberlain
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition
Promotion Officer
Central Queensland Population Health Unit
Rockhampton, QLD

Lenore Chantrelle
Senior Project Officer
Workforce and Planning Branch
Aboriginal Health Division
South Australian Department of Health, SA

Juli Coffin
Senior Lecturer Aboriginal Health
Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health
Geraldton, WA

Lyn Eiszle
Conference Manager
National Rural Health Service
ACT

Michelle Elwell
Nutrition Promotion Officer –
Indigenous Health
Tropical Population Health Network
Cairns, QLD

Anthea Gregoriou
Project Officer
Nutrition Networks Conference
VIC

Gordon Gregory
Executive Director
National Rural Health Alliance
ACT

Dot Henry
Indigenous Program Officer
WA Cervical Cancer Prevention program
Perth, WA

Paulina Leko
Conference Coordinator
National Rural Health Alliance
ACT

Dallas Leon
Manager – Centre for Clinical Research
Excellence
Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health
Council
QLD

Leisa McCarthy
Nutritionist
Red Cross (formerly Menzies School of Health
Research)
Darwin, NT

Amanda McGregor
Nutrition Advisor
Department of Health and Community Services
(DHCS)
Darwin, NT

Laurel Rogers
Aboriginal Health Promotion Officer
North Coast Area Health Service
NSW

Sharon Thorpe
Nutrition Project Officer
VACCHO – Victorian Aboriginal Community
Controlled Health Organisation
VIC

Nicole Turner
Aboriginal Health Worker/Research Assistant
Durri ACMS
NSW

2.3 The Conference Recommendations Committee

The NNNC provided a unique opportunity for the development of recommendations from the conference, in part prompted by the opportunity to contribute to the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Equality Summit shortly after the conference. A Conference Recommendations Committee was appointed to collate and categorise contributions into a cohesive list, and secondly to develop a list of priority recommendations. Membership of the committee was based on the following considerations:

- attendance at the conference and availability to participate approximately one to two months post-conference
- majority make up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to reflect the values of the National Nutrition Networks Conference
- degree of independence from governments to enable greater freedom to advocate to governments.

The members of the Conference Recommendations Committee were:

Michelle Elwell (Chairperson)
A/Senior PH Nutritionist/Health Promotion
Officer
Tropical Population Health Network
Townsville QLD

Leisa McCarthy
Nutritionist
Red Cross
Darwin NT

Maureen Chamberlain
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition
Promotion Officer
Central Queensland Population Health Unit
Rockhampton, QLD

Tabitha Lean
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healthy
Families Project Coordinator
Northern Adelaide, SA

Judith Myers
NATSINSAP Project Officer
Melbourne VIC

Dawn Charteris
Nutrition Promotion Worker
Tropical Population Health Network
Cairns, QLD

Dympna Leonard
Public Health Nutritionist
Early Life Indigenous Nutrition and Growth
Tropical Population Health Unit, QLD

Raima Toulis
Nutrition Promotion Officer
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Brisbane, QLD

Stephen Cochrane
Newcastle, NSW

Sharon Laurence
NATSINSAP Project Officer
Melbourne VIC

2.4 Project officer and timing

A project officer (Anthea Gregoriou) was employed 20 hours per week for 7–8 months to assist NRHA and the CMC with the conference coordination, planning and implementation. As all presenters were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and many travelled from interstate, this involved significant planning and organisation. The project officer contacted the presenters/work colleagues to ensure travel arrangements had been made and that they were still available to present at the conference. During this process the project officer discovered that some presenters were unable to present therefore the reserve list of presenters needed to be contacted.

The conference was funded, planned and conducted in a relatively short time frame of 8 months, particularly given the gap since the previous NNNC in 1999. The NATSINSAP National Senior Project Officer also contributed at least 0.3–0.4 FTE per week to support the project officer, chair the CMC and

liaise with NRHA on various conference planning matters. Support at this level of intensity by the NATSINSAP National Senior Project Officer was not accounted for in the initial conference service agreement. Given the pressured time frame to organise the conference, the outcome would not have been the success it was without this level of resourcing. In essence the staff resourcing to successfully plan and implement the conference was more like 1.0 FTE over the 7.5 months (August 2007 – 14 March 2008). This had an impact on time for other aspects of the NATSINSAP business plan to be implemented. It is recommended that future NNN Conference budgets include a greater funding allocation for a project officer.

2.5 Media

As the conference manager, NRHA also managed the media component of the conference. This marked a dramatic departure from previous years when it was commonly believed the media had little interest in events of such nature. However, national interest over the Federal Government's Taskforce Intervention in the Northern Territory combined with the anticipated/scheduled appearance of Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, assured a decidedly high media profile.

A fully-equipped media room set the scene for local and mainstream news outlets to attend and receive basic information on each session. The room was made available for the duration of the event for individual interviews with delegates and speakers. To maintain an element of media control, key members of the CMC were authorised to conduct media interviews as required. Their mobile phone numbers were provided to Marshall Wilson (NRHA Media Officer).

Advance planning ensured the early engagement of the services of the Central Australian and Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) to publicise and promote the conference. In addition Leisa McCarthy, (presenter and CMC member) was invited to make daily morning radio appearances with CAAMA broadcaster Gerry Lyons. The combined CAAMA radio and television footprint into rural and remote regions sparked widespread interest in the event.

It also generated interest from mainstream radio, in particular various branches of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), with little interest from mainstream media once it became known Commissioner Calma was no longer available to speak. A report that Olga Havnen might also fail to appear brought particular interest from Darwin and Perth, prompting the local ABC reporter to attend the convention centre itself.

Under the circumstances of media outlets requesting interviews from different speakers via mobile phones, it is impossible to say precisely how many interviews were conducted over the four days. A best estimate is that, apart from local interest in Alice Springs, more than 50 separate radio interviews were conducted with reporters from areas like Darwin, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Perth and Broome. According to Marshall Wilson (NRHA media liaison), this was largely facilitated because of an interview by Sharon Laurence (NATSINSAP Project Officer) with Fran Kelly on the ABC's AM morning program on the opening day.

Marshall Wilson notes that the quality of speakers and conference format, not to mention the efficient manner in which this event was conducted, is sufficient to maintain an important media presence in the future. In future a minimal level of media training should be given to those tasked with selling the all-important messages. When dealing with media the most important element is to know the subject/topic and be prepared to speak with confidence off-the-cuff and at short notice.

3 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the conference were developed by the CMC. Considerable time was spent on this to ensure it captured the vision for the conference in a meaningful way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference participants.

The outcomes for each objective are reported in relevant sections of the report based on the evaluation questionnaires and CMC feedback.

3.1 Aims

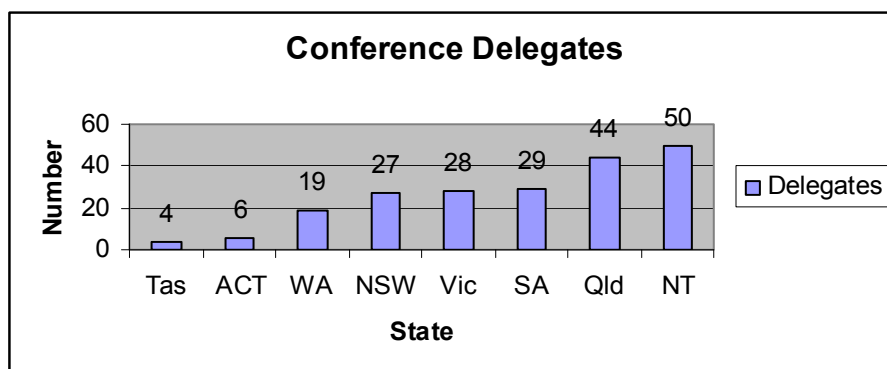
- To provide an environment that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share thoughts, knowledge and experiences in food and nutrition.
- To inspire people working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food, nutrition and health area to support, share, network and learn together.
- To advocate for nutrition to be at the forefront of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health agenda.

3.2 Objectives

- To encourage self-confidence and self-reliance amongst people who work in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition, and to provide strategies to support and deliver nutrition initiatives that foster self-determination and sustainability. (see Section 5.8)
- To showcase programs and projects initiated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition/Health Workers. (see Section 5.9 and Appendix A)
- To provide a forum that enables fostering of partnerships between individuals, communities and agencies (including those beyond the scope of the health system) to address and prioritise issues surrounding food, nutrition and health. (see Section 5.9 and Appendix A)
- To raise awareness of relevant communication networks that support quality nutrition work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and advocate for further development, expansion and maintenance of those networks. (see Sections 6 and 7)
- To review progress and make recommendations for the future of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP). (see Section 8, Appendices E, F, G and H and Section 9)
- To consider how the National Nutrition Networks Conference can be retained as a core component of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP). (see Section 9)
- To promote the newly expanded nutrition section on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (internet based knowledge resource), and its email communication network. (see Section 10)

4 Conference attendees

The conference attracted 207 delegates with representation from all states and territories. Attendance may reflect the current nutrition workforce in each jurisdiction with dedicated commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition.



4.1 Presenters

All papers presented at the conference were delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to be consistent with the conference core values and principles. This created some confusion for those submitting abstracts, as it was not specified in the original call for abstracts. This requirement was decided by the CMC after the call for abstracts went out, based on strong feedback from those working on the ground in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition that this should be the requirement. Hence some abstracts submitted were not included, because the authors did not have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander colleague to co-present. Discussion at the conference generally concluded this concept is supported for future National Nutrition Networks Conferences, unless exceptional circumstances.

It would have been good to announce earlier that to present you needed to be Aboriginal or co-present with an Aboriginal person. Need time to get funding for co-presenters to attend. Some good programs not presented because of this criteria. Think it is a good idea to allow voice recordings of Aboriginal people involved in programs so that this criteria can be met.

I was surprised in the beginning that it was not a requirement that Aboriginal people had to be the main presenters. I am so pleased that it was changed.

4.2 Financial assistance

A sub-committee of the Conference Management Committee was formed to consider the applications received for financial assistance. As there were not sufficient funds under financial assistance allocated in the budget to cover all the financial assistance requests it was decided to firstly offer full reimbursement for registration fees, travel and accommodation to those applicants who were presenting concurrent session papers. Those not presenting papers were offered partial financial towards their costs to attend the conference. A flyer containing information about Financial Assistance to attend the NNNC 08 and also how to apply for the assistance was sent out through the NATSINSAP networks and the Conference Management Committee networks (see Appendix I).

5 Evaluation questionnaires

Written questionnaires were developed by the CMC to evaluate the presentations as well as the overall conference and objectives. Random oral interviews were conducted with people asking open-ended questions (this was limited due to lack of available staffing). Butcher's paper was distributed in each concurrent session room to allow for participant's additional comments. Comments from both the interviews conducted and butcher's paper have been integrated to the discussion section.

The evaluation relied mainly on written responses (apart from some interviews), therefore it does not reflect the opinions of participants who did not complete the written questionnaires. This would have been a disadvantage for delegates for whom English is not their first language.

The program consisted of seven themes:

- nutrition issues in urban areas
- communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce
- family focused maternal and child nutrition
- food supply in rural and remote communities
- Good Tucker, Good Health
- other topics.

The different themes were divided into five sessions, with some themes being repeated throughout the program (refer to Appendix A for conference program). There were a total of 14 sessions (with repeated themes) and 43 papers that were presented.

Five evaluation questionnaires were developed for each session (refer to Appendix C). Each questionnaire consisted of two questions:

- How useful was the paper?
- How relevant was the paper?

The questions were formatted to allow delegates to tick the appropriate box and circle the number based on a scale from 1-3:

- 1 – Not useful/relevant
- 2 – Partly useful/relevant
- 3 – Very useful/relevant

A final questionnaire was developed to evaluate the overall conference. Responses were given by tick box, yes or no, ratings between 1-3 and comments. Delegates had the opportunity to comment on support prior to the conference, how the conference benefited them, size of each session, plenary speakers, what should be included in future conferences, and how the conference could have been improved. There was also an opportunity for delegates to comment on the conference organisation, venue, food, handbook, dinner and accommodation.

5.1 Distribution and collection of questionnaires

All delegates received the evaluation questionnaires in their satchel upon registration.

There was dedicated time (four 10-minute sessions) in the program for the delegates to complete the evaluation questionnaires:

- Wednesday afternoon – to complete evaluation questionnaire for Session A and B
- Thursday prior to lunch – to complete session B and C
- Thursday afternoon – to complete Session E
- Friday prior to lunch – to complete the final evaluation questionnaire.

On completion of the questionnaires, delegates returned them to the registration desk and received a raffle ticket. This enabled the delegates to be in a draw for a prize.

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) and chairpersons of sessions reminded delegates throughout the conference to complete their questionnaires.

The winners of the session questionnaires were announced Friday morning.

The winner of the overall questionnaire was announced whilst having lunch on the Friday just after the conference had finished.

Oral interviews were conducted throughout lunch breaks by a couple of volunteers. The butcher's paper was collected at the end of each day by the conference organisers.

5.2 Collation and analysis of the questionnaires/data

In order to collate the questionnaire results, the project officer, Anthea Gregoriou, used Microsoft Office Excel 2003 to collate all the information using fields as per the evaluation forms. The data entered into the program allowed graphs and pie charts to be produced. Anthea added the comments from all delegates into the evaluation report (both positive and negative), including the oral interviews and the comments that were written on the butcher's paper. Although the data entry was very simple, the process was very time consuming.

5.3 Results

The results of the questionnaire showed that:

- 207 delegates attended the conference over the 2.5 days
- 62 delegates (30%) completed the full conference evaluation (the full conference evaluation was completed throughout the conference)
- 92 delegates completed Session A and B evaluation questionnaire
- 65 delegates completed Session C and D evaluation questionnaire
- 54 delegates completed Session E.

5.4 Full/overall conference evaluation

Sixty-two delegates out of 207 (30%) completed the full conference evaluation questionnaire.

The majority of questionnaires were completed and handed in on the last day, although some delegates completed the questionnaires throughout the conference.

The information collected from the respondents is not reflective of all the participants. Only 30% of delegates completed the overall conference evaluation. This could have been due to the fact that it was mainly a written based evaluation, so the less literate would have been at a disadvantage. Many delegates also left the conference early, that is, on Thursday night or Friday morning to catch a flight home and may not have had enough time to complete the evaluation questionnaire.

The following results are based on information obtained from the 62 delegates who completed the questionnaire, that is, 30% of the conference delegates.

5.5 Demographics of respondents

Table 1 Residence of respondents

Place of residence	Number of people	Percentage %
New South Wales	10	16
Queensland	18	29
Australian Capital Territory	1	1.6
Northern Territory	8	13
South Australia	12	19.4
Western Australia	7	11
Tasmania	0	0
Victoria	6	10
Others	0	0
Total	62	100

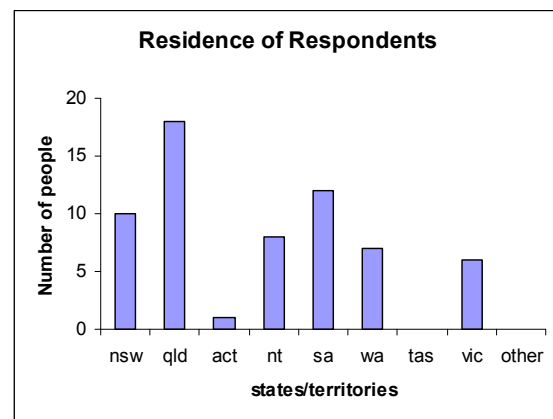
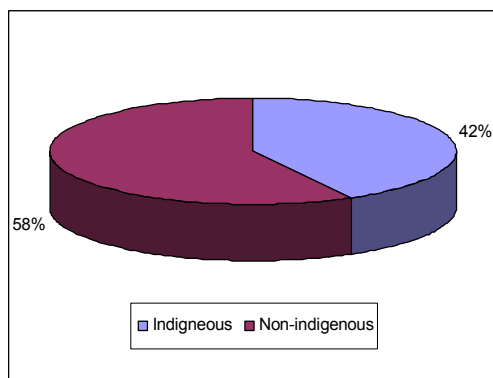
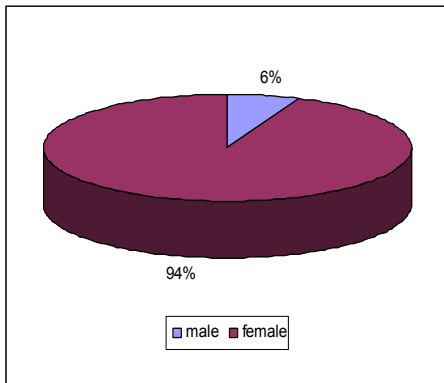


Figure 1 Cultural background or cultural identity of respondents



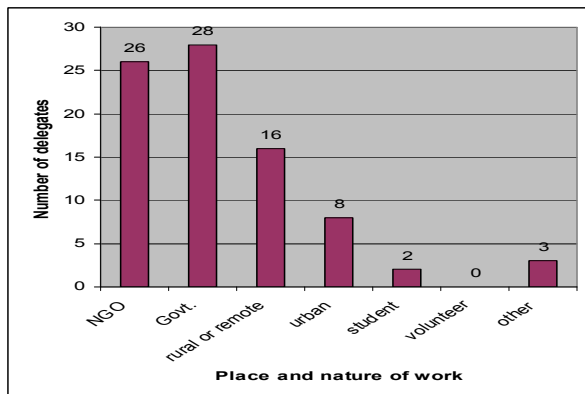
Of the delegates that responded to the questionnaire 42% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 58% of delegates were non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, although it was noted that there was higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 2 Gender of respondents



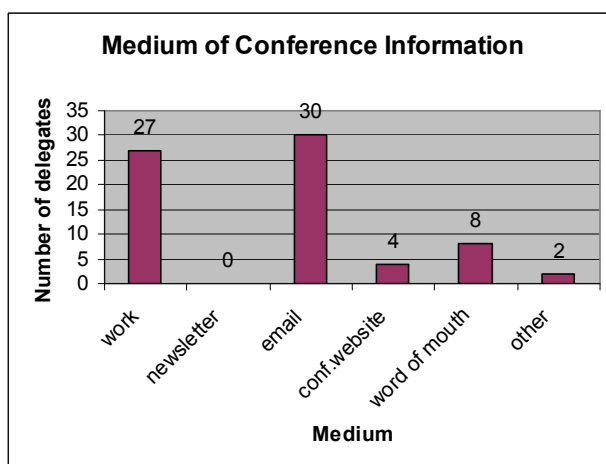
94% of delegates that responded to the questionnaire were females and 6% males.

Figure 3 What best describes place and nature of work



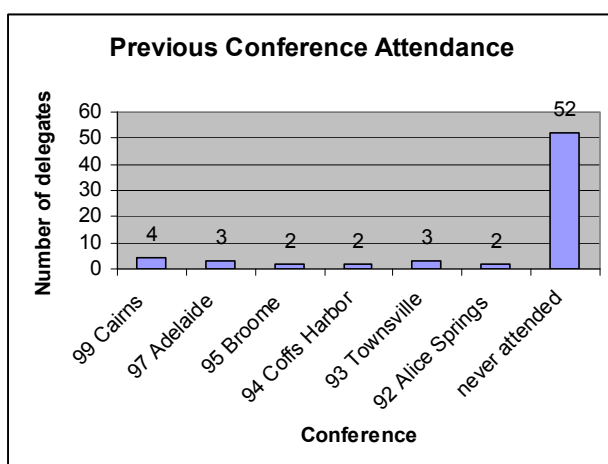
34% of respondents reported to be employed by government departments and 31% by non-government organisations. The majority of people who responded to the questionnaire worked in a rural and remote setting and 10% worked in the urban setting. 2% were students and 4% worked in retail (other).

Figure 4 Medium of conference information



The majority of respondents (approx. 43–48%) found out about the conference through either their work, email or both; 13% found out through word of mouth and 6% found out through the conference website.

Figure 5 Previous conference attendance



84% (52) of the respondents indicated that this was the first National Nutrition Networks Conference that they had attended; 6% had attended the '99 Cairns conference, 5% had attended the '97 and '93 conferences and 3% had attended the '95, '94 and '92 conferences.

5.6 Pre-conference information and comments

Despite the short time line, most delegates found out about the conference through their work, email or both. A large proportion of delegates believed that the online and written information and answering questions (both written and verbal) in regards to the conference were excellent. A smaller proportion believed the call for abstracts was excellent (approximately one-third) with confusion around whether presenters needed to be Indigenous or non-Indigenous (see Appendix D for full results).

5.7 After the conference: benefit of the conference

Most delegates believed the conference assisted them with networking and more than 70% believed the conference was excellent for discovering new programs, resources and service providers. Two-thirds believed this was a great opportunity to gain ideas to take back to their communities/workplace. A large percentage of delegates believed that they had a better understanding of government and non-government policies and initiatives and the importance of keeping nutrition in the focus and to develop nutrition as a priority (see Appendix D for full results).

5.8 Conference organisation

Nearly 80% of respondents believed the conference organisation was excellent and the fact that delegates could move in-between rooms during concurrent sessions was a great advantage. The main criticism was the food – lack of variety with more than 50% of respondents reporting that it was satisfactory. At least three-quarters of the delegates found the handbook excellent and very useful although it may have been helpful if the page number of the abstract was on the program. Most delegates enjoyed the conference dinner, although some mentioned that it would have been better if there was entertainment, e.g. music, dancing. The flour drum stove cooking on Wednesday night was a hit, with delegates thoroughly enjoying themselves. They believed it was a fantastic way to get to know other delegates and a very unique idea to take back to their communities.

Conference Management Committee

While some members may not have had nutrition as their only work focus, the mix on the committee allowed a broad perspective on Indigenous nutrition issues, and a vast communication network to promote the conference. It also reflected the current nutrition workforce in Australia, in that there is a lack of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples qualified as nutritionists or nutrition workers. This issue was subsequently addressed in

the conference recommendations. Lack of representation from some states on the CMC was also noted as a concern (ACT and Tas).

Members of the committee reported an overall sense of empowerment and satisfaction from their involvement. Some people indicated they had never been involved in anything similar before and commented they had benefited from the experience. Similar feedback also came from chairpersons of concurrent sessions and first-time presenters at the conference.

The high level of professionalism of the CMC Chair and conference project officer were noted by the CMC to be a contributing factor to the overall success of the conference.

Media

Feedback from CAAMA Television – they were interested in interviewing presenters of abstracts, but when presenters were approached by CAAMA they froze. CAAMA mentioned that it would be a lot easier if there were prepared abstracts for the media and the presenters knew this in advance, thus knowing what they were going to talk about when approached.

There was significant media interest associated with the conference with more than forty interviews including Fran Kelly Breakfast – ABC Radio National, CAAMA radio and considerable interest from ABC regional radio as far as Broome, Cairns, Canberra and Adelaide.

Timeline and funding

The conference was funded, planned and conducted in a short time frame of 7–8 months, especially in light of the long gap between the previous NNNC in 1999 and the current one. The success of the conference was due to the exceptional organisational assistance of the NRHA, NNNC project officer and Conference Management Committee. *It is recommended that a greater lead-in time (for example 12 months) is needed for future conference management.*

The project officer

The project officer was employed 20 hours per week for 7–8 months. These hours were found to be inadequate. The project officer often worked 24–32 hours per week with assistance from the NATSINSAP Project Officer (1–2 days per week – which was not funded). This conference was unique in that all presenters were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coming from all areas within Australia. This involved a lot of planning, not only from the presenter's perspective but also from work colleagues. The project officer contacted the presenters/work colleagues to ensure travel arrangements had been made and that they were still able to present at the conference. In this process the project officer discovered that some presenters were unable to present therefore the reserve list of presenters needed to be contacted. This was very time consuming.

It is recommended a 12 month position for a project officer with 3 days per week for the first 6 months then 5 days per week for the following 6 months.

Recommendations committee

The NNNC provided a unique opportunity to develop recommendations from the conference, in part prompted by the opportunity to contribute to the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Summit held shortly after the conference. The Conference Recommendations Committee, comprising mostly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, was appointed to collate and compile recommendations into a cohesive list. Members of the committee were made known to conference participants from the beginning.

Feedback from the committee confirmed that this was a valuable process, however, it was very time consuming and meant that committee members were unable to participate in many of the conference sessions. As this was a new process for Nutrition Networks, the role and responsibilities of the committee members were not clear at the beginning and developed as the conference progressed. *It is recommended that this be fine-tuned for future conferences.*

5.9 Conference program

Ninety-eight per cent of the respondents enjoyed the plenary sessions/speakers. Delegates reported that they thought the presentations were excellent, very informative and thought provoking. The majority of delegates enjoyed Tom Calma, Olga Havnen and John Tregenza, especially coming from a political perspective. Some delegates believed that John Tregenza's work with the communities needed to be acknowledged, supported and assisted by other agencies and government.

Delegates were interested to hear especially from Olga Havnen at the next conference regarding the Northern Territory intervention. Delegates reported that it was very good to get an overview of the bigger picture and good to get a background on different policies and initiatives that are happening around Australia.

Delegates also found Leisa McCarthy's and Traven Lea's presentation ('The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan—the story so far') very informative. Leisa's presentation ('Why become a nutritionist? Experiences of three Indigenous nutritionists') was reported to be very moving and inspiring. Hearing about outback stores, RIST (Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaways) and NATSINSAP was also particularly useful.

91% of the respondents believed the size of the audience in the workshop sessions was just right (see Appendix D for full results).

More than 90% of respondents to the questionnaires found all concurrent sessions useful and relevant. Feedback was generally very positive. The themes that were the most useful were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Food supply in rural and remote communities'. The themes that were most relevant to delegates were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Communicating and disseminating "good practice" in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives'. Less than 10% of respondents had negative feedback, that is, the session was not useful or relevant.

Please note the conference program in the conference handbook differs slightly from the conference program shown in Appendix A. This reflects the changing circumstances of speakers and delegates in the final few weeks leading up to the conference. The availability of some speakers and key delegates for the final day of the conference meant adjustments to the program were necessary. It also shows the flexibility of the Conference Management Committee, through the project officer, to work with changing circumstances.

6 Networking workshops

Six state and territory-specific networking workshops were held as part of the National Nutrition Networks Conference.

The objectives of these workshops were to:

- explore the existence and adequacy of nutrition support networks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition in each jurisdiction
- make recommendations for improving nutrition support networks from a jurisdiction and national perspective.

Some jurisdictions already have formalised region-specific networks involving government and non-government nutrition staff, and hold regular meetings for communication and professional development. Networks are less formalised in other jurisdictions, but this meeting has prompted more concentrated effort in some places.

Key themes and recommendations emerging from the workshops were:

- greater recognition of the need for greater inclusion and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutritionists/workers in both new and existing networks
- make greater use of the *HealthInfoNet*, and other communication methods, for regular discussion, contact and support
- broader involvement of sectors and agencies beyond health agencies.

7 Theme-based workshops

For the final session of the second day participants had the choice of attending four workshops based on key NATSINSAP themes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce
- nutrition issues in urban areas
- family focused maternal and child nutrition
- food security.

The workshops were facilitated by partnership teams and provided an opportunity to explore and discuss key issues relevant to NATSINSAP themes. The workshops were well attended and were an important way of gaining national input to either affirm or critique the relevance of NATSINSAP nearly ten years since its inception. Key recommendations that arose from each of the workshop groups were contributed to the conference recommendations process.

8 Conference recommendations and future of NATSINSAP

Due to fortunate timing, the National Nutrition Networks Conference presented a unique opportunity to advocate strongly for the critical role food and nutrition issues have at the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Summit held in Canberra on 18–20 March 2008.

At the last National Nutrition Networks Conference held in 1999, participants assisted in formulating the key actions that now form part of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP). Nine years later, the National Nutrition Networks Conference in Alice Springs again brought together people across the spectrum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food and nutrition issues across Australia. The conference provided a unique occasion to re-visit NATSINSAP, to report on progress, identify gaps and articulate clear actions for the future.

Traven Lea, the Chair of NATSINSAP Steering Committee has also been a member of a Steering Committee for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) that has drawn together 40 representative bodies under the umbrella of the 'Close the Gap' campaign. The HREOC committee was chaired by Mr Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner who was a keynote speaker at the first plenary session at the conference. One of the achievements of the HREOC committee has been the development of the 'Equality in Health' Plan for closing health policy gaps to complement existing Federal Government priorities. In the plan there were a number of priorities that were relevant to food and nutrition.

Professor Kerin O'Dea AO (Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Department of Medicine, St Vincent's Hospital and formerly Director of the Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin, NT, 2000–2005) was invited as an independent expert to provide direction in the development of targets on the HREOC committee for the 'Close the Gap' campaign. While Kerin was unable to attend the National Nutrition Networks Conference, Dympna Leonard and Michelle Elwell (Public Health Nutritionists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, Qld) developed a presentation for the first plenary session at the conference to provide background to this process and some initial recommendations for consideration by conference participants.

Following the success of the 'Close the Gap' public campaign, HREOC convened the 'Close the Gap' Indigenous Health Equality Summit in Canberra the week after the National Nutrition Networks Conference. At the summit speakers provided a context and content on targets that will support closing the gap of life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Professor Kerin O'Dea in addition to representation from NATSINSAP was asked to support the development of target setting in the nutrition area.

The timing of the National Nutrition Networks Conference was ideal for encapsulating new ideas and commitment to clear actions required to improve nutrition and food security that informed our response to the 'Close the Gap' campaign; as well as other advocacy opportunities.

Refer to Appendix E for the plan used for consulting and reaching consensus among conference delegates on important or relevant actions required to progress food and nutrition issues among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

The Conference Recommendations Committee collated a set of over 80 recommendations from delegates at the conference. This information provided a useful overview of people's thinking on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition and affirms both the current and future direction of NATSINSAP.

The recommendations came from several sources: from the authors of the papers presented at the conference in concurrent sessions, from keynote addresses, from opinions expressed in concurrent sessions, from groups of concerned delegates and from theme-based concurrent workshops.

Recommendations were grouped according to content into overarching guiding principles or key themes consistent with priority areas of NATSINSAP. The Conference Recommendations Committee progressed these further and developed a set of priority recommendations for further advocacy to progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives. The set of priority recommendations is available on both the National Nutrition Networks Conference website and on Indigenous HealthInfoNet.

These recommendations are the property of the conference delegates, but all jurisdictions, agencies and government departments are encouraged to progress them wherever possible. Specific action on some of the recommendations will be actively incorporated into the workplan of the NATSINSAP Project Officer(s) position (funded until October 2008 at this stage).

One of the priority recommendations from conference delegates relates to the future and applicability of NATSINSAP:

Progress NATSINSAP, in line with current government policy and 'Close the Gap' led by the federal government, in partnership with state governments and community controlled organisations, recognising needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban, rural and remote communities.

This would be achieved by establishment of a national nutrition function with responsibility for the evaluation and revision of NATSINSAP, development of new goals and targets, securing funding for the next phase and leading implementation with accountability to the relevant government departments and AHMAC.

NATSINSAP, or an equivalent strategy, is strategically positioned to oversee the future of the Nutrition Networks Conference, as supported by delegates from the networks conference support the continuation of NATSINSAP and embedding the future of the conference into the national strategy.

9 Vision and future of the Nutrition Networks Conference

The vision of the National Nutrition Networks Conference was to:

- provide an environment that enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share thoughts, knowledge and experiences in food and nutrition
- inspire people working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food, nutrition and health area to support, share, network and learn together
- advocate for nutrition to be at the forefront of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health agenda.

One of the unanimous recommendations put forward by the conference delegates under the NATSINSAP priority area 'Communicating and disseminating good nutrition practice' was:

Explore and secure funding options to ensure continuation of a biennial National Nutrition Networks Conference that enables networking and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others working in food and nutrition programs and related areas, and to ensure the conference is accessible to all.

The 'future of the conference' was discussed at a plenary session on the final morning of the conference. Key points raised at this session were:

- Participants voted for the continuation of the NNNC every two years with sufficient lead-in time and funding for a project officer.
- As funding is an issue – consider sponsorship, and other funding models (e.g. environmental health) to keep costs affordable and accessible for all. Ensure concessional rates are available and sponsorship for travel.
- Engage the conference management services of National Rural Health Alliance to work with local nutrition network and conference management committee.
- Continue to ensure that all papers are presented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, unless exceptional circumstances as deemed by the Conference Management Committee. Make use of audiovisual and other technology to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples voice (or input).
- Progress NATSINSAP, or equivalent strategy, and embed the future of the conference into the national strategy.

9.1 Environmental health model

Discussions were held with Jeff Standen, Environmental Health Manager, New South Wales to discuss the model used to fund the Indigenous Environmental Health Conference. These conferences have been held generally every second year for the past 10 years in NT, SA, NSW and Qld. The last conference was held in Cairns in 2007, with the next one planned for Kalgoorlie in 2009. Each State Environmental Health Branch of the participating jurisdictions contributes approximately \$10 000 per conference and the federal government contributes \$20 000. Costs for delegates are kept to a minimum, and financial assistance is offered as needed. No sponsorship is sought.

The conference is managed by a sub-group of EnHealth, overseen by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health working group reporting to the Health Protection Committee of the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC). EnHealth comprises the Directors of Environmental Health from each state and territory, industry and professional body representation. The ongoing sustainability of the conference is included in the work plan of EnHealth, part of the National Environmental Health Strategy 2007-12.

The NATSINSAP Project Officer will develop recommendations for a sustainable model for future National Nutrition Networks Conferences for consideration by the NATSINSAP Steering Committee in the next three months.

10 Promoting the newly expanded nutrition section of Indigenous HealthInfoNet

The nutrition section of Indigenous HealthInfoNet was launched and promoted in a plenary session at the conference. Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet director Neil Thomson ran a HealthInternet café at the conference and subsequently all conference delegates have received email communication about the availability of the site, in particular the supported discussion board.

11 Discussion

As it has been in previous years, the National Nutrition Networks Conference was a gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others working together in many different ways and settings across Australia to improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is a wonderful opportunity to share good practice and learn from each other.

The National Nutrition Networks Conference in Alice Springs again brought together people from across Australia to re-visit the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP); to report on progress, identify gaps and articulate clear actions for the future. It was a unique opportunity to advocate strongly for the critical role food and nutrition issues have in helping to close the gap in Aboriginal health.

Throughout the course of the conference, delegates were able to contribute their recommendations which were taken to the Indigenous Health Inequalities Summit in Canberra the week after the conference. The timing of the National Nutrition Networks Conference was ideal for encapsulating new ideas and commitment to clear actions required to improve nutrition as well as other advocacy opportunities.

At registration, delegates were provided with evaluation questionnaires for each session and for the overall conference evaluation. During the conference delegates were encouraged to complete these evaluation questionnaires during dedicated times in the program. Both the usefulness and relevance of each session was evaluated. An overall evaluation questionnaire was to be completed by the end of the conference. The questionnaires were designed to give feedback to future Conference Management Committee members so as to ensure the sustainability of the National Nutrition Networks Conference and ensure the Aims and objectives of the conference were met.

11.1 Strengths

The strengths of the conference were described as:

- Lots of opportunity for networking
- Very well organised
- Moving between each presentation was fantastic
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speakers being the main presenters with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders co-presenting
- Having a meaning to the conference and being more strategic, i.e. providing recommendations for the Health Summit the following week in Canberra
- Fantastic MC – Kerry Arabena
- Excellent presentations from the plenary speakers
- A good mix covering many key issues and initiatives
- Great to hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples talking about their work – keep this going

11.2 Weaknesses of the conference

The weakness of the conference were described as:

- Very short lead time, which gave the delegates only five weeks for 'call for abstracts'
- A lot of the presentations were rushed and many of the slides went so quickly that it was too difficult to take notes! Would be nice to have access to presentation slides (so that we can get the maximum amount of information from each presentation).
- To announce earlier that to present you needed to be Aboriginal or co-present with an Aboriginal person. Need time to get funding for co-presenters to attend. Some good programs not presented because of this criteria. It would be a good idea to allow voice recordings of Aboriginal people involved in programs so that this criteria can be met – if this was allowed for this conference it would have been good to know
- Not involving local nutrition networks
- Lack of variety of food provided
- Not enough spoken about the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders taking responsibility for their health issues
- Delegates had to leave the conference early because of availability of flights from Alice Springs

11.3 Relevant comments

Other relevant comments included:

- It's a challenge to cover big picture policy and strategic directions and engage community people at the same time. Both are needed and should be represented at future conferences.
- Fantastic to have the opportunity to feed recommendations into national forum 'Close the Gap' – good to know that something constructive will come out of the discussions
- I feel this conference is a priority for people working to improve nutritional status of Aboriginal people. Appropriate decision makers and policy people should be represented from each state and territory.
- Wonderful conference. So inspiring. It was opportunity to finally have a say and maybe impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition and health.
- More cultural display (e.g. artwork display) – Welcome to Country was fantastic and moving but show of culture seemed to stop there. Needed to showcase NT Aboriginal culture more (especially at the conference dinner)
- Allow presenters of non-Indigenous background who work for Aboriginal organisations and who work closely with Aboriginal people and live within Aboriginal communities to present and share information.

11.4 Limitations of the questionnaires

The evaluation questionnaires, and the data set it provided, had a number of limitations:

- not all questionnaires were fully completed by the delegates (i.e. not all questions were answered)
- the total number of delegates that completed the overall questionnaire was only 30.5% of the total number of delegates that attended the conference

- delegates who were not comfortable with writing their comments did not really have the opportunity to contribute apart from the limited oral interviews
- if delegates circled more than one number in a session, the first number was taken.

11.5 Suggested additions

Delegates were asked what kind of sessions/activities they would like to see included in future conferences. Suggestions fell into the following categories:

- urban
- updates on previous conference recommendations
- yarning, more practical examples, e.g. cooking sessions like the flour drum cooking session
- male journeys/program
- bush tucker options/use/access/tour – making better of what is available
- resource development, display of resources and use of them
- small group discussion/more interactive
- the mindset of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how this is having an impact on their health problems and how to change this
- youth
- physical activity.

11.6 Suggested improvements

Delegates were asked ways in which this conference could have been improved. The main issues raised were:

- to have an extra day instead of so many sessions in one day
- the program was great but some people felt that they had missed out on too many presentations
- to have workshops at the beginning of the day when people are fresh and alert rather than in the afternoon
- for the welcome drinks/registration night, have traditional dancers or singers present
- organisers to be more identifiable (i.e. wearing bright t-shirts)
- neutral facilitators to be brought in for the conference to run the recommendation sessions, workshops or any other strategic sessions so that the leaders can have a rest and participate with others
- increase ways presenters can demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement to enable them to present
- the importance of engaging with local groups and ensuring their presence
- ensure there was more variety of food (rather than just sandwiches).

One of the aims of the conference was to advocate for nutrition to be at the forefront of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health agenda. The process for this was to put forth recommendations

throughout the conference by involving all delegates. The Conference Recommendations Committee was established to assist with compiling all the recommendations put forward. Some of these recommendations were taken to the Indigenous Health Inequalities Summit in Canberra the week after the conference. The other recommendations were refined by the Conference Recommendations Committee and tabled. These will be used as an advocacy tool in the future. The timing of the National Nutrition Networks Conference was ideal for encapsulating new ideas and commitment to clear actions required to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition (see Appendixes G and H for complete set and priority recommendations).

The conference encouraged self-confidence and self-reliance amongst people who work in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition, and provided strategies to support and deliver nutrition initiatives that foster self-determination and sustainability. Programs and projects were showcased and presented or co-presented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The conference raised awareness of relevant communication networks by conducting jurisdictional workshops on Friday morning and also in promoting the Australian Indigenous Health *InfoNet*. This will be further developed and expanded to ensure the maintenance of these networks and to support quality nutrition work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It was discussed on the last day of the conference how the National Nutrition Networks Conference can be sustained and possibly retained as a core component of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP). Some recommendations were made at the conference regarding the future of the NNN Conference. It was recommended that it will be held every two years, that the National Rural Health Alliance consider continuing to be the conference managers, there should be at least a 12 month lead-in time and local groups will be involved with the process as well as a national Conference Management Committee overseeing the conference. One other very important stipulation would be that the presenters/co-presenters would be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander with exceptions. Securing funding options to ensure the sustainability of the National Nutrition Networks Conference and investigating the possibility of an association needs to be further explored.

11.7 Key recommendations

Key recommendations for future NNN Conference Management Committees were:

- at least 12 months lead-in time with project officer resourcing recommended to be at least 0.6 FTE
- national representation with majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and local nutrition representation by host state
- begin preparing for media three months prior to the conference, and provide media training for CMC members who will be media representatives for the conference
- greater clarification of roles for committee members on CMC and CRC
- stronger targeting of mainstream media regarding relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition issues being showcased at the conference.

12 Conclusion

The National Nutrition Networks Conference is the only forum of its kind in Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others (working together in many different ways and settings across Australia) to meet in such a forum to facilitate sharing of good practice, knowledge and information, whilst also learning from each other with the ultimate goal to improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In the nine years since the last conference, many things have progressed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition, including the release of NATISINSAP (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan 2000–2010). This conference gave people the opportunity to revisit NATSINSAP and put recommendations forward to ensure food and nutrition is at the forefront of the national health agenda. It has helped to report on progress, identify gaps and where action needs to be taken in the future.

Many participants felt that the conference exceeded their expectations. They felt that it was a great networking opportunity and very inclusive. Most people felt very inspired by the end of the conference.

The evaluation shows that the aims and objectives of the National Nutrition Networks Conference were met. This evaluation was conducted to provide feedback to the Conference Management Committee, funding bodies and conference delegates attending the conference. This evaluation report will also provide useful information to future Conference Management Committees, funding bodies and potential participants.

Appendix A Program

Note: Presenting authors in concurrent sessions are underlined in the program.

TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2008		
4.00 pm	Registration commences	Ghan Foyer
1.00–6.00 pm	Optional Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaway tour	
6.30 pm	Welcome reception	Ghan Foyer

WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2008		
8.00 am	Registration Desk open Conference Office open	Ghan Foyer
	PLENARY SESSION	MacDonnell Room A
8.30am	Welcome to country	
8.45am	MC: Introduction NATSINSAP and Nutrition Networks Housekeeping	
9.00 am	<i>Indigenous Australians and nutrition – a human rights based approach</i> Tom Calma	
9.30 am	<i>The fundamentals of food security in remote Indigenous communities – impacts and effectiveness of the Federal Government intervention in the NT</i> Olga Havnen	
10.00 am	<i>Close the gap with good tucker</i> Michelle Elwell; Dympna Leonard	
10.20 am	Audience questions and comments facilitated by MC	
10.30 am	MORNING TEA Trade display and networking	Ghan Foyer
11.00 am – 12.35 pm	Concurrent Session A (4 papers of 20 minutes each with 5 minutes between each paper)	
	A1 <i>Good Tucker, Good Health</i> Chair: Tanya Stiles	MacDonnell Room A
	11.00 <i>Living Strong: a health lifestyle program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities</i> <u>Dawn Charteris, Michelle Elwell</u>	
	11.25 <i>Crunch&Sip® – increasing fruit, veg and water consumption in rural and remote WA schools</i> <u>Brenda Cheveralls, Jenny Atkins, Kate Hawkings, Terry Slevin, Diane Ledger, Lyn Dimer</u>	
	11.50 <i>Darayiga Guya Mapu (Come here: talk feeling)</i> <u>Karen Miranda</u>	
	12.15 <i>Yarning: Goolarri Television series – Catch & Cook</i> <u>Robert Lee, Julie Nimmo</u>	

WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2008

	<p>A2 <i>Communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives</i> Chair: Kym Blechynden</p>	Ellery Room A
11.00	<p><i>Validity of short nutrition questions among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children aged 10 to 12 years using multiple 24-hour recalls: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project</i> <u>Josephine Gwynn</u>, <u>Nicole Turner</u>, Janine Cochrane, Victoria Flood, Wayne Smith, John Wiggers</p>	
11.25	<p><i>Yalu'Marnggithinyaraw and the Yolnguy Walngakum Yolngu life project</i> <u>Dorothy Yunggirrnga</u>, <u>Jean Rurrukunbuy</u></p>	
11.50	<p><i>Collaborative approach to community-based research: a case study in the Northern Territory</i> <u>Jeannie Campbell</u>, Danielle Aquino</p>	
12.15	<p><i>Mean nutrient intake and foods contributing to selected nutrients among children aged 10 to 12 years: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Program</i> <u>Victoria Flood</u>, Josephine Gwynn, Jimmy Chun-Yu Louie, <u>Nicole Turner</u>, Janine Cochrane, Stephen Cochrane, Wayne Smith, John Wiggers</p>	
	<p>A3 <i>Nutrition issues in urban areas</i> Chair: Amanda McGregor</p>	Ellery Room D
11.00	<p><i>Which way public health nutrition in Brisbane?</i> <u>Raima Toolis</u>, Bronwyn Fredericks, Dallas Leon</p>	
11.25	<p><i>Developing a model of primary prevention for urban Aboriginal and Islander populations – Primary Prevention and Capacity Building Project</i> Tom Ogwang, Brian Oldenburg, Brownyn Fredericks, <u>Dallas Leon</u>, <u>Joanna Coutts</u></p>	
11.50	<p><i>Plenty Valley Community Kitchen project with urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families</i> <u>Glynis Vickery</u>, <u>Emma Hughes</u></p>	
12.15	<p><i>South Australian Community Foodies: supporting communities to make healthy food choices</i> <u>Liz Sanders</u>, <u>Jenni Glover</u></p>	
12.40 pm - 1.40 pm	<p>LUNCH Trade display and networking</p>	Ghan Foyer
	<p>PLENARY SESSION Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce</p>	MacDonnell Room A
1.40 pm	<p>MC</p>	
1.45 pm	<p><i>The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NATSINSAP) – the story so far</i> Traven Lea, Amanda Lee</p>	
2.25 pm	<p><i>Why become a nutritionist? Experiences of three Indigenous nutritionists</i> Leisa McCarthy</p>	

WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2008

2.45 pm	<i>Good tucker education and how it links to the new national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker qualifications</i> Emma Silvester, Linda Zerna	
3.05pm	Audience questions and comments	
3.15 pm - 3.45 pm	AFTERNOON TEA Trade display and networking	Ghan Foyer
3.45 pm - 5.20 pm	Concurrent Session B (4 papers of 20 minutes each, 5 minutes between papers)	
	B1 <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce</i> Chair: Meg Adam	MacDonnell Room A
3.45	<i>Making healthy choices for ourselves: partnerships for healthy eating and physical activity in Aboriginal communities</i> <u>Jennifer Browne</u> , <u>Sharon Thorpe</u> , Priscilla Pyett, Peter Waples-Crowe	
4.10	<i>'More than Medicine': a work in progress</i> <u>Cynthia Porter</u> , Robynne Snell, Tony Dodd, Debbie Woods, <u>Alan McDonald</u>	
4.35	<i>From principles of nutrition to good tucker stories back again – pedagogical lessons from an Indigenous specific community nutrition degree</i> <u>Lauren Grose</u> , Lisa Schubert, <u>Amanda McGregor</u>	
5.00	<i>Expansion of the Indigenous nutrition workforce in Queensland Health</i> Amanda Lee, Dympna Leonard, Simone Lowson, Anita Groos, Christina Stubbs, <u>Angela Simons</u> , <u>Deanne Minniecon</u>	
5.20	Evaluation for Session A and Session B	
	B2 <i>Family focused maternal and child nutrition</i> Chair: Judith Myers	Ellery Room A
3.45	<i>Good Food Great Kids</i> <u>Jo Stanford</u> , Gail Crozier, Jane Judd, <u>Doseena Fergie</u>	
4.10	<i>Community consultation of home micronutrient supplementation 'Sprinkles' for Indigenous children in the Northern Territory</i> <u>Jeannie Campbell</u> , Danielle Aquino	
4.35	<i>Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Child Nutrition Program</i> Camilla Sleeth, <u>Suzanne Bryce</u> , <u>Debra Umala</u>	
5.00	<i>Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby</i> <u>Kani Thompson</u> , <u>Joanna Boyle</u>	
5.20	Evaluation for Session A and Session B	

WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2008

	B3 <i>Good tucker, Good health</i> Chair: Nicole Turner	Ellery Room D
3.45	<i>Bush tucker farm, Rutherford Technology High School</i> <u>Lesley Salem</u> , George Salem	
4.10	<i>Lockhart River Bush Tucker Nutrition Project 'Kuyulu Ngampulungku Mayi'</i> <u>Grace Hermawan</u> , <u>Liz Kyle</u> , <u>Lucy Hobson</u> , <u>Lisa Clarmont</u> , Susie Pascoe	
4.35	<i>Healthy Festivals: celebrating life and health in a way that appeals to whole communities – DVD</i> <u>Introduced by Dorothy Yunggirnga</u> , <u>Jean Rurrukunbuy</u>	
5.00	<i>Deadly Tucker – a story about a cookbook.....</i> Sandra Radich, Janice Reidy, <u>Dot Henry</u>	
5.20	Evaluation for Session A and Session B	
5.30 pm	Session concludes	
Free night or Optional Flour Drum Dinner		

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008

8.00 am	Registration Desk open Conference Office open	Ghan Foyer
PLENARY SESSION		MacDonnell Room A
8.30 am	Summary of Conference Recommendations	
8.50 am	<i>NATSINSAP – implementing the Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaway project across Australia</i> Traven Lea, Sharon Laurence	
9.10 am	<i>The Mai Wiru Stores Policy – a community development model for remote store operations</i> John Tregenza	
9.30 am	<i>Outback Stores – achieving food security in remote communities</i> Paddy Stephensen	
9.50 am	Audience questions and comments	

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008

10.00 am – 10.45 am	Concurrent Session C (2 papers, 20 minutes each with 5 minutes in between)	
	C1 <i>Food supply in rural and remote communities</i> Chair: Roy Price	MacDonnell Room A
10.05	<i>Yarning session: The expansion of Good Start Breakfast Clubs and accompanying food security initiatives to remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia</i> <u>Gwen Crombie, Jack Crombie</u>	
10.25	<i>Community mapping of food access and food services in rural NSW communities: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project</i> <u>Janine Cochrane, Stephen Cochrane, Josephine Gwynn, Nicole Turner</u>	
	C2 <i>Other topics</i> Chair: Julie-Anne McWhinnie	Ellery Room A
10.05	<i>Workshop: Good tucker, good health – great teeth!</i> <u>Annette Davey, Richelle Jackson</u>	
10.25	<i>Bush tucker in kidney failure and diabetes</i> <u>Lesley Salem, Elizabeth Thompson</u>	
	C3 <i>Posters</i>	Ellery Room D
	Authors of posters to speak to their posters	
10.45 am – 11.15 am	MORNING TEA Trade display and networking	Ghan Foyer
11.20 am – 12.35 pm	Concurrent Session D (3 papers 20 minutes each with 5 minutes in between)	
	D1 <i>Food supply in rural and remote communities</i> Chair: Leisa McCarthy	MacDonnell Room A
11.20	<i>Mai Wiru Regional Stores Policy</i> <u>Liz Balmer, Rosalind Butler, Mrs Paddy</u>	
11.45	<i>Making a difference – the Outback Stores and Canteen Creek story</i> <u>David Clegg, Julie Croft</u>	
12.10	<i>Working together for better health in Lajamanu</i> <u>Kathy Long, Danielle Aquino, Jim Butler, Lynette Tasman, Shirlene Daniels</u>	
12.35	Evaluation of Session C and D	

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008

	<p>D2 <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce</i> Chair: Margaret Daly</p>	Ellery Room A
11.20	<p><i>Making it happen: linkages between students and health workers create great nutrition resources</i> <u>Cynthia Porter</u>, Tony Dodd, Robynne Snell, Deborah Woods, <u>Alan McDonald</u></p>	
11.45	<p><i>Yarning session: Working towards a healthier Palm Island</i> <u>Leah Lenoy</u>, <u>Lauwanna Blackley</u></p>	
12.10	<p><i>Yarning session: Cooks Camp</i> Kellie Schouten, Sarah Conally, Jeannie Campbell, <u>Chrissy-Joe Kamara</u></p>	
12.35	Evaluation of Session C and D	
	<p>D3 <i>Communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives</i> Chair: Dawn Charteris</p>	Ellery Room D
11.20	<p><i>Focus groups with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland: information to direct the development of future nutrition strategies</i> <u>Angela Simons</u>, Kate Gellweiler, <u>Maureen Chamberlain</u>, Linda Medlin, Stephen Hogan, Amanda Lee</p>	
11.45	<p><i>Dietary glycemic index and glycemic load among children aged 10 to 12 years: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project</i> <u>Jimmy Chun-Yu Louie</u>, Christopher Everingham, <u>Nicole Turner</u>, Janine Cochrane, Josephine Gwynn, Wayne Smith, John Wiggers, Victoria Flood</p>	
12.10	<p><i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Brief Intervention</i> <u>Tanya Stiles</u>, Kaye Smith, <u>Kym Blechynden</u></p>	
12.35	Evaluation of Session C and D	
12.45 pm – 1.35 pm	<p>LUNCH Trade display and networking</p>	Ghan Foyer
1.00 pm	<p>Launch of the RIST resources in the trade display area</p>	Ghan Foyer

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008

1.35 pm – 2.45 pm	Concurrent Session E (4 papers 20 minutes each with 5 minutes in between)	
	<p>E1 <i>Food supply in rural and remote communities</i> Chair: Amanda Lee</p>	MacDonnell Room A
1.35	<p><i>Keeping track of healthy food: monitoring and planning for improvements in the national quality of the store food supply in remote communities</i> <u>Julie Brimblecombe, Dorothy Yunggirnga</u></p>	
2.00	<p><i>Stocking healthier choices in Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaways as part of the RIST project</i> <u>Traven Lea, Sally Drinan</u></p>	
2.25	<p><i>Impact of a community store based budgeting tool (FOODcard) on customer purchasing patterns in a remote Indigenous community in East Arnhemland, Northern Territory</i> <u>Adam Barnes, David Djalangi</u></p>	
2.45	Evaluation of Session E	
	<p>E2 <i>Family focused maternal and child nutrition</i> Chair: Maureen Chamberlain</p>	Ellery Room A
1.35	<p><i>Nunga Kids Café</i> <u>Michael Manders, Jeremy Coaby, Elizabeth Richards</u></p>	
2.00	<p><i>Consulting with Aboriginal communities: finding out about the facilitators of, and barriers to, healthy eating for our children</i> <u>Scott Trindall, Luke Allan, Lynde Bartel, Jackie Trapman, Renae Draws, Colin Bell</u></p>	
2.25	<p><i>Eat Well, Be Active, Healthy Kids for Life – Badu Island</i> <u>Kani Thompson, Rita Kebisu</u></p>	
2.45	Evaluation of Session E	
	<p>E3 <i>Other topics</i> Chair: Amanda McGregor</p>	Ellery Room D
1.35	<p><i>Pakana Kipli nayri – Aborigines eat well</i> <u>Candy Bartlett, Lisa McQueen, Tina Goodwin, June Sculthorpe, Rose Romeo</u></p>	
2.00	<p><i>The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program</i> <u>Colette Lappin, Vicki Taylor, Margaret Pumpa</u></p>	
2.25	<p><i>Koori’s Cooking Healthy recipe cards</i> <u>Natalie Burak, Clive Carroll</u></p>	
2.45	Evaluation of Session E	
2.50 pm – 3.15 pm	AFTERNOON TEA Trade display and networking	Ghan Foyer

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008

		MacDonnell Room A
	PLENARY SESSION	
3.15 pm	<i>Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet</i> Neil Thomson	
3.30 pm	Introductory presentation to workshops	
3.40 pm – 5.10 pm	Concurrent Session F—Workshops	
	Choose from the following 4 workshops or optional workshop	
	F1 <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce</i> Chairs: Leisa McCarthy, Amanda Lee	MacDonnell Room A
	F2 <i>Food security</i> Chairs: Julie Brimblecombe, Patricia Carter, Megan Ferguson, Dorothy Yunggirringa, Jean Rurrkunbuy	Ellery Room A
	F3 <i>Family-focused maternal and child nutrition</i> Chairs: Dympna Leonard, Michelle Elwell	Ellery Room D
	F4 <i>Nutrition issues in urban areas</i> Chairs: Sharon Thorpe, Jennifer Browne	Ellery Room B
	F5 <i>Optional workshopping</i>	Ellery Room C
5.10 pm	Session concludes	
6.45 pm	Conference Dinner	Desert Park

FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2008

8.00 am	Registration Desk open Conference Office open	
	PLENARY SESSION—Conference Recommendations	MacDonnell Room A
8.30 am	MC: introduction	
8.35 am	Summary of Recommendations/Conference Recommendations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATSINSAP and Close the Gap campaign – framework 2010 onwards; funding, advocacy strategy Audience questions and comments	
9.30 am	Nutrition Networks Conference – funding, sustainability, the future Winners of evaluation raffle	
10.15 am – 10.30 am	MORNING TEA Trade display and networking	Ghan Foyer

FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2008

10.35 am – 11.30 am	Concurrent Session G—State and Territory networking	
	G1 VIC/Tas, SA, NSW/ACT	MacDonnell Room A
	G2 QLD	Ellery Room A
	G3 NT, WA	Ellery Room D
11.35 am	PLENARY SESSION—Conference Recommendations	MacDonnell Room A
	Conference Recommendations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition Networks—ongoing conference, professional networks (states/territories, national) Audience questions and comments Acknowledgments	
12.00 pm	Final evaluation session	
12.15 pm	FAREWELL LUNCH	Ghan Foyer

Notes:

Keynote address/plenary—A special invitation from the Conference Management Committee to give a 20- or 30-minute plenary address.

Workshop—An interactive session on an agreed topic with one or more leaders who may present evidence/data/proposals etc for discussion.

Paper—A 20-minute paper presented to a split or concurrent session; groups of three or four per session on agreed NNNC themes.

Poster—poster presentation that is displayed and addressed by authors in one particular session (delegates walk around).

Yarning session—one or more delegates are invited to tell stories and interact with each other and the audience in a split or concurrent session.

Appendix B Final/overall evaluation questionnaire

National Nutrition Networks Conference '08 – Evaluation

11-14 March 2008, Alice Springs

Please complete and return to the box at the Registration Desk in the Foyer.
Where relevant, one or more options can be chosen for each question.

About you:

- Where do you live?**
 NSW QLD ACT NT SA WA TAS VIC other
- Do you identify as:** Indigenous Australian Non Indigenous
- Gender** Male Female
- What best describes your place and nature of work? (tick all boxes that apply to you)**
 Non-government organisation (including Community Controlled, not for profit etc.)
 Government organisation
 Rural or remote
 Urban
 Student
 Volunteer
 other _____
- How did you find out about this conference?**
 work E-mail word of mouth
 newsletter Conference website Other _____
- Have you attended any previous Nutrition Networks Conferences before?**
 '99 Cairns '97 Adelaide '95 Broome
 '94 Coffs Harbor '93Townsville '92 Alice Springs

Before the conference

- How would you rate the pre-conference information and support prior to the conference for each of these areas? Please circle (1= poor 2=satisfactory and 3 = Excellent)**

Written and online information	1	2	3
Call for abstracts	1	2	3
Answering queries about the conference (verbal and written)	1	2	3

Comments

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8. Did you have any expectations of the conference before it started?

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After the conference

9. How would you rate the benefit of the conference for each of the following areas?

Please circle (1=poor, 2=satisfactory, 3=excellent)

Assisting with networking	1	2	3
Discovered programs, resources and other service providers	1	2	3
Ideas to take back to my community/work	1	2	3
Better understanding of government/non-government policies/initiatives	1	2	3

Comments.....

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10. How would you rate the following?

	1 = Poor 2 = Satisfactory 3 = Excellent	Comments
Conference Organisation	1 2 3	
Registration	1 2 3	
Venue	1 2 3	
Food	1 2 3	
Handbook	1 2 3	
Conference Dinner	1 2 3	
Overall Cost	1 2 3	
Accommodation	1 2 3	Name of Accommodation:
Conference Dinner	1 2 3	

9. How did you find the size of the audience for each session?

too small just right too big

Comments.....

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10. Did you enjoy the plenary speakers?

Comments.....

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11. Was the conference what you expected?

Yes No

Comments:.....

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12. **What kind of sessions would you like to see included at future conferences?**

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13. **In what way could this conference be improved?**

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Thank you! We value your feedback.

Please place the completed form in the box at the registration desk, and take a Raffle ticket to be in the draw for a prize!



Appendix C Session evaluation questionnaires

National Nutrition Networks Conference '08 Evaluation Form for Wednesday 12 March—Session A

Please take a quick moment to complete this questionnaire on today's sessions. The questionnaire should take no longer than 5 minutes. Your response will be anonymous and confidential. Feedback is vital for improvements in the planning of future Nutrition Networks Conferences.

Name of presentation	Please tick session attended	How useful was the session? 1= not useful 2= useful 3= very useful	Is this relevant to your work? 1= not relevant 2= partly relevant 3= very relevant	Comments
Concurrent Session A, 11.00am – 12.35pm				
Session A1: Good Tucker Good Health				
Living Strong: a group based healthy life style program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Crunch and Sip—Increasing fruit, veg and water consumption in rural and remote WA schools		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Darayiga Guya Mapu (come here; talk feeling)		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Goolarri Television series—Catch & Cook		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session A2: Good Practice				
Validity of short term nutrition questions. Many rivers Diabetes Prevention Program		1 2 3	1 2	
Yalu/Manggithinyaraw and the Yolnguy Walngakaum. Yolngu life project		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Collaborative approach to community based research—a case study in the NT		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Mean Nutrient intake and food contributing to selected nutrients among children aged 10–12 years—many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session A3: Nut. Issues in urban areas				
Which way public Health Nutrition in Brisbane?		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Developing a model for primary prevention for urban Aboriginal and Islander populations		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Plenty Valley Community Kitchen Project with Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.-		1 2 3	1 2 3	
South Australian community foodies: supporting communities to make healthy food choices		1 2 3	1 2 3	

Comments from Session A

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Thank you! We value your feedback.

Please place the completed form in the tray at the registration desk and take a raffle ticket to be in the draw for a prize!



**National Nutrition Networks Conference '08
Evaluation Form for Wednesday 12 March—Session B**

Please take a quick moment to complete this questionnaire on today's sessions. The questionnaire should take no longer than 5 minutes. Your response will be anonymous and confidential. Feedback is vital for improvements in the planning of future Nutrition Networks Conferences.

Name of presentation	Please tick session attended	How useful was the session? 1= not useful 2= useful 3=very useful	Is this relevant to your work? 1= not relevant 2= partly relevant 3= very relevant	Comments
Concurrent Session B, 3.45pm – 5.20pm				
Session B1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Workforce				
Making healthy choices for ourselves		1 2 3	1 2 3	
More than medicine, a work in Progress		1 2 3	1 2 3	
From principals of Nutrition to good tucker stories back again		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Expansion of the Indigenous Nutrition Workforce in QLD health		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session B2: Family focused Maternal and Child Nutrition				
Good Food Great Kids		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Community Consultation of home micronutrient supplementation—Sprinkles		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Child Nutrition Program		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Growing Strong: Feeding you and your baby		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session B3: Good Tucker Good Health				
Bush Tucker Farm, Rutherford Technology High School		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Lockhart River Bush Tucker Nutrition Project 'Kuyulu Ngampulungku Mayi'		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Health Festivals—celebrating life and health in a way that appeals to whole communities		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Deadly Tucker—a story about a cookbook		1 2 3	1 2 3	

Comments from Session B

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Thank you! We value your feedback.

Please place the completed form in the tray at the registration desk and take a raffle ticket to be in the draw for a prize!



**National Nutrition Networks Conference '08
Evaluation Form for Thursday 13 March—Sessions C and D**

Please take a quick moment to complete this questionnaire on today's sessions. The questionnaire should take no longer than 5 minutes. Your response will be anonymous and confidential. Feedback is vital for improvements in the planning of future Nutrition Networks Conferences.

Name of presentation	Please tick session attended	How useful was the session? 1= not useful 2= useful 3=very useful	Is this relevant to your work? 1= not relevant 2 = partly relevant 3 = very relevant	Comments
Concurrent Session C, 10.00am – 10.45 am				
Session C1: Food Supply in rural and remote communities				
The expansion of the Good Start Breakfast Clubs and accompanying food security initiatives to remote Aboriginal Communities in Central Australia		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Community mapping of food access and food services in rural NSW communities: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Program		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session C2: Other Topics				
Good Tucker, good health—great teeth!		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Bush Tucker in kidney failure and diabetes		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Concurrent Session D, 11.20am – 12.35pm		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session D1: Food Supply in rural and remote communities				
Mai Wiru Regional Stores Policy		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Making a difference—the Outback Stores and Canteen Creek Story		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Working together for better health in Lajamanu		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session D2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait nutrition Workforce				
Making it happen: linkages between students and health workers create great nutrition resources		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Working together towards a healthier Palm Island		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Cooks camp		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session D3: Communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives				
Focus groups with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in QLD: information to direct the development of future Nutrition strategies		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Dietary glycemic index and glycemic load among children aged 10 to 12 years: Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Brief Intervention		1 2 3	1 2 3	

Comments from Session C and D

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Thank you! We value your feedback. Please place the completed form in the tray at the registration desk and take a raffle ticket to be in the draw for a prize!

**National Nutrition Networks Conference '08
Evaluation Form for Thursday 13 March—Session E**

Please take a quick moment to complete this questionnaire on today's sessions. The questionnaire should take no longer than 5 minutes. Your response will be anonymous and confidential. Feedback is vital for improvements in the planning of future Nutrition Networks Conferences.

Name of presentation	Please tick session attended	How useful was the session? 1= not useful 2= useful 3=very useful	Is this relevant to your work? 1= not relevant 2 = partly relevant 3 = very relevant	Comments
Concurrent Session E, 1.35pm – 2.45pm				
Session E1: Food supply in rural and remote communities				
Keeping track of healthy food: monitoring and planning improvements in the national quality of the store food supply and remote communities		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Stocking healthier choices in Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaways as part of the RIST project		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Impact of a community store based budgeting tool (FOODcard) on customer purchasing patterns in a remote Indigenous community in East Arnhemland, NT		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session E2: Family focused maternal and child nutrition				
Nunga Kids Café		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Consulting with Aboriginal communities: finding out about the facilitators of, and barriers to, healthy eating for our children		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Eat Well, Be Active, Healthy Kids for Life—Badu Island		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Session E3: Other topics				
Pakana Kipli nayri—Aborigines eat well		1 2 3	1 2 3	
The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program		1 2 3	1 2 3	
Koori's Cooking Healthy recipe card		1 2 3	1 2 3	

Comments from Session E

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Thank you! We value your feedback.

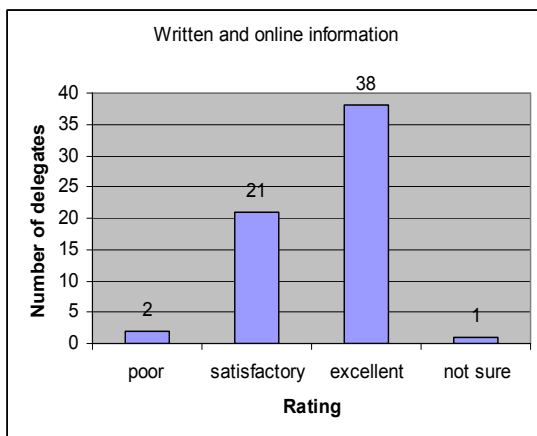
Please place the completed form in the tray at the registration desk and take a raffle ticket to be in the draw for a prize!

Appendix D Conference evaluation findings

D.1 Pre-conference information and comments

Despite the short time line, most delegates found out about the conference through their work, email or both. A large proportion of delegates believed that the online and written information and answering questions (both written and verbal) in regards to the conference were excellent. A smaller proportion believed the call for abstracts was excellent (approximately one-third) with confusion around whether presenters needed to be Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

Figure 6 Written and online information

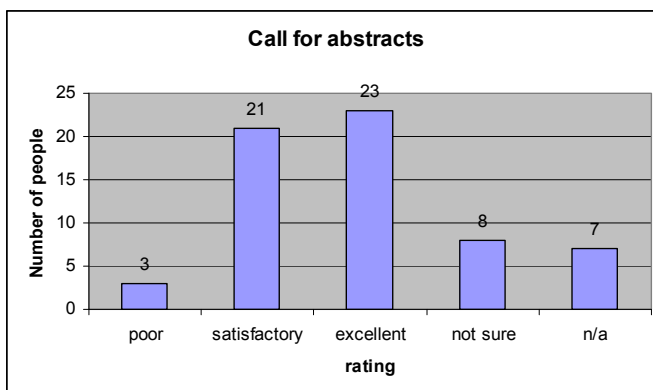


61% (38) of the delegates believed the written and online information was excellent.

Comments included:

- Given short time line, the conference organisers did a fantastic job
- Website information – great
- Well organised
- Excellent communication provided
- Well done to all
- Very efficient

Figure 7 Call for abstracts

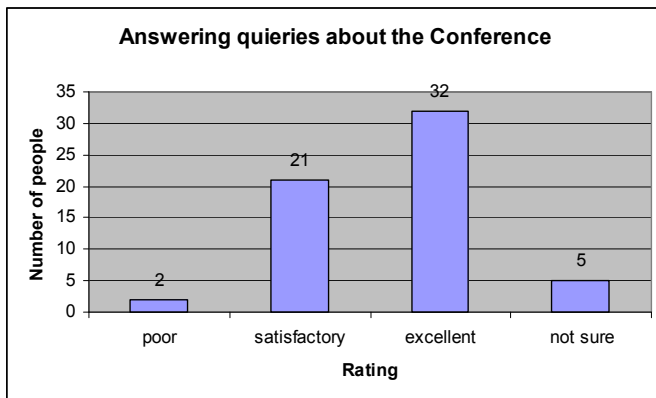


37% of delegates reported that the call for abstracts was excellent and 34% believed it was satisfactory. 24% reported that they were not sure or it was not applicable.

Comments included:

- It would have been good to announce earlier that to present you needed to be Aboriginal or co-present with an Aboriginal person. Need time to get funding for co-presenters to attend. Some good programs not presented because of this criteria. Think it is a good idea to allow voice recordings of Aboriginal people involved in programs so that these criteria can be met – if this was allowed for this conference it would have been good to know.
- Only heard about it last stage
- Application lost in the system so did not receive any info./support
- Abstract wasn't received on time
- I was surprised in the beginning that it was not a requirement that Aboriginal people had to be the main presenters. I am so pleased that it was changed.
- Didn't see any call for abstracts despite having reasonable networks in WA – so felt we'd missed a good opportunity.

Figure 8 Answering queries about the conference (written and verbal)



52% of respondents reported that queries answered (both written and verbal) about the conference were excellent, whilst 34% believed it was satisfactory.

Comments included:

- Would have liked to have all information and costs before hand so that I could have attended all workshops
- Very quick and accurate response.
- Wonderful – Paulina and Lyn (conference organisers)

Did you have any expectations of the conference before it started?

Most delegates had the following expectations:

- To learn about the current situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and nutrition outcomes (x4)
- To network and share information (x7)

- To learn about lots of programs that are happening in communities
- Exceeded expectations – quality of presentations (x4)
- Wanted to get as much as information as possible to take back to my organisation to pass onto our board members and to take back to their services and communities
- I have attended the Health Promotion Conference in Alice and this is just as good.
- Looking forward to hearing about projects and programs from around the country.
- Never been so didn't know what to expect. However, it's been truly inspiring and would definitely come back to Nutrition Networks.
- Looking forward to the outcomes of NATSINSAP actions recommended in previous '99 conference
- Expected focus on recommendations for the future
- Didn't expect it to be as large, inclusive and comprehensive as it was

D.2 After the conference: benefit of the conference

The majority of delegates believed the conference assisted them with networking and more than 70% believed the conference was excellent for discovering new programs, resources and service providers. Two-thirds believed this was a great opportunity to gain ideas to take back to their communities/workplace. A large percentage of delegates believed that they had a better understanding of government and non-government policies and initiatives and the importance of keeping nutrition in the focus and to develop nutrition as a priority.

Table 2 Assisting with networking (Objective 3)

	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
Number of delegates	1	21	40
Percentage	1.5%	34%	64.5%

64.5% of respondents believed the conference was beneficial in assisting them with networking. 34% reported that it was satisfactory.

Comments included:

- Assist with networking by having small groups 'meet people' session on first day or at the welcome dinner.
- Great, thoroughly learnt so much and great ideas
- Great networking. Would be great to have the presentations made available.
- Fantastic conference
- Very worthwhile. Well organised, well run
- Excellent networking opportunities

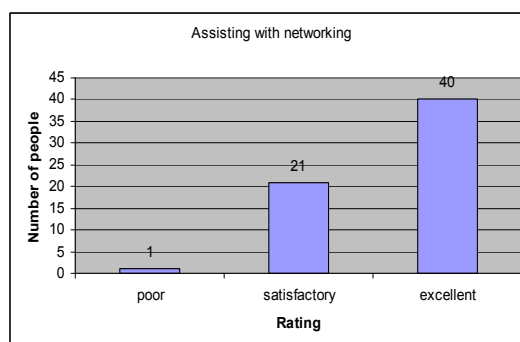


Table 3 Discovered programs, resources and other service providers

	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
Number of delegates	0	18	44
Percentage	0	29%	71%

71% of delegates reported that the conference was excellent for discovering programs, resources and other service providers.

Comments included:

- Great to have the opportunity to see what other states, other organisations and other communities are doing. It's also inspiring to see so many people dedicated to improving health, especially of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.
- The conference covered a broad range of areas

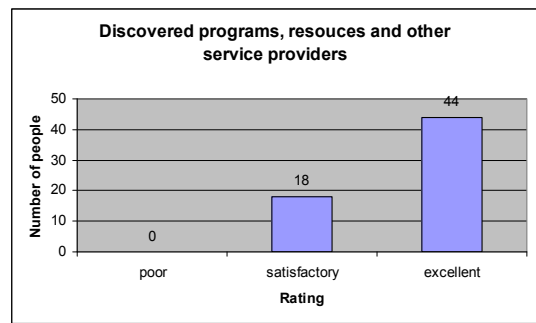


Table 4 Ideas to take back to my community/work

	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
Number of delegates	1	20	41
Percentage	2%	32%	66%

66% of respondents believed the conference was excellent in giving them ideas to take back to their communities

Comments included:

- Great networking opportunity and useful programs/resources/items to take back to my community.

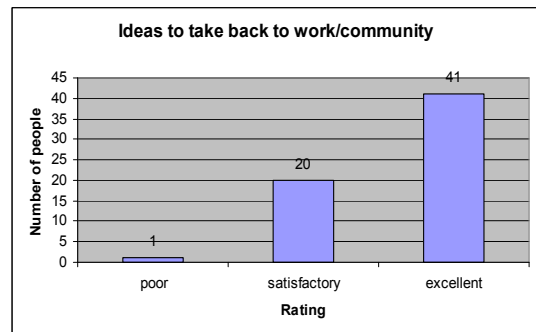


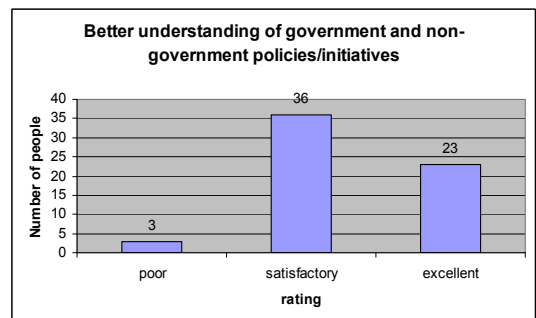
Table 5 Better understanding of government/non-government policies/initiatives

	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
Number of delegates	3	36	23
Percentage	5%	58%	37%

58% of the delegates reported that they had obtained satisfactory benefit in the understanding of government and non-government policies/initiatives, while 37% believed that they benefited greatly.

Comments included:

- Really good background of policies and initiatives were presented. It was interesting and encouraging to hear other people's success stories and various program initiatives however the needs of all communities are different.
- Made more aware of NATSINSAP and 'Close the Gap' campaign
- The close the gap recommendations workshops on Thursday could have been conducted and guided better. Should have been more organised given the short amount of time given to work on them.
- This is very important to keep nutrition in the focus and the future to develop nutrition as a priority.



D.3 Conference organisation

Nearly 80% of respondents believed the conference organisation was excellent and the fact that delegates could move in between rooms during concurrent sessions was a great advantage. More than 70% of respondents were very happy with the registration process and the venue apart from there not being enough chairs in the foyer during breaks. The main criticism was the food – lack of variety with more than 50% of respondents reporting that it was satisfactory. At least ¾ of the delegates found the handbook excellent and very useful although it may have been helpful if the page number of the abstract was on the program. Most delegates enjoyed the conference dinner, although some mentioned that it would have been better if there was entertainment, i.e. music, dancing. The flour drum stove cooking on Wednesday night was a hit, with delegates thoroughly enjoying themselves. They believed it was a fantastic way to get to know other delegates and a very unique idea to take back to their communities.

Conference organisation

- Poor – 0%
- Satisfactory – 22%
- Excellent – 78%

78% of delegates believed the conference was very well organised (excellent), although there was suggestion that in future local groups should be involved. People were also very happy that they could move rooms in between sessions.

Comments included:

- Very professional
- Organisation was smooth and efficient – brilliant (x4)
- Wonderful – thank you (x3)
- Well done – short time frame – great job
- Should involve local groups
- Very organised. Great, friendly professional people
- It would have been nice to have a more formal welcome on Tuesday night – e.g. music or dance.
- Fantastic ladies! So helpful from the beginning
- Good that we could move between workshops/sessions. Much better than what happens at some other conferences where you have to choose topics and attend all.

Registration

- Poor – 3%
- Satisfactory – 24%
- Excellent – 73%

Comments included:

- Easy
- Very smooth (x3)
- Very well managed
- The ladies behind the registration desk were so helpful – thank you

Venue

- Poor – 0
- Satisfactory – 25%
- Excellent – 75%

Comments included:

- More chairs in foyer for elders (x2)
- Not enough chairs to sit on at breaks, especially at lunchtime (x2)
- A bit chilly
- Perhaps elevated seating for big room
- Toilets not to be cleaned at lunch time.
- Need a dedicated roving microphone person for plenary sessions.
- Alice Springs is lovely but it meant nearly everyone had to travel.

Food

- Poor – 12%
- Satisfactory – 55%
- Excellent – 33%

Approximately one-third of the delegates thought the food was excellent, but a higher percentage thought the food was satisfactory; 12% believed the food was poor. There was a mixed response, but there was some criticism in the variety of food available. People were not satisfied with sandwiches alone.

Comments included:

- Healthy – plenty of it.
- Good to have plain and basic food
- Lunch excellent
- Simple but healthy
- Great having whole meal sandwiches and fruit
- Fruit at morning and afternoon tea could be better – was unripe. Fruit platter is easier too – can't cut oranges
- Found the sandwiches a bit boring. Like the whole fruit though
- Would like hotter, stronger coffee
- Should have nutritious food only – e.g. no cakes etc.
- More variety would have been nice (x6)
- Some Indigenous people complained that the food was not culturally appropriate
- Lovely – nice to have chocolate cake
- Sandwiches for everyday is not sufficient nor cake. There are many healthy alternatives.
- Not a great selection of vegetarian options.

Handbook

- Poor – 2%
- Satisfactory – 22%
- Excellent – 76%

Comments included:

- Very useful
- Abstracts (page reference) should be noted on program for easy reference
- Look forward to a CD/DVD of presentations
- Would be helpful to have the page number on the program timetable.
- Would have liked more pages in notebook to write on – ran out of room
- The coordination of abstracts and timetable was probably very difficult – but it would have been helpful to have the program handbook with abstracts in order of presentation or divided into concurrent sessions.

Conference dinner – Madigan's, Thursday night

- Poor – 2%
- Satisfactory – 26%
- Excellent – 36%
- Didn't go – 36%

Comments included:

- Needed entertainment – wasn't value for money. Traditional dancers would have been good (x2)
- Great location
- Didn't go because it was too expensive
- Good transport, location and quality food
- Excellent venue
- Fantastic
- Quantity okay but quality (taste) not crash hot – expected more bush tucker
- The venue and atmosphere was great but the meals and lack of 'entertainment' was disappointing – would have liked to see more of an Aboriginal theme.

Flour drum stove cook-off, Wednesday night

Although it was not included in the evaluation questionnaire, many people reported that they enjoyed this and thought it was excellent.

Comments included:

- Excellent (x6)
- Fantastic experience – will consider using it in own communities

Overall cost

- Poor – 4%
- Satisfactory – 62%
- Excellent – 34%

Comments included:

- Good
- Affordable
- Far too expensive
- Overall cost was expensive when the conference is held in a remote area

The majority of delegates believed the overall cost of the conference was satisfactory although a few people thought it was far too expensive, especially when it is held in a 'remote area'.

Accommodation

- Poor – 9%
- Satisfactory – 40%
- Excellent – 51%

The majority of delegates were happy with their accommodation. The accommodation that rated as satisfactory was mainly Desert Palms and Comfort Inn. The majority of delegates that stayed at Lasseters Hotel reported that it was excellent.

D.4 Conference program

The size of the audience

- Too small – 3.5%
- Just right – 91%
- Too big – 2%
- Not sure – 3.5%

91% of the delegates believed the size of the audience in the workshop sessions was just right.

Comments included:

- Sizes were fine. Some people left so it gave the impression of small groups
- Workshop sessions great but maybe breaking into smaller groups to give shy people more chance to speak.
- Big room elevated perhaps – especially Day 1 when have a full house
- There should just be one room so people don't miss stuff. I know its not really possible.
- Varied as a result of topic and other presentations being delivered at the same time.
- Generally pretty good
- Last session – people leaving early
- Variable in size and the large room was not good for the discussion format

Did you enjoy the plenary speakers?

- Yes – 98%
- No – 2%

98% of the delegates enjoyed the plenary sessions/speakers. Delegates reported that they thought the presentations were excellent, very informative and thought provoking. The majority of delegates enjoyed Tom Calma, Olga Havnen and John Tregenza, especially coming from a political perspective. Some delegates believed that John Tregenza's work with the communities needed to be acknowledged, supported and assisted by other agencies and government.

Delegates were interested to hear especially from Olga Havnen at the next conference regarding the Northern Territory intervention. Delegates reported that it was very good to get an overview of the bigger picture and good to get a background on different policies and initiatives that are happening around Australia.

Delegates also found Leisa McCarthy and Traven Lea's presentation (include title of the presentation) very informative. Leisa's presentation (title) was reported to be very moving and inspiring. Hearing about outback stores, RIST (in full) and NATSINSAP was also particularly useful.

There was a small amount of criticism with both John Tregenza's and Olga Havnen's presentations. One delegate was offended by John Tregenza's opening statement whereby he welcomed the traditional owners in language and addressed the rest of the audience as 'others'. One delegate was disappointed with Olga Havnen's presentation as they were expecting a talk on food security issues but instead received a political 'grandstanding' speech. The same delegate reported that this was not what the topic was about and commented that 'this kind of diatribe should be left to the relevant conference'. Another delegate believed that political grandstanding was not appropriate for this function.

Overall delegates were happy with the plenary speakers and enjoyed the good mix covering many key issues and initiatives.

Was the conference what you expected?

- Yes – 93%
- No – 7%

Comments included:

- Had no expectations really. To come learn, listen, share and network. Great opportunity to do all of them
- Liked the mix between plenary, presentations, workshops etc.
- Exceeded expectations (x5)
- No – didn't expect there to be four main themes (one was very relevant though). Also, didn't expect the conference to be making recommendations – didn't know about the Aboriginal health meeting in Canberra the week after – but this is excellent. It's so good the conference wasn't just a talk fest, but bringing together expertise to try and create change on a policy level.
- More engaging than expected. This was a huge investment by our agency and was a sound investment.
- I have learnt so much and can't wait to share with my CEO and board members
- Rural and remote speakers were excellent. Love hearing from community people about their stories. Language presentations were great.
- Was more strategic given the Indigenous health summit the week after in Canberra.
- Hoping to get some ideas for resources and programs, some fresh motivation for working in Indigenous nutrition and meet some people working in similar areas. Also enjoyed the new, inspiring and unexpected experience of recommendations to 'Close the Gap' – some stimulating discussions.

- Good blend of personal journeys and best practice and advocacy re 'Close the Gap' and NATISINSAP. Recommendations – good summary
- Geared to traditional communities as expected but relevant still to apply to other contents
- I didn't realise how great it would be
- New learning for me as an educator – moving to health focus
- Lots of good presenters and political activists
- Thought the focus would be more on community people that would be better represented.
- Was great to see conference focused on outcomes and recommendations.
- Was good mix. Great that there was a purpose with the recommendations
- Not enough spoken about the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders taking responsibility for their health issues.

Overall comments—additional

The overall comments included:

- A well organised/structured conference
- Thank you so much to Anthea, Julie-Anne and Sharon and others
- Great work everyone
- Overall a very informative and interesting conference
- Thanks to all those who worked so hard organising the conference and the speakers for their insights.
- Wonderful conference. So inspiring. It was opportunity to finally have a say and maybe impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition and health.

D.5 Results from concurrent sessions

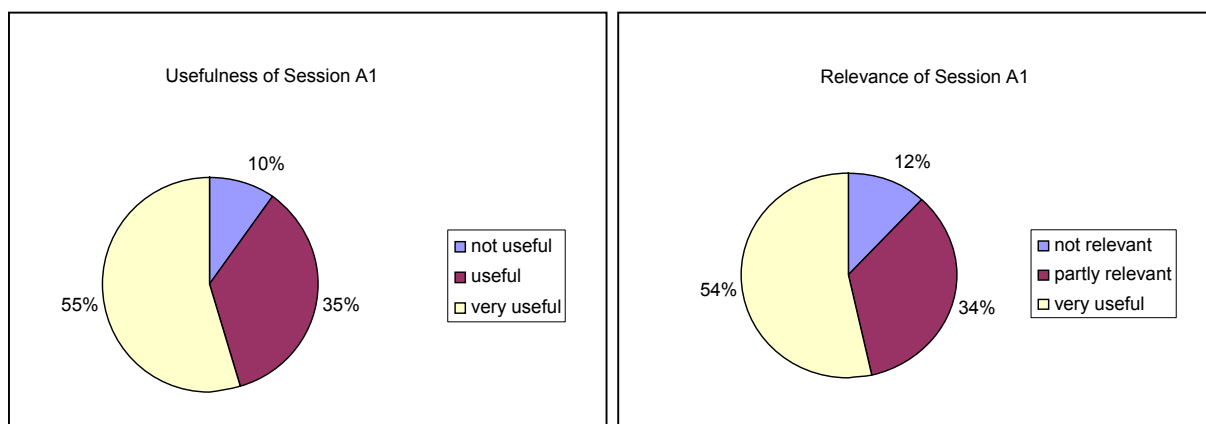
Greater than 90% of respondents to the questionnaires found all concurrent sessions useful and relevant. Feedback was generally very positive. The themes that were the most useful were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Food supply in rural and remote communities'. The themes that were most relevant to delegates were 'Family focused maternal and child nutrition' and 'Communicating and disseminating "good practice" in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives'. Less than 10% of respondents had negative feedback, that is, the session was not useful or relevant.

Session A

44.5% (92) of the delegates completed the evaluation questionnaire for Session A. The following results are based on the response from 44.5% of the delegates.

Concurrent session A1 – Good Tucker Good Health

60% of the delegates that responded to the questionnaire attended the 'Living strong' session. This was the highest attended session from the theme 'Good Tucker – Good Health'. The 'Crunch and Sip Program' was the next most attended session. 55% of delegates found the Good Tucker, Good Health Session A1 to be very useful and 54% very relevant with highlights being the Living Strong Program and Crunch and Sip Program.



Comments included:

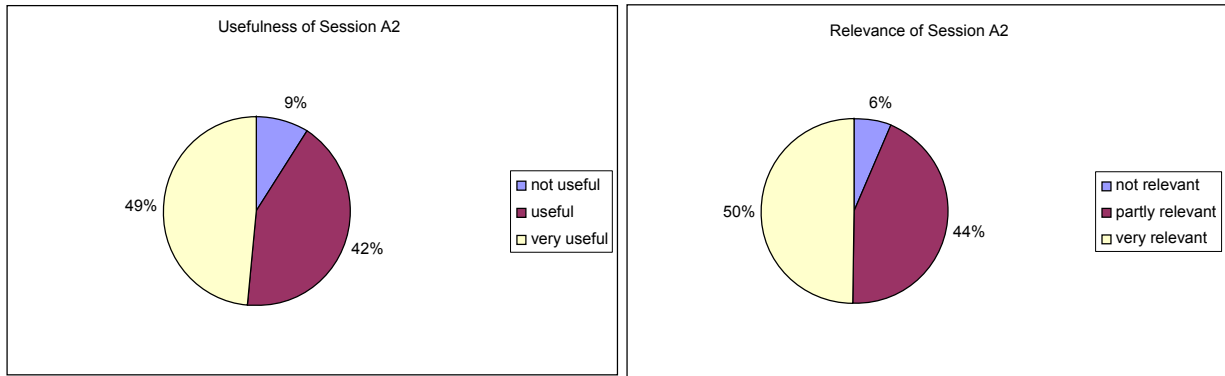
- The Living Strong Program gave awesome information and fantastic resources. Would have liked state-wide information
- Crunch and Sip is such a simple approach but a fantastic resource. Good to hear challenges and barriers.
- Darayiga Guya Mapu session – 36% of delegates attended this session again fantastic resources and very informative. Also good to hear how mental health affects nutrition and health. One delegate commented that she would have been interested to hear about the extent of the involvement of the nutritionists and the activity and about evaluation
- Goolari Television Series – Catch & Cook – was well presented and very interesting. Excellent practical example of accessible health promotion. The DVD could be used for cultural work with urban youth. It was great to see bush tucker promoted.

Overall comments for Session A1 included:

- All four sessions were well presented good nutritional information
- I loved it. Left empowered after working in remote. Glad that remote store policy is in action – need justice for Aboriginal people in their communities.
- Great sessions – can't wait to get back home and put some of these ideas into practice.
- This session was very informative for families, individuals, children around healthy eating and physical activity.

Concurrent session A2 – Communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives

This was the least attended session with attendance (according to the conference evaluation or according to conference delegates who responded to the evaluation) ranging from 18% to 24% of the delegates that responded to the questionnaire.

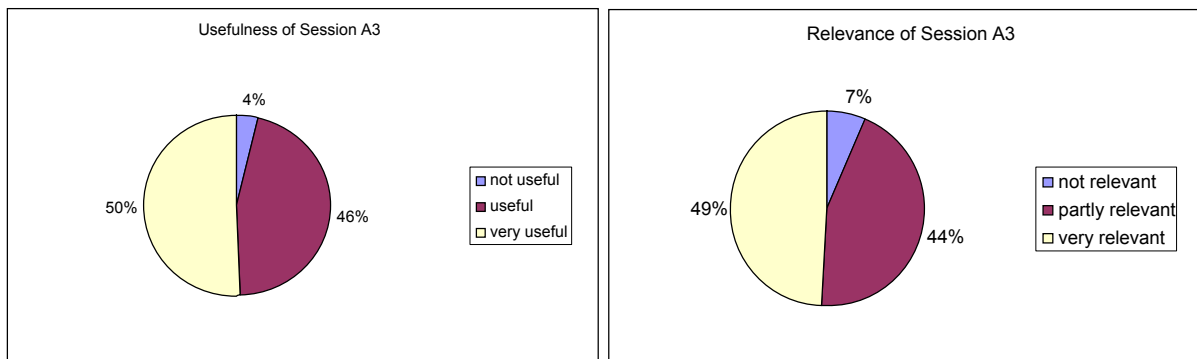


From the delegates that responded 49% found the information very useful and 50% found the information very relevant.

Comments included:

- Validity of short nutrition questions among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 10–12 years session was very interesting. It would be good to have data and compare in years to come for other areas to adopt.
- Yolngu life project – great to see more communities taking control of their communities. Great role model.
- Collaborative approach to community based research – very interesting. Great research collaboration as well as meeting a need in the community. Would have been good to discuss the challenges of working in partnership – only mentioned briefly – the positive outcomes
- Mean nutrient intake and foods contributing to selected nutrients among children aged 10 to 12 years – Great work. Good to hear some evidence to underpin work done

Concurrent session A3 – Nutrition issues in urban areas



50% of delegates that attended this session found it very useful and 49% found it very relevant. Only 4% found it not useful and 7% found it not relevant.

The most popular abstract for this session was the Plenty Valley Community Kitchen project with 44% of the delegates attending this session followed by the South Australian Community Foodies.

Comments included:

- Which way public health nutrition in Brisbane? – Good presentation
- Developing a model of primary prevention – Only a new program – would be better once in operation for a while. Useful and would like to see this project develop
- Plenty Valley Community Kitchen program – First time I have heard of Koori kitchens – will be a great program. Fantastic presentation. The stories brought it down to a very human level. Oral presentations long and no slides. Hard to focus on long presentation.
- SA Community Foodies – Well done Foodies. Peer education is important! Great to see action. Very well presented and informative.
- Some of the presentations were not properly presented. It was therefore difficult to determine its importance to promoting healthy eating. Secondly some were said to be focusing on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander but it was not clear from photos whether it truly focused on Aboriginal people.

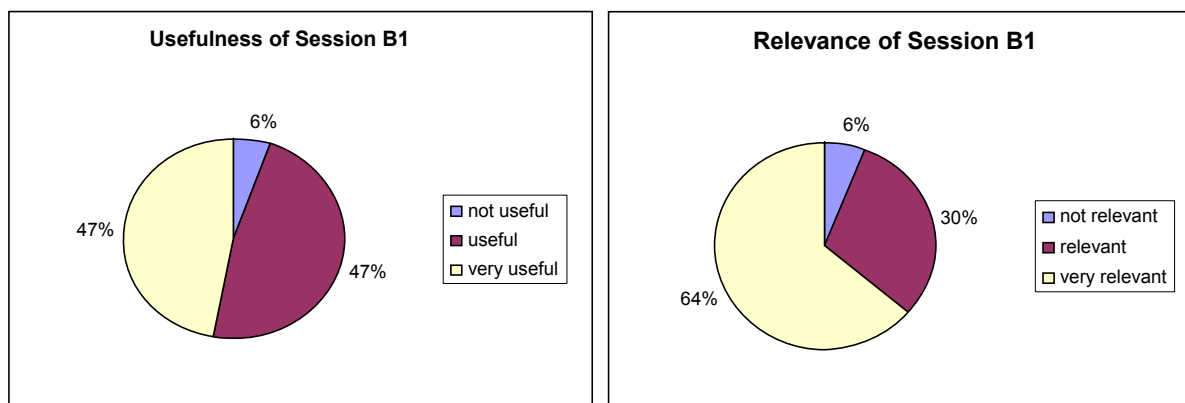
Comments overall for Session A

- No-one actually spells out the difficulties they encounter in running the programs and whether the community implements what they learn in daily life i.e. does it only work when there is outside intervention or when the organisation steps back after the education process, does the community continue to use what they learn.
- All presentations thus far have been rushed and many of the slides go so quickly that it's too difficult to take notes! Would be nice to have access to presentation slides (so that we can get the max amount of information from each presentation). Also need more space above for adequate comments to be provided.
- Great session – hope to look at implementing in my work area
- All sessions very informative and useful information which I will be able to utilise in programs that I am doing in Brisbane. I find all information good as this is my first conference.
- Great to see the many programs established for young children, mothers etc. These are our future leaders. This is our target group where we should be trying to educate. Government should get behind programs such as these. Look at encouraging parents to buy fruit and vegetables. Pity can't monitor remote stores and how they operate locally.

Session B

45% (92) of the delegates completed the evaluation questionnaire for Session B. The following results are based on the response from 45% of the delegates.

Concurrent session B1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce



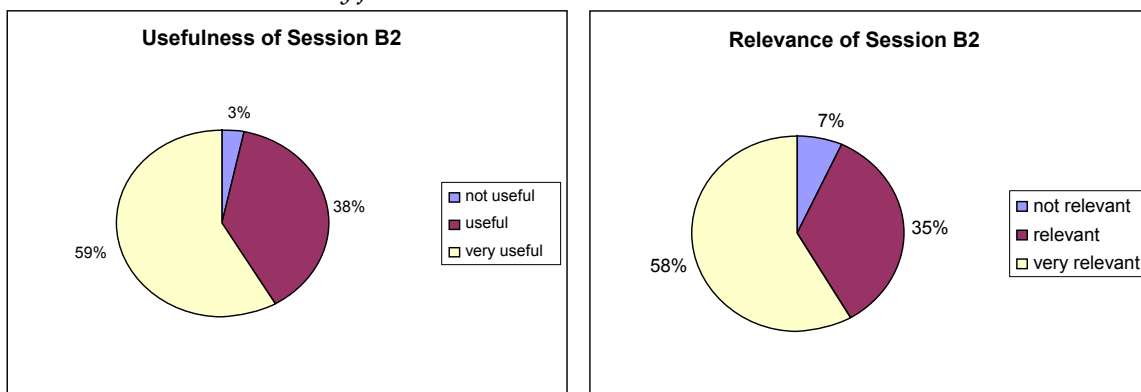
46% of respondents of the questionnaires attended the 'Making healthy choices for ourselves' session which was the most popular session within Concurrent session B1.

47% of respondents found Session B1 very useful and 47% found it useful. 64% of the respondents found Session B1 very relevant.

Comments included:

- Making healthy choices program. Good to hear about dietitians – very good presentation. I look forward to hearing strategies for changes have worked – at next conference. Would benefit other non-Indigenous organisations. Health should be integrated not an add on.
- More than medicine – Our workplace is always struggling to find projects for students. Good idea. Excellent presentation
- From principles of nutrition to good tucker stories back again – Excellent, very relevant. Information I can pass on. Very beneficial for Aboriginal Health Workers, can take back to my organisation. Difficult to see the links to follow how it aims to improve workforce (but maybe because the slides and presentations go so quickly). Would like to have heard more from Amanda McGregor, i.e. experience of graduate, lessons learnt, impact on career.
- Expansion of the Indigenous nutrition workforce – Great work happening with workforce in Qld. Was great to get an overview of what is being planned by head office to improve the ATSI workforce. Good overview. Good presentation.

Concurrent session B2 – Family focused maternal and child nutrition



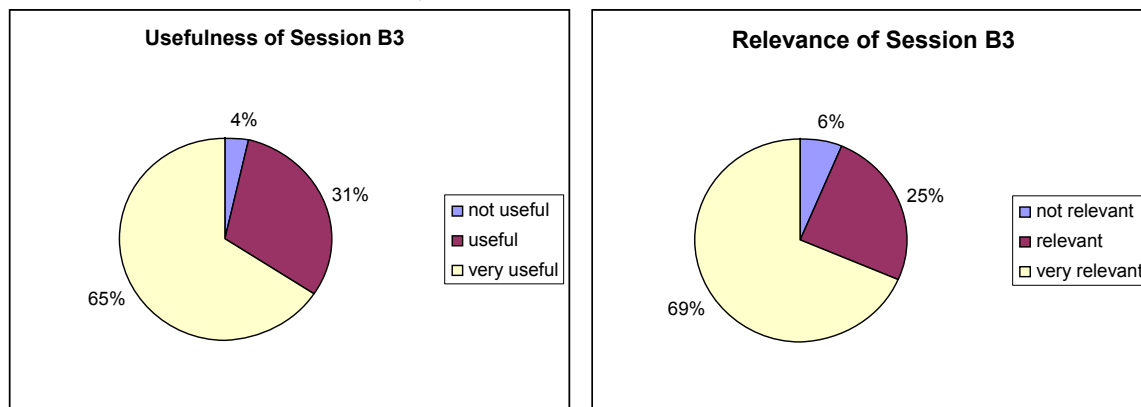
This particular theme was very popular with approximately 33–47% of the delegates attending at least one of these papers. 97% of delegates found these sessions useful/very useful and 58% reported that it was very relevant, 35% reported it to be relevant and 7% reported it not to be relevant and 3% not useful.

Comments included:

- Good Food Great Kids – Great work, great community garden. Great program!
- Community consultation of home micronutrient supplementation 'Sprinkles' – Interesting approach. Very useful discussion after the Q&A session. Very interesting. Would like to know more. The presenters gave a very good overview of program that was easy to understand. Excellent visual slides. Sprinkles program is controversial and could be extensively argued from two points of view – from a community point of view it provides a treatment and prevention program in one whilst advocating food consumption. This is better than any current alternatives, well done!
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunutjatjara Women's Council Child Nutrition Program – Deadly work. Love the resources. Good presentation. Great slides and community support. It would have been good to find out more about the background of the women on the council – training etc.

- Growing Strong – National collaboration for resourcing. Be great to progress training. Valuable information on infant health. Useful resource.

Concurrent session B3 – Good Tucker, Good Health



The highlights of this concurrent session were the Lockhart River Bush Tucker Nutrition Project with 33% of delegates attending and Healthy Festivals – DVD celebrating life and health in a way that appeals to the whole communities. 69% of delegates found this theme very relevant, and 65% of respondents found it very useful.

Comments included:

- Bush Tucker farm – Inspirational practical approaches. Very good
- Lockhart River Bush Tucker Nutrition Project – Excellent information – community-based program. Well presented. Inspirational/practical approaches. The best! Yes, our people need to go back to traditional foods. Very impressive and empowering. Fabulous community presentation. Excellent and good things happening in the local community. The most touching presentation. Fabulous principle
- Healthy Festivals – DVD Excellent production. This DVD needs to be presented to everyone as it reflects everything. Empowering. A lot of excitement and fun. Great. Very impressive and empowering. Great Aboriginal people doing it for themselves. ‘Nothing about us without us’. Great idea for community involvement. Wonderful to hear from the people of the community
- Deadly Tucker – Very good. Great program. The cookbook needs to be available. The speaker was great – to the point.

Session B – General comments

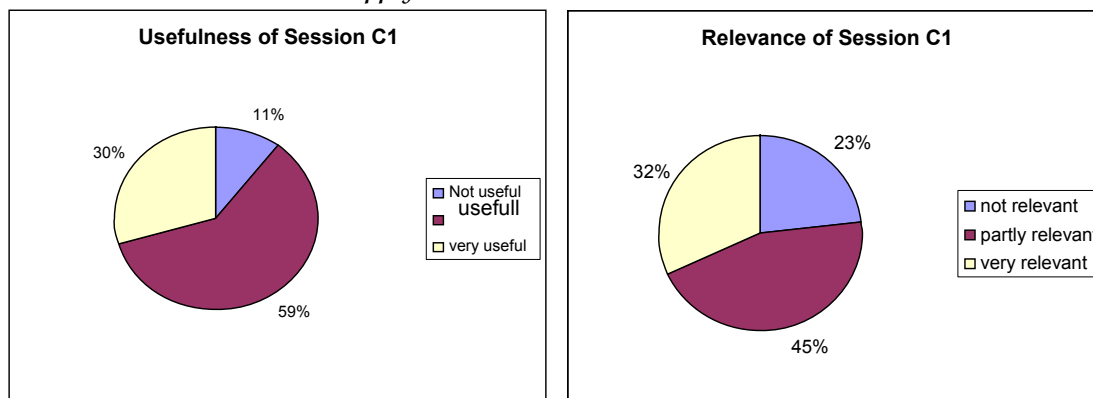
- The Yolngu (healthy festivals) and Lockhart river project are a great example of Aboriginal people doing it for themselves and taking responsibility. Well done, inspiring, empowering and entertaining.
- All presentations were great
- Aboriginal health today is the result of white government policy interference. Black Australia knows the answer to most of the reasons why the health is poor today. We can learn so much from them.
- Useful information from local community – bring back Lockhart river!
- Very empowering session, we all need to work together and exchange ideas from states, this is great networking.
- Plenty of ‘look what we are doing’ but not enough on how the projects are actually changing the communities eating habits, food choices and general wellbeing.

- All presentations were clear however some are irrelevant to the improvement of nutrition among ATSI people
- Acknowledging the challenges and barriers is the pathway toward all learning together by sharing in these experiences – thank you
- Whilst each of the sessions were reasonably short, it was a very full-on day. So much learnt. So much to do.
- These sessions provided information on the family as a whole. Dad (hunting/cooking), Mum and her wellbeing to her family. The children and their health. ‘Family health is your families’ future’.
- All great. Excellent sessions

Concurrent session C

31% (65) of the delegates completed the evaluation questionnaire for Session C. The following results are based on the response from 31% of the delegates. There were two themes in Session C and also a session where authors spoke to their posters.

Concurrent session C1 – Food supply in rural and remote communities

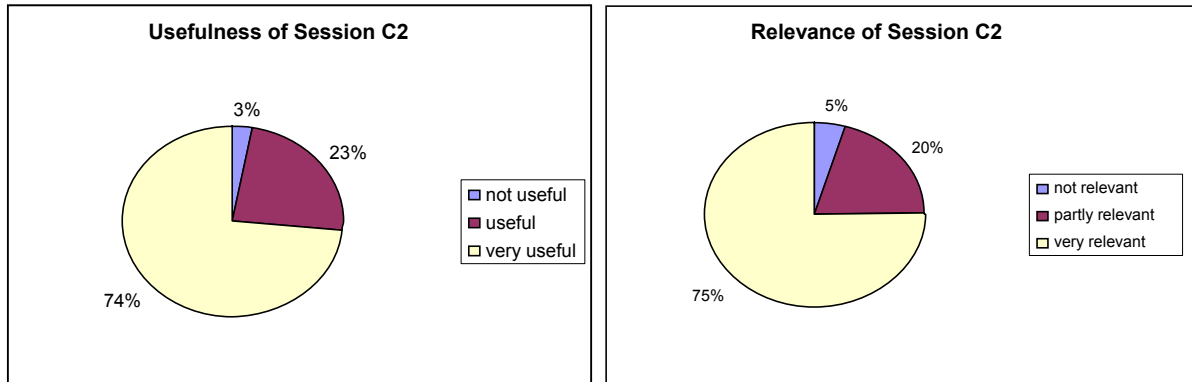


From the 31% of respondents, 54% of delegates attended the Expansion of Good Start Breakfast Clubs and 30% attended the community mapping session. 30% of respondents found this theme very useful and 32% found it very relevant.

Comments included:

- The expansion of the Good Start Breakfast Clubs – Very interesting. Great for the community. Many issues already well advanced.
- Community mapping – Good ideas. I can definitely take these ideas back to my organisation and promote this whole research project. It looked like a very hard, time-consuming project. Well done!

Concurrent session C2 – Other topics



45% of respondents attended the Good tucker, good health – great teeth paper and 60% of delegates attended the ‘Bush tucker in kidney failure’ session, which was the most attended paper for this session and presented by Lesley Salem. This paper brought about a lot of positive responses.

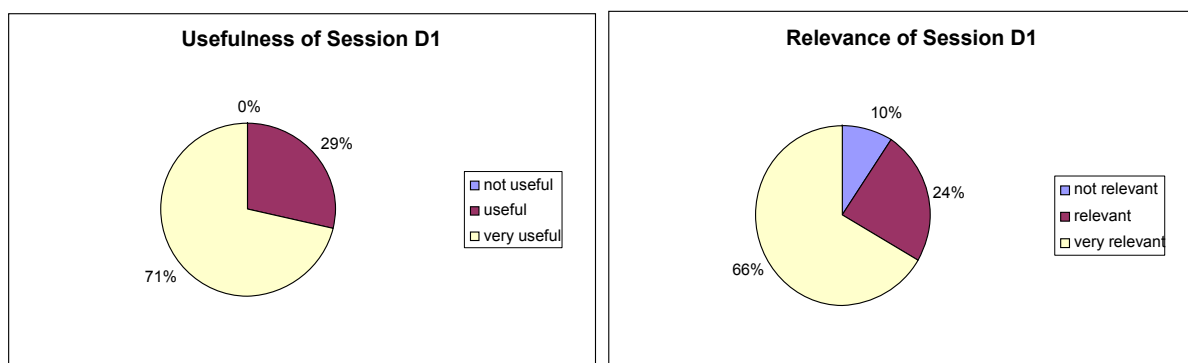
74% of delegates that attended this theme found it to be very useful and 75% to be very relevant.

Comments included:

- Good tucker, good health – great teeth! Wasn’t all that useful to workshop as not enough time for workshop. Great brainstorming session. Very good presentation – reinforces a need to link nutrition and oral health. Top presentation, but went overtime and meant next presentation rushed. Good to have some discussion and hear more about the importance of good oral health. Definitely more promotion needed in this area.
- Bush tucker in kidney failure and diabetes – Very passionate speaker. Excellent presentation. Now know of need in this area for resources. Should be presented at ‘Close the Gap’. Bloody brilliant. Great speaker. Feel very positive after her passion and presentations.

Concurrent session D – Food supply in rural and remote communities

31% (65) of the delegates completed the evaluation questionnaire for Session D. The following results are based on the response from 31% of the delegates. There were three themes in Session D

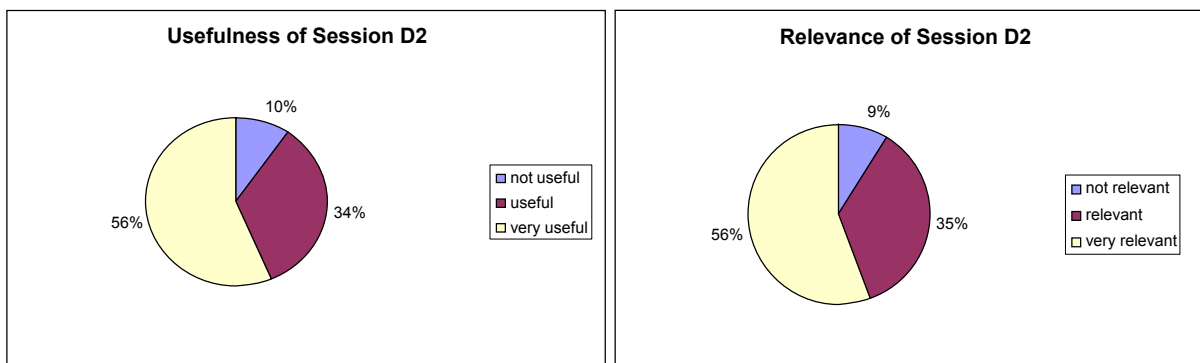


The most popular paper from the ‘Food supply in rural and remote communities’ session was the Mai Wiru Regional Stores policy. 43% of respondents attended this paper and found it very empowering and interesting. 33% of respondents attended the ‘Making a difference’ session and really enjoyed the discussion afterwards. 27% of delegates attended the ‘Working together-Lajamanu’ presentation. 100% of delegates reported that this session was useful/very useful, 66% of delegates reported that this session was very relevant, and 10% reported that it was not relevant. This session created lots of great discussion.

Comments included:

- Mai Wiru – Fascinating insight to remote stores. From urban area – different issues. Great ideas. Great work. It's good to see the community working well together to look after their communities and empower them and their families. Good news stories instead of bad. Some good ideas for engaging store managers and community interest in the nutrition foods. Great accomplishment
- Making a difference – outback stores. Good discussion followed. Another great story about how community people are working together to get healthy. At last, a story of how positive change has been achieved. Wonderful to hear a community persons perspectives. Great concept.
- Working together – Lajamanu. Great ideas in promotion activities for stores. Great story!

Concurrent session D2 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce

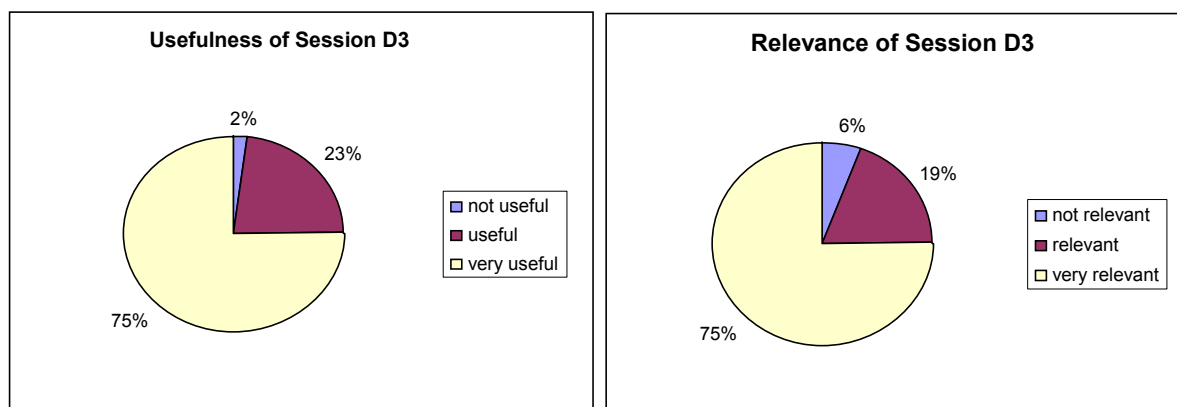


From the 31% of delegates who completed their questionnaire for Session D this was the most popular theme with 45% of delegates attending the Working towards a healthier Palm Island' presentation by Leah Lenroy and Lauwanna Blackley. Many delegates enjoyed their presentation and reported that it was very inspirational. 56% of delegates reported that this theme was very useful and very relevant.

Comments included:

- Making it happen – A bit of an overlap with the other one. Great deadly resources – empowering the community. Nice to see students getting involved in practical work
- Working together towards a healthier Palm Island – Great speakers. Awesome presentation. Girls from Palm Island did such a good job they know their stuff! Very knowledgeable young women. Good to hear some success stories
- Cooks camp – Fantastic integration with other programs already running. Great presentation. Fantastic idea, one that will work with our urban community

Concurrent session D3—Communicating and disseminating 'good practice' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition initiatives



45% of delegates attended the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity brief intervention paper with delegates suggesting that it should be rolled out to the rest of Australia. 75% of delegates that attended this theme reported that it was very useful and very relevant.

Comments included:

- Focus groups with ATSI people in Qld—Similar information that has already been found
- Dietary glycemic index and glycemic load—Explains in lay terms well. Good collaboration. Great research project— which gives evidence to promote change— good work. Very practical.
- ATSI Nutrition and Physical Activity Brief Intervention-Flexible model—resource kit beneficial to other service providers. Deadly resource. Great work. Brief intervention vital to put information on agenda. Roll out across Australia. Would be very useful.

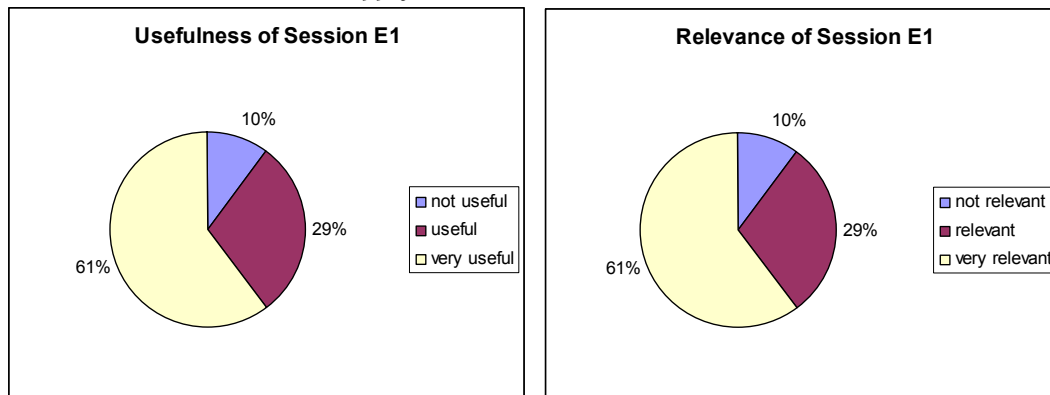
Comments from sessions C and D

- Very great presentations
- Informative presentations. I noted the very different presentations, strategies and projects all aimed at changing health of Indigenous people. Diverse and very practical.
- It was inspirational to hear how remote areas are helping their communities to push healthy eating and physical activity
- Great input from Aboriginal community members from all presenters.

Concurrent session E

26% (54) of the delegates completed the evaluation questionnaire for Session D. The following results are based on the response from 26% of the delegates. There were three themes in Session E

Concurrent session E1 – Food supply in rural and remote communities

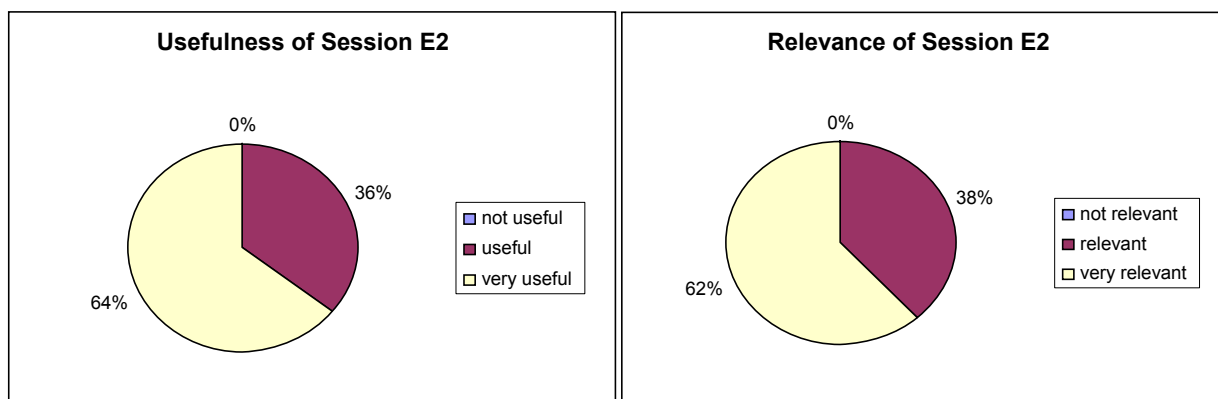


Between 32–40% of delegates that responded to the questionnaire attended Session E1. A large percentage of delegates found this session to be very interesting and relevant (61%). The delegates reported that there were many great ideas in this session and they appreciated hearing from community members and language inclusion was great. One delegate mentioned that they could definitely take these ideas back to their organisation and pass onto board members to take back to their communities.

Comments included:

- Keeping track of healthy food – Very good. Keep the tradition systems.
- Impact of community store bases. Very interesting. Especially with all the other interesting things they have done. Would like to hear more about this in the future to see outcomes long term.

Concurrent session E2 – Family focused maternal and child nutrition

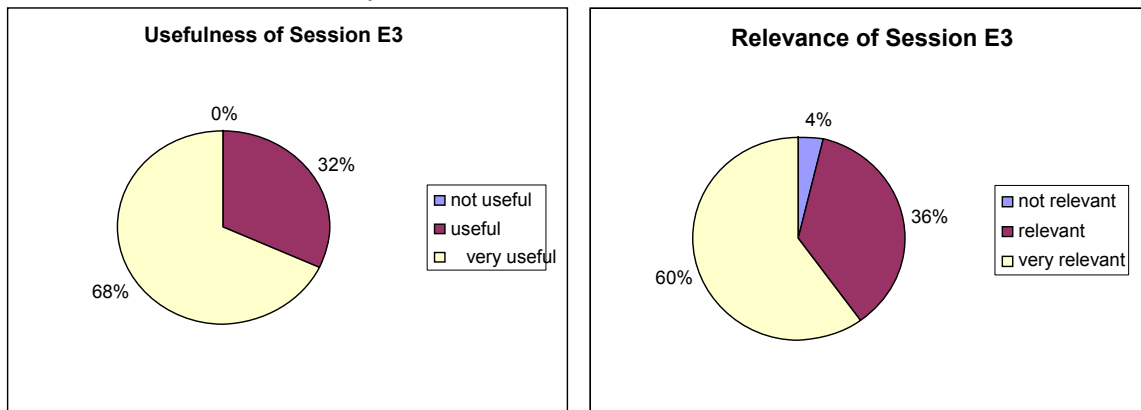


This was the most popular theme within Session E with 45–49% of the respondents attending this session. Nunga Kids Café provided an excellent example of combining education and health. Consulting with Aboriginal communities gave fantastic ideas on how to develop community programs and the consultation process and Eat well, be active, Healthy kids for life was presented by Kani Thomposn and Rita Kebisu, both excellent presenters. All delegates found this session to be useful and relevant. No-one found it not relevant or useful.

Comments included:

- Nunga Kids Café – Pity some of us are so stretched on the ground – positive. Excellent example of combining education and health. Very good presentation. Educational focus with kids ++ great – future of kids important. I work in schools and think this is a great initiative. Great community program that is successful – many benefits. May be good for urban Brisbane kids and other locations to support school intervention.
- Consulting – Fantastic example of thorough and appropriate consultation. Gave ideas to develop community program and consultation process – good stuff. This program looks great and is a benchmark that we should all aspire to.
- Eat well, be active, Healthy kids for life – Badu Island – Excellent, pass on to all Torres Strait Islanders. Good information. Great presenters. Would be good if it can be transferred to other remote areas

Concurrent session E3 – Other topics



10–20% of respondents attended Session E3. Overall, 68% of respondents indicated that these sessions were useful and 60% indicated that they were relevant. The Nunga Nutrition lunch program and Kooris cooking health recipe card were both very practical programs.

Comments included:

- Pakana Kipli nayri – Aborigines eat well – Important to start at home with healthy food. Food policy and staff education
- The Nunga nutrition lunch program – A wonderful way of getting mature people to socialise, get educated over lunch. Good practical program for an urban area
- Kooris cooking healthy recipe card – Excellent to have copies of resource available for people to take home. Good tool for clients – gives ownership. Practical program.

Overall comments from session E

- Excellent mixture
- Sessions need to have handouts at the end so that information can be re-read and taken in as there is a lot of information in a session to take in.

Appendix E Recommendations process

The process for developing conference recommendations at the National Nutrition Networks Conference 2008 was as follows.

- Recommendation pro formas (see Appendix F) were placed on the tables in each conference room for delegates to write down recommendations and were then placed in collection points identified at the conference venue. Recommendations were signed by two people to ensure a degree of commitment from others.
- All presenters prior to the conference considered whether they would like to put forward a recommendation that was relevant to their presentation by including it in their presentation.
- Chairpersons collected the recommendations that were identified from each session. Some facilitated discussion was involved at the end of each session.
- The Conference Recommendations Committee was appointed whose job it was to collate and compile recommendations into a cohesive list. Some members entered the information into the computer. Members of the committee were made known to conference participants from the beginning.
- Large posters were placed in the foyer of the conference venue to show people the recommendations that had been put forward each day of the conference (Day 2, Day 3). This was important to ensure an open and transparent process.
- At the final afternoon session on the second day of the conference (Thursday 13 March) four facilitated workshop sessions were conducted around key themes relevant to:
 - nutrition workforce
 - early life (or family focused maternal and child nutrition)
 - urban nutrition
 - food security.

Chairpersons were identified to facilitate these sessions to further discuss and clarify key recommendations under these different themes (see Appendix G for recommendations).

- In the first session of the last day (Friday 14 March) the recommendations contributed so far were presented at the conference plenary. This was the draft list for delegates to consider, comment and amend among the audience at large. Using a consensus process the draft recommendations at this final session were considered the final recommendations for the conference.
- All recommendations that were contributed throughout the conference are attached (see Appendix G), however only the final list of recommendations that were confirmed at the final session of the last day were considered to be the 'conference recommendations' for the Alice Springs National Nutrition Networks Conference in 2008 (see Appendix H). This was the final list used to guide contributions put forward to the 'Close the Gap' campaign, the future of NATSINSAP and other identified advocacy opportunities.
- The National Nutrition Networks Conference Management Committee continued to meet after the conference and work with the NATSINSAP Project Officer to determine an advocacy plan to promote the conference recommendations.

Notes

- It was important not to get stuck on detailed wording of recommendations at the final session. Concepts were general and there was a degree of trust so that the Conference Recommendations Committee worked to phrase recommendations correctly after the conference.

- In determining recommendations, delegates were encouraged to identify who the recommendations were relevant to. This was to guide future advocacy work undertaken through the 'Close the Gap' campaign, NATSINSAP and by the National Nutrition Networks Conference Management Committee.

Appendix F Recommendations pro forma

National Nutrition Networks Conference Alice Springs 11–14 March 2008 Recommendations—pro forma



Write your recommendation on this form and place it in the Recommendations tray at the Registration Desk. Remember that it requires your name and a contact number in case the Recommendations Group needs clarification. Individual delegates are encouraged to provide recommendations as long as they are signed by two people.

Recommendation

Text of proposed recommendation:

Who should be responsible for action on the recommendation? eg State Government(s), Indigenous organisation/agency, professional association(s), consumers, the NRHA, Australian Government.

This recommendation has arisen out of (*please indicate*):

- Plenary session
- Concurrent session A1 A2 A3
- Concurrent session B1 B2 B3
- Concurrent session C1 C2 C3
- Concurrent session D1 D2 D3
- Concurrent session E1 E2 E3
- Concurrent session F1 F2 F3
- personal interest

We believe this recommendation is (tick if yes):

- Important for Indigenous health status
- Urgent
- Timely
- Likely to be cost-effective
- Affordable now
- Something that can be done by the non-government sector

Submitted by: Name 1 _____ (mobile phone) _____

Name 2 _____ (mobile phone) _____

Appendix G Conference recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations that were put forward during the conference.

Guiding principles

- Community values
 - Community voice for nutrition at all levels
 - Community engagement, i.e. community people are consulted, make decisions, guide strategies, understand information and lead programs for their communities
 - Community consultation, participation and ownership are part of program planning
- Relationships
 - Foster, formalise and maintain relationships between, and within, government, non-government organisations and ACCHOs
 - Value the role and responsibilities of the broader family, including men in a family-centred approach to improve health rather than sole focus on maternal and child health
- Cultural values
 - Recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are different from one another and value this diversity
 - Value the role of bush foods and traditional food systems
 - Consider an ecological approach and sustainability
- Equal funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous people employed in nutrition positions
- Recognise and respect the needs of urban, rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- All social marketing nutrition strategies are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Equal funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled initiatives as for government departments.
- Equal value for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and voice in guiding programs

1 Progress NATSINSAP in line with current government policy and 'Close the Gap' led by the federal government, in partnership with state governments and community controlled organisations

- Establish a national nutrition unit, with responsibility for the evaluation and revision of NATSINSAP, development of new goals and targets, securing funding for next phase and leading implementation with accountability to the relevant government departments.
- Strengthen cross-jurisdictional arrangements to monitor, report, place remedial action around the implementations of NATSINSAP.

2 Early Life

Guiding principles:

- Targets to be developed for reducing low birth weight, increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration, reduced anaemia, improved child growth (both underweight and overweight)
- Nutrition initiatives are holistic in nature with consideration for approaches that address other determinants of health, including smoking, alcohol, and food security more broadly than solely for mothers and children. Need for supportive environments, and approaches addressing whole family and community food security
- Early childhood nutrition strategies also aim to improve educational outcomes and reduce chronic disease.

2a All pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and children have access* to enough# available and affordable nutritious food

* Access = availability, affordable, knowledge, skills

#enough – ‘according to recognised principles such as Dietary Guidelines’

- Nutritious food is provided to ‘top up’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, babies and children to reduce low birth weight and promote healthy growth (i.e. not overweight or underweight) (proportion of requirementswhen required.....make available to all ...choice....’at risk’not free.....acceptable to local need)
- National breakfast/lunch initiatives e.g. programs e.g. women’s centres, childcare, preschools, schools. ?co-payment....local needs.....sustainability.... influencing policy... community involvement, participation
- Support for community led initiatives to achieve positive outcomes to promote breastfeeding healthy birth weight and childhood growth

2b Nutrition is embedded at all levels of early childhood nutrition workforce

- Creation and ongoing support of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions prioritising early life, linked with pre-existing programs and structures
- Dedicated nutrition positions are needed for the development and delivery of maternal and child health programs

3 Food Security. Address the underlying food security issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban, rural and remote Australia

Guiding principles

- To ensure food security in all remote and urban Indigenous communities, regardless of population size and the store's capacity to be economically viable.

3a Research

- Research, including an economic analysis is conducted to identify effective strategies of applying subsidies to achieve equity in the costs and availability of basic foods including fresh fruit and vegetables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This research will include, but not be limited to, subsidies on freight in remote settings and will include

application of subsidies at critical life-stages such as pregnancy and lactation and early childhood.

- Food security issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living non-remote and remote locations are researched and reported and food security indicators developed for routine monitoring and reporting nationally.
- A framework for monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the food system and key foods be developed, and implemented and supported at the community level with a feedback mechanism to national policy development

3b Funding and subsidies

Guiding principle: The idea of targeted food subsidies has been raised with government by Mai Wiru previously, and not seen favourably. Funding and subsidy for infrastructure is considered the preferred approach

- Better road infrastructure to small remote areas to ensure accessibility of good food supplies all year round (e.g. dirt roads inaccessible for long periods of time in wet weather)
- Explore opportunities to subsidise store infrastructure to support stores to purchase ovens, fridges and other infrastructure, including wages, maintenance and other associated costs e.g. grant schemes
- Freight subsidies for essential foods in remote communities
- That the governments, both state and federal, provide subsidies to remote stores on the APY lands in accordance with the recommendations of the Mai Wiru Stores Policy, a COAG Trial Initiative
- Increase funding for improved access to food supply for school settings with focus on remote areas
- Support for a coordinated approach to addressing food security at the household and community level. This needs to complement store-based strategies to improve the food supply
- Investments made in household infrastructure include appropriate food storage, preparation and cooking facilities.
- More community lunch programs

3c Monitoring and evaluation

- Remote areas are included in a national food pricing enquiry with a plan for ongoing food price monitoring (national MBS)
- Outback Stores continues to prioritise and is held accountable to nutrition and health indicators; as well as business outcomes.
- Nutrition and health expertise is sought in the developmental stages of the mandatory store licensing program for remote Northern Territory communities with consideration of broadening this program to other States of Australia.

Other

- Education of store owners on correct storage of fruit and veg and nutritional value of canned and frozen foods

- Legislation be considered that will enable local government and councils to be monitored in their town planning activities re the effect of food supply for Aboriginal communities, and the impact on health.
- Subsidising cost of low GI/high fibre white bread sold in small food outlets that service Aboriginal communities in rural Australia

4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Workforce and training

4a Address the lack of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions

- More recurrently funded, permanent AHW (Nutrition Promotion), Indigenous Nutrition Promotion Officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutritionists (Community and Public Health) are required.

4b Requirement for funding new positions

TARGET: 100 nutrition positions per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population by 10 years

- Recurrent funding for community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people to support families and promote health in their communities
- Create positions specifically for men

4c Nutrition training needs

- Review the scope and role of NGOs in addressing training needs
- Sustainability of funding for new nutrition positions
- Cultural awareness training for all nutrition work-force, including undergraduate and postgraduate nutrition training. All nutrition courses Australia wide include foundation principles set out in the ANAPHI Indigenous Public Health Curriculum Framework document to address cultural competencies.
- Better recognition of cultural skills and experience for incorporation into position descriptions and workplace practices, e.g. better recognition of local staff on ground, both in paid and unpaid positions. Ensure effectiveness two-way learning partnership (two-way mentoring and capacity exchange i.e. between Nutritionists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition workers) and mutual respect of roles and responsibilities to acknowledge local communities are a source of cultural and nutrition capacity.
- Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake tertiary training:
 - Scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate training
 - Cadetships for undergraduate training to ensure positions available following graduation
 - Recommendation to create positions for 2-3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each undergraduate nutrition program year (not just one unsupported position)
 - Better support systems in university for first year students; mentoring and tutoring

- Nutrition units be included as core units in the community care stream of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker training package
- Clarify a skills set for the nutrition workforce in the primary health care qualification
- Funding for programs that increase knowledge and skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the areas of food preparation, food safety and nutrition (cooking skills)
- All community health workers be trained in health promotion (wider than nutrition)
 - Training opportunities are made available across Australia to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who wish to become Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers (nutrition). Should be a certificate IV, diploma, advanced diploma levels and should articulate with university courses for those wishing to progress to degree level qualifications.

4d Ongoing support of workforce

- Establish career pathways, and increase retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the nutrition workforce; providing support through mentoring programs and formal accredited training
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work at all levels and roles including in policy development in state and federal government.
- Encourage nutrition workforce through targeting education and career promotion programs in schools and existing workforce through:
 - Inclusion of nutrition in ‘career day’ opportunities similar to the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Doctors and Nurses.
 - Identify ways of incorporating VET sector nutrition training into years 11 and 12 curriculums through traineeships, i.e. NT currently have years 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking VET training through a traineeship arrangement as part of secondary qualifications to lead into a Tertiary qualification. This training to lead into career pathing, jobs and further studies.
 - Nutrition ‘site’ on the HealthInfonet to include a prompt/ area ‘want to become a nutritionist’ and links to Nutrition courses, availability of financial support – scholarships, etc.
- Address employment inequity issues, i.e. Criteria for Nutritionist positions to be flexible around necessity for individual to hold a DAA membership.
- Ensure that AHW award wages are uniform nationally and across employment agencies.
- Other equity issues are employment packages for certain professions include incentives to retain staff, i.e. Bonuses, accommodation, freight subsidy for those living in remote areas. Need to make this available to AHWs and allied health professionals.
- Review STEP guidelines to facilitate increased flexibility leading to sustainable jobs (linked to positions and not people)

5 Urban issues—a priority for NATSINSAP not previously addressed

- Need strong data on nutritional status in urban areas and evidence on effective programs
- Introduce nutrition early in high schools

- Dedicated funding for nutrition positions including nutritionists partnered with AHWs specialising in nutrition appropriately funded to deliver health promotion programs from ACCHS in urban settings
- Make cooking groups available to urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

6 Monitoring and surveillance

- Establish national monitoring and surveillance indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, including child growth and nutritional status and oral health indicators
- All information is owned by the community, is fed back and informs community-run initiatives.
- National market basket surveys

7 Research

- Research/ data collection on how often risk factors, e.g. smoking, alcohol and drugs impact on or divert 'nutritional funds' (money spent on family nutrition) for families – particularly in urban settings
- More research on traditional bush tucker and its nutritional value and link with chronic disease
- Extend the Many Rivers Diabetes Prevention Project to be completed for the adult population
- Financial support for the ongoing development of a core set of dietary measuring tools which have been validated in an Aboriginal population

8 Communicating and disseminating good nutrition practice

- Funding to ensure that programs at all levels (local, state-wide, national) are well evaluated, findings communicated and shared, and ongoing funding is secured for such programs, e.g. Brief Interventions Program (Qld Health), Lockart River,; Badu Island project. Eat well Be active Healthy kids for life
- Increased use of media and marketing to increase profile and participation, ensuring focus testing and piloting of program resources prior to implementing.
- Increase bush tucker information e.g. analysis for nutrient profile and education resources, free resources containing information on bush tucker foods and their health/ disease benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and health care professionals dealing with these issues
- The Mai Wiru Stores Policy by John Tregenza be recommended for the OATSIH Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award

9 National networking and collaboration

- Improved systems for communication and sharing of technical, operational and financial resources across states and territories. Opportunities are needed to work together not only at the policy and management level, but also at the program level. This particularly needed to progress maternal and child health issues.

10 NT intervention

- refocus/re-allocate \$88 million for income quarantining to expanding Centrepay, financial literacy/budgeting, child and family services, re-engagement of young men.

11 Other

- Ongoing financial support for healing programs for women to continue running for eventual community ownership
- Gender equity in funding emotional wellbeing treatment facilities
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in rural, remote and urban areas have access to good oral/dental treatment and health promotion to improve their nutritional intake that will influence their health and wellbeing

Appendix H Final priority recommendations

The following final priority recommendations were developed by the Conference Recommendations Committee following the conference.

1 Progress NATSINSAP, in line with current government policy (and 'Close the Gap') led by the federal government, in partnership with state governments and community controlled organisations, recognising needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban, rural and remote communities

- Establish a national nutrition function with responsibility for the evaluation and revision of NATSINSAP, development of new goals and targets, securing funding for the next phase and leading implementation with accountability to the relevant government departments and AHMAC.

2 Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and children have access to enough available and affordable nutritious food

- Implement the provision of nutritious food to supplement at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, babies and children according to local need through existing programs (e.g. Maternal and Child Health and new nurse-led home visiting programs).
- National breakfast/lunch initiatives are funded based on local need and community involvement and participation. e.g. women's centres, childcare, preschools, schools.
- Creation and ongoing support of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions prioritising early life, linked with pre-existing and new programs such as nurse home-visiting programs.

3 Strengthen the nutrition workforce working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations

- Increased funding for dedicated permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions across the workforce spectrum (health workers specialising in nutrition, community nutritionists, public health nutritionists and clinical dietitians) to achieve a **target: 100 nutrition positions per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population by 10 years in urban, rural and remote settings.**
- Establish career pathways, and increase retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the nutrition workforce; providing support through 'two-way' mentoring programs and formal accredited training. Advocate for implementation of the cultural respect framework to ensure Indigenous health workers are valued for local nutrition knowledge around cultural processes and valuing traditional knowledge.
- Increased and sustained financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women to undertake undergraduate and tertiary nutrition training through access to current funding schemes, advocacy for new schemes (VET sector and secondary school-based training) and provision of workplace-based nutrition-specific government cadetship programs. Also, offer nutrition-specific tertiary level scholarships through new initiatives and existing scholarship schemes, e.g. NHMRC postgraduate scholarships.

- Nutrition units be included as core units in the community care stream of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker training package.

4 Address the underlying food security issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban, rural and remote Australia

- Research, including an economic analysis is conducted to identify effective strategies of applying subsidies to achieve equity in the costs and availability of basic foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Subsidies for infrastructure and transport (particularly for communities with small populations) and food household infrastructure (including appropriate food storage, preparation and cooking facilities).
- Food security issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban, rural and remote locations are researched, reported and food security indicators developed for routine monitoring and reporting nationally.
- Recognise and promote the value of traditional food systems and the role they play in food security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Ensure that nutrition and health expertise and community consultation is sought in key aspects of store licensing for remote communities.

5 National monitoring and surveillance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, ensuring that all information is fed back to the community

- Establish sustainable coordinated ongoing national monitoring and surveillance indicators, systems and targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, including healthy birth weight, healthy child growth, breastfeeding initiation and duration, nutritional status and oral health indicators linked to existing national targets and state key performance indicators.
- Urban, rural and remote areas are included in a national food pricing inquiry with a plan for ongoing food price monitoring e.g. national market basket surveys.

6 Communicating and disseminating good nutrition practice

- Funding to ensure that programs at all levels (local, state-wide, national) are well evaluated, findings communicated and shared, and ongoing funding is secured for such programs.
- Collaboration across all sectors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and child development to address holistic approaches that recognise good nutrition as a necessary component of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health improvement.
- Secure funding for the communication and dissemination of good nutrition practice through current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communication systems as well as other networking systems – e.g. journals, newsletters, indigenous HealthInfonet etc.
- Explore and secure funding options to ensure continuation of a biennial National Nutrition Networks Conference that enables networking and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others working in food and nutrition programs and related areas, and to ensure the conference is accessible to all.

Appendix I Financial assistance flyer

Conference Travel Financial Assistance National Nutrition Networks Conference '08 11–14 March 2008, Alice Springs Convention Centre, NT

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who would like to be considered for financial assistance to attend the National Nutrition Networks Conference '08, and have no access to any other avenues of financial support to attend or present a paper at the Conference, can apply to receive funding to support their attendance.

The Conference will be held on 11–14 March, 2008 at the Alice Springs Convention Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory. Further information will be available on the conference website from mid November through www.ruralhealth.org.au

The financial assistance is intended to meet the partial or full costs of the Conference attendance where the financial burden of the conference may prevent participation. Areas that may be supported include registration, travel and accommodation expenses.

Only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may apply for financial assistance, and need to meet the following criteria:

- Will be presenting a paper at, or attending the Conference;
- Will be representing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander service or organisation e.g. a health service or a community-controlled organisation;
- Are preferably people who do not have other opportunities available to them to attend local events, that is individuals who do not live in capital cities;
- Will be evenly represented from across all states and territories across Australia as far as possible
- Will travel to the Conference by economy class air or commercial land transport that is reimbursed by National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) on provision of relevant receipts, or will travel by private vehicle to the Conference and will be reimbursed petrol costs by the NRHA on provision of receipts and by prior arrangement with the NRHA.

Please note that funding will **not** be provided to support state or territory government employees who do not work within direct health service delivery areas (eg remote or regional health centres or regional hospitals).

Priority will be given to Aboriginal health workers in Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care services or positions.

Application Process

Applicants need to provide:

1. A letter of not more than two pages that concisely address the following areas:
 - a. Why there is a need for support and details of any other funding obtained from e.g. employers, study grants and other sources.
 - b. Your expectations about the Conference and how your attendance will assist in your work
 - c. How you will involve yourself in the Conference including whether you have submitted a proposal to present an abstract, workshop, poster, or yarn session.

- d. The opportunities you will have to share your Conference experience with others when you return home.
2. A detailed budget that includes overall costs associated with attending the Conference and identifies the items for which support is sought. As noted above, the items may include Conference registration, travel and accommodation expenses.
3. Two letters of support from relevant individuals outlining the benefits of your attendance to the Conference.
4. Full contact details including your name, position, organisation, postal address, email and telephone and facsimile.

Please note that applications can only be accepted from individuals. Application for groups will not be considered.

The application process will be managed through the National Nutrition Networks Management Committee. Applications may be sent by post or email.

The review process:

A panel will be set up by the Conference Management Committee and will review all applications. Selection will be based on the need for support as demonstrated by the application letter and supporting documents. Some applicants may be offered partial funding.

Note: If you have an abstract accepted for the conference and your application for a grant is not successful, you will be contacted by the Conference organisers to discuss your options.

Submission details:

By Post:

National Nutrition Networks Conference
C/- PO Box 280
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au

Timeline:

Applications must be received by	Friday 11 January 2008
Applicants advised by	Friday 18 January 2008