Welcome to the October Update which is a snapshot of the latest news of implementing the NATSINSAP project. The update is for all people across sectors with an interest in improving health and nutrition.

Please feel free to forward to relevant networks and contact us to find out more.

A brief history

The NATSINSAP 2000-2010 is a nationally agreed framework for action to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through better nutrition. The NATSINSAP is separate though aligned to Eat Well Australia- an Agenda for Action for Public Health Nutrition 2000-2010. To download a copy of the NATSINSAP visit http://www.nphp.gov.au/publications/signal/natsinsa1.pdf.

To progress implementation, a NATSINSAP national project officer position is hosted by the Heart Foundation and funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. This position works under the guidance of a national Steering committee and Reference group.

NATSINSAP evaluation & project officer position

- **NATSINSAP evaluation**- funding for an evaluation of the NATSINSAP was approved by the Australian Health Ministers’ Conference (AHMC) in July 2008. The evaluation is due to commence later this year and the Department of Health and Ageing will manage the evaluation contract. The evaluation will examine how effectively the NATSINSAP has been implemented and identify ways in which it could be made to be more effective and responsive to the current environment. It will be important to seek contributions from a diverse range of stakeholders, viewpoints and expertise to ensure that the evaluation outcomes are valid. The Department of Health and Ageing is currently considering the best mechanisms for seeking such contributions.

- **NATSINSAP Project Officer funding extended to June 2009**- we welcome the extension of funding for the NATSINSAP Project Officer position from October 2008 to June 2009 by the Department of Health and Ageing. Informing the NATSINSAP evaluation will be central to the ongoing work of this position, in addition to continuing work in the priority areas of ‘Maternal and Child nutrition’, ‘Workforce’ and an emerging focus on ‘Nutrition and food security in urban areas’.
Sadly Judith Myers, who shared the position with Sharon Laurence, resigned shortly before the extension was approved last month. Judith made a terrific contribution in this position and her experience and passion will be missed.

**NATSINSAP promotion, stakeholder engagement and strategic alliances**


The specific sections relevant to nutrition are:

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<th>GOAL: National nutrition plan, developed, funded and implemented</th>
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<td><strong>TARGET:</strong> &gt; 90% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can access a standard healthy food basket (or supply) for a cost of less than 25% of their available income by 2018.</td>
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<td>*Food security- focus on affordability and accessibility of healthy food choices,</td>
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<td>*Nutrition intervention for at-risk communities- recognising the link between poverty and poor quality diets,</td>
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<td>*Community stores to commit to healthy nutrition goals and targets as well as financial goals and targets.</td>
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| TARGET: National coverage of culturally appropriate maternal and child health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. |

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<td>*Develop a national ‘nutritional risk’ scheme for at-risk mothers, infants and children,</td>
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<td>*Nutritionists are partnered with Indigenous Health/Nutrition Workers to support maternal and child health nurse home visiting teams.</td>
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The Health Equality Targets and Benchmarks accompany a commitment by the Prime Minister, Minister for Health, the Opposition Leader as well as the leaders of the Indigenous health peak bodies and mainstream health peak bodies to measure, monitor and report upon joint efforts to achieve achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Indigenous and non- Indigenous Australians by the year 2030. The COAG commitments, the signing of the ‘Close the Gap Statement of Intent’ and the development of the ‘Indigenous Health Equality Targets’ together form an ambitious plan to address Indigenous health inequality.

- **NHMRCH ‘Road Map’ Review of Indigenous Health Research**- A submission was prepared behalf of NATSINSAP calling for an increased research focus on nutrition as a key determinant of health, particularly the impact of food insecurity in remote, rural and urban areas. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake nutrition research was prioritised.
Communicating and disseminating 'good practice'

**Australian Indigenous HealthInfo Net**- welcome to Kathy Ride, the new Research Officer at the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, responsible for the 'nutrition' section. Kathy's nutrition expertise provides a wonderful opportunity to build and keep abreast of relevant nutrition policies, programs, evidence and resources at the InfoNet. Kathy will also look after the online nutrition yarning place which is a great way to promote new resources or programs being run, or to ask advice from other experts in nutrition. Membership is free; simply log onto [www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition) or contact Kathy Ride at k.ride@ecu.edu.au

This initiative has been established on behalf of the NATSINSAP through funding from OATSIH in partnership with contributions from State Departments of Health from NSW, WA, SA and Tasmania and is managed by the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet.

- **National Nutrition Networks Conference**- following the overwhelming success of the conference held in Alice Springs this year, a submission is being prepared for funding this ongoing bi-annual conference- with the intention of holding the next conference in 2010. Please be in contact if you are interested in being involved in helping to organise or hosting the next event.

- **Nutrition Networks evaluation**- the conference evaluation report was completed in June 2008 and is now available at the Australian Indigenous Health InfoNet [http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition). At this site you can also download conference abstracts, select presentations and the 2008 Conference recommendations.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition workforce**

- **Accredited nutrition training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers**- the final draft of the nutrition support materials has been reviewed through a NATSINSAP reference group and will include: a Learners Manual, Facilitators Guide, Powerpoint presentations and an Assessment Guide for Registered Training Organisations. The materials support a nationally consistent approach to the delivery of accredited nutrition training at the Certificate 1V level of the Primary Health Care qualification across Australia, for both specialist and generalist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.

The nutrition resource materials cover the following five 5 units of competence that make-up the Nutrition Skills Cluster:

- **HLTAHW407A Provide nutrition guidance for specific health care**
  
  Includes the competencies required to promote healthy nutrition to address the requirements of a range of client groups and to improve community nutrition.

- **HLTAHW411A Plan, develop and evaluate health promotion for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities**
  
  Includes the skills and knowledge required to organise a health promotion program as part of Primary Health Care services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients.
• **HLTAHW412A Provide information and strategies to promote nutrition for good health**
  Includes the competencies required for giving nutrition advice for growth and development, maintenance of health throughout life, and in managing ill health.

• **HLTAHW429A Provide healthily life programs and advice**
  Includes the competencies required to plan, promote, deliver and evaluate a healthy lifestyle program.

• **HLTAHW512A Address impact of food supply on community health**
  Includes the competencies required to conduct health care programs to influence food supply and food access in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.

The materials are being developed by the Community Health and Industry Skills Council and should be available well before the end of this year.

• **Formalising a ‘Nutrition Skill Set’** - a submission was prepared on behalf of NATSINSAP to the NACCHO August board meeting to seek support for defining a nationally endorsed ‘nutrition skills set’ for Certificate 1V level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers. Defining a ‘nutrition skill set’ increases national recognition and workforce opportunities for Aboriginal Health Workers specialising in nutrition. It also strengthens pathways into the nutrition workforce from secondary schools to the VET sector, university and the workplace and provides consistency and transferability in training between states. To have a ‘skill set’ nationally endorsed a submission must be lodged with Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council.

**Food supply in remote and rural communities**

• **‘Heart Foundation Buyers Guide- for managers of remote Indigenous stores and takeaways’ now available** - The Heart Foundation has developed this practical guide for managers and owners of remote Indigenous stores and takeaways. It identifies specific brands of foods and beverages the Heart Foundation would encourage these stores to stock to improve the range of healthier items on offer for these remote Indigenous communities. It is not designed for the broader community.

  The **Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaways (RIST)** project was a collaborative project between the federal and five state and territory jurisdictions aimed at improving the supply of healthy foods in remote communities. This project sought assistance from the Heart Foundation Tick to improve the range of healthier foods available in remote outlets and develop the Buyers Guide.

Printed copies can be ordered by calling on 1300 36 27 87 (local call cost) or email heartline@heartfoundation.com.au. To download this **Buyers Guide** in addition to the full set of the **RIST resources visit** [http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition).
Family focused maternal & child nutrition

- **SNAICC**- The NATSINSAP Project Officer prepared an article and coordinated several other contributions for a feature edition of the SNAICC newsletter on child health and nutrition in July 08. *The Secretariat of the National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Inc (SNAICC)* is the national non government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. SNAICC operates from a membership base including of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based child care agencies, Multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services, long day care child care services, pre schools, early childhood education services and services for young people at risk. In addition to these members SNAICC has a network and subscriber list of over 800 predominately Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups with an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children. Visit [www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au).

- **Building a maternal and child nutrition network**- formalising a national advisory network around maternal and early childhood nutrition will be a priority for the NATSINSAP Project Officer position over the next eight months. Relevant issues include workforce training, advocacy; sharing 'good practice' models and informing research priorities. If you would like more information or wish to be involved please be in contact.

We value your ideas, information and guidance. Please be in contact if you would like more information about any of the above areas or if you wish to be added to the email list for future Updates.

Please keep in touch

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