

The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program

Colette Lappin, Vicki Taylor, Margaret Pumpa, Regional Aboriginal Health Team, SA

The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program is a key component of the nutrition services provided by the Aboriginal Health Teams as part of the Central Northern Adelaide Health Service (CNAHS) and a partnership community engagement strategy with Nunkuwarrin Yunti, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health. The overall aim of Nunga Nutrition Lunches is to provide a tasty and healthy meal in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere where Indigenous community members are encouraged to access Nunga Health Clinic and engage in other health promotion services available on the day.

Through the work of the nutritionist and supporting staff, a range of easy-to-prepare, low-cost, diabetes-friendly recipes are served to approximately 80 people at lunches on a weekly basis across three separate metropolitan health sites in central eastern and western region of Adelaide. The program is considered a valuable link in supporting attendance of Indigenous clients at Nunga Health Clinic and up-skilling Aboriginal individuals in becoming a community peer-support worker assisting with menu planning, developing recipes, ordering food, co-coordinating guest speakers, gaining computer skills and evaluating the Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program.

Staff from within the Aboriginal Health Teams and from outside agencies are encouraged to share in lunch, as this interaction enables health workers to build connections, be seen regularly by the community and offers team and other agency staff the opportunity to share information about their programs and upcoming events.

The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program has been fortunate to receive support from agencies including the Asthma Foundation, BreastScreen SA, the Cancer Council, Quit SA, Australian Hearing, the Hepatitis C Council, Housing SA and Kidney Health SA, Royal Adelaide Hospital Burns Unit and SA Fire Bridge. Each agency provides the community with brief, informal and educational talks about the services they provide and the issues they represent.

Working with the Indigenous community in the area of nutrition is rewarding and challenging work. There is great scope for initiating positive change in people's diets and their understanding of good nutrition. The Nunga Nutrition Lunch Program is a powerful tool for focusing people's interests on the importance of healthy eating and maintaining good physical, social and emotional health. It provides people with a sense of community, an opportunity for social interaction, a nutritious meal and access to health services, information and support.