Media Release

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Victorian Aboriginal healthy eating campaign

Cancer Council Victoria and the Heart Foundation, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), are launching a campaign to encourage Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to make small changes to their eating habits for better health and wellbeing.

Funded by the Victorian Government as part of Healthy Together Victoria, LiveLighter is a new public education campaign that highlights the damage unhealthy weight, poor diet and physical inactivity can cause to internal organs. The campaign is scheduled to run until June 2015.

VACCHO’s CEO, Jill Gallagher, said: “VACCHO is pleased to be partnering with the Cancer Council Victoria and the Heart Foundation to deliver healthy eating messages to Victorian Aboriginal community members. This radio ad will deliver relevant, culturally appropriate messages to our community, and builds on VACCHO’s long history of promoting the benefits of good nutrition.”

The radio ad, spoken by Wotjobaluk man Dylan Clarke, asks the listener why they would ruin their body by eating unhealthy and processed snacks if being in touch with nature and the land is what keeps their families and communities grounded and healthy. The ad encourages listeners to make small swaps, like fruit or unsalted nuts instead of lollies, to do their body and spirit the world of good.

Prevention Division Director, Craig Sinclair, at Cancer Council Victoria said: “This campaign will encourage and support Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make positive lifestyle changes and maintain healthy choices. It will act as a powerful reminder that the time to act is now and it’s never too late to make small changes for better health.”

The LiveLighter campaign is supported by a comprehensive, easy-to-use website, providing a wealth of information, resources and tools including an online meal and activity planner featuring healthy recipes that are easy to make.

Thirty-seven year old Luke Sultan, an Eastern Arrernte and Gurindji man from Central Australia, who now lives in Melbourne, has lost over 30 kilograms through healthy eating and physical activity. “I’ve been training at the gym now for about two years and in that time I’ve become more interested in nutrition too. I’ve cut out unnecessary sugars, started using low fat milk, eating a lot of fruit and veg, cut out spreads such as butter and margarine and opted for alternatives like avocado. To take that next step I have gone to see a dietitian and worked out a daily eating plan. I feel more in touch with my body now and my energy levels have improved. It only took two to three weeks each time I made a change in my eating habits to notice a difference. Now I really love nutrition.”

LiveLighter was funded by the Department of Health in Western Australia and developed by the Heart Foundation WA in partnership with Cancer Council of WA and has been implemented in that state since 2012.