



# **OUTREACH NEWSLETTER**

## **September 2018**

**Outreach Co-ordinator    Jocelyn Dhu**

**Outreach Worker        Brian McDonald**

**Outreach Worker        Nardia Bray**

**Outreach Worker        Brenton Forrester**

# Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome

Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome (WKS), once thought to be a rare condition, is now known to be common in people with nutritional deficiencies or alcohol dependence. The primary cause of WKS is thiamine deficiency, and more than 90% of cases are reported in alcohol dependent patients because alcohol dependence predisposes to severe nutritional deficiency.

WKS may lead to significant, long-term brain dysfunction with severe effects on work, personal and social function. Whilst effective treatment may greatly reduce severe disability and the human and social costs of this illness, most AOD clinicians know little or nothing about this disease. The DASA Outreach team has been running programs in Central Australia to raise awareness to the wider community in the hope of early intervention and prevention with people who maybe chronic alcohol abusers and who are at higher risk of developing WKS. The importance of raising awareness is two fold. First, in relation to acute symptomatic WKS, failure to treat immediately or adequately may result in profound and often permanent cognitive and neurological disability. Secondly, with early intervention, subclinical WKS may be preventable with adequate thiamine treatment.

The Optimum Thiamine Intervention Trial (OpT In) is a four year research project trialing different doses of thiamine (Vitamin B1). They are trying to find out the best dose to treat symptoms of Wernicke Korsakoff Syndrome (WKS), and to prevent brain damage in people at risk of thiamine deficiency due to risky alcohol intake. The project commenced in September 2014 at the Alice Springs Hospital. Menzies researchers Dr Kylie Dingwall, Katie Kingshott, Annette McCarthy and the Addictions Medicine team lead by Dr Jen Delima aim to recruit over 450 patients onto the project. Jocelyn Dhu has been a part of the Indigenous Reference Group since 2016. The IRG was established in 2014 to provide advice and guidance to the OpTimum Thiamine intervention trial to ensure its procedures are culturally appropriate and advise on appropriate messages from the trial to disseminate to the community.





# Because of **her**, we can

As pillars of our society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played – and continue to play - active and significant roles at the community, local, state and national levels. As leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women fought and continue to fight, for justice, equal rights, our rights to country, for law and justice, access to education and employment and to maintain and celebrate our culture, language, music and art.

They continue to influence as doctors, lawyers, teachers, electricians, chefs, nurses, architects, rangers, emergency and defence personnel, writers, volunteers, chief executive officers, actors, singer songwriters, journalists, entrepreneurs, media personalities, board members, accountants, academics, sporting icons, Olympians and the list goes on. They are our mothers, our elders, our grandmothers, our aunties, our sisters and our daughters.

Sadly the Indigenous women's role in our cultural, social and political survival has often been invisible, unsung or diminished. For at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried our dreaming stories, song lines, languages and knowledge that have kept our culture strong and enriched us as the oldest continuing culture on the planet. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were there at first contact.

They were there at the Torres Strait Pearlers strike in 1936, the Day of Mourning in 1938, the 1939 Cummeragunja Walk-Off, at the 1946 Pilbara pastoral workers' strike, the 1965 Freedom Rides, the Wave Hill walk off in 1966, on the front line of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972 and at the drafting of the Uluru Statement. They have marched, protested and spoken at demonstrations and national gatherings for the proper recognition of our rights and calling for national reform and justice. Our women were heavily involved in the campaign for the 1967 Referendum and also put up their hands to represent their people at the establishment of national advocacy and representative bodies from the National Aboriginal Congress (NAC) to ATSIC to Land Councils and onto the National Congress for Australia's First Peoples.

They often did so while caring for our families, maintaining our homes and breaking down cultural and institutionalised barriers and gender stereotypes. Our women did so because they demanded a better life, greater opportunities and - in many cases equal rights - for our children, our families and our people.



They were pioneering women like Barangaroo, Truganini, Gladys Elphick, Fannie Cochrane-Smith, Evelyn Scott, Pearl Gibbs, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Celuia Mapo Salee, Thancoupie, Justine Saunders, Gladys Nicholls, Flo Kennedy, Essie Coffey, Isabel Coe, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Eleanor Harding, Mum Shirl, Ellie Gaffney and Gladys Tybingoompa.

Their achievements, their voice, their unwavering passion gives us strength and have empowered past generations and paved the way for generations to come. This year the Outreach team celebrated NAIDOC at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre.

## Because of **her**, we can!

# FASD Awareness Day

9:09am on the 9th day of the 9th month is observed every year in recognition of the importance of being alcohol free for the nine months of a pregnancy

There is no known safe amount of alcohol which can be consumed during pregnancy and it is the responsibility of the whole community to support alcohol free pregnancies. Community events to mark FASD Awareness Day take place around the world. These provide opportunities for communities to raise awareness about FASD, to pause, reflect and consider the benefits of an alcohol free pregnancy, to support pregnant women and to share this prevention message around the world. NOFASD Australia has been involved in this campaign since the very beginning.

This year it was agreed to host the FASD Awareness Day in Alice Springs on the 7 September 2018 at the Town Council Lawns.



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NOFASD has joined the **Red Shoes Rock** campaign, which was started by RJ Formanek, an adult with FASD. He decided to wear RED SHOES to stand out, be noticed and have some fun starting FASD conversations with strangers. With strong supports and increased awareness FASD can be prevented. Wear red shoes proudly to raise awareness about FASD. #RedShoesRock #FASDawareness



It was decided instead of keeping to the "Red Shoe Rock" theme we would adapt it fit Central Australia. We came up with the concept of hanging hats, caps, baby bonnet's on a tree.

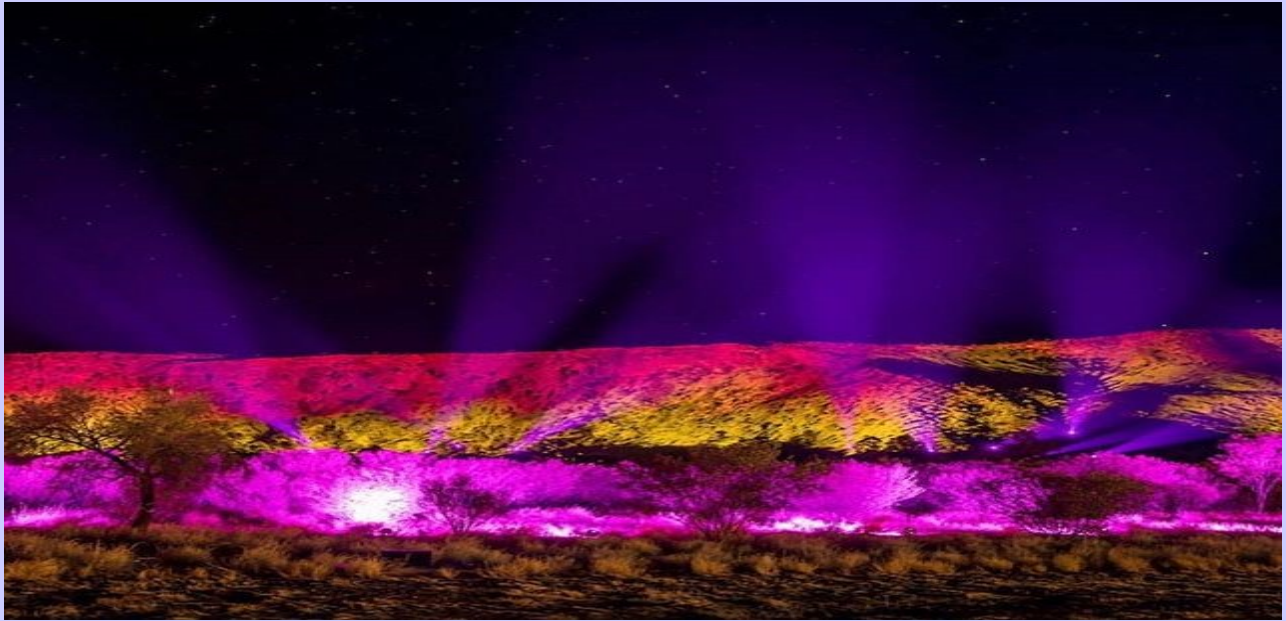
Hanging the hats on the tree was a great conversation starter. It was fun and interactive and it achieved what the different services were trying to do, which was raise awareness around FASD.

The DASA Outreach Team held their BBQ at this event which is always a great way to get the public involved. Over 100 people attended the event.

We would like to thank all the different agencies involved in making this event a success.



# Parrtjima Festival of Lights



Immerse yourself in the only authentic Indigenous Light Festival of it's kind. Commencing 28 September to 7 October this year, in Alice Springs with the magnificent backdrop of the MacDonnell Ranges. Below Pictured: Featuring a series of bold, large-scale sculptures which visitors can explore and weave their way through,

the Forest Space installation honours the importance of the trees which grow in clusters across the desert. The sculptures share knowledge of seasonal changes in the environment and the ecology of plants and trees, which provided more than just shelter for the first nation's people.



## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services.

**Drug & Alcohol Services Australia (DASA)**

4 Schwarz Crescent  
Alice Springs NT 0870

Ph: (08) 8952-8412

Visit us on the web at [www.dasa.org.au](http://www.dasa.org.au)

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