



QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK NEWS

DECEMBER 2010

Aims to strengthen links between women by providing access to information and support'

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

QWHN Holds Women's Health Forums in Torres Strait

Local women have their say

Members of the Queensland Women's Health Network voluntary Management Committee visited the Torres Strait from 15 to 17 July 2010 to facilitate a series of Women's Health Forums.

Dr Betty McLellan, Chairperson of QWHN, said "We've been wanting to visit the Torres Strait for some time now as it is well known that Torres Strait Islander women experience particular challenges in terms of health outcomes". The forums were coordinated by the QWHN Far North Queensland Representative, Romina Fujii, a long-time resident of Thursday Island and dedicated community leader.

The Torres Strait encompasses eighteen islands and two communities on the Northern Peninsula (Bamaga and Seisia). On



Approximately fifty women attended the QWHN Women's Health Forum on Thursday Island. QWHN West Queensland Representative, Sue Manthey (above), presented a workshop on 'Respectful Relationships' which was well received by young women from the local college. (Photo Courtesy Velma Gara, News Editor, Torres News.)

this occasion QWHN representatives visited the 'Inner Islands' of Hammond Island, Horn Island and Thursday Island.

Young women from the local Kazivi Meta College made up the majority of the fifty women who attended the first forum on Thursday Island, which is the main administrative centre of the Torres Strait with a population of approximately 2,600. The program included a presentation by local health care workers from the Primary Health Care centre, and three workshops by

QWHN representatives: 'Respectful Relationships' by Sue Manthey; 'Accessing Health Information on the Internet' by Martha Power and Maree Hawken; and 'What Can Counselling Do For You?' by Dr Betty McLellan. Other organisations involved included Women's Health Queensland Wide (www.womhealth.org.au) who provided reusable showbags which contained information brochures and novelty items including pens, stickers, wrist-bands, magnets, and notepads promoting healthy

(continued next page)

w
w
w
.
q
w
h
n
.
a
s
n
.
a
u

IN THIS EDITION TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S HEALTH

QWHN Women's Health Forums	1-2	Yarning About Depression	5
Flora Spreads the Word	3	'What's On' & 'Women's Health on the Net'	6
New 4WD Digital Mobile Service	4	Women Growing Stronger in Gympie	7
Healing Foundation Receives First 'Seed'	5	568,000 Reasons for DES Awareness	8

(continued from page 1)

messages on topics such as nutrition and exercise, dengue fever, depression, breast health, healthy relationships, cervical screening, arthritis, osteoporosis, incontinence, cancer, smoking, and heart health. The following day the QWHN Committee took the fifteen minute ferry ride to Hammond Island, a hilly island with a population of around 220 residents, where they were briefed on local women's health issues by Cr Nancy Pearson and other local women. Cr Pearson works tirelessly for the local community including being a member of a 'first response' team to assess and facilitate the movement of sick or injured people from Hammond Island to the hospital on Thursday Island. Island residents anticipate that a health centre may be established on Hammond in the very near future to alleviate this situation. Women

expressed concern for the issues caused by isolation, particularly for those living on the more remote islands, the gradual loss of knowledge about traditional food cultivation and practices, the impact of overfishing and climate change on local fish stocks, and how these issues affected the health and wellbeing of residents. Similar discussions took place when the Committee presented workshops on Horn Island and heard about local issues facing women and their community. They include the challenges of a highly transient population, the need for a permanent doctor and ambulance service, the need for a transit bed for outer islands, and a stronger focus on preventative health measures. The women suggested there would be great on-going benefit in providing young local women with training in social work and identified an existing space that could be utilised as a library and study centre. They were also keen to re-establish the Community Health Management Group to increase community access and feedback to local people. The QWHN Committee also visited the Thursday Island Hospital and the Primary Health Care Centre where they met with local health workers. QWHN facilitates annual Women's Health Forums in remote and regional areas of Queensland. The Committee was invited to return to the Torres Strait in the future, and is committed to working with local women at every opportunity.

Radio drama promotes healthy lifestyle

Kasa Por Yarn is a radio drama broadcast in Creole promoting healthy lifestyle choices to young Torres Strait Islander people with an emphasis on awareness of sexually transmissible infections. The storylines and characters were developed with the help of local people through a series of workshops on Thursday Island.

For more information visit:
www.kasaporyarn.wordpress.com



OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

will examine health issues related to the use of

TOBACCO (& OTHER DRUGS)

**DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA?
OR ARE YOU A WOMAN WITH KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE ON THIS TOPIC?**

Share your insights with over 400 organisations, health workers, and other women in Queensland and beyond...

We welcome your articles, news items, or other submissions. Please contact us in advance at coordinator@qwhn.asn.au for submission guidelines.

DEADLINE: 11 February

QWHNEWS

Our women's health forum prompted us to change our QWHN News schedule and devote this edition to the health of Torres Strait Islander women. Our advertised edition on 'Tobacco & other drugs' will now be moved to April 2011. We apologise for any inconvenience, and wish you all a happy and healthy New Year.



Maree Hawken
Coordinator



Top: Chairperson of QWHN, Dr Betty McLellan, and Horn Island resident, Agnes Fox, inspect home-grown vegetables in the community garden.

Bottom: QWHN Committee Members, local women and children on Hammond Island. Centre Left: Cr Nancy Pearson. Centre Right: QWHN Far North Queensland Representative Romina Fujii (white shirt).



Flora Spreads the Word

Mrs Flora Warria advises Torres Strait Islander women not to be ashamed

Torres Strait Island local and Pastor's wife Mrs Flora Warria, 43, is spreading the word about the importance of cervical screening following her own recent experiences. Mrs Warria of Moa Island attended a local Women's Health Check in May 2010. At this clinic, run by Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Mobile Women's Health Nurse, Gaynor Hampel, changes were detected in Mrs Warria's Pap smear results. Following further tests which identified a high grade change, and hysterectomy surgery, Mrs Warria has recently returned home from Townsville and is encouraging other women to have regular Pap smears. "I worked as a Health Worker from 1984 to 1986 and am keen to run a community workshop to tell Torres Strait Islander women not to be ashamed and to have regular Pap smears and get any problems

detected early so they have a better chance of a positive outcome like me," Mrs Warria said. Mrs Warria, a mother of eight with five birth and three adopted children, believes her spiritual approach to life has helped her recovery. "I was in hospital for five days and was lucky to have my husband in Townsville with me. I thank God for my fast recovery." Flora Warria and her husband Milford run the local tabernacle of the United Pentecostal Church of Australia and

"I want to make it my business to encourage women my age to have regular Pap smears ..."

with her family and the recent birth of a grandchild, she leads a busy life. "I want to make it my business to encourage women my age to have regular Pap smears", Mrs Warria said. The cervical screening participation rate for the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Health Service District for 2007-2008 was 55.4% which was

below the Queensland average of 59.7%.

Lower participation rates in cervical screening for women in rural and remote areas provided the impetus for the creation of the Mobile Women's Health Service which was initially piloted in Queensland in five areas in 1991.

Fifteen Mobile Women's Health Nurses are now located throughout Queensland and provide a range of women's health services including Pap smears. All women are eligible to use the Mobile Women's Health Service, no referral is necessary.

Cancer of the cervix is widely recognised as one of the most preventable cancers. Research suggests that up to 90 percent of the most common form of cancer of the cervix can be prevented if women have regular Pap smears every two years.

The organised approach to cervical cancer screening, initiated in Australia in 1991 (the National Cervical Screening Program), has been effective in reducing the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. However, three out of four women who develop cervical cancer have not had regular screening or have never had a Pap smear (Women's Cancer Screening Services, 2002). This supports the need for continued activity in the areas of prevention and early detection, with increased recruitment to cervical screening being recognised as a public health priority in Australia (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000).

A regular Pap smear every two years can help to prevent up to 90 percent of the most common form of cervical cancer. Women aged 20-69 years, who have ever had sex are encouraged to have regular Pap smears.

For more information on cervical screening or to find a Pap smear provider near you visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/cervicalscreening

For further information contact: Donna Byrne, Senior Health Promotion Officer, Queensland Cervical Screening Program, Cancer Screening Services Branch Queensland Health
Phone: (07) 3328 9448
Email: Donna_Byrne@health.qld.gov.au

(September 2010)

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

In 2001, 48,800 people identified as being of Torres Strait Islander origin or of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin – one in every ten Indigenous Australians. At the time of the survey, the Torres Strait Islander population in private dwellings was estimated to be 50,500. Around one in seven Torres Strait Islander people (14%) live in the Torres Strait Area, with a further 45% in other parts of Queensland and 18% living in New South Wales. Overall, the health of Torres Strait Islander people is generally similar to that of the total Indigenous Australian population. In the 2004-05 NATSIHS, 77% of the Torres Strait Islander population assessed their health as either 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. Around 60% of Torres Strait Islander people reported long-term health conditions. The most commonly reported long-term health conditions were eye/sight problems (26%) and asthma (13%). One in eleven Torres Strait Islander people (9%) reported heart and circulatory problems/

diseases, slightly lower than the rate for other Indigenous Australians. Almost two-thirds of the adult Torres Strait Islander population (61%) were overweight or obese according to the BMI – similar to the total Indigenous population. Overall, Torres Strait Islander people reported diabetes/high sugar levels at a similar rate to the total Indigenous population (around 6%). However, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes/high sugar levels was greater among those living in the Torres Strait Area, at 11%. Nearly half the adult Torres Strait Islander population (49%) reported smoking one or more cigarettes per day and 13% had consumed alcohol at risky/high risk levels in the week before the survey. Those living in the Torres Strait Area reported lower levels of daily cigarette smoking and risky/high risk alcohol consumption than Torres Strait Islander people in other parts of Australia.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

OCOSS Health Update

With Ros Walker, Health Policy Officer
Queensland Council of Social Service

Is the Gap Closing?

On the face of it there seems little difference between the Close the Gap campaign initiated by the Close the Gap Coalition and the Australian Government's Closing the Gap agenda. However, the Coalition points out a big difference. Primarily, the Australian Government has delivered a top down approach which fails to address the social and cultural determinants of health, inequality and disadvantage. These factors need to be addressed before any sustainable health gains can be achieved through direct health service provision.

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) identifies the following factors as critical to achieving successful outcomes for Indigenous people and communities:

- Facilitating individual and community control over their affairs;
- Supporting strong culture and identity;
- Protecting traditional connection and access to land; and
- Tackling racism and social exclusion.

Earlier this year the Close the Gap Coalition released a "shadow" report to the Prime Minister's annual Close the Gap report to Parliament. The report calls for the Australian Government to meet key commitments of the Close the Gap *Statement of Intent* signed by Government and Aboriginal health leaders in 2008. Namely: addressing health inequalities through an evidence based approach; ensuring the full participation of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs; and supporting and developing community controlled health services. The report can be found on Oxfam's website at www.oxfam.org.au

The Close the Gap Coalition "is an Indigenous-led initiative involving a coalition of 40 or so concerned organisations that was formed following the March 2006 release of Tom Calma's Social Justice Report 2005. The report made recommendations for a targeted approach to achieving Indigenous health equality within a generation, defined as 25 years".
ANTaR

New 4WD Digital Mobile Service Improves Access

BreastScreen Queensland launches free mobile service for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women in the Cairns Hinterland, Cape York, & Torres Strait Islands



Breast cancer remains the most common cancer experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) women and is the second leading cause of cancer death after lung cancer. ATSI women are also less likely to participate in breast cancer screening [1].

High quality breast cancer screening is provided free through the BreastScreen Queensland (BSQ) Program, which aims to reduce deaths and illness from breast cancer by maximising the early detection of breast cancer. In Queensland, current participation rates in the BSQ Program for the target age group in 2007-08 is 57.3% for the non-Indigenous population and 46.2% for ATSI women, an 11% gap. To help decrease this gap, the Australian Government contributed funding for the new BSQ four wheel drive (4WD) digital mobile service named "Orchid", which is fully equipped with the latest state-of-the-art digital technology.

The new 4WD digital mobile service allows the BSQ program to provide improved access to free breast cancer screening for ATSI women by visiting areas in the Cairns Hinterland, Cape York, the Torres Strait Islands and allowing additional ATSI communities in other rural and remote areas of North Queensland to be visited in the future. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Reference Group,

which consisted of Health

Workers and representatives from the local communities, was established in 2007 to ensure "Orchid" is culturally acceptable, effective and safe in the delivery of breast cancer screening to ATSI women. Design features recommended by the Reference Group included an outdoor room and awning to provide a waiting room for family members and Indigenous artwork to the exterior of the mobile. The colourful artwork titled "Screening for health, not screaming for help" by artist Ms Jordana Angus, aims to increase the awareness of the importance of breast cancer screening and early detection of breast cancer and will be visually appealing and recognisable as it travels throughout Northern Queensland.

The 4WD digital mobile unit commenced free breast cancer screening services on 19th July 2010. Women aged 50-69 years are strongly encouraged to have a breastscreen every two years and women aged 40-49 and those over 70 are also eligible for a free breastscreen.

For more information or to book an appointment, please call **13 20 50**.

[1] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre (2009). Breast cancer in Australia: an overview, 2009. Cancer series no 50. Cat. no CAN 46. Breast cancer in Australia: an overview, 2009. Canberra, AIHW.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation Receives First 'Seed for Future'

A newly created Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation was described as 'a first step to becoming a sustainable organisation' by Foundation Chairperson, Florence Onus. Florence accepted the donation at the recent QWHN AGM in Townsville where she was Guest Speaker. The Foundation is a national, Indigenous-controlled, not-for-profit organisation established to support community-based healing initiatives to address the traumatic legacy of colonisation, forced removals and other past government policies. The approach of the Healing Foundation is a holistic one that encompasses spirit, culture and people. It is committed to



Foundation Chairperson, Florence Onus

addressing the legacy of abuse in all its forms and manifestations by building on the strengths and resiliency of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples. QWHN members attending the AGM were very pleased to be introduced to the Foundation by Florence, who is a descendant of the Bindoi people and a member of the Stolen Generations, and Co-Chair of the Townsville Indigenous Human Rights Group.

For more information visit: www.healingfoundation.org.au

NEW NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

For the first time, Indigenous women will be represented under their own National Women's Alliance - the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA). This Alliance, made up of Indigenous women and their organisations from across the country, will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to share information, identify issues from their own communities and raise concerns, in their own words, with their own solutions.

If you are interested in finding out more about NATSIWA or have an interest in joining the Alliance please email natsiwa.admin@ywca.org.au or visit http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/equal/Pages/engaging_womens_org.aspx for more information.

Yarning about depression in Indigenous communities

beyondblue: the national depression initiative has developed a FREE DVD - *Depression Yarns: Tackling depression and related disorders* - designed to assist health professionals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Having a yarn about depression helps to break the fear factor of seeing

depression as a weakness - it's not, it's an illness. *Depression Yarns* provides practical strategies, advice and guidance on recognising the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety disorders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There are two dramatised case studies which aim to promote discussion

about depression and/or anxiety and highlight ways in which to start a conversation with someone who may be showing symptoms. To order *Depression Yarns* or to find out more about depression/anxiety and related disorders call 1300 22 4636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au

The major health issues in Torres Strait Islander communities are much the same as those facing many Australians - heart disease, stroke, lung disease, cancer and diabetes. Nutrition plays a key role in both their prevention and management, so it needs to be high on the agenda of anyone working towards closing the gap.

What do we know about nutritional intakes of Torres Strait Islanders?

A recent survey¹ showed that only about 10% of Torres Strait Islanders are eating the recommended 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables a day, nearly 70% use full fat dairy products and 35% have takeaway food at least once a week. Finding community driven ways to improve nutrition is therefore a priority.

So what are the key nutrition messages?

- Eat a variety of healthy foods
- Eat more fresh foods - try to include 2 fruit & 5 veg every day
- Cut down on the "bad" fats and replace them with healthier fats
- Watch your portion size!
- Cut down on salt
- Choose healthy snacks

NUTRITION EDUCATION
is it on your agenda?

- Use healthy cooking methods
- If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to no more than 2 standard drinks a day

How can you help?

There aren't enough nutritionists to go around - but all health professionals can help by including nutrition in the advice they give. Simple food messages are easy to incorporate into your programs, resources or education sessions - and if you're not quite sure of what to say, there's plenty of help available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on healthy eating for Torres Strait Islanders:

- www.ibis.org.au or Ph (07) 4051 3343 (A Healthy Life Booklet)
- Queensland Health Ph 13 13 04 (Healthy Murri Healthy Islander booklet, Go for 2 and 5 resources)
- www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au or 08 93706336
- www.heartfoundation.org.au or 1300 36 27 87

Reference

- 1 Self reported Adult Health Status - Torres Strait Northern Peninsula Health Service District. Queensland Health 2009.

* Deanne Wooden is away, so thank you to Nicky Peberdy, Nutrition Manager, Heart Foundation for this edition of **Food Files**.



food files
with Deanne*
NUTRITION MANAGER, HEART FOUNDATION



WHAT'S ON...

*Important Events, Conferences
and Workshops around the State & beyond*

11-16 MAR 2011 11th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE – PERTH, WA.

Rural and remote Australia: the heart of a healthy nation

The conference will discuss social and economic determinants, chronic disease, electronic health records and the rural and remote health research agenda.

Early bird registration closes before Saturday 18 December 2010.

FOR INFORMATION visit: <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au>

17-19 MAR 2011 HEART FOUNDATION 2011 CONFERENCE – MELBOURNE, VIC.

Heart to Heart: from Access to Action

The conference will host leading international and Australian presenters to showcase key clinical, research and public health issues perspectives on cardiovascular disease.

Cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, general practitioners, nurses, cardiac technicians, public health professionals, policy makers, researchers, dieticians, nutritionists, and other allied health professionals should not miss this opportunity!

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.heartfoundation2011.org

10-13 APR 2011 AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PROMOTION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE – CAIRNS, QLD.

AHPA 20th National Conference : Strengthening Action

The focus of the conference will be on the determinants of health, with a strong emphasis on the social determinants of health along with solutions to strengthen action to address them. The report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health demonstrated how social factors directly shape health outcomes and explain health inequities. The report stressed the need to tackle the leading causes of ill-health at their roots, going beyond encouraging individuals to change their behaviour. There will also be a focus on Actions to Close the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Determinants of Health.

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.healthpromotion.org.au or phone: (02) 6292 9000

**“Have a Heart,
Give a Gift”**

Black Tie Dinner

Saturday

19th February 2011

Kershaw House, Rockhampton

**Raising Awareness for
Organ and Tissue
Donation**

Cost is \$150 per head

Proceeds to Transplant Australia

RSVP Friday

14th January 2011

**Tickets available from
Prime Properties Rockhampton
or Kate Backhouse**

0437 839 379




WOMEN'S HEALTH ON THE NET

Hot Spots on the Internet for Women

ABORIGINAL & ISLANDER HEALTH WORKER JOURNAL


www.aihwj.com.au

The Aboriginal & Islander Health Worker Journal is the only national publication written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers. The Journal is distributed nationally and internationally and has been in circulation since 1977. It is published six times a year and has a broad readership.

Each issue covers a range of topics including primary health care, community profiles, health promotion, best practice models and workforce issues. Necessary reading for health workers, service providers, program funders and anyone working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provision. The site also provides information about other Indigenous health promotion resources. 

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY

www.awhn.org.au

The Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN) recently published the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health Strategy. The Strategy was launched at the AWHN National Conference in May and was a collaboration between AWHN and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). The Strategy was written by Bronwyn Fredericks, Karen Adams and Sandy Angus after extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from every state and territory. The challenge now is to make sure the recommendations within this important work are implemented. A copy of the Strategy can be downloaded from the AWHN website. 

Women Growing Stronger!

Continuing our series profiling Women's Health Services throughout Queensland we visit

Gympie & District Women's Health Centre



Staff at the Gympie and District Women's Health Centre

Gympie is located about 45 minutes north of Noosa (some locals jokingly refer to it as being "Noosa hinterland" just to push up property prices!) and is one of the oldest towns in Queensland. The discovery of gold led to mining, and later farming, in the resource rich region.

The Gympie and District Women's Health Centre first began offering services to women in Gympie and its surrounding districts in 1994. The Gympie Zonta Club members saw the need for a service which provided professional support in an accessible, safe and confidential environment, and the success of the application to Queensland Health for funding under the National Women's Health Program saw the office open in September, 1994.

The service flourished and expanded under the expert guidance of women such as Marchelle Armstrong, Ann Sinclair, Cobi van der Es, Sheila King, Gayleen Middleton and Dynesse Swan, with diversification of services always high on the agenda. Co-location of services such as sexual assault (until 1999), BreastScreen Qld (until 2006) and SCOPE (domestic and family violence assistance, still co-located) has been particularly successful.

After three moves, the Centre is now

located across from the Gympie General Hospital and Community and Mental Health, at 21 Alfred Street. With four consulting rooms, a large and inviting reception area, library space, two meeting rooms, offices and a room for the SCOPE service, the Centre is able to offer a wide range of primary health care services.

Women aged 12 years and over able to self refer to the service. Counselling is always in demand, with emotional and mental health issues and relationship issues the topics most frequently presented. Support groups meet regularly at the Centre, including Bosom Buddies, Meet and Mix, and Meditation. The Centre regularly runs workshops on a variety of topics, such as managing anxiety and understanding grief. Most services are free of charge; workshops may have a small charge.

Pap smear clinics are limited due to funding restrictions, with monthly clinics on offer. Ruth Tidswell wears many hats as part of the Centre's staff, adding the role of Registered Pap Smear Provider last year to her already impressive list, including manager and counsellor.

"I guess it does sound like a lot, but already being a registered nurse, and having a clinical interest in the Pap smear screening process, I felt that it added to my experience here at the

Women's Health Centre. Clinic days can be a nice change of pace from meetings and report writing! And it certainly helps to keep you in touch with local women. I love hearing their stories and supporting them in educating themselves about their own health."

Josephine Keijzer and Fiona Herrington are both experienced, qualified counsellors at the Centre. Rounding out the clinical team is Tricia Jones, a registered nurse who offers health promotion and health checks (blood pressure, height and weight) one day a week at the Centre. Rose McClintock is the administration officer, with a calm and capable manner that sees the frontline operate efficiently. Backing up the business side is Julie Austin, who manages the accounts and business side of the Centre. A Management Committee made up of seven local women from diverse backgrounds supports the Centre.

The Centre is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9am to 4pm. Women are welcome to phone, email, or just drop in to say hello.

Visit us at www.gwhc.com.au

Phone (07) 5483 6588, or

Email: ghealth@spiderweb.com.au

568,000 reasons for DES awareness

The DES Awareness Week campaign held in June by DES Action Australia-NSW showed there are still many Australians with known or suspected exposure to the drug, DES (diethylstilboestrol) needing information about this harmful drug. The anti-miscarriage drug, DES was given to women during pregnancy from 1938 to 1971 (and sometimes beyond). Women given DES and their children of that pregnancy are at higher risk of certain types of cancer and reproductive problems. People exposed to DES require vital and ongoing special health care. The DES Action group promotes their blog site www.desnsw.blogspot.com to provide Australians with everything they need to know about DES, including resources to help with DES health care. The group's coordinator, Carol Devine is now pinning her hopes on a feature film under development in USA by screenwriter, Caitlin

McCarthy, called "Wonder Drug", a scientific drama about the DES tragedy. It is hoped that when this film comes to Australian cinemas, it will encourage families to talk about DES, or it may help trigger a memory for mothers who were prescribed DES those years ago. The DES Action group's blog site is following the exciting and very hopeful progress of the multi-award winning screenplay, "Wonder Drug".

Latest figures obtained by the group reveal there could be at least 168,000 DES exposed mothers, daughters and sons in Australia and this figure may even be as high as 568,000. Upwards of 4 million women were given DES during pregnancy in USA.

For comprehensive information about DES, visit the group's blog site www.desnsw.blogspot.com or Phone DES Action Australia-NSW: (02) 9875 4820.

Where's Your Nearest

Women's Health Service?

Regional & Statewide Women's Health Services provide a range of services including community support, health promotion, early intervention & prevention. **For more information visit www.qwhn.asn.au**

Season's Greetings
& Best Wishes
for 2011

from
Queensland Women's Health Network Inc

RESEARCH

Research Project – Call for Participants

MANAGING THE FEMALE BODY: USING FEMALE GENITAL COSMETIC SURGERY TO FASHION APPROPRIATE FEMININITY

The incidence of female genital cosmetic surgery particularly labiaplasty is rising, not just in Australia, but worldwide and this surgery has attracted considerable attention in the popular press. This study seeks to explore the reasons women are prepared to have cosmetic surgery on their genitals (including hymen repair) and discover what they consider to be the benefits of surgery. The research aims to understand how genital surgery is used by women to enhance their sexual appeal, make them feel more 'normal' or less anxious about their genital appearance or, in the case of hymen repair, comply with cultural or religious traditions. The research hopes to hear from women at different stages of their reproductive lives and from various cultural backgrounds in order to find out why some women decide that having genital surgery is the best option for them.

PARTICIPANTS ARE INVITED TO COMPLETE A BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE FOUND AT:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/genitalcosmeticsurgery>

The survey is completely anonymous. Information from the survey will be published as a thesis and as academic journal articles. The research hopes to understand how surgery is used by women to help them 'fit in' to their particular social worlds and also ensure that medical intervention in women's bodies remains open to public discussion. The study is being conducted by Lindy McDougall and will form the basis of her PhD in Anthropology at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Wynn. If you would like to know more about this research please feel free to contact:

Lindy McDougall (02) 9850 8040, 0409 521481 or
lindy.mcdougall@mq.edu.au OR

Dr Lisa Wynn (02) 9850 8095 or Lisa.Wynn@mq.edu.au

QWHN CONTACT DETAILS

Ph: (07) 4789 0665

Fax: (07) 4789 0647

PO Box 1855, Thuringowa BC QLD 4817

* **NEW EMAIL ADDRESS** *
coordinator@qwhn.asn.au
Website: www.qwhn.asn.au

**CHAIRPERSON &
North Qld Representative**
Dr Betty McLellan (Townsville)

**TREASURER/SECRETARY &
Central Qld Representative**
Belinda Hassan (Mackay)

Far North Qld Representative
Romina Fujii (Thursday Island)

West Qld Representative
Sue Manthey (Emerald)

South Qld Representative
Olivera Simic (Brisbane)

HAVE YOUR SAY...



We are interested in your feedback on the quality of the newsletter, and issues and topics you would like to see in future editions.

**If you have something to say please contact
Maree on (07) 4789 0665 or
email us at: coordinator@qwhn.asn.au**

Newsletter content is provided for information purposes only. Opinions expressed by article contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the QWHN. Copyright remains with each author.