This is our last Talkin’ Strong for 2006. In this issue we share some good news stories from our research, teaching and publications. Throughout the year quite a few of our staff have been busy working on curriculum development both for trainee doctors and for public health students—getting Aboriginal content into mainstream university courses across Australia. We are now seeing more Koori researchers coming through the Master of Public Health course, and the Wirraway Mirrim Researchers Group has been meeting regularly throughout the year.

Onemda is also strengthening its relationships with Indigenous colleagues in New Zealand, North America and other countries in Europe and the Pacific. And we continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, the Koorie Heritage Trust, the Maya Healing Centre and many other Community organisations.

All of us at Onemda would like to wish you a happy holiday time and look forward to another year of working together in 2007.

Finally, we would like you to please take note of our new website address: www.onemda.unimelb.edu.au
Nineteen deans from medical schools in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji recently met with Indigenous spokespeople and members of the Committee of Deans of Australian Medical Schools (CDAMS) for the Indigenous Health Leadership Workshop. The aim of the workshop was to assist the deans in developing their leadership capacity in Indigenous affairs by more clearly understanding the broader social, economic, political and cultural environments they are operating in when making interventions in Indigenous health.

The workshop was held in the bushland setting of Werribee Park, where senior custodian and respected Elder Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin conducted a traditional welcome to Kulin country. She continued her thorough address on the history and culture of her people by an invitation to participate in a smoking ceremony. CDAMS National Program Manager Gregory Phillips said that he was proud to have witnessed the participation of the deans in a traditional Aboriginal ceremony, and that this was probably the first time that he had seen Aboriginal culture honoured in this way.

In his opening remarks to the workshop attendees Lindon Wing, Chair of CDAMS, reminded the deans that as stewards of their professions they are attracting significant national and increasingly international attention as a result of their work in Indigenous health.

Indigenous leaders in health discussed key national Indigenous health priorities, Indigenous terms of reference, and the potential of the role of CDAMS in Indigenous health. The speakers included Ian Anderson, respected Elder and academic Lilla Watson, members of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA), and Mick Gooda, CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Mark Wenitong, AIDA Chairman, said that his organisation was interested in further developing a leadership partnership with CDAMS to jointly implement the recommendations for recruitment, retention, and training of Indigenous students in their Healthy Futures report. The workshop concluded with renewed commitments to Indigenous health education and the possibility of developing regional cooperative models for the recruitment and retention of Indigenous medical students into Australian medical schools.

Over the past three years CDAMS has been actively engaged as a national body in Indigenous health education and training as a result of its work on the Indigenous Health Curriculum Project. This work now involves all Australian medical schools in a process of implementing and sustaining the CDAMS Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework, which is endorsed by the accrediting body, the Australian Medical Council.

The project looks forward to continuing its work with the deans, and to support them in making positive interventions for better Indigenous health outcomes. For more information contact Gregory Phillips at glphil@unimelb.edu.au

Participants at the CDAMS Indigenous Health Leadership Workshop
Participants were able to attend a variety of break-out sessions on CRCAH programs and projects (including those by CRCAH students), capacity development and research impact. Kahnawake Elder Amelia McGregor from Canada presented the keynote address on the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project.

CEO Mick Gooda presided over the launch of three new CRCAH-funded reports: ‘It’s more than machines and medicine: they should understand there’s a ‘Yarangu Way’; a summary report by Paul Rivalland for the Western Desert Ngnampaa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (WDNWPT), which is providing its own kidney dialysis services to Indigenous people from the Western Desert; Overseas Trained Doctors in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services: A Literature Review by Rachelle Arkles of the Muru Murr Dynasty Health Unit at the University of New South Wales; and Marilyn Newton King’s The Relevance of an Accredited Diabetes Educators Association Course to Aboriginal Health Workers, Supervisors and Aboriginal People in South Australia. All three are available in hard copy from the CRCAH or as pdfs from the website (www.crcah.org.au).

We were pleased that CRCAH was well represented at the Symposium. It was also important that the CRCAH funded a number of our community partners to join us there to hear about CRCAH research and meet up with community representatives and researchers from across the country. Lucky Lisa Thorpe won a Western Desert painting in a fund-raising raffle (pictured opposite with Mick Gooda).

Finally, the Kaurna Dance Group led an emotional closing of the Symposium with a smoking ceremony on the forecourt of the Hyatt (pictured below).
During September, as part of the national conference of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), Cronulla University jointly convened a National Indigenous Public Health Curriculum Workshop in Sydney. The workshop was convened by the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University and the Indigenous Health Special Interest Group of the PHAA.

The workshop’s purpose was to follow up a similar one convened by Cronulla in 2003, and to review progress concerning the integration of Indigenous components of the national Master of Public Health (MPH) program. The workshop is one component of the Indigenous Public Health Capacity Building project funded by the Public Health Education and Research Program (PHERP) of the Commonwealth’s Department of Health and Ageing.

More than fifty public health professionals from around the country generously gave up their Sunday and spent the day working together to identify the key Indigenous content to be included in the core MPH curriculum. The workshop also looked at ways of strengthening the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students and of maintaining ongoing linkages within the network of Indigenous public health professionals.

Ian Anderson and Cindy Shannon co-facilitated the workshop in a relaxed but business-like way, and managed to keep everyone interested and focused across the day. The workshop produced a range of ideas concerning key Indigenous MPH content and strategies to make it happen.

Led by Aunty Joan Vickery, Victoria was well represented with staff from Cronulla, the Institute of Koorie Education, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. Other participants included workers from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in most states, public health academics, workers from State and Territory health services and some government policymakers.

After the rigours of deep thinking, some of the workshop participants later donned their dancing shoes and celebrated at the PHAA annual dinner.
**Community Profile**

Lisa Thorpe

My father Alister Thorpe I is a Gunnai man from Gippsland and my mother Alma Brown is a Gunditjmara woman from the Western Districts. I was born in Yallourn, Victoria, but spent most of my life in Melbourne. I am the youngest of seven children and one of more than 100 descendants from my grandmother Edna Brown.

My family has always been involved in Aboriginal communities’ activities at various levels in the local, state, national and international arenas. My mother and grandmother were founders of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and played vital roles in establishing other Aboriginal services.

My brothers and sisters have also been positive influences on my life. This inspires me to carry on working for the community knowing that I have their strength and knowledge behind me. I have two sons and two daughters and a beautiful grandson Charles Gordon, all of whom I am extremely proud.

I have worked in Aboriginal community organisations all my life. My primary work has been in senior management in community based and controlled organisations and in programs that have contributed to the provision of services to Aboriginal people, particularly in the areas of health, women’s issues, community development, health promotion, research and cultural awareness.

I have just completed my Master of Public Health at the Institute of Koorie Education (IKE) at Deakin University, and am feeling very pleased with myself. I am currently employed at Deakin with IKE as a Research Fellow; my role includes community development in research, lecturing and assisting with coordination and recruitment for the Master of Public Health program. I am always on the lookout for new students!

**International Learning Developments**

Shaun Ewen recently spent a month with the Division of Aboriginal People’s Health at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. While there, he was able to share ideas about the teaching and learning of Aboriginal health to medical students, and gave a presentation to medical students who were undertaking an Aboriginal Health residency program.

The strengthening of collaborations with the University of British Columbia will foster the exchange of ideas about Aboriginal people’s health in Canada and Australia, which in turn should help strengthen our approaches to teaching Aboriginal health at The University of Melbourne.

In August, Gregory Phillips, Angela Clarke and Viki Briggs attended the 5th Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The conference brought together 2000 Indigenous peoples from across the globe to talk about alcohol, drugs, gambling and other addictions, as well as recovery from traumas associated with dispossession. Presenters covered a range of topics, the most important of which was the successful programs and approaches that had been achieved to deal with these issues in our communities.

Excellent contacts were made with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, which administered the Canadian government’s healing fund for survivors of the residential schools (similar to the stolen generations in Australia), and a national health care accreditation agency. Gregory presented the paper ‘Health Care Workers and their Emotional Coping Skills’, which was a summary of findings from his Masters research, the CDAMS Project and his prospective PhD studies. Gregory and Angela gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of the CRC for Aboriginal Health. For further information contact them at gphil@unimelb.edu.au, clarkea@unimelb.edu.au or vbriggs@unimelb.edu.au

Kyllie Cripps recently attended the 7th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference: Warriors against Violence in Vancouver, Canada. This international conference brought together Indigenous people from around the world to discuss the growing patterns of violence within Indigenous families and communities. A particular focus was on the success stories of those Indigenous communities that have learned effective strategies to promote wellness in their home environment. The conference placed particular emphasis on hearing the voices of Indigenous youth, Elders and men. Such an approach recognises that combating the problem of violence requires not only listening to the perspectives of the different sectors of our communities but also that their involvement in designing and implementing solutions to the problems are integral to addressing the problem of violence in a holistic way.

Keynote speakers included: Madeleine Dion Stout, an independent Cree scholar who spoke of the warrior spirit that lies within and how we might tap into that resource in responding to violence; Ginger Gosnell, a member of the Kwa‘wa‘kagil First Nations who spoke about youth participation; and Mary Lou Louie a traditional spiritual healer who talked about empowering us all through culture and tradition. All speakers were inspirational in the personal stories that they shared and in their visions for how we might—together—combat the problem of violence in our communities.

Kyllie presented three papers at the conference. The first, which was based on her PhD research and co-presented with one of her research case studies Morning Star House from Albuquerque New Mexico, was entitled Responding to Indigenous Family Violence: Practice and Reflection. Kyllie’s second paper, Indigenous Family Violence Policy in Australia: A New Era Has Begun but What Does the Future Hold?, was presented with Antoinette BrayBrook, Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Service and Kim from The Many Rivers Family Violence Hold?, was presented with Antoinette BrayBrook, Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Service and Kim from The Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention Legal Service and Kim from The Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention Legal Service. The final paper, based on Kyllie’s postdoctoral work, was entitled The Social Determinants of Indigenous Family Violence in Australia: Results from the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002.

For further information contact Kyllie at kcripps@unimelb.edu.au

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Publications

New Discussion Paper

Discussion Paper No. 15: Mothers, Boorais and Special Care: An Exploration of Indigenous Health Care Workers’ Perceptions of the Obstetric and Neonatal Needs of Rural Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families Transferred to the Mercy Hospital for Women.

This discussion paper by K. Jane Middleton summarises an exploratory study carried out by the author to obtain the views of rural Victorian Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers (AHLOs) and health care workers of their clients’ cultural needs when they are transferred to Melbourne’s Mercy Hospital for Women for specialist obstetric or neonatal care. It also documents what the workers’ perceptions of those families’ experiences have been and what information the health care workers would like to have available for future clients faced with the prospect of transfer to Melbourne.

Reprint: Community Report

We Don’t Like Research But in Koori Hands it Could Make a Difference

Due to popular demand we have reprinted this report of Onewa’s first Community Workshop. Held in November 1999, the workshop was run in cooperation with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Department of Rural Health, The University of Melbourne and the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative, Shepparton.

It was a day for Koori researchers to present and discuss their work and/or involvement in research activities and for others to voice their concerns about research itself. About forty people attended the workshop and both Community Elders and young Community members spoke of their experiences and offered opinions.

Forthcoming Discussion Papers 16, 17 & 18: December 2006

The following three discussion papers are background documents for the project entitled ‘Action-oriented indicators of health and health systems development for Indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada and New Zealand’. The goal of the study is to conceptualise and pilot a health indicator development cycle that will contribute to effective health information, surveillance and monitoring systems, and translate into action to improve the health of Indigenous peoples.

Measuring the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by Marcia Anderson, lan Anderson, Janet Smylie, Sue Crengle & Mihi Ratima

Multiple indicators of Indigenous health exist in Australia and there has been a significant focus on the development of these systems over the past decade, particularly. More recently there has been a significant achievement in refining the national indicators so that they articulate more clearly with a national policy framework. However, if health indicators systems are going to maximise the opportunities for health gain, a system-wide approach to the development of service capacity, more work needs to be done at regional and local levels where the existing systems remain relatively undeveloped. This would potentially include more focus on Indigenous understandings of health and local priorities.

Māori Health Indicators by Mihi Ratima, Will Edwards, Sue Crengle, Janet Smylie & Ian Anderson

Robust Māori health indicator sets that are relevant and meaningful are a necessary foundation for the most effective planning, policy development, purchasing, service delivery and monitoring to improve Māori health outcomes. This paper outlines the health sector context for Māori health indicator set development, and describes principal Māori health indicator sets with a focus on Māori participation in indicator selection and development, the extent to which indicator sets reflect Māori concepts of health, and how indicators are being used. It draws on local literature and interviews with thirteen key informants representing a range of health sector organisations.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Health Indicators in Canada by Marcia Anderson, Janet Smylie, lan Anderson, Raven Sinclair & Sue Crengle

Multiple indicators of Indigenous health exist in Canada, but the use of these indicators has not effectively contributed to the improved health of First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples. The ineffectiveness of these indicators in health care monitoring, evaluation and surveillance systems is not clearly understood by health researchers. This paper reports on the authors’ stocktake and assessment of Indigenous health measurement systems in Canada. Its findings are based on a review of the published and unpublished literature, expert consultation and key informant interview data.

All three will be available from Onewa in December.

Carpentaria

Congratulations to Alexis Wright on the launch of her new novel Carpentaria, an epic story set in the Gulf country of north-western Queensland. Henrowel was launched at the Brisbane Writers Festival by Murrandoo Yanner and Jacqui Katona and in Melbourne at the Brunswick Street Bookstore by Tony Birch, Gary Foley and Alison Ravenscroft.

There were large gatherings at both events to listen to the speeches made by our Indigenous leaders who sent this fine novel off in style on its journey throughout the world. Carpentaria is available in all good bookshops or from the publisher, Giramondo Publishing Company.

Congratulations

We would like to congratulate both Paul and Laura on the arrival of their new baby boy Soul Adam John Stewart.

Soul was born on 24 September 2006, weighing in at 8.9lbs and measuring 54cms.

Soul’s arrival gives Rose a baby brother and Paul and Laura a ‘Pigeon Pair’.

It’s a BOY!
If you would like to receive our newsletters, and to be informed about the workshops, seminars and courses that we run at the Unit, please fill in this form and mail or fax it to the address below. All questions are optional but it would help us to know what aspects of our work you might be most interested in.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: .........................................................
Organisation: .............................................
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Tel: (....) ................................ Fax: (....) ............
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Are you Koori? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you currently work in a Koori Community organisation?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

How would you describe your current area of work or study: ..............................................
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Does your work/study involve any of the following:
(Please tick as many as apply)
Health service delivery ☐
Health policy ☐
Health research ☐
Other research ☐
Koori education ☐
Other education ☐
Koori Community service ☐
Other (Please specify) ☐

Do you have any particular interests that we might be able to help you with? (e.g. children’s health, evaluation, research methods, Koori history)
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