



UPDATE

Aboriginal Health

The Sydney Local Health District recently marked Sorry Day at Balmain Hospital with a morning tea and cultural dances performed by the students from St Scholastica's College. District celebrations for NAIDOC Week will include an official ceremony on July 9 at the Sydney Dental Hospital, as well as smaller events such as Youthblock holding its roaming community kitchen at the Redfern Community Centre.

The Aboriginal Health Unit works with District health services to provide leadership and cultural support in promoting Aboriginal health programs and developing partnerships with community health services.

One such program is the Yana Muru Sustained Health Home Visiting Program for Aboriginal Families, where families are regularly visited by Child and Family Health nurses and Aboriginal health workers during the first two years of a child's life. The program has been delivered to 138 families over the last two years and has recently been evaluated. Preliminary results indicate that Aboriginal health workers are key to the delivery of culturally sensitive healthcare, and that the program provides a strong foundation for Aboriginal child development and wellbeing.

Centre for Education and Workforce Development

In August this year the Aboriginal Assistant in Nursing / Wardsperson Program will be launched in SLHD. This program is being conducted as collaboration between CEWD, SLHD Workforce Services and Yarn'n, an Aboriginal Employment Agency. We will be delivering a tailored program for Aboriginal people interested in working within Sydney Local Health District. Participants are offered the opportunity to complete a Certificate III in Health Service Assistance while undertaking a traineeship as either an AIN or a wardsperson.

We have been gratified with the huge response this program has received from the community. We have received nearly 60 expressions of interest from the Aboriginal community, and have interviewed 49 people for the available 20 places on this program. The majority of the applicants have expressed an interest in choosing the AIN pathway.

CEWD will be delivering the 12 month education program; Yarn'n will be providing mentoring during the program and Anna McGowan, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, SLHD, will be providing support to the trainees in the workplace.

Bush scholarship open for applications



Inspired... Stevie Kemp, the first recipient of the Alison Bush Scholarship, in RPA's NICU.

Following the success of the inaugural Alison Bush Scholarship last year, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is once again calling for interested Aboriginal doctors, nurses, midwives or health workers interested in short placements at the hospital.

The Alison Bush Memorial Trust Fund was established in 2010 in tribute to Sister Bush, the hospital's longest serving midwife, and the first Aboriginal midwife to be based at a major maternity hospital in NSW.

The scholarship aims to provide opportunities for upgrading the obstetric skills of Aboriginal medical and midwifery clinicians who are working in Aboriginal communities, preferably remote communities more than 200 kilometres from the nearest obstetric centre.

Stevie Kemp, a registered health practitioner from Broken Hill, was the first recipient of the Alison Bush Scholarship last year. She completed two weeks' training at Royal Prince Alfred Women and Babies unit,

and found the experience inspiring, reaffirming her passion for midwifery.

"Being here made me realise this is what I really want to do," she said.

"I feel really privileged because Alison's story gives people like me, and the communities we come from, even more drive to get educated and make a difference like she did."

Royal Prince Alfred's Clinical Manager of Women's Health, Neonatology and Paediatrics, Karen Redrup, said that although the scholarship applications were reviewed twice a year, the application process was always open.

"We are quite flexible and willing to work around interested individual's work, study and family commitments," she said.

"The Alison Bush Trust Fund is also available to cover the travel and accommodation costs associated with these placements. Our emphasis is on enabling health professionals from rural and remote areas to access experience that may otherwise be difficult for them to obtain."