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Anthony Franks

Donna Smith-Lloyd
Northern Rivers Area Health Service

Sallie Newell
Southern Cross University

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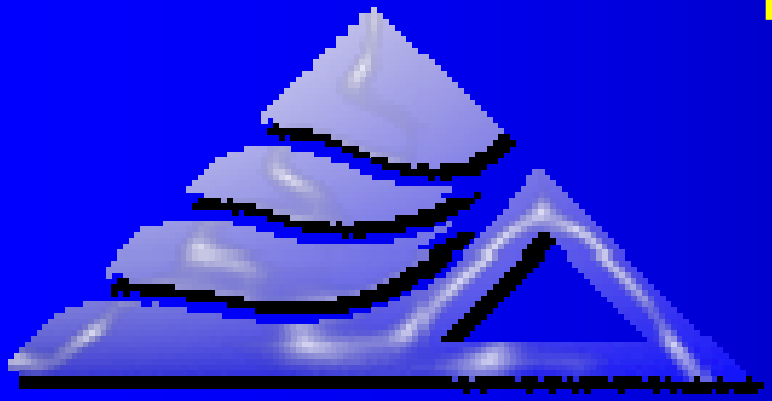
A Pathway to Holistic Health for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People

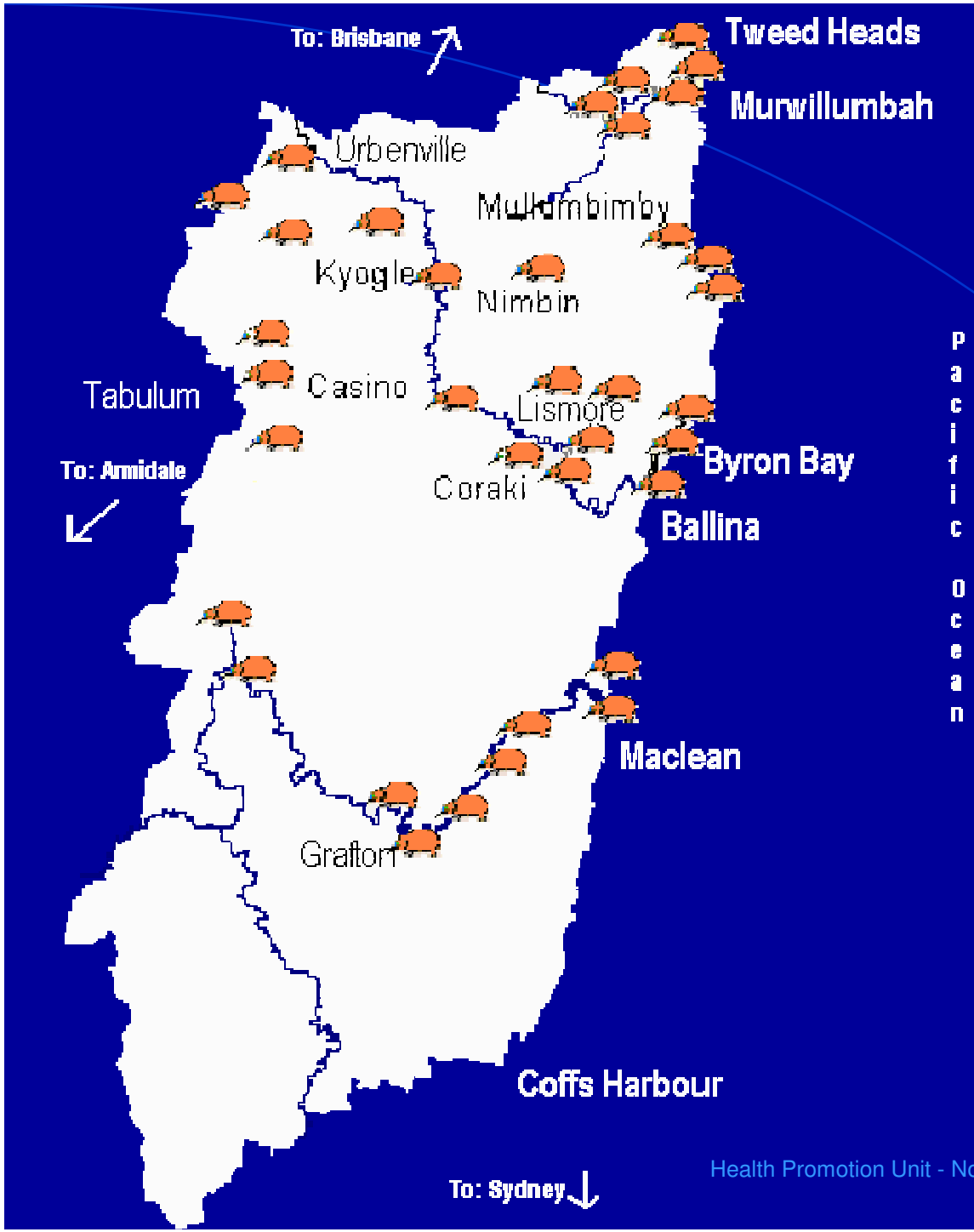
Anthony Franks

Donna Smith-Lloyd, Sallie Newell, and Uta Dietrich

Health Promotion Unit
Northern Rivers Area Health Service
Lismore NSW



13th Australian Health Promotion National Conference (June 2001)



Bundjalung Country

- Is home to 13 different tribes

History

- Self-Determination Project in partnership with other service providers.

SELF DETERMINATION

Specific Issue Identified

Mapped out the functions of Government and Non-Government organisations at National, State and Local levels.

Conducted Literature Review
Aboriginal issues/projects/programs

Collected national, state and local demographic, mortality and morbidity data on Aboriginal people

History and Culture, Self determination, Mental Illness, Health status, Education, Self-esteem issues, Family Violence, Drugs & Alcohol, Violence, Social and community support, Dietary and physical activity behaviours.

Review of Indigenous projects/programs at International, national, state and local level

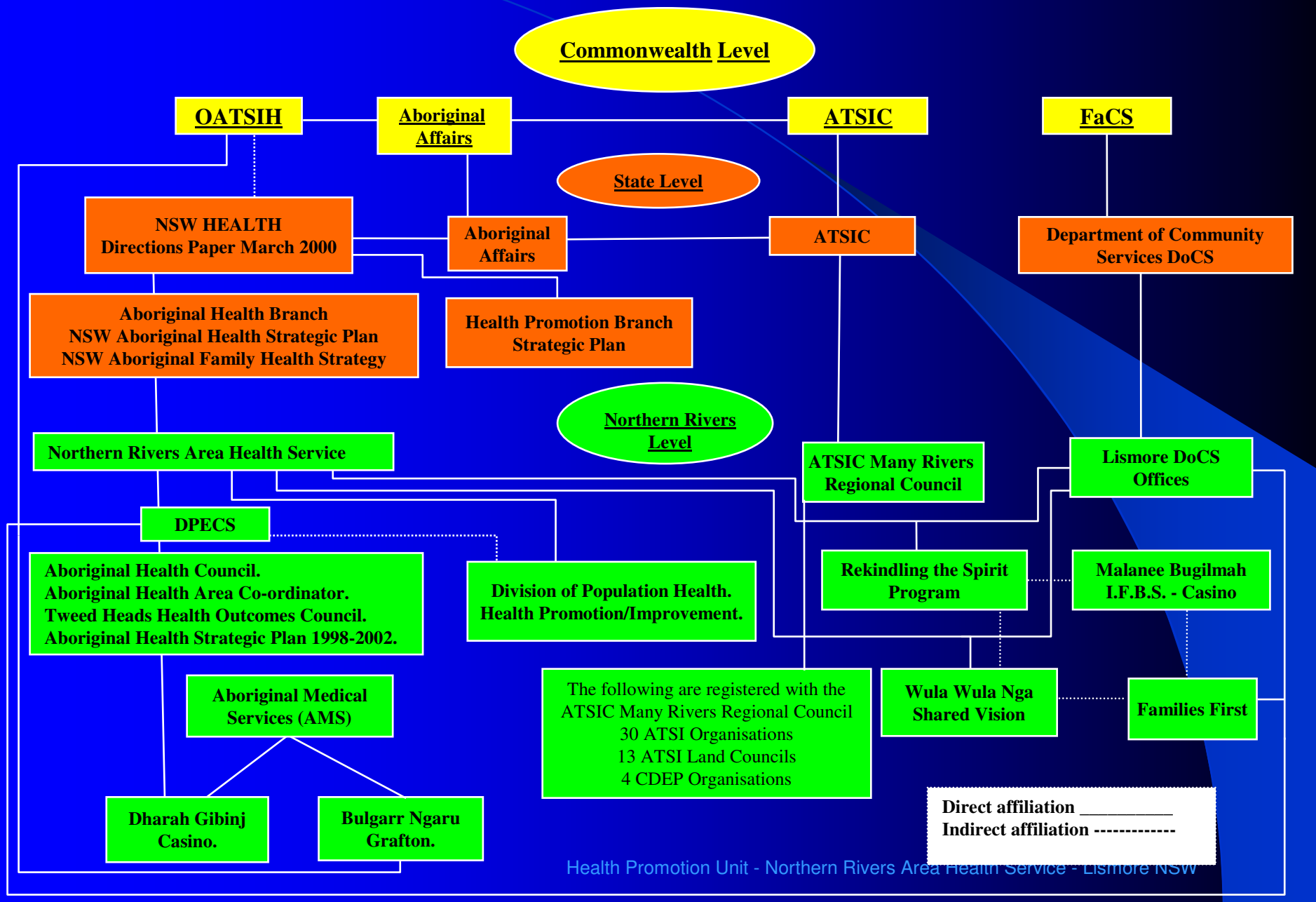
Consultations to determine issues of concern with: - Community members, Health-workers, Government Departments, Local Aboriginal Preschools.

Issues identified from consultations
Family Violence, Literacy and numeracy, Drugs and Alcohol, Parents to value education, Children- transition, Support/intervention programs for parents.

Early on in the project

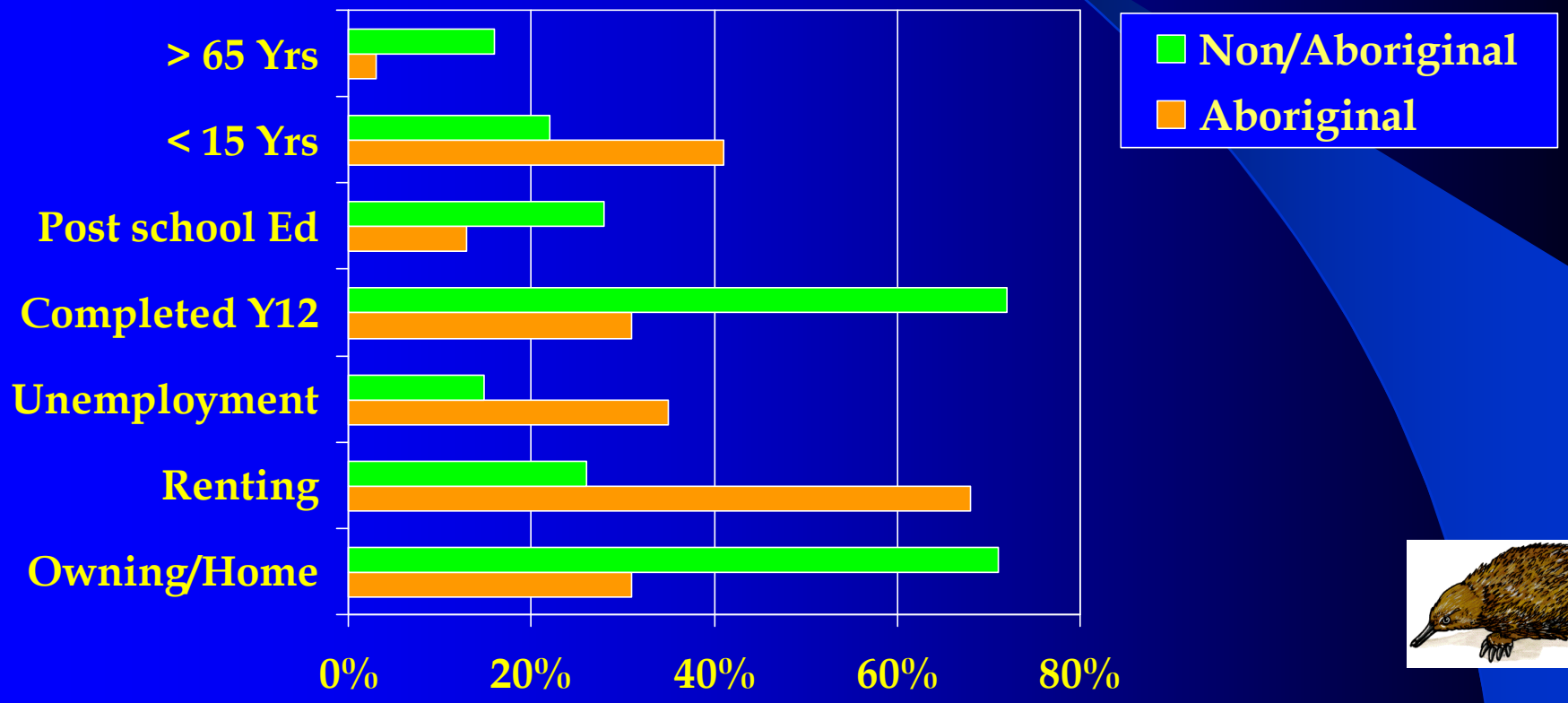
- Review the overall complex organisational context of Aboriginal Health.

Diagramatic overview of interaction between Commonwealth, State and Northern Rivers Departments/Organisations



Aboriginal people residing in the NRA

Indigenous Data Profile of the Many Rivers ATSIC Region Report in 1998



Aboriginal Children

- Aboriginal children are 2 to 8 times more likely to suffer from abuse and neglect,
- 4 times more likely to be under welfare protection
- 6 times more likely to be on fostering placements than non-Aboriginal children.

Indigenous Project/Programs

- Review of Indigenous Project/Programs at International, National, State and Local level.

Literature Review

- History and Culture.
- Self determination.
- Mental illness.
- Education.
- Self-esteem issues.
- Family violence.
- Alcohol & other drugs.
- Violence.
- Social & community support.
- Dietary & physical activity behaviours.

Consultations

- To determine issues of concern with:-
  - Community members,
  - Health workers,
  - Government departments,
  - Local Aboriginal Preschool.

Issues identified

- Issues identified from both Literature review and Consultations:-
  - Family Violence,
  - Literacy and Numeracy,
  - Alcohol & other drugs,
  - Parents to value education,
  - Children transition,
  - Support/intervention programs for parents.

Issue Children and Parents

- Existing programs.
  - Coraki/Box Ridge Transition Program.
    - **Better Education.**
  - Rekindling The Spirit.
    - **An Aboriginal Fathers Parenting Program.**
- Breaking the cycle.
    - **Family Violence, Alcohol & Other Drugs Abuse, Unemployment,**

Conclusion

- To understand Aboriginal health it is paramount that service providers acknowledge the factors that have had an impact on Aboriginal communities and develop an understanding of Aboriginal culture .

- Prior to European arrival, Aboriginal people lived an active lifestyle as hunters and gatherers, which promoted good health. There is little evidence to suggest widespread illness or disease amongst Aboriginal people until colonisation. In order to comprehend Aboriginal poor health status, acknowledgment of the impact of colonisation must first take place .

Pathway to Holistic Health

Anthony Franks

Aboriginal Health Promotion Officer
Health Promotion Unit
Northern Rivers Area Health Service
PO Box 489 Lismore NSW 2480

Phone: 0266 207511
Email: anthonyf@nrhs.health.nsw.gov.au