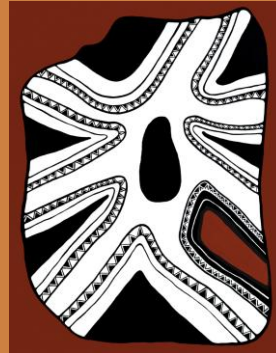


Hume Moreland and North East Melbourne Area Taskforce 1000



Taskforce 1000 North Metro Update

May 2016

Purpose

Taskforce 1000 is a collaborative project between the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People.

Taskforce 1000 was established in response to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) services. The project seeks to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people, and to inform future planning and practice based on the themes and findings arising from Taskforce 1000 Area Panels.

This North Metro area update provides an opportunity to showcase work being undertaken to contribute to positive outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and their families, and to celebrate progress arising from the implementation of action items in the Hume Moreland Area and North East Melbourne Area (NEMA) Taskforce 1000 Action Plans (together, North Metro).

North Metro Taskforce 1000

Taskforce 1000 Area Panels for NEMA and Hume Moreland Areas were held from mid to late 2015. Following the Area Panels, panel members from each Area agreed to form a joint Governance Group, to oversee the implementation of the Area Action Plans.

The inaugural meeting of the North Metro Taskforce 1000 Governance Group took place on 11 March 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Area Action Plans, with a view to finessing the actions and identifying priorities for 2016, confirm Lead agencies and to determine governance arrangements.

At the March meeting, there was an overwhelming commitment by all panel members across both Areas to remain involved in Taskforce 1000 through the North Metro Governance Group. As a result, it was agreed that a strategic Executive Group be formed, to provide high level advice to the Governance Group to inform its decision making.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) from the two Areas recently met to discuss the role and function of the North Metro Taskforce 1000

Governance and Executive Groups. It was agreed that the Executive Group comprise of representatives from each ACCO, Victoria Police, as well as departmental representatives from Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, including Child Protection and Youth Justice. Endorsement of the North Metro Taskforce 1000 Terms of Reference will be sought at the next Governance Group meeting on 10 June 2016.

Agencies with Lead responsibility for action items have been asked to provide feedback on the updated Action Plans. Feedback has been received and, once finalised, the Action Plans will be circulated to the Governance Group.

Aligning the work that we do

The Taskforce 1000 Area Panels saw the coming together of key stakeholders comprising Aboriginal organisations, community service organisations and government departments. The themes and issues identified throughout the Area Panel processes have informed planning in the North Metro area, and Taskforce 1000 remains a key agenda item for a number of complimentary forums and working groups whose core business aligns with the outcomes sought to be achieved through Taskforce 1000. These include:

Central Steering Committee

The Taskforce 1000 Steering Committee is co-chaired by the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, and the Secretary, DHHS. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis and currently a statewide report is being written using the 17 Area Action Plans. The report will identify the statewide themes identified through Taskforce 1000 for future action. This will include themes identified by Hume Moreland and NEMA. The statewide report will be tabled at the next Taskforce 1000 Steering Committee meeting on 8 June 2016.

Aboriginal Children's Forum

The Victorian Aboriginal Children's Forum (ACF) is a representative forum of ACCOs, the community sector and Government. The ACF meets quarterly over two days and is co-chaired by Jenny Mikakos MP, Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Youth Affairs,

and the CEO of an ACCO. The ACF was established to drive the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people in, or at risk of entering OOHC. Progress updates against all Taskforce 1000 Areas Action Plans are provided to the ACF and form part of the pre-reading material. Hume Moreland and NEMA will be required to provide an update to the next ACF, on June 15 and 16.

Recommendations of the Family Violence Royal Commission (VIC)

The report from Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) was released on 30 March 2016. The Report contains 227 recommendations, 9 of which specifically concern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Victorian Government has committed to implementing every recommendation. The RCFV Report is available online on the Commission's website.

The North Metro Taskforce 1000 has identified key actions to address family violence, including work being undertaken by Victoria Police and through collaboration with the North Metro Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group.

Out of Home Care Reform Committee (DHHS)

The OOHC Reform Committee is responsible for delivery of reforms across the North Division that aim to improve outcomes for all children in OOHC. A key focus of the North Division Reform Framework is the implementation of several recommendations from Taskforce 1000. The Committee has embedded key work from the recommendations of Taskforce into the Reform framework, particularly implementing the action plan from the Carer's Advisory Group and developing an integrated and therapeutic model of care for children in OOHC.

Sample of Achievements to Date

MyMob App –

- Our Local Connections teams met with Drummond Street to explore how App technology might be utilised or modified to assist Aboriginal children remain connected to their families. Drummond Street has agreed to present the MyMob App at the next T1000 Governance Group meeting for members to consider.

Child Protection –

- The Summary Information Form (also known as the Form B) has been updated to include additional fields about Aboriginal identity for use when bringing

a Protection Application by Emergency Care before the court. These changes are designed to reinforce the importance of identifying Aboriginal children to the court, so that matters of culture can be accounted for and to improve compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle. These changes complement new practice advice and tools to support improved practices in identifying Aboriginality, and support a conscious shift in the way these conversations are approached with children and their families.

- Child Protection Master classes continue to be delivered to Child Protection staff to promote best practice. Topics covered include Cumulative Harm; Engaging with Aboriginal Services, delivered in conjunction with VACCA, VAHS, Hanover, Bubup Wilam and Pathways to Good Health; and Family Violence training, delivered in conjunction with Victoria Police, Berry Street and Kildonan.
- In late April 2016, DHHS issued revised guidelines regarding cultural plans for Aboriginal children. The legislative changes that took effect on 1 March 2016 seek to establish that all Aboriginal children in OOHC are required to have a cultural plan, including those children subject to care by Secretary or long-term care orders. Under the legislative amendments, Child Protection and ACCOs are now prioritising all Aboriginal children subject to an application for a permanent care order in addition to Aboriginal children subject to care by Secretary or long term care orders, particularly those Aboriginal children residing with non-Aboriginal carers and/or outside their community.
- In March 2016, DHHS issued revised program guidelines for Family Led Decision Making (for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children). A key platform of the revised guidelines will see Child Protection and ACCOs considering the appropriateness of an AFLDM to occur for Aboriginal children soon after the Child Protection investigation is substantiated. The emphasis is on preventing Aboriginal children from further entering the Child Protection and/or out-of-home care system, and keeping Aboriginal children on Country. This work will continue with Local Connections (DHHS) and ACCOs.

Victoria Police –

- Victoria Police are continuing to roll out the Darebin Koori Family Violence Police protocol across the North East Area.

- Module 1 of the e-learning program for police supervisors – Family Violence Dynamics – was launched on 7 March 2016. As at 29 April 2016, 7000 members have completed the module. The second and third packages are due for release in August, including a component on Aboriginal identification.
- North East RAMP is going to begin on 1 June 2016, with the first meeting to occur on 21 June 2016. VACCA is the associate member for the North East RAMP and will coordinate Aboriginal representation for victims and perpetrators.

Springboard –

- NEMA Local Connections has coordinated a DHHS meeting with Melbourne Polytechnic in late May to discuss how Springboard brokerage funding can be utilised to better support Aboriginal young people in care to access mentoring opportunities and/or other programs to support their transition into vocational and educational pathways

Identifying resources to better support Aboriginal families –

- A North Metro T1000 working group will meet in mid-May to progress the development of a toolkit of culturally relevant resources for staff and carers, to better support Aboriginal families. Our Local Connections teams have formed relationships with stakeholders, and have undertaken a desktop review to better understand existing services and resources available to guide the working group.

Supporting our vulnerable families –

- The role of the Aboriginal Disability Focus Coordinator was highlighted throughout the Taskforce 1000 Area Panels. This has seen an improved relationship with Child Protection, which has assisted the identification of Aboriginal children, young people and parents for assessment and link up with appropriate disability related supports.
- The Aboriginal Disability Focus Coordinator will present to the Governance Group on 10 June on the NDIA rollout and transition to NDIS.

Department of Education and Training –

- The Department of Education and Training has convened a working group of State and Commonwealth agencies to review the ongoing sustainability of early learning services, including Bubup Wilam and Yappera. The group has met three times to coordinate actions underway in different agencies, including current support and

funding provided, and potential additional supports. This action is ongoing.

Improved Coordination of Government Departments –

- An all of government meeting was convened and discussion continues to ensure a coordinated approach to implementing T1000 North Metro action items.

Health –

- North Metro Health is funding the establishment of 3 new multi-disciplinary team clinics to prioritise the health care of Aboriginal children. Two of the new clinics will operate from NEMA – VAHS in Fitzroy and Heidelberg West in Bayule Community Health Service. The aim of these clinics is to provide a clear pathway for children in OOHC into our health services.
- A working group is being established to map current effort and recommend action for a more strategic and effective approach to vulnerable children's health needs across North Division.
- Sunbury Community Health Service has been funded to trial a mentoring program that brings Aboriginal Children and Elders together. The program led to the children making digital stories with their Elders and will be launched at a local film festival. The program received recognition from the local media and a child who was heard on Taskforce was referred into the mentoring program.

Recruitment of Elders for the Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM) Program –

- VACCA are seeking expressions of interest for Elders and Respected persons to assist in the AFLDM program in the North. The AFLDM program is a 3 way partnership between ACCOs, DHHS and Indigenous Elders. It is offered to Indigenous families, where child protection concerns have been substantiated and/or children who are subject to a protection order. The AFLDM program aims to strengthen support within the family by bringing immediate and extended families together, and empowering them to make informed decisions about the welfare of the child/children. For more information please contact: Shakara Basso (Community Convener) on 9287 9824 or 0239 485 577, or shakarab@vacca.org

Feedback and Information Sharing

Taskforce 1000 North Metro bulletins are prepared quarterly. Please feel free to circulate this update to your colleagues, department, community, or networks. We welcome regular progress updates by agencies on work being undertaken in support of Taskforce 1000 and encourage feedback on this bulletin.

Taskforce 1000 Project Officer

For information on Taskforce 1000 North Metro or to provide feedback, please contact:

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Artwork: 'Kukna Watnanda' (working together) was produced by Victorian artist Vicki Couzens and represents the gathering of people in the spirit and intent of inclusion, negotiation, collaboration and respect. This is symbolised through the different pathways converging to a shared space where each and every contribution is considered, valued and respected.