



Environmental Health Association (Australia) Inc.

Issue 4

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Health InfoNet

Mary Ward

At the EHAA conference held in September just how passionate members are about Indigenous health was obvious. Many recounted significant efforts, to bring about even the most basic standards in sanitation, housing and health to Indigenous people.

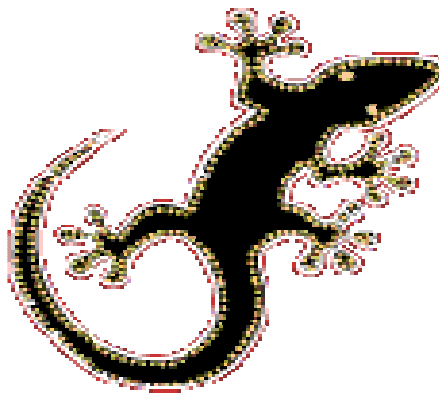
The early nineteenth century founding father of Environmental Health, Edwin Chadwick, would sadly still find too much in common with his contemporaries of today. Few would tolerate the dire living conditions for more than a matter of hours, that many Indigenous people live out their entire lives in.

The theory practice gap - between what is proven to be detrimental to Indigenous public health and the actions needed to address those causes still needs a great deal of work to be done. During the conference *HealthInfoNet* was promoted as a *valuable resource to help bring about that change.*

This site already provides a wealth of evidence based information but,

the team is keen to do more. They have asked EHAA members to take part in a short survey to find out how to give you better support.

"It is very important that this resource is developed according to the needs of the people who will be using it, so we are looking



forward to hearing from your members says HealthInfoNet Research Officer Christine Potter.

The award winning HealthInfoNet web site team is based at the [Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/health-systems/iehp), Kurungkurl Katitjin Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research at Edith Cowan University. They describe the site as a

'one-stop info-shop' for people working, studying or interested in the environmental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"We have the survey about the Indigenous environmental health practitioners' web resource and yarning place up on our pages and would appreciate your support," continues Christine.

"The answers to the survey will help HealthInfoNet create a more useful web resource and yarning place (electronic network) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners (workers and Officers)."

Participants in the survey will also have a chance to win an iPod as a token of thanks for their valuable feedback.

To participants in the survey go to:

www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/health-systems/iehp





President's Address

I am very pleased to announce to members that our EHA logo has now been trademarked and we can use it associated with a range of environmental health promotional and education activities. This security of naming rights will help EHA to gain recognition in Australia and internationally. This is a significant step forward for our Association.

The newly released enHealth Environmental Health Officer Skills and Knowledge Matrix recognises EHA for its contribution to discussion on this important topic and it is also the first recognition in an enHealth publication. My thanks to those members who have been actively supporting their colleagues by promoting the environmental health profession. The Matrix will also provide direction to EHA to plan training and skills development for environmental health practitioners in Applied Skills and Knowledge.

I am pleased to welcome the contribution of our newest member of the EHA team, Mary Ward. Mary is our Media Consultant and will look for opportunities to promote environmental health through the media and preparing newsletter articles. Your EHA Executive believes that promotion of Environmental Health is a very high priority.

A recent communiqué to members from our colleagues in environmental health, the Environmental Health Australia, painted a gloomy picture of their current financial status and their unsustainable (in their words) management structure. While it would be desirable to have only one representative organisation representing the environmental health profession in Australia, it is pleasing that they are now intending to adopt a Federated management model, similar to that adopted by the EHA in 2004.

I encourage members to begin thinking about the International Federation of Environmental Health's (IFEH) World Environmental Health Conference in Vancouver Canada in September 2010. A number of delegates from the EHA are intending to register for Conference attendance. Please contact Bridget if you are interested in attending.

As we draw into the festive season, I would like to extend my sincere wishes to all members and your EHA support team and their families, to have an enjoyable Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Best wishes
Llew Withers

"Rest in peace old friend"

In Memory of Vale George Stark

George Stark began his 30 year Environmental Health Career with the Shire of Moora as Health/ Building /Traffic inspector in 1958. Before moving onto the Shire of Dandaragan, he greeted on my first day in the office and offered his knowledge and assistance to help me settle in to my new role. George started at the Shire of Dandaragan in April 1971 and held the position of Health/ Building Surveyor and Planning officer until he retired in 1988.

George has always been a strong supporter of the

environmental health profession and diligently attended Annual and Regional conferences. He also made himself available to assist any colleague who needed help. George continued to carry out relief work all over the state for many years after retirement. When the Moora floods happened George volunteered to spend several weeks in Moora inspecting buildings for flood damage. George assisted many local governments in his retirement including; Moora, Dandaragan, Coolgardie, Koorda, Ashburton, Beverly, Carnamah,

Three Springs and Mount Marshall.

George was well respected by many in local government circles and in the profession. George passed away peacefully on the 7th December 2009 and was buried on the 15th December.

Trevor Walker J.P.

George was father of former EHO Michael Stark (now with Water Corporation) and Father-in-Law of EHO/BS Trevor Walker (Shire of Chittering). Our thoughts are with the family and friends of George Stark.

Editor



Is your community covered?

Helen Muccilli—WA Cancer Council

Local Government facilities including parks, playgrounds, BBQ areas, outdoor pools and sports centres encourage children, youth and families to be active. However many outdoor facilities provide inadequate shade increasing exposure to harmful ultraviolet UV radiation from the sun.

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Over 444,000 Australians are diagnosed with skin cancer every year. Local Governments have a responsibility to protect the community from UV radiation thereby reducing the risk of skin cancer.

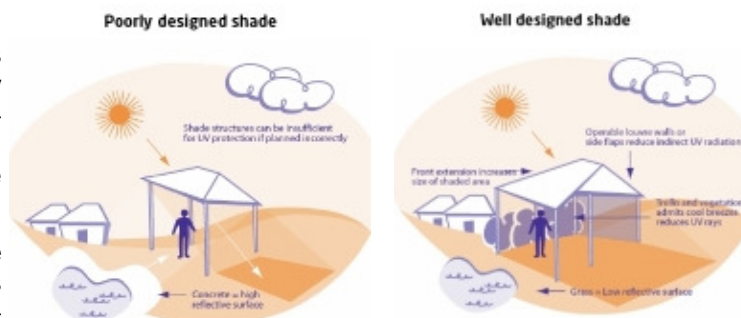
During summer the Cancer Council WA is urging Local Governments to assess shade levels at out-

door facilities. Adding shade to facilities can reduce exposure to UV radiation by up to 75%.

Careful shade planning not only increases the appeal of recreational facilities but makes them safer to use in the middle of the day when UV radiation is at its peak. To assist Local Government in shade planning, the Cancer Council WA has published a comprehensive shade handbook includ-

ing a shade priority checklist, an overview of shade materials, and information for developing shade in high risk settings such as outdoor swimming pools, parks and street-scapes.

Quality shade whether natural or built provides protection from UV radiation where it is needed, at the right time of day and at the right time of year.



For more information on shade contact Cancer Council WA on 9212 4333 or visit www.cancerwa.asn.au

Does your local rec centre have a solarium?

Helen Muccilli—WA Cancer Council

The number of solariums operating in Perth has dramatically declined since Clare Oliver's public campaign in 2007 to warn people about the dangers of using solariums and the State Government's introduction of solarium regulation in 2008.

Sadly Clare passed away in 2007 aged just 26 due to a melanoma she attributed to her solarium use. Clare's message to other solarium users was that no tan is worth dying for.

Cancer Council Western Australia strongly discourages the use of solarium

(often referred to as solariums or tanning beds). There is nothing healthy about a tan and no solariums or sun beds produce a safe tan. Solariums produce artificial ultraviolet UV radiation levels that are up to three times as strong as the summer midday sun. Research shows that using solariums before the age of 35 increases the person's risk of melanoma by 75% or more.

Local Governments which manage and develop recreation centers or gyms are reminded about the dangers of solarium operations and should check if

any of their centers operate a solarium for their gym or health club members. The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission has advised that all solarium operators have a duty of care to ensure solarium patrons are aware of the risks involved with solarium use.

For more information about Solariums, please refer to Cancer Council Australia's Position Statement available at www.cancer.org.au For skin cancer information go to www.cancerwa.asn.au

444,000 Australians are diagnosed with skin cancer every year, are you protecting your local community?



Healthy lifestyle program improving indigenous health in the Kimberley

Kim Hames, Deputy Premier; Health; Indigenous Affairs

The Looma Aboriginal community in the State's Kimberley region is defying national trends relating to the incidence of diabetes and obesity, according to an interim report released today.

The report, which documents progress with the community-based 'Roadmap Towards Better Health' program, was based on the results of a health assessment of Looma residents in August this year. The program is a diabetes management and care initiative that provides regular health assessments such as eye checks and antenatal education.

A joint initiative between the WA Country Health Service (WACHS), the Unity of First People of Australia (UFPA) and Caritas Australia, the 'Roadmap' program promotes healthy behaviours and lifestyle choices among Aboriginal people in the Kimberley.

Health Minister Kim Hames said contrary to



the Australia-wide trend of rising obesity and diabetes, rates at Looma were not increasing.

"The results are very encouraging," Dr Hames said.

"It is pleasing to see early dividends from our policies that give a high priority to indigenous health."

The Liberal-National Government earlier this year provided \$500,000 over four years to expand the UFPA program, bringing indigenous communities and health professionals together to tackle indigenous health issues in the Kimberley.

The program provides cooking classes and nutrition programs, including the school breakfast pro-

gram run jointly with Foodbank WA.

The Minister said there was an emphasis on exercise and sport programs and support provided under the Happy Family Project to promote emotional and social well-being of individuals and families.

"The Looma community members and UFPA are to be applauded for taking control of their people's wellbeing, the increased exercise, better diet and heightened awareness that it fosters in individuals," he said.

UFPA president Ernie Bridge said the improving health of young people at Looma was particularly pleasing.

"This is a fantastic result," Mr Bridge said.

"It shows that with a concerted, joint effort by communities, public health departments and government, the prospects for even the most vulnerable groups can be turned around to provide extended and healthy lives for their young people."

Looma setting new trends in Healthy Indigenous Lifestyle programs...

Take precautions when removing carpet

The Department of Health is reminding people replacing or removing old carpets to ensure they take appropriate precautions to avoid inhaling any dust.

The warning comes as the first traces of asbestos fibres have been found in carpet underlay samples taken from a Perth home.

Director of Environmental Health Jim Dodds said "While the likelihood of asbestos fibres being present in carpet underlay is low, people should remain vigilant when removing old carpets,"

Tests were also carried out on carpet and other surfaces in rooms of the home with the affected underlay but there was no

evidence that the asbestos had spread from underneath the carpet.

Advice about safe handling of asbestos and testing of samples for asbestos is available from the Department's website at www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/867/2/asbestos.pm

WA's Planning approval process to set to be streamlined

John Day Minister for Planning; Culture and the Arts



Planning Minister John Day said a Bill introduced to State Parliament today to modify the Planning and Development Act 2005 would make the system more transparent, consistent and efficient.

Mr Day said that as the State approached another period of significant economic growth, the proposals would also cut uncertainty and delays for those wanting to invest in this State.

"These legislative reforms are some of the most comprehensive ever undertaken in Western Australia," he said.

"We know that communities and investors are unhappy with some of the red tape and inefficiencies of the current system.

"The proposals will have significant benefit for all involved in planning, including local and State governments and communities.

"They will ensure WA continues to prosper and remain an internationally-competitive place to live

and do business."

Most of the proposals outlined in the Bill have been previously detailed in the Building a Better Planning System document released in April 2009, the subsequent 'Planning makes it happen: A blueprint for reform' document, and the discussion paper on Development Assessment Panels, both released in September this year.

"Under the proposals, development assessment panels would be established, resulting in more transparent, consistent and efficient decision-making on development applications and giving local governments the opportunity to refocus their resources on strategic planning," the Minister said.

"The panels will consist of elected local government representatives and professionals who will consider development applications over certain monetary values. This will boost the level of planning and technical expertise in assessing development applications while ensuring the appropriate

level of local government representation in decision-making."

The Bill would also allow the use of improvement plans throughout the State, not just in areas where region planning schemes existed.

"Improvement plans and corresponding improvement schemes would allow the State Government to take control of areas that have been chosen for developments of State or regional significance," Mr Day said.

"Improvement schemes will allow planning and development controls to come under a single approval process."

Also under the Bill, projects funded through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan stimulus package would be exempt from planning approval, helping ensure the State met Federal Government timelines and did not lose any of its funding entitlements.

Reforms to the approvals process attractive to investors

EHAA Up Coming Events

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
19 February	16.00-18.00	EHO Networking Sundowner
17 March	15.00-17.00	Seminar One
13-15 October	3 day event	2010 National EHAA Conference



For more information about up coming events, please visit our website or email info@envirohealthaustralia.com.au

MEMBERSHIP

EHAA was formed to enable members to express their opinions across a range of public health and environmental health concerns. The second central feature is that, as a federated, autonomous incorporated organisation, all decision making to be undertaken at State Level.

The *EHAA* objectives are very broad, decidedly so to allow our organisation to move in many directions, to reflect members' needs and the changing face of environmental health.

The federated system places emphasis on ensuring accountability for members' funds and communication to outside stakeholders. The *EHAA* manages its own budgets and reports through an annual general meeting to members. This ensures that their local concerns are reflected in decision-making and State organisations can be flexible and innovative as they conduct their day-to-day business.

The federated system ensures that formation of an Australian Council is constituted by representative State bodies.

EHAA conducts an Annual Conference and in each membership year will:

1. conduct (4) SIG sessions with complimentary members' attendance
2. return an operating profit for investment in the future of the organisation
3. publish quarterly electronic bulletins
4. launch an "Employment Directory" for professionals and graduates accessed via our website and newsletter
5. provide regular industry mail outs
6. actively represent members in a wide range of government and industry discussion papers

If you would like to become an *EHAA* member or would like more information about becoming a member please visit our membership page on www.envirohealthaustralia.com.au or email info@envirohealthaustralia.com.au



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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Employment

For full details visit www.envirohealthaustralia.com.au or register to receive email updates

Senior Building Surveyor (Private Certification)

City Plan Services, NSW

Building Surveyor/ Registered Private Certifier in SA

PBS Australia, SA

Trainee Building Inspector

DJM Building Consultants, VIC

Accessibility Consultants - Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane

MGAC, VIC

Graduate Building Surveyor / Building Inspector Limited – Readvertised

Swan Hill Rural City Council, VIC

Senior Building Surveyor

The Good Men Building Surveyors, VIC

Essential Safety Measures Auditor

Total Essential Services Group, VIC

Senior Building Surveyor / Maintenance Officer

Broome (Shire of), WA

Environmental Officer

Donnybrook-Balingup (Shire of), WA

To receive email updates of positions vacant, register on the Environmental Health Association (Australia) website.

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