

ANNUAL REPORT

MICK EDWARDS,
FIELD OFFICER.

Over the past year my job as Field Officer with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service has helped me to understand just how bad health care and health conditions among Aboriginal communities really are.

My work has enabled me to become more involved within the community and to try to help those who come to us at VAHS for help. I try to help those who need help in attaining their social benefits, welfare, sickness etc..

Not only has this been happening in Melbourne area, but also in country areas. With the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service setting up small clinics in Morwell and Shepparton. I have been involved in a lot of driving and field trips to these particular country areas. In these particular areas of health care, we at VAHS feel that there is great need to visit them particularly when the people request us to do so.

This job has not only involved me in working in Victoria but it has also enabled me to visit many other Aboriginal health centres around Australia and to take part in The First National Aboriginal Health Workers Conference held in Darwin in September, 1978. My work requires me to visits to patients in hospitals and make home calls with doctors when the need arises. These doctors have been very helpful while I've been here, particularly Bill, Mal and Helen Brown while she was with us. They assisted with my enquiries into health was great whenever patients came in with burns and lacerations. They helped me to do some of the dressings only if it was alright by the patients.

I have really enjoyed working with VAHS. The thing that made this past year so fantastic for me was the trip to The Peoples Republic of China. While there I was able to see their different services (clinics, services) and hospitals and their Traditional Medicines at work. I saw acupuncture in action which gave me a thrill.

In conclusion, I only hope to see that the government come to our aid and enable us to expand our services to those who have nothing in the way of health care and health services.

21st February, 1979.

REPORT 1978

LYN. CASSAR,
HEALTH WORKER.

Being with the health service for six months, I have found that it has done an outstanding job to benefit the people belonging to our community.

I give credit and congratulations to all staff and people who have participated and supported the Health Service throughout these years.

The response of the service including field trips, home visits along with other treatment and services has been a great success.

Government funding is very poor to this Service and without their funding how do they expect the service to fulfill its needs to the people and community.

The Health Service has proved to be a successful organisation and can run efficiently, if not better than that of a white organisation, who tend to let their hierachy get the better of them.

All the best to the health service organisation for now and the future.

21st February, 1979.

ANNUAL REPORT

PATRICIA LOWDEN,
HEALTH WORKER.

Over the last year there have been a number of improvements in the nursing done at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. The Filing System for the medical records has been improved. The histories are now filed in alphabetical order and now are clearly marked; making it much easier to find and refile histories.

The nurses/health workers are involved in maintaining and cleaning the doctors' surgeries, sterilising and cleaning instruments and medical equipment, doing laboratory tests, assisting the doctors with examinations and suturing, assisting the patients, particularly the children, and helping with injections. It is also our responsibility to get the files for the doctors.

The nurses/health workers are also involved in field trips each week. We visit Morwell and Shepparton and are involved in other field trips to other parts of the state.

Last year the nurses/health workers have been involved more in doing dressings of lacerations, burns, injections, and other skin conditions. We visit people who are sick in hospital and make home visits when people need any nursing care at home.

During my four and half years with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service I have noticed great changes also I have met lots of people and made some very good friendships.

In closing I would like to say thanks to Alma Thorpe and Mal Dobbin who have been tremendous to me in more ways than one. Also, the other doctors and staff who have been great to work with and know. One thing more though we do desperately need much more money from the government than we are getting now so as to keep our Health Service going for lots more years to come.

21st February, 1979.

ANNUAL REPORT

BRIAN SMITH,
TRAINEE FIELD OFFICER.

Over the past year, I have worked with the Victorian Aboriginal Health and Dental Services and I have been to about half of Victoria's towns. And I have realised that alot of Koorie people and children have bad dental problems and poor health.

Looking back on my work with the Aboriginal Dental Service, a lot of Koorie people and children are still waiting for the Dental Mobile Caravan and Team to come around to their town again; but if we had another Mobile Unit working it would help all Koories with dental problems instead of waiting another year; or see the dentist in their own town which they cannot afford.

During my work with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, I have been on many field trips to Morwell, Shepparton, Warrnambool and Cumeragunja where a lot of black people have always got health problems.

They always need a doctor to go around to these places to examine the people who are sick. These people have got to known our doctors and field officers/health workers.

21st February, 1979.