

# MAKING CONNECTIONS CARING ACROSS ALL POPULATIONS

“How do we improve access? Making the Palliative Care Service more accessible for Indigenous people”

*Palliative Care for Indigenous Australians*

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# History of the Project

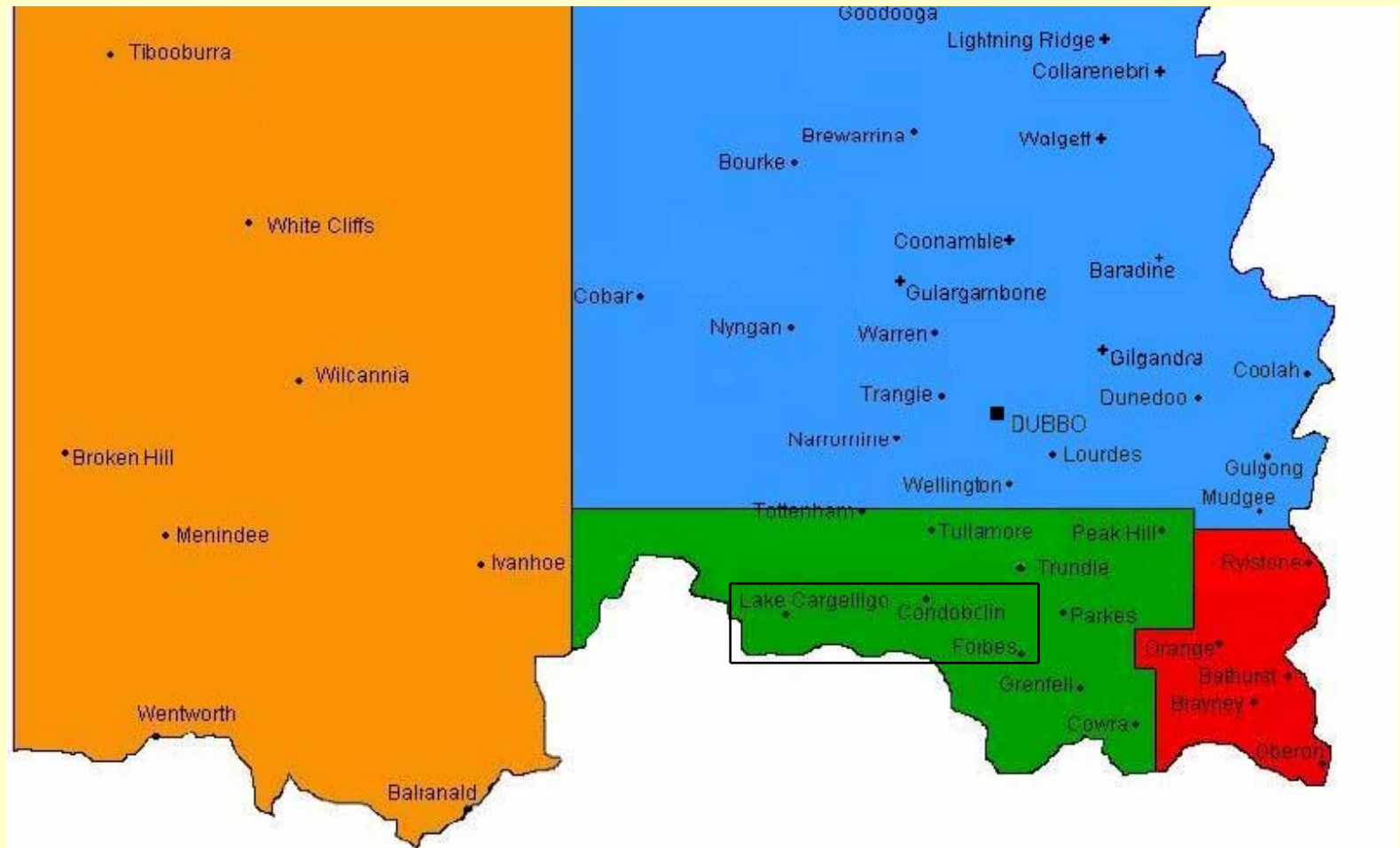
- In March 2007 the Forbes Health Service applied for funding through the Australian Government Department of Health & Aging – Local Palliative Care Grants Program.
- In January 2008 the Forbes Health Service was notified that this application had been successful and they received \$37,500.00.
- Initially \$34,000.00 was received to assist with equipping of Palliative Care rooms within the Health Service.
- The final \$3,500.00 was received in June 2008 and this was utilised to make the Palliative Care Service more culturally appropriate.

# Reviewing the available data

- The Palliative Care Service based at Forbes NSW covers a large geographical area stretching from Forbes to Lake Cargelligo which is 200 km to the west.
- Total population for this area is 13,770 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007).
- Of this total population 1501 or 10.9% of the population identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007).
- This is significantly higher than the state average for NSW with 2.1% of the total population identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

# Forbes Palliative Care Service

(Greater Western Area Health Service – NSW)



# Referral Patterns

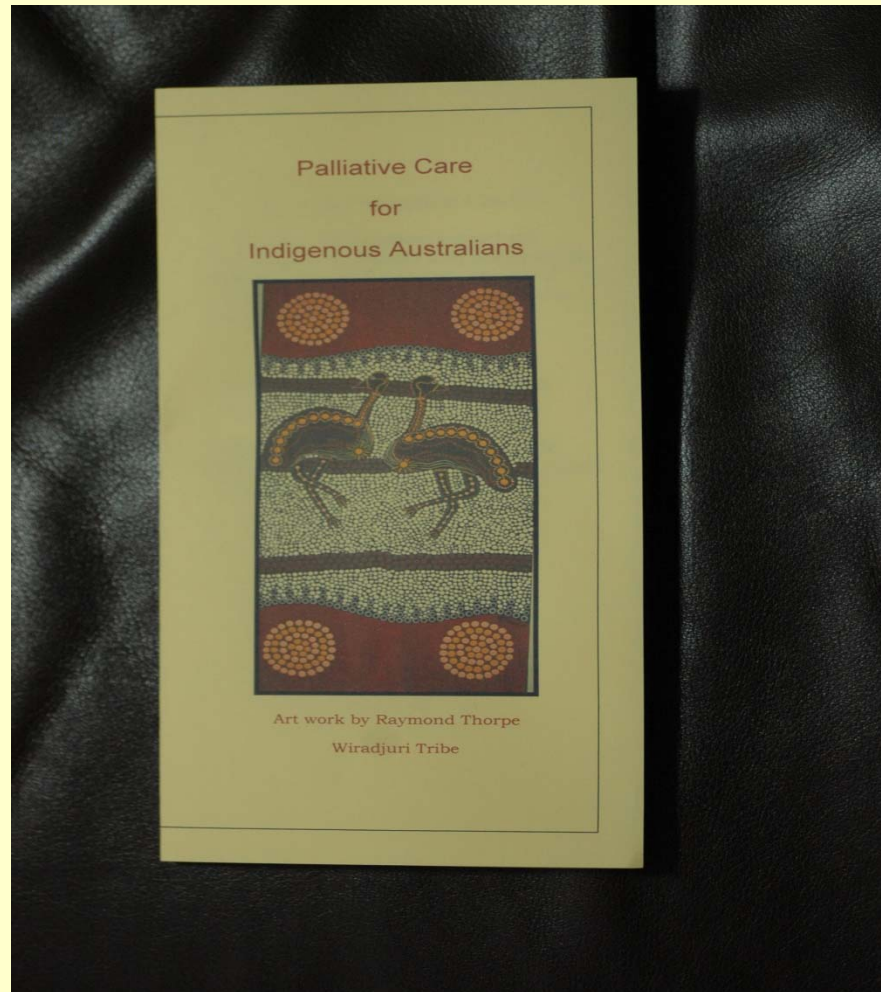
- In the 3 years prior to the grant being received the Forbes Palliative Care Service received 251 referrals.
- Of these referrals only 2.8 % were for Indigenous Australians despite a population percentage of 10.9%.
- The majority of the referrals that were received were for malignant conditions, with very few for non-malignant conditions eg. end-stage renal disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart failure.
- This is despite the four top causes of death for Indigenous Australians being cardiovascular disease, cancer, end-stage renal disease and respiratory conditions (Australian Indigenous HealthInfonet, 2005)
- A review of the literature also supports that only very small numbers of Indigenous Australians are accessing Specialist Palliative Care Services (Maddocks & Rayner, 2003; Commonwealth of Australia, 2004).

# The Steps to Improvement

- Consultation with local Aboriginal Health Workers
- Consultation with the local Indigenous community
- Liaison with local Aboriginal artists, community members and Aboriginal Health Workers to develop the brochure

*“Palliative Care for Indigenous Australians”*

# “Palliative Care for Indigenous Australians”



# Local Aboriginal Artworks

(by Raymond Thorpe – Wiradjuri Tribe)



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# Implementation

- Official launch function with local Indigenous community, other community representatives and Aboriginal Health Workers.
- Artwork from the brochure was purchased and placed in the Palliative Care room within the local hospital.
- The brochure is available for distribution to local government and non-government organisations.
- Aboriginal Health Workers will be supported by the Palliative Care Service with specific education sessions around the specialty of Palliative Care.

# Project evaluation

- Ongoing monitoring of referral data will occur to review whether any changing trends are noted for the Indigenous population.
- Members of the Indigenous community and Aboriginal Health Workers will be asked to provide feedback on the brochure and the option for future changes to the brochure will be available.

# Project expansion within Greater Western Area Health Service

- Current brochures will be available to all Palliative Care Services within the Wiradjuri Tribe regions of Greater Western AHS.
- The option will be available for the brochure template to be used in other tribal areas within Greater Western AHS, with these Palliative Care Services liaising with Aboriginal artist from their area for the artworks for the brochure.