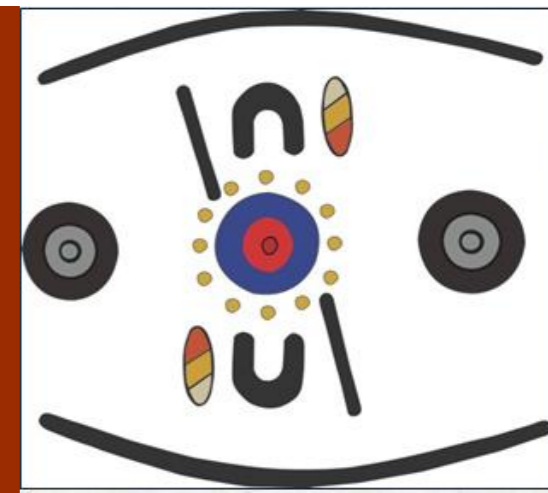


# UTJU MAI WIRUNGKA KUNPU KAYINI HEALTHY FOOD KEEPING STRONG



# Background

My name Sarah Gallagher and I have been the Aboriginal Health Practitioner at Utju for fifteen years.

I am proud to work in the clinic that I was born in.

Utju is 240 kms west of Alice Springs and has a population of 240 Pitjantjara people and our language is Pitjantjara.

Last year we trialled a program that would get our community to eat healthy and exercise.



# Community Consultation

For the twelve months before the program, Utju community was consulted to ensure the program was going to meet the needs of our people.

The directors of the clinic board talked about the options and we thought the health program would be good for our community. The Areyonga store board and the 106 people at health check week agreed that we wanted:

- An exercise program that included group classes like walking, aqua-aerobics, gym, boxing and separate classes for men and women.
- Healthy breakfasts and lunches to be supplied at the store and no sugar drinks or other unhealthy food to be allowed in the mornings

# Community Consultation Aboriginal Way

- There has been some criticism about the consultation prior to this trial. Our way of consultation is to sit down in a big group and talk in our language about what is best for us and our community
- I believe consultation was done in a proper way with our people which might not be the usual way for some people but it is what works best for us
- It's very important for us to have these talks ourselves and then translate what we decide to other people
- Before the program started we had a full community meeting to explain to everyone what was going to be happening with the program

# Project Vision

In Utju community only 24% of women and 38% of men are in the healthy weight range and 45% of the adults have diabetes.

Our plan was to improve our health in Utju with healthy food and exercise programs over a six month trial period.

- To improve the health status of the community members of Utju by:
- Providing healthy breakfast and lunch for sale at the store five days per week
- No full strength sugar drinks, pies, chips, ice-cream or lollies would be sold before 2:30pm each day
- Providing regular mens and women's exercise classes

# Goals

- To raise awareness of the benefits of healthy food choices provided by the Areyonga Store.
- To raise awareness of the benefits of regular exercise and promote regular exercise for men and women
- Increase awareness of the benefits of health checks and promote visiting the clinic for regular check-ups
- To raise awareness of the benefits of quitting smoking



# Strategies

To reach these goals we made up a five part plan:

- Health check week
- Healthy breakfast and lunch at the Areyonga Store
- Limiting availability of unhealthy food and drinks at the Store
- Healthy cooking classes
- Exercise programs



# Health Check Week

We held our second annual health check week last July to gain a baseline from which to measure results.

Over two and a half days we completed 106 adult health checks (715s)

A special thank you to our Senior Medical Officer to Dr Rosalie Schultz who was able to consult with over 59 patients in two days.



# Health Check Week



# Healthy Food

Encouraging healthy eating was one of the most important parts of the program.

The Areyonga Store received funding from Congress and participated in the program by:

- cooking healthy breakfast and lunch to replace the usual breakfast of pies and coke. These healthy meals were cheap to buy with use of the funding.

- not allowing purchase of lollies, full sugar drinks, ice-creams, pies or chips before 2:30pm each day

## Healthy life-style begins with the shop and clinic working together

In July the clinic did important health checks. There was also a community meeting where the Areyonga people made a strong decision. For the next 6 months chips, ice-creams, lollies and soft drinks with sugar are available only in the afternoons, not in the mornings.

The clinic will then do more health checks to see if people's health has got better.

We hope everyone who comes to the Areyonga store supports this community decision

Choose good foods to start your day

Healthy foods = healthy life

**Stay strong Live long**



# Cooking Classes

Chef Phil held cooking classes to teach people how to make healthy meals for their family. The classes taught food hygiene, preparation and ingredient buying education. They were so popular we even had a waiting list to join the classes!



# Exercise

Women's aqua-aerobics were held three days a week during summer and had 10-25 women attending each class.

After these classes the women would sit around talking and learn about the importance of healthy food and exercise while eating fresh fruit and drinking water.

Out of summer months the clinic provided walking and aerobics classes regularly which were also enjoyed by the women.



# Challenges

The program was liked and strongly supported by the community, however there were challenges including:

- Finding consistent external support to assist with the exercise program was difficult and let this part of the program down. Not having a male to lead men's exercise groups was also a challenge
- Although informal community consultation had been taking place for 12 months prior to the trial, the limited time we had available to put the program together (due to funding time limits) made planning a challenge
- There were issues with supporting programs which meant that certain aspects of the trial had to be changed

# Positives Outcomes

- Community fully supported the program. It was exciting to see the community getting involved like when local footballers told a visitor who tried to get chips from the shelf before 2:30pm to put them back and when community members told the store if the soft drink fridge wasn't locked in the mornings
- Children swapped to bananas when they were unable to buy ice-creams and have continued this even after the trial
- Since completion of the trial, community members have expressed that “sugar is killing us” and that they want more healthy food at the store

# Results

As a result of the Utju Mai Wirungka Kunpu Kayini program we were able to educate the Utju community about the importance of healthy food and exercise. Many residents swapped their pie and coke for a healthy breakfast and water in the short time of this trial.

- 38% of the community lost weight (27% gained weight)
  - 73% of diabetic people had a reduction in their HbA1c (27% had an increase)
  - 85% decrease in pie sales at the store- pies were one of the best selling items prior to the program
  - 95% increase in sales of wholemeal bread
  - 52% decrease in lolly sales
  - 45% decrease in full strength Coke sales
- \*56 of 106 participants attended follow up health check

# Learnings

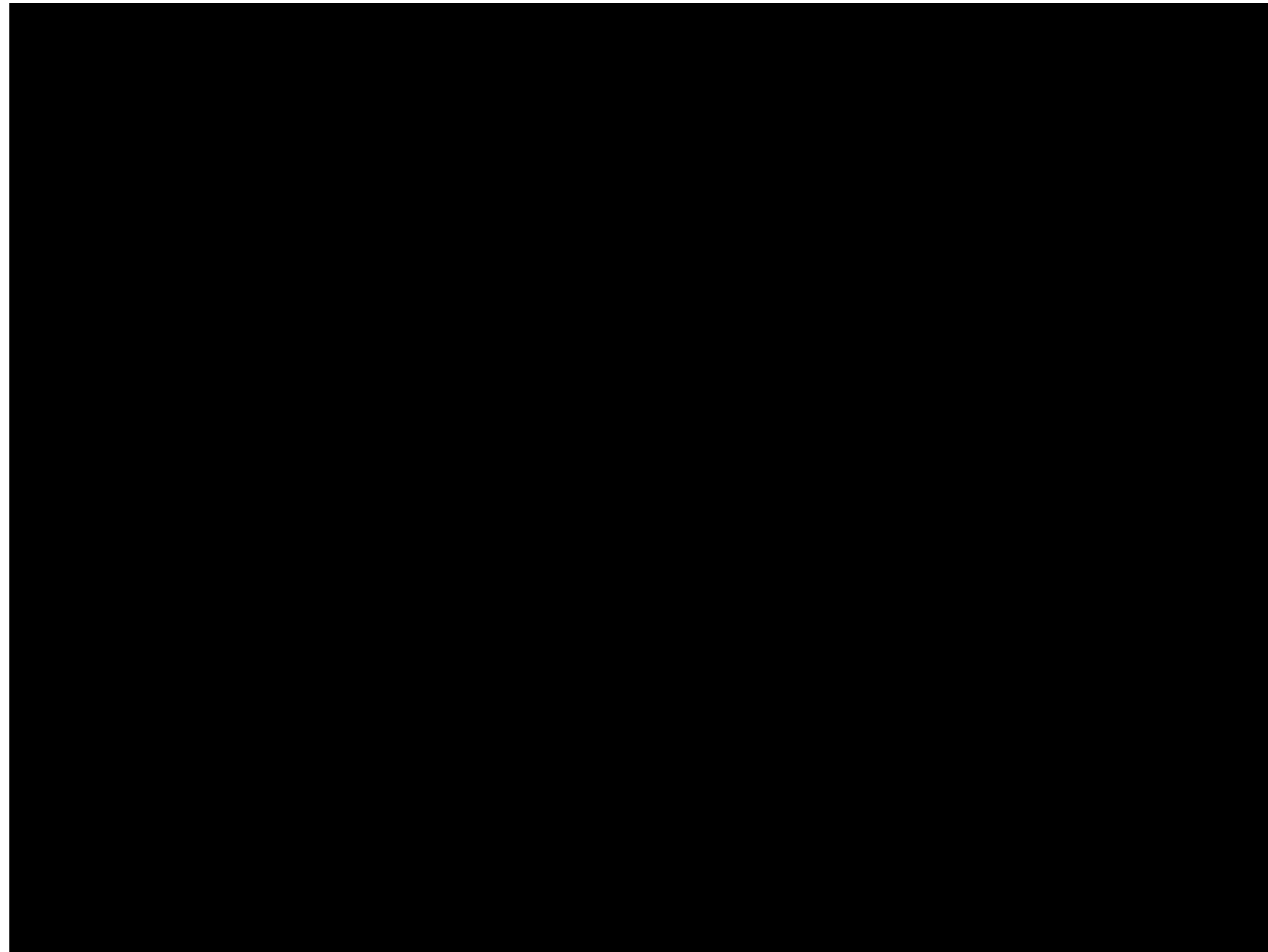
If this program was to continue it would benefit from:

- Additional support for the exercise program and dedicated male classes with male staff
- A longer planning period with literature reviews
- Working with a community development officer to enable a 100% community controlled program
- A contract with the store stating their role and expectations during and after the program funding ceases
- Sustainability measures put in place from commencement



# Feedback

Some of our community feedback



# Thank you

A big thank you Areyonga Store for their participation, to Beverley Scott-Visser and Emma Hobbs for their help with writing the reports and the Areyonga community for their great participation in the program.

And a special thank you to Dr Rosalie Schultz for her wonderful work in the community over the last 18 months. We will miss you very much!

# Questions?



bananas \$7.08 kg      rockmelon whole \$7.70  
apples \$6.37 kg      mushrooms pre-pack \$7.90  
oranges \$3.43 kg      cucumbers \$7.40  
lemons \$5.84 kg      lettuce \$3.90 each  
cherry tomatoes \$4.90 punnet  
strawberries \$7.50 punnet      km-but 80¢

