

Welcome to RIG News #7 - June 2010

RIG Network is a cross-sectoral information sharing, networking and research initiative. The Network aims to connect people who have an interest in food gardens, food security, and the contribution local food gardens, related enterprises and employment offer to people who live and work in remote Indigenous communities.

We're keen to hear from you about your food garden projects and enterprises, issues and ideas - and to receive your input to our ongoing research, outreach and communications activities.

AMSANT Fresh Food Summit May 2010 – Aboriginal leadership for fresh food for better health and wellbeing

The critical importance of local food production by and for Aboriginal people is well on the agenda following the success of the AMSANT Fresh Food Summit.

For the first time in any jurisdiction in Australia, the Aboriginal Comprehensive Primary Health Care sector – through the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) – came together on May 5 & 6 at Tennant Creek to discuss the vital issue of food security.

More than 300 people – Aboriginal health workers, nutritionists, clinicians, board members of community controlled health services as well as key public servants - from across the Northern Territory attended the Summit to tackle issues that included family, community and market gardening; larger scale horticulture projects on Aboriginal land; the future of stores; the costs to Aboriginal health of poor food supplies, marketing and promotion of healthy foods, and the issue of fresh food subsidies.

Stephanie Bell, Chairperson, AMSANT, spoke about the importance of healthy food as a critical social determinant in achieving good health in her opening address. She highlighted the need to tackle food security which she said was built on three main ideas:

1. Sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis
2. Access, or having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; and
3. Appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care.

The need for affordable healthy food – not just health education – was highlighted for action, along with the need for the 'health system' to tackle food security more directly and address its disconnection from the production and supply of food to Aboriginal people.

Discussion and presentations about opportunities to grow food locally were a key feature of the Summit. Presentations from Centrefarm, Alice Springs, and Rachel Green, Research & RIG Network, provided practical information about food garden successes and partnership based food garden enterprise models as food for thought and action.

RIG Network and Centrefarm presentations were well received and support for their work are among key Summit Resolutions.

Ms Bell said the Comprehensive Aboriginal Primary Health Care Sector must take a leading role and engage with food production. Her comments that "at a local level, market and community gardens are about far more than getting fresh food: they can be major contributors to broader measures of health and well being programs. At a larger level, agricultural production can employ our people – as well as supply fresh food grown on Aboriginal land" highlights the diverse benefits that food gardens and other local food production initiatives offer to Aboriginal communities and families.

RIG supports action and investment to enable sustainable local food production in remote communities. We congratulate AMSANT on the Summit and look forward to working with them and key players such as Centrefarm to progress the Summit Resolutions.

AMSANT have kindly made the Interim Summit Report available. The Interim Report and Resolutions can be viewed online at: <http://www.remoteindigenousgardens.net/useful-resources/amsant-fresh-food-summit-interim-report/>

RIG Network – Network partnerships and communications

Northern Territory Horticultural Association & RIG Network

RIG Network and the Northern Territory Horticultural Association (NTHA) have agreed to partner together to deliver strategic research, outreach and communications projects with Aboriginal organisations and communities to address food security and enterprise development. The NTHA is the Northern Territory's peak industry representative body for horticulture and they and their members possess a wealth of knowledge, expertise and industry connections pertinent to the horticultural sector, enterprise innovation and the environmental sustainability of food production in northern Australia (see www.ntha.com.au). An introductory document outlining partnership projects and opportunities is at <http://www.remoteindigenousgardens.net/useful-resources/rig-ntha/>

Interest based email discussion groups.

RIG interest based email discussion groups have kicked off, with the CDEP Gardens Discussion Group and Schools & Life Skills Gardens Discussion Group underway. If you'd like to join one or more of the groups, let us know at rig@remoteindigenousgardens.net

Send us your garden stories and photos!

We're keen to share more stories and photographs from food garden initiatives in remote communities via the RIG website and materials such as this newsletter. If you have a garden story to share, and/or photos approved for use – please shoot them to us at rig@remoteindigenousgardens.net.

Recent reports & research findings: Health and the NTER

Two recent reports highlight mixed health outcomes of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). They make interesting reading in relation to food security, and broader health and wellbeing issues.

Research findings published in the Medical Journal of Australia in mid May, **Impact of income management on store sales in the Northern Territory** (Julie K Brimblecombe, Joseph McDonnell, Adam Barnes, Joanne Garnngulkpuy Dhurrkay, David P Thomas and Ross S Bailie) shows that the federal government's income management policy is not making an impact on tobacco and health food sales in remote community shops in the NT. Smoking and poor diet are responsible for much of the health gap between indigenous and other Australians.

The research article, and Minister Macklin's response to it have generated considerable online discussion. To access the report published in the Medical Journal of Australia and see commentary by diverse contributors on the issues go to:

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2010/05/17/income-management-isnt-working-and-macklins-twisting-the-truth/>

Indigenous Doctors assess the NT Emergency Response

The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) launched in March by the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association predicts that while new investments in education, housing and health care will contribute to improved physical health for some people, any benefits will be outweighed by the negative impacts arising from the way the initiative was devised and implemented.

The report and an Executive Summary of it is available at (click [Health Impact Assessment of the Northern Territory Emergency Response](#)). The Report looks at potential health impacts of the Intervention on all aspects of Indigenous health and wellbeing, not just physical health.

Indigenous Community Volunteers - call for help!

RIG has received an email from Gregory Andrews, CEO, ICV, in relation to dramatic cuts in Commonwealth funding to the organization. Greg writes:

"We need your help. The Australian Government has proposed to cut funding to ICV by 83% - from \$1.7 million this financial year to only \$300,000 from 1 July...Last year, over 25,000 Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people benefited directly from ICV's programs. The total amount of volunteer time put into ICV projects was equivalent to 128 years of human service at a value of \$9.9 million...The Commonwealth has acknowledged that we are delivering a high quality service that is making a difference. Its advice about the cuts has been the 'tight Federal budgetary environment'. But given the people we serve, ICV believes that the services it provides should be the last to be cut in such circumstances. If you share this view and see value in our product, we urge you to send a letter to Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin MP expressing your concern at ICV missing out on crucial funding in the Federal Budget".

For further information, or to voice your support, contact Gregory Andrews, CEO, Indigenous Community Volunteers, action@icv.com.au

Health & Wellbeing – Climate Change impacts, Top End

Major new report: Risks from Climate Change to Indigenous Communities in the Tropical North of Australia

Released in May, the report finds climate change will have a significant impact on indigenous communities in the tropical north, and indirectly local food production issues. The report – the first of its kind in Australia - examined the impacts on the health, environment, infrastructure, education, economic and employment of Indigenous people.

To view the Media release by Senator the Hon. Penny Wong Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, and follow link to the report, click on [Report highlights climate change impacts on indigenous communities in the tropical north of Australia](#)

Related news from NAILSMA'S Carbon Project

Anticipating the above report, NAILSMA recently held an important workshop in Darwin on '**Adaptation to Climate Change in Indigenous Populations**'. Funded by The National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility and the University of Melbourne, over 50 participants attended from across north Australia and from diverse fields of work and interests. NAILSMA will soon compile a report from the Climate Change workshop summarising responses and recommendations which will go towards managing impacts and opportunities to and for Indigenous north Australians.

Further information about the report, NAILSMA workshop and background materials can be found on the NAILSMA website, or contact Max Bowden at max.bowden@cdu.edu.au.

Food Gardens – Business & Industry News

Inaugural ANFIL native food conference, Adelaide, May 3 2010

Presentations about significant industry developments relevant to bush foods and fusion gardens included:

- 1) developments to describe flavour, aroma and taste of key commercialised native foods and spices– to make it easier for food manufacturers and chefs to describe their products and dishes
- 2) advancements in research on the health and nutritional properties
- 3) developments on research into the preservative properties of some native foods (eg Kakadu Plum and lemon myrtle) for example increasing the shelf life of a fish product which is packaged with a sauce including these ingredients
- 4) Development of an online training resource mapping into the hospitality and commercial cookery national training package – which focuses on the use of Australian Native Foods.

For further information about ANFIL, bush foods properties, recipes and research underway, go to <http://anfil.org.au/>

Outback Business Network – new online database of businesses

Check out this new resource developed by the Outback Business Network. It includes members of the Local Produce Network – you can search for contacts or add information about your own activities. For further information contact Joy.Taylor@csiro.au or visit <http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/dka/networkmembers/>

DKCRC – CRC for Remote Economic Participation - Survey on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Small Enterprises. Per capita there are more small businesses in desert Australia than in the whole of Australia. This surveys findings will provide an important input to DKCRC's successor, the CRC for Remote Economic

Participation, due to start on July 1 this year. The survey team wants to interview owners of all kinds of SMEs. To learn more or participate, contact F.Rola-Rubzen@curtin.edu.au or phone 08 9266 2122.

Centre for Appropriate Technology – Social Enterprise Development Project

CAT, Alice Springs is undertaking a project to explore needs and opportunities to support Indigenous led social enterprises. To learn more check out CAT's forthcoming newsletter "Our Place" and a story about the project in the next RIG News. For further information, contact Susan.Dow@icat.org.au or call 08 8959 6171.

Commonwealth Government draft Indigenous Economic Development Strategy – comment and submissions sought by Nov. 1 2010

On 24 May, the Commonwealth Government released its draft Indigenous Economic Development Strategy for consultation. The draft strategy outlines a framework for Indigenous economic development and focuses on five key areas: education and building individual capacity; creating sustainable job opportunities; supporting business and enterprise development; financial security and independence; and strengthening the foundations to provide an environment that supports Indigenous economic development.

Interested individuals and organisations are invited to review the strategy and provide feedback on issues raised or issues not been adequately covered. See [Indigenous Economic Development Strategy - Draft for Consultation](#)

School Gardens - News, Funding & Resources

EON Foundation Edible Gardens Program

Stay tuned for a detailed update from the EON Foundation, WA, in the next RIG News. EON currently conducts five school and community food gardens in remote communities in WA. When we spoke recently with Clair Medhurst, EON's CEO, she told us two more gardens are about to kick off and they have 10 communities on their waiting list. EON is doing fantastic work – their gardens enable schools and local community members to grow fresh, nutritious food in very remote contexts. For example, one community they work with is cut off from supplies for 5 months each year.

EON will soon publish (online and in hard copy), a food gardens manual & resources book for schools and community gardens tailored to the challenges and environs of the remote north west – look out for it and we'll keep you posted as it becomes available. You can learn more about EON's work by visiting the RIG website links section – see link to EON Foundation and to recent ABC media story about their gardens.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation – funding open, to June 25

This well known program now involves some 138 schools, engaging primary school age children in growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing fresh, seasonal food each week across Australia. Ange Barry, CEO, says the program has recently welcomed schools from Coober Pedy, Burke and Driver PS (NT) to the program, and Alawa Primary School, Darwin joined the program last year. Developed in Melbourne, the program requires a supportive school community and investment to establish kitchen and other facilities.

The Foundation's 3rd round of grants in their National Program are now open. For the first time, all non-government schools with a primary enrolment that are classed as a SMARTER school with low socio economic status under the School Communities National Partnership can also apply for these grants, in addition to Government schools with a primary enrolment, and special schools with a primary curriculum. For further details visit: <http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/grants-national.shtml>

Great resource!! 'Outdoor Classrooms', by Carolyn Nuttall and Janet Millington

Authors Carolyn Nuttall and Janet Millington, experienced primary school teachers and permaculturists, have drawn upon their long association with garden-based learning to produce 'Outdoor Classrooms: a handbook for school gardens'. The book is available for approximately \$40. Find details via 'google' or email Janet at miltech@bigpond.com.

Coming events

9th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference

Hosted by the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, 22-25 August 2010, Darwin

The corporation welcomes all people who are interested in, or concerned with, Indigenous women and

wellness to get involved in the conference and particularly encourages the participation of Indigenous women. More information from Jodie Farrow, Community Health Engagement/Health Promotions Officer, Danila Dilba Health Service, email jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au, T: 08 89435100, F: 08 89435101, W: <http://www.daniladilba.org.au>

Australasian Permaculture Convergence, Kuranda, Cairns, September 24—27, 2010

Visit the [Official APC10 website](http://www.apc10.org) at www.apc10.org and watch for updates and developments in the program. The organizers have a really innovative program. Check it out! Email the organisers at apc10.2010@gmail.com

Great new information links and resources

ABS RELEASE - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Australia: Summary Booklet, 2008 (Cat 4714.0.55.003) The 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey summary booklets are intended for use by Indigenous Engagement Managers while visiting Indigenous Communities. They present information on topics including population, culture and language, health, education, labour force, housing, family and support networks, children and young adults. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0.55.003?OpenDocument>

ABS RELEASE - Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 (Cat 4713.0) Understanding Indigenous population data, Population distribution and structure, Mobility, Household and family composition, Language and religion, Education, Work, Income, Housing and transport, Need for assistance, Torres Strait Islanders <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4713.0?OpenDocument>

Environmental health needs of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia : the 2008 survey and its findings.

HealthInfonet has circulated links to this new report by the Western Australian Department of Health, Public Health Division, released mid May. For an abstract and links to the document, see: <http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/health-resources/bibliography?lid=18425> The direct link to the report is: http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/2971/2/70650_2008_EHNS_Report1_FINAL.pdf

The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse provides access to information on good practice to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. [View website: Closing the Gap Clearinghouse](#)

We welcome your comments, feedback and items for our next newsletter - email: rig@remoteindigenousgardens.net

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