



Government of **Western Australia**
WA Country Health Service

Your Ref :
Our Ref : ED-KI-19-2175
Enquiries to : Bec Smith, bec.smith@health.wa.gov.au

Ms J M Freeman MLA
Chair
Education and Health Standing Committee
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

Via Email: laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Ms Freeman

Kimberley Food Assistance Program

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January 2019 seeking information pertaining to a program which provided food and assistance with menu planning to Aboriginal women in the Kimberley.

WA Country Health Services (WACHS) has confirmed a program of a similar nature was run in 2017 however I am unable to determine if this is the program to which your correspondence refers to.

In 2017, WACHS Kimberley was successful in obtaining funding through Rural Health West via a grant to deliver a program similar to the 'Women and Children' (WIC) Program, which has operated for many years in the United States. This program was delivered in Broome titled the 'Women and Children in the Kimberley' (WICK) Program.

WICK was delivered fortnightly in April to June 2017 at the Broome Drop in Centre. The centre holds an existing 'mums and bubs group' attended by two nurses from WACHS Kimberley Community Health and WICK was delivered as a joint project between Boab Health's Paediatric Nutritionist and Kimberley Population Health Unit (KPHU) dietitians. The funding was spent on food baskets for the families whom attended and these baskets included items such as fruit, vegetables, tinned legumes, milk, yoghurt, cheese, basic spices and the time spent with the mums including cooking together using the items in the food baskets.

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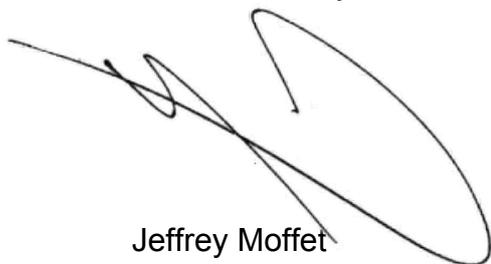
WACHS Kimberley advises the program was difficult to evaluate for various reasons. Firstly, attendance was sporadic for many mothers, therefore follow-up in regards to the food provided at the group was difficult to obtain. Secondly, the mothers engaged in this group, although relatively 'high-risk', still represented a group of mothers who had the capacity to be engaged in formal service delivery, therefore they were not necessarily the most 'in-need' mothers who would be most likely to benefit from the provision of food baskets.

The benefits to the usual attendees of the program included being provided access to a supply of fresh food fortnightly, together with the social interaction, and supplementary place-based care. In terms of whether it improved overall nutrition outcomes, there isn't sufficient evidence to comment.

The funding model was not considered appropriate for the WACHS Kimberley as it was focused on paying a metropolitan-based professional to travel to the Kimberley rather than be operated by existing services. In order for the program to be of more benefit to WACHS Kimberley families, WACHS Kimberley believes it would be of benefit to have flexibility with regards to expending the grant monies and more notice to plan and deliver such a program.

I trust that this information is of some benefit to you and should you wish to discuss this further, please contact Ms Bec Smith, WACHS Kimberley Regional Director on 9195 2450 or alternatively via email on bec.smith@health.wa.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Jeffrey Moffet
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

8 February 2019