

THE HEALTHY KOORIE KLUB

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The Victorian Aboriginal community faces major health problems related to diet. Prevalence of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardio-vascular disease and some cancers is much higher than in the non-Aboriginal population and life expectancy is approximately 20 years less.

In early 1990, a review of the nutrition-related service for Koories at the Aboriginal Health Service (AHS) in Fitzroy was conducted. This revealed that the traditional client counselling approach was not effective as a strategy to impact on Aboriginal health, and alternative approaches were investigated.

The nutritionist working at the AHS found there was sufficient interest in the Koorie community for a healthy lifestyle programme to be established.

A four week programme was compiled and piloted from April to September, 1990. The programme covered healthy eating practices, exercise, and relaxation techniques and was partly conducted by members of the Koorie community.

An evaluation of the programme revealed that Koories who attended the full 4 week programme reported adapting many of the new lifestyle behaviours discussed.

The major problems encountered were a high drop out rate from the programme and adequate publicity.

These problems are currently being addressed and if there is sufficient interest shown by the Koorie community to continue the programme, ongoing funding will be sought for future programmes and for the training of members of the Koorie community to run the programme themselves.

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