

2005 New Zealand Post Management Excellence Awards

Women's Health Initiatives in Glen Innes, a
community project by Auckland City
Council



Award category: New Zealand Post Community
Relationships Award

Introduction

The Glen Innes Health Project is a Ministry of Health funded project that is based within Community Development of Auckland City Council. This project is funded to address the wider socioeconomic determinants of health in Glen Innes. Women's Health and accessing national screening programmes were identified as an area of high need in Glen Innes. To address these issues a women's health initiative was developed and implemented in collaboration with Auckland City Council, Well Women's Nursing Services (WONS) and ProCare. This project provides a unique opportunity for Auckland City Council to work in collaboration with health providers to achieve the health and wellbeing objective of the Local Government Act 2002.

Project Background

Glen Innes is a multicultural low socioeconomic area that is known as an area with poor health statistics. It is an area with high unemployment, a high number of one parent families and poor education statistics.

Breast and cervical cancer cause a huge impact on the health of women in New Zealand. Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer in women with an age standardised incidence rate of 117 per 100 000 in 1996 and an age standardised mortality rate of 36 per 100 000 in 1997. Breast screening is available free to women aged 45-69 years although as is seen in the table below coverage is low, especially for Maori and Pacific women.

BreastScreen Aotearoa Coverage

Ethnic Group	Coverage
Non Maori, Non Pacific women	62.6%
Maori women	42.7%
Pacific women	43.4%

Independent Monitoring Group of the National Cervical Screening Programme 2003

Cervical cancer affects women of all ages with an age standardised incidence rate of 14 per 100 000 in 1996 and an age standardised mortality rate of 5 per 100 000 in 1997. Maori women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and four times as likely to die from it. There is also a strong deprivation gradient for cervical cancer, with those living in the most deprived areas having twice the incidence rate and four times the mortality rate than those in wealthier areas. Cervical cancer screening is available to women 20-60 years but as in the case of BreastScreen Aotearoa the coverage is very low in Maori and Pacific women.

National Cervical Screening Programme

Ethnic Group	Coverage
Non Maori, Non Pacific women	77.8%
Maori women	50.9%
Pacific women	49.4%

Independent Monitoring Group of the National Cervical Screening Programme 2003

The Project

With this background in mind a program was developed in partnership between Well Women's Nursing Services (WONS) and Auckland City Council with support from ProCare (PHO) and Ka Mau te Wero (Glen Innes Community Development Project). The aim of the project was to improve the health of the women of Glen Innes and increase the Maori and Pacific women accessing the screening programs.

The project consisted of two main components:

- Community training
- Affordable clinics and support meetings.

Community trainings

The first part was a Women's Health Hui, where women from Glen Innes were invited to a day to learn more about the overall aspects of women's health from menopause to breast and cervical cancer. During the day cervical smears and cholesterol testing were offered and people had the opportunity to ask questions of expert women's health nurses. The day was fully catered and childcare was provided. Comments included:

'Clear, informative and very easy going. Excellent'

The second part of the project was a 'Sisters in Health' training. This initiative was originally trialled with great success in Ngaruawahia. The day was a workshop for community workers and community members to learn about breast and cervical cancer. The women gained the skills and knowledge to pass the message onto others in their community about the importance of accessing regular screening.

'Explain every word in plain English, very well understood. It is helpful to me when I go out into the community and explain or tell them about it'

Affordable Clinics and support meetings

Alongside these workshops a free cervical screening clinic has been set up and ongoing networking and learning opportunities for the trained 'Sisters' is organised in an informal manner around healthy food.

The need for and expected benefits of the project and how it furthers the council's vision and strategic direction

The need for a project that aims to improve the rate of screening was seen through the low rates of screening in Maori and Pacific Island women. One of the key reasons given by many for not partaking in the cervical screening programme is access to an affordable clinic. This was overcome by bringing the clinic to the one day hui, and setting up affordable and accessible monthly clinics in Glen Innes.

This project helps further the council's First City of the Pacific community vision to 2020 by addressing priority five: Strong and healthy communities. This was achieved through increasing women's knowledge of their own health, empowering a group of women to pass on the message about the importance of cervical and breast screening and to make cervical screening more accessible to the women of Glen Innes.

Effective project management techniques

The success of this project was due to the strong motivation and commitment of all parties to see it succeed and their passion for addressing issues of women's health.

Strong and committed leader

The CEO of WONS had a vision for what the project needed to achieve to improve the health of women in Glen Innes. She built a committed team of experts in women's health, community development and people with knowledge of Glen Innes and led the team to success.

Teamwork

The project team consisted of:

- WONS staff
- Coordinator of Glen Innes Health Project
- Health Promotion adviser from ProCare

This team brought individual skills and networks that complemented each other. Roles were clearly defined from the start of the project, this allowed task responsibility to be clearly identified and completed in timeframes. The team was adaptable to new ideas and challenges throughout the planning process.

Communication

Clear and regular communication was a strong point of the planning process. Regular planning meetings were held throughout the process. Communication was through regularly meetings and e-mail contact due to people working from different organisations.

Evaluation

Evaluation was seen as an important part of the project from the start and was planned for throughout the planning and implementation stage. This allowed statistics to be collected on the ethnicities of the women who attended, the best forms of communication and how to improve the workshop. A debriefing session was held following the workshops to allow all stakeholders to comment on successes and future improvements.

A participatory approach to communicating with and getting 'buy-in' from stakeholders associated with the project

The key stakeholders WONS, Glen Innes community, Auckland City Council, Ka Mau te Wero (community development project) and ProCare were identified at the early stages of project development. The group of coordinators brought with them a variety of skills that made this project a success: women's health experts and people with good knowledge of and networks in the community. This meant that the approach and direction of the project could be established and agreed upon by all and carried through the project.

Several methods of communication with the community were used to inform people of the Women's Health Hui. The most effective of these: community newspaper, fliers and word of mouth, were then used to advertise the Sisters in Health training. The women who attended the Women's Health Hui were amazing advocates for the Sisters in Health training and many attended both workshops and inputted into the development of further workshops. Ongoing community meetings will be shaped according to the needs and wishes of the trained 'Sisters'.

Innovation and originality in the specific award category

The Women's Health Initiative was both an innovative and original way for a local government to work with its community. Traditionally local government does not tackle health issues directly but by partnering with a community health provider women's health was able to be addressed.

The Women's Health Hui was an innovative and original way of interacting and educating women and providing them with access to cervical screening and blood tests in an environment that was welcoming and comfortable. It was a way of meeting the communities need of increased access to screening in a way that the women of Glen Innes felt comfortable and responded to.

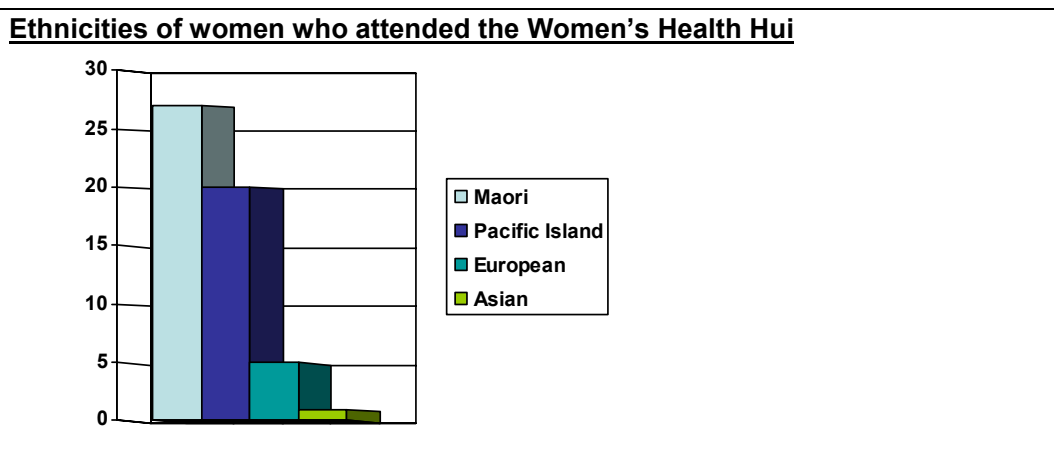
The Sister's in Health training was an innovative way of training community women to take control of their health and the health of their community. By giving them the skills to teach others and providing a support group that continues to develop the women's skills.

Successful results, in both financial and non-financial terms

The costs of this project were met mainly by two community grants (Ka Mau te Wero and Auckland City Council) to WONS for the two workshops, the remainder (approximately \$1000) was funded by the organisations involved in the project. Costs were kept to a minimum due to coordinators and nurses providing their time as part of their work responsibilities. When possible community members were used to provide services eg. catering and childcare, this allowed the community to have a greater involvement in the process and also provided for work opportunities for the community.

The non financial results were the greatest success of this project.

- The initiative reached women of the target group eg. Maori and Pacific (see table below for ethnicities of women who attended the Women's Health Hui)
- 53 women attended the Women's Health Hui
- 20 women were trained as 'Sisters in Health'
- 3 Women who had not had a cervical smear in the past three years had a cervical smear at the Women's Health Hui
- An affordable monthly cervical smear clinic is going to be set up in Glen Innes
- Ongoing training and support will be available for the trained 'Sister'
- A second 'Sisters in Health' training will to occur in August



The project was a 'good, sensible and right thing to do'

'Big need out there'

'Ka Pai'

'Opportunity to meet different communities'

The health of women is vital to themselves, their whanau and the community. By providing a forum where women are able to learn about their health, have access to screening and learn how to educate others on the sometimes scary and often taboo issues of breast and cervical cancer and screening, we have been able to increase the capacity of the Glen Innes community to start addressing their own health needs.

By being part of a collaboration of organisations that had experts in women's health and people with knowledge of and networks in the Glen Innes community, Auckland City Council was able to address the health of women in its community in a way that was both unique and innovative. This shows how a council can step outside the square and address the health and wellbeing of their community.

The success of this project is seen by the ongoing community meetings of trained 'Sisters' and the calls for workshops and trainings to be held in other communities around Auckland from women who have heard about the workshops.