

26 October 2017

Aunty Jean's Koori Mini-Olympics celebrates health and community

Competitors travelled far and wide to attend the 13th Annual Aunty Jean's Koori Mini-Olympics held at Bomaderry Basketball Stadium on Thursday, 26 October.

More than 220 competitors from the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD), Murrumbidgee Local Health District and the Southern NSW Local Health District came together to compete in events including a modern day version of the traditional Aboriginal game of Kee'an as well as quoits, bullseye and frisbee.

The Koori Mini-Olympics evolved from the Aunty Jean's Program, an initiative started in the Illawarra in 2004 and built around the community working together to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people, with Elders leading the way. The Aunty Jean's Program was named in memory of past respected Elder Aunty Jean Morris, who promoted Aboriginal health and culture.

ISLHD Aboriginal Health Worker, Bev Crowther said the Koori Mini-Olympics is a celebration of health and community.

"The Aunty Jean's Program was designed to include health promotion, education and self-management to support and sustain the development of good health behaviours and strategies for Aboriginal people with chronic and complex care needs," she said.

"The Koori Mini-Olympics is an extension of that. It is a highlight of the year for many members of our community as they meet up with friends, family and compete against one another in a friendly, competitive environment.

"The event has grown from 30 people in 2004 to more than 200 people in the past few years," Ms Crowther said.

Chronic disease is a major factor contributing to higher mortality, increased hospitalisations and reduced quality of life for Aboriginal people.

Key areas in chronic disease prevention and management are:

- Respiratory
- Renal
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Cardiac

The Aunty Jean's Program runs locally at three sites: Berkeley, Nowra and Ulladulla.