

MEDIA RELEASE

24 March 2011

From Little Things Big Things Grow

South East Alliance of General Practice (Brisbane) Ltd (SEA-GP (Brisbane)) and Redland City Council held a tree planting in Capalaba Regional Park for National Close the Gap Day. The tree planting symbolised the commitment of both SEA-GP (Brisbane) and the Council to close the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians within a generation.

Postal
PO Box 235
Capalaba Q 4157

Office
Capalaba Business Centre
39 Old Cleveland Road
Tel (07) 3390 2466
Fax (07) 3823 1408
admin@seagp.org.au
www.seagp.org.au

The tree planting ceremony was well attended with John Torpy, CEO of SEA-GP (Brisbane) welcoming honoured guests, Cr Murray Elliott (Deputy Mayor of Redland City Council), Lorraine Tutton and Rhys Williams (Department of Communities) and Jim Dargan (Medicare).

Mainstream primary care generally provides the first point of contact for health services in Australia; however, cultural barriers can limit usage of these services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

John Torpy, CEO of SEA-GP (Brisbane) says "through funding from the Department of Health and Ageing's *Closing the Gap Program* we have been working with over 75 GPs from 15 Practices in the local area to reduce the barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients."

"This work includes; breaking down the barriers that prevent patients from visiting GPs, making medications more affordable (through PBS co-payment), increasing awareness of preventative health checks and available follow-up services, and providing support for improved Chronic Disease management," Mr Torpy said.

"Accessing services and navigating the health system can often be intimidating for any patient. Social determinants of health must also be recognised; housing, employment, access to recreation facilities and community services as important in leading to better health for the community. This is why we are looking forward to working with the local authorities and other community focused organisations in our area so we can lead the way in improving the health of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities," he said.

[ENDS]

NB: High resolution photographs of today's event are available - see examples on the following page.

Media contact: Breanna Caton – (07) 33 902 466

www.seagp.org.au



Pictured Above (Left to Right): Colleen Lavelle, Helen Price-Jones and Sarah Wyman (SEA-GP Closing the Gap Program Officers).



Pictured Above: Cr Murray Elliott (Deputy Mayor of Redland City Council)



Pictured Above (Left to Right): Lorraine Tutton (Department of Communities) and Jim Dargan (Medicare)



Pictured Above (Left to Right): Rhys Williams, Lorraine Tutton (Department of Communities), Colleen Lavelle (SEA-GP) and Jim Dargan (Medicare)



Pictured Above (Left to Right): Rhys Williams (Department of Communities), John Torpy (SEA-GP), Colleen Lavelle (SEA-GP), Jim Dargan (Medicare) and Lorraine Tutton (Department of Communities).

