

Wiimali Chronicle

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Cloudy, High 26, Low 18

Singing for Health

The Singing for Health project aims to improve and promote the health of African refugees living in Wiimali and surrounding districts. It aims to explore ways of increasing social and emotional wellbeing, prevent mental illness and chronic diseases and reduce social exclusion among the project's participants. The project was jointly managed and funded by the Centre for Migrants and Refugees and a collaboration of local churches.

Project leader and a social commentator in public health, Dr Ben Armstrong, said addressing mental health issues in the African

community is an important priority. Many members of this community group have experienced extensive persecution, war and other tragedies.

"There is a gap in services for refugees suffering from mental illness and social isolation," Dr Armstrong said.

"Community singing groups are one way of improving their mental health, emotional wellbeing and social inclusion, and of increasing their access to and use of health services." Dr Armstrong said participation in the project by people with

mental illness and chronic diseases may also lead to reduced costs to health services in the future.

Wiimali Singing for Health groups meet weekly at the Community Centre. There are no auditions, no pressure, and no requirement to be able to read music. It is just lots of fun.



Sunshade for Seniors Project

Wiimali Carers received \$2500 funding from the Cancer Council NSW for their Undercover Seniors Project. It will provide disabled clients, carers, parents, staff and volunteers with the opportunity to enjoy sun-safe outdoor

activities through the provision of a Cancer Council marquee. The Wiimali Cancer Support Group provide emotional support for local cancer patients and carers through monthly supporting meeting. Mr Matheson said that this

is an invaluable service for people in the area who are socially or geographically isolated. Thanks to the Cancer Council the group will now be able to meet outside and enjoy the fresh air.