**NATSIEH 2019 ABSTRACT SUBMISSION**

# Presentation Title

# Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council – Implementing a food business licensing program in Far North Queensland

**Abstract. *Word Limit: 500 words or less (approximately 1½ A4 pages).***

Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (YASC) is a Local Government under the Local Government Act 2009.The Yarrabah Community lies to the East of Cairns , by road it is about 60 kilometres from Cairns CBD. The community has an official population of 2,559 people ( *2016 census*) with reports of up to 4,500 on any given day residing in community..

Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council’s Environmental Health Worker (EHW) Stephen Canendo requested assistance from Queensland Health Tropical Public Health Services Cairns to undertake compliance inspections of food businesses he had identified currently being operated in YASC area.

Council had previously granted food business licences to several food premises without consulting the EHW or ensuring premises met compliance with the Food Act 2006 and the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code,(FSC). It was also identified that some food businesses were operating without any food licences, and the EHW was not appointed as an ‘authorised officer’ under the Food Act 2006.

As a result, a partnership agreement was signed in March 2017 which enabled TPHS to assist YASC EHW to maintain Food Safety Standards in the food premises and mobile food vans in the community and to support the implementation of a food premises Licencing system and compliance inspection program.

Inspections were undertaken on a range of premises in the Council area including:

take away food premises, service station and grocers, Coffee shop, Family day care, Aged care facility,Four (4) existing food vans, Mobile food van (new fit out), Supermarket, bakery (new fit out), rehab centre kitchen and Sport ground Kiosk (new fit out).

Common issues were identified across all premises included no hand washing facilities or hand wash basin being used for other purposes (eg: washing up), no vermin proofing (flies and evidence of cockroaches), inadequate or no cleaning of premises, and food stored out of temperature control. Also, no food safety supervisors or in some cases no food handling experience at all.

The EHW also provided advice on ‘fit out’ of food premises to comply with the Food Standards Code as part of a development application for the new sports complex kiosk and the refurbishment of the old bakery site.

Food handler awareness training was undertaken for stall holders and temporary food permits were issued to a number of food vendors to operate at the community events held throughout the year. Inspections of temporary food stalls at major events (eg: music festival Which attracted in excess of 3000 people) was undertaken to ensure compliance on the day.

It should be noted that most food premises required 2-3 reinspections before compliance was achieved and the business was issued with a licence. A fee had been set by YASC for the licence and a data base has been created which shows the food premises licenced and previous dates of inspection, reinspections required and the next date for inspection recorded to prompt the activity. This is by way of a notification email to eth EHW to enabe inspection planning.

Home cooking and sale of meals without a food business licence is not permitted and the EHW is keeping a close eye on any non- compliance. All food businesses in YASC are now licenced and no new food businesses are licenced until the EHW has undertaken a compliance inspection and approved the premises. Licenec renewals willnot be issued without a written report from the EHW.

The learnings obtained from this project, both in terms of what has worked well and what the key challenges were, are likely to be very relevant to any Indigenous Environmental Health Workers who have yet to licence (or equivalent) food premises and assess them for compliance with the relevant Food Act and FSC. Stephen Canendo EHW YASC will provide his perspectives of the successes and challenges faced during the project. The presentation will include deidentified photographs showing the process and the standards of food premises from start of the project through to them being successfully licenced as they demonstrate their ability to maintain appropriate food safety standards.

**Abstract Summary.** *A summary of no more than 100 words is required.*

Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (YASC) in far north Queensland, has successfully implemented a food business licensing program to ensure all food businesses are compliant with the Queensland *Food Act 2006 and FSC. S*tephen Canendo Environmental Health Worker YASC will provide his perspective of the challenges faced during the project. The presentation will include before and after photographs showing the standards of food premises. The learnings obtained from this project, what has worked well and what the key challenges were, are likely to be very relevant to any Indigenous Environmental Health Workers who are proposing a licencing program for food premises

**Main Presenter Biography**

**Biography**

Stephen Canendo is the Environmental Health Worker at Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council and has been in this position since 1995. He has qualifications in Environemtnal Health, Animal Management and Pest Management.

In his current role he Manages the Environmental Health program, including the food business licencing program, assists the attending Veterinary surgeon and Animal Management Officer, carries out pest management in the community, and management of siginificant mass gatherings for music festivals, sporting events and other community functions, provides health education and also is a DAD worker (do as directed).