

Artist is creating change

PROGRAM GETTING RESULTS

Barry Kennedy

INSPIRING indigenous artist Richard Franklin paid a visit to Sunbury last week as part of Reconciliation Week.

The Portland-based activist met Sunbury Community Health Centre management, board members and participants in the service's new indigenous program.

Mr Franklin has previously adapted plays, recorded music and directed feature films, but is now focused on training what he calls "lateral violence and cultural safety".

Last year he trained 35 people who took part in five-day training programs.

He said the courses, supported by the Healing Foundation, aspire to turn indigenous people into achievers and contributors, rather than survivors.

Participants came from communities throughout Australia and are already producing startling results, Mr Franklin said.

"It has been incredible,"

he said. "I've seen Aboriginal women write a book on cultural safety and cultural foundations, while there has been the establishment of a men's healing circle.

"Another bloke in NSW goes into schools with sticks and he gets the kids walking with him and making didgeridoos. That's an example of getting boys' hands engaged and their minds and spirits engaged."

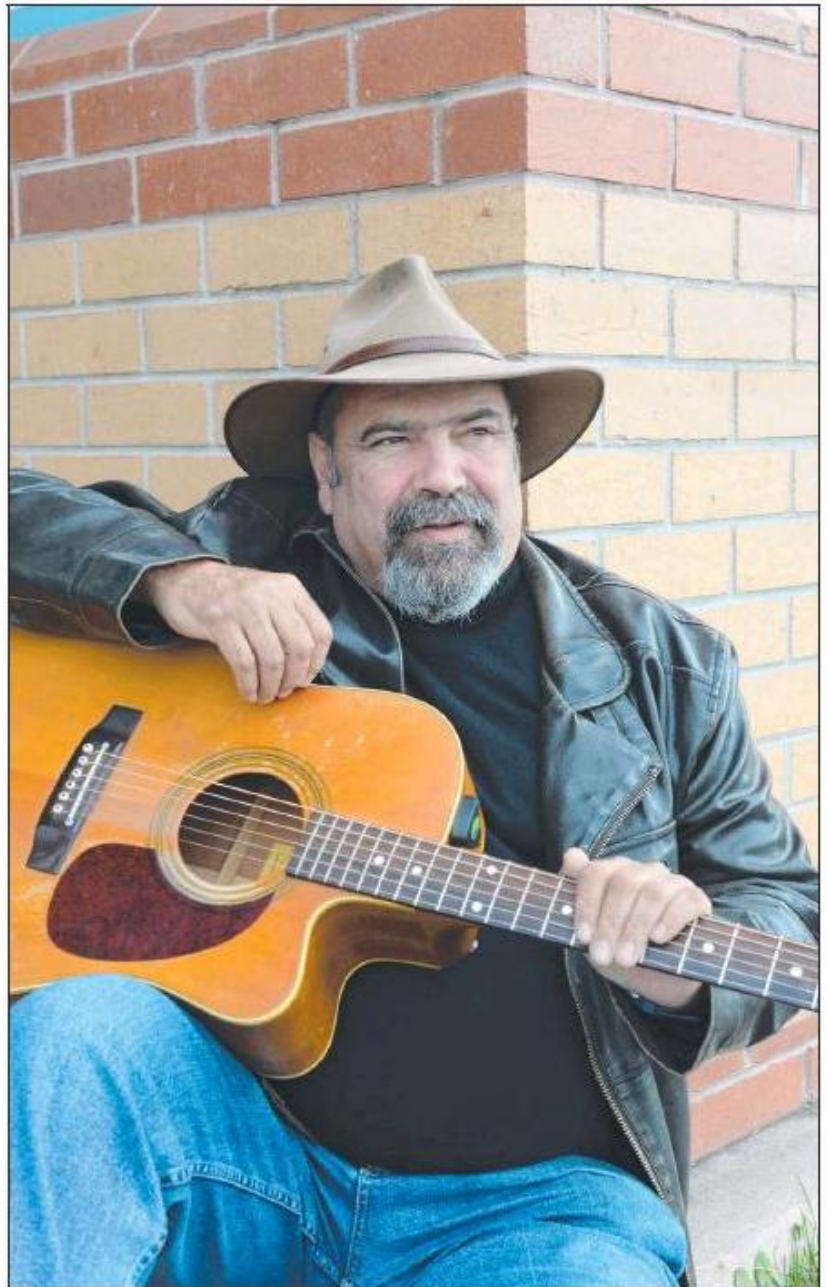
Sunbury Community Health Centre Aboriginal engagement officer Gail Radford trained under Mr Franklin.

"Gail's role is to be a hub of a community and provide a culturally safe pathway where indigenous people can come into a medical centre," Mr Franklin said.

She has started a women's group, meditation group and is about to start a Women's Shed program in partnership with Sunbury Masters.

Later this month she will run a health event called Healthy, Happy, Deadly.

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Richard Franklin during a visit to Sunbury last week.

Picture: DENNIS MANKTELOW