

MY PLACE

Gail Radford is Sunbury Community Health's first Aboriginal engagement officer. She speaks with Esther Lauaki about her love of working with indigenous people in the community.

What's your connection with Sunbury?

I moved to Sunbury six years ago. I lived in St Albans for 38 years – Sunbury reminds me a lot of Tasmania, which is where I'm originally from.

Tell me about your work with Sunbury Community Health?

The aim of this role is to engage Aboriginal people in Sunbury, supporting them to create a sense of community that has been lacking in the past.

I love my job, it is usually more fun than work. I'm fortunate that Sunbury Community Health support me and trust that, however odd my ideas may be, I know my community and what will work. We have, over the past three and a half years, had three large community events, we have had meals together, we have been fortunate to host a number of events involving Richard Frankland. Our most recent activity was a Koolin Balit-funded project that involved young Aboriginal people in Sunbury being taught how to write a script, act in, film and edit short films. They were taught by the Victorian College of the Arts and the Wilin Centre (Melbourne University). It culminated in a film festival called *Short and Deadly* films.

What inspired your line of work?

I have worked in diverse jobs, from factory hand to academic. It's taken me a long time to find what I am really passionate about.

Where are your Indigenous connections, and what do you like about Sunbury?

I am a Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) woman, and I love working in community.



The Aboriginal community in Sunbury is a diverse mob ... many work in professional roles, others are unemployed, some retired, a growing number of young people. Sunbury has the highest percentage of Aboriginal youth in Hume. It seems a small number, about 500, but the percentage of Sunbury's population that is

Aboriginal is the same as the state percentage.

What would you change about Sunbury?

Sunbury has five of seven ceremonial rings in Victoria.

I'd like to see more appreciation (and celebration) of the Aboriginal community.