RUSU & RMIT Oxfam:
2016 Close the Gap Proposal

Date 17/03/2016
Time 12:00 - 14:00 (or agreed time with RUSU)
Location Bowen St/Alumni Courtyard (depending on availability of spaces)

Club Name: RMIT Oxfam
Event Organiser: Mariah Murphy
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Background
The event is to acknowledge ‘Close the Gap’ Day. Close the Gap is a campaign by a coalition of health and community organisations, prominently including Oxfam Australia. It occurs in March every year since launching in 2006. The main tenet of the Close the Gap campaign is the desire to close the gap between the life of expectancy of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, a gap that is a startling 10-17 years according to Oxfam (2015). Beyond this however, Close the Gap aims to also bring attention to and end the differences in health, social issues and education between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The complexity of these issues require the cooperation of Australians, the governments, educational facilities, health services, and so on in order to ensure the success of this campaign.

Proposal
The event in question is to raise awareness about these issues, promote change and reconciliation. The university setting is an ideal opportunity and space to talk about these issues, and bring awareness and understanding to the student body. The RMIT Oxfam Club acknowledge that the students of RMIT University are the future of Australia. Many of students will most likely go on to be tomorrows lawmakers, advertisers, human rights advocates, politicians, engineers, scientists, social workers and so forth, meaning that there is benefit in making this campaign and issues known to them now. Many international students may know about this campaign, but many know little of the indigenous culture and this event can bring them more knowledge and appreciation for the oldest continuous culture in the world.
The main components of the event will be:

- Entertainment by a performance group, for example the Indigenous Hip Hop Project.
- Participation of the Oxfam Club and volunteers, handing out fliers and promoting information to the students.
- Collection of a hand print petition and a regular signatory petition.
- Coordination with RUSU for the chill n grill

Additional components of the event yet to be confirmed:

- Diversification of food offered at the Chill n Grill, so as to be themed with close the gap. Some options are an indigenous food truck or jams/spread/spices native to Australia (Bushtuckershop 2015). This is pending discussions with RUSU to ascertain what is can be achieved.
- Perhaps a speaker from RUSU, RMIT Oxfam or Ngarara Willim.

The event is not academically assessed or required, will involve RMIT staff from at least the Ngarara Willim Centre –but hopefully other staff choose to attend.

The estimated attendance is difficult to guess (~1000 for chill n grill usually) as it will depend on promotion, interest and foot traffic (which depends on location). It would be expected that the event would be an ongoing event. The target audience is staff, RMIT domestic students and international students.

The proposed location is Bowen Street –as this is central. This is pending discussions with RUSU regarding availability of spaces.

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Proposed method of advertising: mailing list, posters, facebook, other, catalyst and RUSU website pending agreement from RUSU).

Funding amount sought: $1500.0 (see attached quote, note that initial amount quoted was $2035, but has been reduced to $1500).

The funding will pay for only the entertainment by the IHHP group, as this has been quoted as $1500*

RMIT Oxfam believe this event should receive extra funding from RUSU as the students of RMIT should be aware of this issue and carry knowledge of indigenous culture/s into their professional and personal futures. As the club cannot afford the performers without it, this funding for this performance is vital. Without the performance, the event would be quite lacklustre by lacking a special attraction. Additionally the performance group will be culturally relevant to the campaign and benefit students by giving them an experience of indigenous culture (Indigenous Hip Hop Projects 2015) in a new and exciting way. The indigenous hip hop group is lively and will entertain as well as grab the attention of students towards this social justice issue and give it the attention it has not been given in the past.
Additionally this event will bring attention to, promote and advance the image that RMIT (and RUSU) are diverse, modern and culturally sensitive institutions, qualities which make RMIT stand out. These are particularly important qualities when considering the under-representation of indigenous students in universities. These may also be attractive qualities to international students who wish to see a more evident acceptance of cultural diversity in the study space.

While RMIT Oxfam are aware that there is an indigenous club recently formed on campus, and that the Ngarara Willim Centre has operated for some time, we believe that this has the potential to be a very unique event that the Indigenous Club may not be capable of organising so quickly as it has only started so recently and additionally, the Ngarara Willim Centre has the primary focus of making university studies attainable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As reconciliation is about non-indigenous Australia reaching out to Indigenous Australia, this event is important as it acknowledges that young non-indigenous Australians are aware and care about this cause.

Lastly this event is well timed, it is 2 weeks after O-week, when the initial discourse in scheduling and such has subsided a bit, and will give good momentum for the first semester. Additionally Triple J recently partnered with AIME (mentorship organisation for indigenous students) for triple J’s hottest 100 which is announced on Australia Day, so this Close the Gap dialogue is current and topical. Adding on to this it is also the tenth year anniversary of Close the Gap making the event all the more relevant and special!!

References


Bushtuckershop 2015, Rare Native Herbs and Spices, Bushtuckershop, <http://www.bushtuckershop.com/collections/rare-native-herbs-spices>