Thursday the 17th of March marks Close the Gap Day. Close the Gap is a campaign for Indigenous health equality. The campaign’s goal is to close the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.

Here are some key findings from the 2016 Close the Gap report:

- The target to halve the gap in child mortality by 2018 is on track
- The target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031 is not on track
- The target to halve the gap in children completing Year 12 by 2020 is on track
- The target to halve the gap in employment by 2018 is not on track

By being part of the campaign we can make sure that by 2030 any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child born in this country has the same opportunity as other Australian children to live a long, healthy and happy life.

Maari Ma Health will be hosting an event at the Primary Health Care Service on Thursday the 17th of March from 10am to 1pm to raise awareness about the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and the health of other Australians. Entertainment, food, activities and resources will be provided on the day so come and join us and help close the gap!

Easter Closure

Our Regional Office and Primary Health Care Service will be closed from Friday the 25th of March and on Monday the 28th of March. Our services will re-open on Tuesday the 29th of March at 9am.

Maari Ma Health would like to wish you and your family a very happy and safe Easter. Please take care if travelling during this time. We hope to see you and your family after the break.
In this issue we have a special birthday wish for one of our Elders.

Happy Birthday to **Steven Kennedy** who turned 51 on the 5th of February.

Congratulations Steven, and best wishes from everyone at Maari Ma.

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Maari Ma would like to welcome a few new bubs into the community this month.

Congratulations to **Lyndsey Ward** and big **Danielle Coombe** on the safe arrival of their baby boy **Axle Coombe**. Axle was born on the 2nd of February, weighing in at 3365 grams and with a length of 51.5cm.

Congratulations to **Tamara Brache** and **Jeffery Harvey** on the safe arrival of their first bundle of joy **Jebb Harvey**. Jebb was born on the 4th of February at 8:37pm, weighing in at 4400 grams and with a length of 52.5cm.

Congratulations to **Sharemelle Dennis** and proud big brother **Antwon** on the safe arrival of baby boy **Trystan Dennis**. Trystan was born on the 25th of February, weighing in at 3655 grams.

**Kate Pittaway** and **Lyndon Pace** had a little surprise last month as their baby girl arrived just over 3 weeks early. **Ariah Coral Pace** was born on the 26th of February at 2:07pm, weighing in at a tiny 2630 grams and with a length of 47.5cm.

A big thank you to **Tamara Jones**, **Bryn Stables** and **Tarnee Tester** for the support they offered these women and their families. Maari Ma would like to wish all of you all the very best.

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Sharlee Wilson had a belly cast done for a keepsake of her pregnancy. Sharlee is due to have her bundle of joy on the 12th of March. She has been attending Maari Ma for her prenatal care and has been seeing Community Midwife, **Helen Freeman** and Aboriginal Health Practitioner, **Tarnee Tester**.

We wish Sharlee all the best for the safe arrival of her bub this month.

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**What’s On?**

**Close the Gap Day**
Thursday the 17th of March from 10am—1pm at the Primary Health Care Service.

**Easter Weekend**
Friday the 25th of March—Monday the 28th of March

**Healthy Start Playgroup**
10:30am—1pm
Fridays at the Maari Ma Child and Family Building
(Not on during the school holidays)

**After school cooking group**
3:30pm—4:30pm Mondays & Thursdays in the community kitchen at Maari Ma Health
(Not on during the school holidays)

**Cooking group for Parents**
10:30am—12:30pm
Thursdays (before Playgroup) at the Maari Ma Child and Family Building
(Not on during the school holidays)
To celebrate Healthy Weight Week last month, Maari Ma held a number of activities for staff and the community across the region. We kick started the week by giving away vegetable baskets on Monday at the Primary Health Care Service. This was a huge success with all 30 baskets being snapped up before 11am.

Tuesday was healthy snack day—where a basket full of healthy snack options that people may not have tasted before were available for the taking. These were also a hit with all 30 being taken home and people reporting that “they were a great idea!”

On the Thursday the smoothie bike made an appearance for a fun afternoon of making healthy smoothies while getting a cardio workout! The kids at After School Cooking Group loved this healthy snack option and were very creative in the smoothies they created (well done kids!).

To celebrate the end of Healthy Weight Week, we held a healthy community breakfast in our community kitchen. We had approximately 50 people participate in our healthy breakfast, and surprisingly fruit and yoghurt was the most popular choice! Other options available on the day were scrambled eggs, roasted tomatoes, mushrooms, avocado, toast with a variety of spreads, a selection of yoghurts, fruits and cereals.

Menindee and Wilcannia stuck with the basket theme during the week and gave out healthy breakfast, snack and vegetable baskets. In Wilcannia the baskets were advertised on the radio and all 45 went within 1 hour! In Menindee all 30 baskets were taken in one morning.

Thank you to all of the staff who were on board with this health event and thank you to the community for your support.

“Got my check, just for the health of it!”

Introduction of the Maari Ma Youth Health promotional wear

All children in the Youth Health age group (9-18 years) will receive a promotional item when they have their health check completed at Maari Ma. These include leggings or a cap.

The feedback from the kids and the parents/carers indicate that they are VERY impressed. The kids are loving the merchandise.
Sober Selfie Cricket Day

A “Sober Selfie” cricket day was held in Wilcannia last month. The Boomerangs and the Warriors came together for a 20/20 match that was supported by Good Sports to promote alternative and healthy solutions for weekend socializing and celebrations without drugs or alcohol.

Approximately 100 people were part of the event. Kalynda Powell, Peter Crossing and Dana Newman represented Maari Ma at the game and ensured that all of the players were kept hydrated during the game. Fruit was provided as a healthy snack and the smoothie bike also made an appearance.

Team Flukes won the game over Team Unlucky, 78-76 runs with only 4 balls remaining.

Thank you to everyone who attended this event!

Having problems with your landlord?

If you rent the home you live in, there are rules about what you can and must do. Most people understand they have to pay rent, and must not deliberately damage the home.

But when you rent a home, you also have rights. For example, the owner of the home is not allowed to turn up to inspect it without warning, or ask you to leave without adequate notice (and it does not matter if the owner is a person, or a social housing company).

But don’t worry, trouble with your landlord is one of those everyday problems that a free lawyer can help you with.

Legal Aid NSW and your local tenancy advice service give free legal advice to help you work out what to do.

For example, if you have asked the landlord to do repairs and they don’t do them, you can apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. You will have to explain what repairs are needed and when you first asked for them. It is a good idea to bring photos. If the Tribunal agrees, they can order the landlord to do the repairs and drop your rent a bit for the period when the repairs weren’t being done.

But if you don’t pay your rent, the landlord can also go to the Tribunal to have you evicted. They must first send you a Notice of Termination. That will say that you must move out by a certain date. If you want to stay, you should continue to pay your rent and try to repay the arrears.

If you do not move out, the landlord can then apply to the Tribunal. The Tribunal will inform you of the date of your hearing and you should always go to the hearing.

The Tribunal will ask why you are in arrears and what you have tried to do to fix it. They will also want to hear why it might be difficult for you to move out. This might be because your kids will have to move schools, or that it has been hard to find another house.

The Tribunal may still order you to move out, but it may give you more time. You must not ignore the Tribunal’s decision, but you can discuss your concerns with a lawyer.

Legal Aid NSW gives free legal advice on everyday issues at Broken Hill and Wilcannia on the second Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of every month.

You can also contact New England & Western Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service (NEWTAAS):
5 Chloride Street, Broken Hill. Phone: 1800 836 268
About Australian Hearing

Australian Hearing helps children, teens and young adults up to 26 years of age improve their hearing.

Our services and hearing aids are provided by the Government at no cost, apart from a small annual fee for batteries and hearing aid repairs.

Each year, around 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are fitted with hearing aids for the first time.

“Without good hearing, our children will have impaired pathways in life.”
-Dr Ngiare Brown

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

Is your child’s hearing OK?

All babies’ hearing is checked at birth because a small number are born with hearing loss. Finding it early makes a big difference. If baby needs a second test it’s important to have that done.

Ear infections (‘glue ear’ or ‘runny ear’) are common. They are often painless. It can be hard to tell if a child has one. But it’s important to know because they cause hearing loss that lasts for months or years.

This hearing loss happens when babies and young children are learning to listen, and to understand and speak their language.

Hearing well is also really important for children to learn their own stories about family and culture.

How to spot ear troubles

Because ear infections are hard to spot, ask the health service to check your child’s ears every visit. Always keep an eye on your child’s ear health and hearing. Look for these things:

- At 18 months old: Not yet saying simple words like ‘Mama’
- At 3 years: Not yet saying short sentences like ‘It’s a dog’
- At 5 years: Other people can’t understand them easily

What can you see?

- A constant runny or crusty nose
- Sore, runny, crusty or smelly ears

How are they hearing?

At 6 months old or older:
- Not looking towards sounds you can hear
- They have to watch your face to understand you
- They say ‘What?’ often

How are they speaking?

What to do next

Tell us at Maari Ma if you are concerned about your child’s ear health or hearing.

If your child’s ear troubles last more than 3 to 4 months, ask your doctor at Maari Ma about having a full hearing test.

After this, referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor and Australian Hearing may be the next step.

Australian Hearing: how do we help?

We help work out whether hearing aids are the right thing for your child by:

- Testing your child’s hearing and finding out about their hearing problems
- Talking with you about whether hearing aids are the right thing for your child
- Helping you choose hearing aids and teaching you and your child how to use them.
- Seeing your child every year, and whenever you need help.

ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) Specialist

Maari Ma has a visiting ENT Surgeon who visits the Primary Health Care Service every 3 months.

If you are concerned about your hearing or your child’s hearing, please let your GP know so they can refer you to see the ENT surgeon.

If you are a Menindee, Wilcannia or Ivanhoe patient you can still be referred to this service, however you need to attend the Broken Hill clinic for your appointment.

Dr Rowan Valentine will next visit in April and Dr Sam Boase will visit in July and October.
Maari Ma would like to welcome five new staff members to our service this month.

**Renee Powell** is our new Office Manager and comes to us from the Western NSW PHN. She has a Diploma in Business Administration and is looking forward to her new role with us. Welcome Renee!

**Thad Nagas** and **Lavinia Henderson** joined us last month as part of our Lead Team. Thad is our Field Officer and spent 15 years on the mines in Broken Hill as a Boilermaker. After a major accident on the mines he decided to study a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Health Management). Thad has previously been involved with projects such as the Sewerage and Water Program, Housing for Health and Healthy Housing Worker Programs during his time with NSW Health and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

Lavinia is our Community Worker and has a degree in Education. She previously worked as a Primary School Teacher and Multilit Coordinator. Her new role is to engage with families who have children under the age of 5 to assess the risk of Lead Poisoning and to find ways to minimize children’s exposure to Lead in Broken Hill.

Welcome to our two new GP registrars who will be with us for the next year. **Jhavevana Useelananthan** and **Belinda Lorenzo** joined us last month and are settling in well.
2016 Far West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Prize

The Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery hosted the opening of the 2016 Far West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Prize last month. Maari Ma is a sponsor of the event and this year approximately 150 people came to the opening which is the largest number ever!

The exhibition is open until March the 13th and will then go on tour to Tibbooburra, White Cliffs, Menindee, Wilcannia, Wentworth and possibly Ivanhoe. This year there were three categories—3D works, 2D works and a young artist award.

ICL (Indigenous Community Links)

Are you looking for information about Transport?
Preschool? Housing? Aged care?
Legal aid? Job services?

Did you know that Maari Ma has compiled a wealth of information about local mainstream services which you can access via the computers in the Primary Health Care Service waiting room? You can also ask staff at the Regional Office for assistance with information.

Feel free to come in and look up the information for yourself (just ask the staff at the front desk if you need any help) or come in or call 8082 9888 (Regional Office).
Preventing and Managing Chronic Disease

**GP Review**
During the year you should see your doctor to see if your GPMP or medication needs to be changed. You may also need some tests.

**START:** Your cycle of care starts with a twelve monthly CTG/IPPI sign up. This includes an ATSI Health Check and followup by a health worker.

**Followup care**
Our health workers will visit you to talk about your health and see how you are going with your medications.

**GPMP & Medication**
You will be looked after by our Keeping Well team and other specialists like our dieticians, podiatrists and eye specialists. The Keeping Well team and pharmacist will help you with your medications which could include a Home Medication Review and a Webster Pack.

**You should see your doctor regularly and develop a care plan to manage your health. This plan is called a GPMP.**

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**Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service**

**“Improving Aboriginal health and closing the gap”**

**About MMPHCS**
Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service aims to provide culturally appropriate health services to Aboriginal people living in Broken Hill and surrounding communities.

We are governed by an all Aboriginal Board of Directors, who are deeply committed to providing an holistic approach to Aboriginal health that includes physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions.

Our health workers, doctors and nurses are committed to providing you with the highest quality care. If you ever feel that this has not been achieved, please contact the manager, Kendy Rogers, on 08 8082 9777 to discuss the matter.

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**Regular services**
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Health workers
- Child health nurses
- Midwives
- Dietician
- Primary mental health workers
- Alcohol and other drug staff
- Psychologist
- Kids dentist
- Adult dentist
- Women’s health
- Pharmacist
- Social Worker

**Occasional services**
- Heart specialist
- Kidney specialist
- Diabetes specialist
- Child health specialist
- Eye specialist
- Alcohol specialist
- Smoking specialist
- Podiatrist

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Maari Ma : Winner of Far West Business Excellence Awards for our successful service to the Aboriginal communities of the Far West.

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