On Friday the 25th of September, the official opening of Maari Ma’s new Primary Health Care Service was held at 439 Argent St. The opening started with a welcome to country by our Chair of the Board, Maureen O’Donnell, and acknowledgement of our Elders, past and present. Maureen explained to community members and representatives from different organisations what Maari Ma does and how far we have come in the last 20 years. From operating out of the historic “Silver King” pub to now having our very own purpose-built health facility, we have a lot to celebrate in our achievements helping Aboriginal people to close the gap.

After the formalities ended, tours through the building were provided by Primary Health Care staff, and a BBQ lunch and activities were held at the back of the building.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in making such a wonderful day happen and thank you to our community and others who attended.
On Saturday the 26th of September, Maari Ma Health celebrated its 20 year anniversary with a fabulous ball that was held at the Broken Hill Civic Centre. On arrival we were welcomed with photo boards of old and current staff members, and community members. The centre was decorated beautifully with a community theme that represented all of Maari Ma’s region of service in the Far West of NSW. Each table had a different design with various trees, sand, twigs and other bush items collected from Broken Hill, Dareton, Menindee, Wilcannia, Ivanhoe, Balranald and Tibooburra.

Our wonderful entertainment for the night was provided by Adelaide band, Pulse and singer/guitarist Paige Renee Court. Our MC was Kevin Kropinyeri and he did a great job of making everyone laugh. Photographers were locals Phil and Helen Grossi from Still Memories Digital Photography.

A big thank you to everyone who was involved in organising the ball—a lot of effort went into ensuring everyone had a good night. Thank you to our sponsors, especially Australian Hearing who sponsored our prizes for Most Elegant Lady, Best Dressed Gentleman, and Belle and Beau of the Ball.

And one last thank you to the community for attending!
Maari Ma’s 20th Anniversary Ball
A Tribute to Gloria King

Wings was established in the late 1980s to provide a safe environment for young people in Wilcannia aged 5 to 18 to enjoy themselves and discover opportunities for education, employment, sports and personal development. Operating from a youth centre in Wilcannia, it is a service where issues can either be addressed or referred.

In February of 2009 the new building was officially re-opened as the Gloria King Memorial Youth Drop-In Centre, honouring elder Gloria King who made a great contribution to Wilcannia and Aboriginal people throughout far western NSW.

As Maari Ma Health celebrates its 20 year anniversary this year, we would like to pay tribute to the late Gloria King for all of her contributions to our community.

National Ride2Work Day

National Ride2Work Day 2015 will be held on Wednesday 14th October.

National Ride2Work Day is the largest celebration of commuter riding in Australia. Held annually in October, the day celebrates the benefits of riding to work and brings together the communities that support it.

The main objective of the day is to normalise the idea of riding to work and encourage more Australians to ride to work on a regular basis. It encourages people who have never ridden to work before to give it a go, and it allows frequent riders to stay motivated and encourage their workmates to get involved.
October is Mental Health Month and this year the theme is “value your mind”. We would like you to think about how mental health exists in your daily life and encourage you to make your mental health a priority.

On Monday the 19th of October we invite you to participate in some mindfulness activities led by our mental health staff from 10am-12pm and 1.30pm-3.30pm in our meeting room at the Primary Health Care Service.

Sean Choolburra will also be visiting the region during October for mental health month. Sean is an Aboriginal performer who plays the didgeridoo, sings, dances, acts, writes music and he is also a comedian.

**Sean Choolburra’s shows are as follows:**

**Broken Hill**
Wednesday the 14th of October at the West Football Club from 5pm (healthy dinner provided)

**Wilcannia**
Thursday the 15th of October at the Wilcannia Town Hall from 5pm (healthy dinner provided)

**Menindee**
Friday the 16th of October at the Menindee Town Hall from 5pm (healthy dinner provided)

Maari Ma is involved in a new project called **ABORIGINAL ALCOHOL AND PREGNANCY PROJECT** which will raise awareness of dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and the harm of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) to Aboriginal women and their unborn child.

The campaign aims to engage partners and families of Aboriginal women, as well as health professionals and key stakeholders providing services to pregnant women, to help raise awareness and understanding of FASD, and knowledge of where women can get needed support.

Please join us to share information on this issue in Broken Hill on the 29th of October. A BBQ lunch will be provided. Please keep an eye out for more information about this event.

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**R U OK? Day**

R U OK? Day (also Suicide Prevention Day) was held on Thursday the 10th of September. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians under the age of 44.

The R U OK? Movement is calling on Australia to take a global lead in preventing suicide by making more effort to have regular, meaningful conversations with anyone who might be struggling. Maari Ma staff joined the national day of action dedicated to reminding people to regularly check in with family and friends by wearing bright yellow t-shirts and joining Lifeline Broken Hill for the “Out of the Shadows and into the Light” walk.

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If you are struggling and need support or even a listening ear, Maari Ma Health can help you. We have a number of mental health workers at our Primary Health Care Service. Please see your GP for a referral to our services.
National Children’s Week

This year National Children’s Week will run from Monday the 26th of October to Friday the 30th of October. In 2015 the theme for Children’s Week is “Children’s Rights are Human Rights” celebrating 25 years of the UN Rights of the Child.

Children’s Week celebrates the right of children to enjoy childhood. It is also a time for children to demonstrate their talents, skills and abilities. Play and the role it plays in the learning of children in our community is highly important to us at Maari Ma Health (Early Years Program) and we take every opportunity to promote its worth. In particular closing the gap for Indigenous children and ensuring greater outcomes for learning alongside their peers.

The events run in different communities focus the attention of the wider community on children and what’s important to them. Examples include education (in general), language and literacy, health, sport and recreation, the arts, science, as well as children’s cultural, social and emotional needs.

There will be a number of events held during this week in Broken Hill for children and families. Reading will be available in the Town Square, Children’s Day will be held at Sturt Park which will include activities, food and drinks, and Maari Ma Healthy Start excursions to local preschools will be offered to community members.

More details coming soon.

National Nutrition Week is from the 11th—17th of October.

The theme this year is Pick Right. Feel Bright! This is about getting all Australians to eat more fruit and vegetables every day.

Whether they’re fresh, frozen or canned, eating more fruit and vegetables is one of the easiest things we can all do for better health and wellbeing.

Fruits and vegetables burst with flavour and they’re packed full of important vitamins and minerals, disease-fighting antioxidants and gut-healthy fibre. And they’re so versatile. They can be eaten raw, cooked, poached, baked, mashed, grated, chopped, diced, sliced - you name it!

Maari Ma Health will be celebrating National Nutrition Week from Monday the 12th of October until Friday the 16th of October. The following activities will be available at the Primary Health Care Service:

Monday - Healthy Breakfast Come and make your own healthy breakfast with a choice of cereals, fruits and yoghurts to start your week off the right way

Tuesday - Low fat/Healthy recipes Cookbook giveaways and recipe ideas

Wednesday - Healthy Snack Stall Come to taste and find out about healthy snacks, perfect for a lunch box or to take to work

Thursday - How much sugar is in your drink? Free water giveaway

Friday - Exercising off foods How long does it take to exercise off your unhealthy food choices?
Australian Hearing

Teamwork builds better health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Both Maari Ma and Australian Hearing are interested in helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people improve their access to health care, which is why they have teamed up to better service the local Broken Hill community.

Australian Hearing’s national network of hearing centres includes more than 135 permanently staffed centres and we make regular visits to over 220 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in all parts of the country.

Our partnership with Maari Ma

Australian Hearing and Maari Ma have a long history of partnership and recently they worked together during Hearing Awareness Week, a national awareness campaign to get the word out about hearing health. Australian Hearing provided free hearing checks at the Primary Health Care Service to Broken Hill residents as part of its ‘Big Aussie Hearing Check’ – an initiative to get Aussies to take up the challenge of getting their hearing checked. They also demonstrated assistive listening devices and provided morning tea. (photographs supplied).

Australian Hearing was with Maari Ma for NAIDOC week and most recently was delighted to attend the official opening of the new building on Friday 25th September, and enjoyed the 20th Anniversary Ball on Saturday 26th September as proud sponsors.

Hearing health training for health care workers.

At Australian Hearing we provide onsite training in Broken Hill for staff and doctors about hearing health, hearing aid care and demonstrate assistive listening devices to staff. We work closely with staff to ensure the clients attend the appointments for hearing tests, follow up treatment/reports, fit and maintain hearing aids. This is for children over three years of age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders over the age of 50 and pensioner concession card holders.

How can Australian Hearing help?

We provide the following services:

- Hearing assessment
- Selecting and fitting hearing devices
- Regular hearing checks to monitor any changes in hearing levels
- Training to improve listening and communication skills
- Ongoing care and device repair services
- Home visits for those unable to travel to a clinic due to a medical condition (doctor’s certificate required).

Australian Hearing also provides:

- Hearing tests—fitting of hearing aids and support for adults, babies and children
- Support to schools where many children have hearing problems
- Hearing health meetings with community members

Samantha Harkus, Australian Hearing’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Manager says that middle ear disease is particularly common for all children and is one of the most common reasons they visit their doctor.

For more information please talk to your GP at Maari Ma’s Primary Health Care Service, or contact Australian Hearing Broken Hill on 08 8084 4200, or visit www.hearing.com.au
Maari Ma Health is giving away free shirts to clients who have their ATSI Health Check and are up to date with their cycle of care.

ATSI Health Checks are important and you should have one every year. This health assessment was developed to ensure that our health care system is meeting your needs and the health check itself promotes early detection, diagnosis and intervention for common and treatable conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Once you have completed your ATSI Health Check with a health worker and your GP, please go to the reception desk with your orange form and ask for a shirt in your size. We may not have your size in stock, but we can place an order for you.

If you are due for your ATSI Health Check, book an appointment with us today on 8082 9777.

Sir Madam Salon visits Broken Hill for the Broken Heel Festival

Last month Broken Hill celebrated the 21st birthday of the classic Australian film Priscilla Queen of the Desert. The Broken Heel Festival was a weekend of fun and entertainment that included a parade of stunning Drag Queens and Drag Kings from around the nation, shows, speeches and a very cool pop-up hair salon supported by Maari Ma Health.

Sir Madam Salon is a pop-up hair salon that invites community members to their space to style each other’s hair and be part of salon chatter about fashion, art, culture, gender and remote Australia.

We offered our old Child and Family Health Building as a space for the pop-up salon and the hairdressers Kate, Ben and Mel were pleased to welcome many community members and some Maari Ma staff into the salon. On the right there are some photos from the salon.

Thank you for your visit Sir Madam Salon!
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.

Follow up 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.

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.

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

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.

Maari Ma Primary Health Newsletter