

MAARI MA'S MOBILE CLINIC



The colourful van is identifiable in any community. Pictured on its inaugural remote community visit are (left to right) Community Support Worker, Kevin 'Buddy' Bates, RN Eileen Adams, GP Dr Stephen Gaggin, RN Heather Curyer and Primary Health Care Nurse Thuy Huynh.

The first remote community visit of Maari Ma's new mobile clinic has been very encouraging. The clinic was trialled at Wilcannia for one week and in that time 51 residents accessed the mobile service with 60 per-cent being people who did not regularly attend medical services. Of those residents 42 Annual Health Checks were conducted including blood tests which resulted in a number of significant clinical findings and interventions. The van has returned to Wilcannia since the initial visit for client follow-up. By using the mobile van in remote communities Maari Ma is aiming to access people who would not normally go to traditional health

services yet are most likely to suffer poor health outcomes.

"While it is early days yet, we are confident that by providing this mobile service we will be able to improve the rate of residents undertaking regular health checks and identify problems early thereby reducing the incidence of chronic disease" Bob Davis, Maari Ma CEO.

As well as annual health checks Maari Ma will look at taking the van to specific community events and using it to target particular activities such as annual Fluvax immunisations, Diabetes Awareness Week and World No Tobacco Day.

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MAARI MA HEALTH
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CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

OVHS SET TO GAIN MOMENTUM

Each year Maari Ma continues to work on improving and increasing its number of Outback Vascular Health Service (OVHS) clinics. Additional support provided to these specialist chronic disease clinics has meant more can be held which has increased the average number of patients seen each year. The trend is set to continue gauging future projections (Table One) and with this in mind it could be expected that there will be a corresponding improvement in health outcomes. There already has been with blood glucose levels which have shown improvements in the past three years as evident in Table Two.

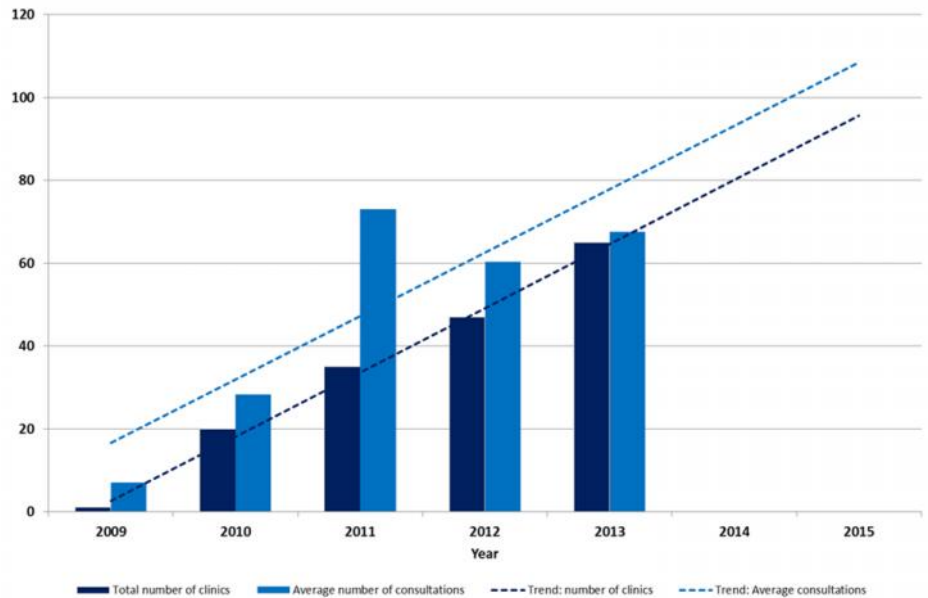


Table One: Total number of clinics and average number of consultations per year, 2009-2013 with forecasting to 2015.

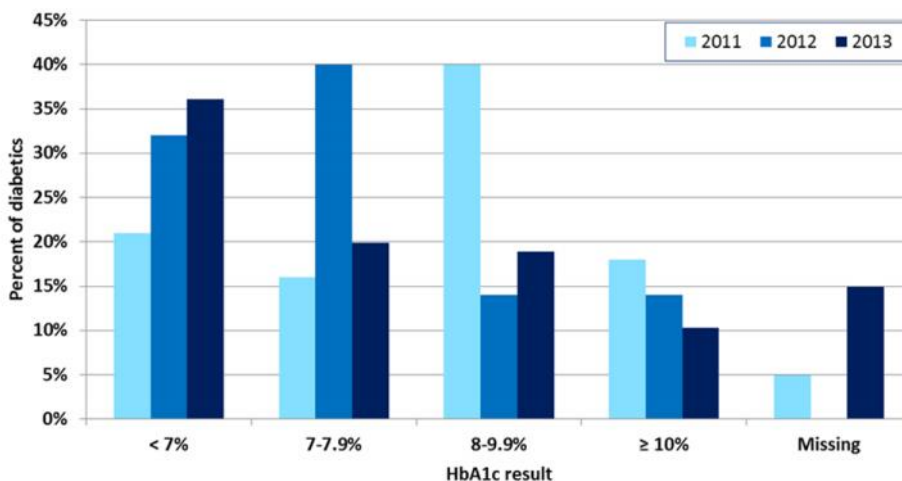


Table Two: Improvement in clinical measures for clients with chronic conditions.

For people with diabetes, Haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) is an important measure of blood glucose control. Ideally a diabetic should aim to have an HbA1c of <7%. Improved diet, compliance with medications and timely commencement of insulin all help to reduce the HbA1c level. Table Two shows the change in HbA1c measured in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and indicates a clear shift towards lower HbA1c measures.

The OVHS is a collaborative program between Maari Ma and the George Institute for Global Health with institutional support through partnership with Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The service aims to build the capacity of local primary care providers and in particular to support GPs and allied health staff in the management of vascular disease related chronic and complex illness. OVHS primarily services the Aboriginal community in Broken Hill and the remote towns of Wilcannia, Menindee and Ivanhoe. Medical specialists include a cardiologist, renal physician and a multi-disciplinary endocrinology team who visit the four remote towns every three months for face to face clinics. Support clinics have been added over the past two years and include smoking cessation specialists, exercise stress tests and echocardiographs. Recently Maari Ma has complemented the OVHS with a pain management physiotherapist.

STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Maari Ma is working towards accreditation with White Ribbon Australia - the only national, male led campaign to end men's violence against women and globally the largest. A working party is being established to progress the application which will take between 12-18 months to complete and includes attendance at a workshop in Sydney, self-assessment and auditing. Taking a lead role in the application is Primary Health Worker, Jamie Billing – "Violence against women, whether it occurs in or beyond the workplace, impacts on the health and safety of women at work, their wellbeing and their productivity. It may also impact negatively on the reputation of the organisation. Maari Ma is committed to being a workplace that prevents and responds to violence against women" Jamie said.



Primary Health Worker, Jamie Billing, is taking a lead role in Maari Ma's White Ribbon accreditation. *"Men's violence against women is not just a women's issue. It's a social issue, a health issue, a men's issue".*

AFTER SCHOOL COOKING CLASS



Maari Ma's After School Cooking Classes are now into their second year at the Broken Hill Primary Health Child and Family Unit and continue to increase in popularity. They are held once or twice a week during the school term with up to 15 children working together to make a healthy snack. The classes not only teach children to read recipes and cook – they learn about nutrition and are asked questions as they work. The classes also teach skills of cooperation and cleaning up.

" Learning how to prepare healthy meals is an important skill in life, and the earlier children start the better. By acquiring this invaluable skill, children can also gain an understanding of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet" Healthy Lifestyle Worker, Shannon Oates, who coordinates the classes.

Pictured left: Making fruit muesli slices was a treat. All of the children had turns in pouring the ingredients into the mixing bowl and discussing each ingredient used but the favourite task was eating the cooked result.

NAIDOC

CELEBRATING HISTORY, CULTURE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Maari Ma's NAIDOC celebrations occurred throughout the month of July providing the opportunity for staff to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as highlight key services to communities. Events included participation in the NAIDOC Week Family Fun Day at Broken Hill's Sturt Park, a community get together in Wilcannia, a NAIDOC themed Wilcannia Community Dinner

and school based nutrition education sessions. At all events staff engaged with community members and answered questions, and there were lots of giveaways and healthy food to sample with stewed quandongs a feature this year. Being out in the community raising awareness and educating children in schools about nutrition is an important area of Maari Ma's work.



Despite a cold day there was a very good crowd at Sturt Park enjoying the NAIDOC Week Family Fun Day. Maari Ma had five trestle tables set up with information and staff on hand to engage with the community. The tables were very popular and Maari Ma mostly ran out of resources by lunchtime. WINGS children (top right) were bussed to Broken Hill from Wilcannia to take part in the celebrations and all had a fun day out.



Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 339 BROKEN HILL NSW 2880 Phone: 08 8082 9888 Fax: 08 8082 9889 / 08 8082 9890

www.maarima.com.au