

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITIES



*Pictured on the left, Bila Muuji Chair, Jamie Newman, who is also CEO of the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, and Maari Ma CEO, Bob Davis, are working collaboratively during the transition from Medicare Locals to Primary Health Networks to ensure that the best possible outcome for their communities is achieved. Bila Muuji is a regional grouping of Aboriginal Medical Services and includes Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble, Dareton, Dubbo, Orange, Wellington and Walgett.*

Maari Ma is working collaboratively with Bila Muuji to ensure the continuation of health care for people with chronic disease currently supported by Medical Locals. As of June 2015, Medicare Locals will cease to be funded and will be replaced by a smaller number of larger Primary Health Networks as the bodies responsible for preventative health and health planning. The geographic boundaries for the PHNs have been drawn up with 17 Medicare Local regions in New South Wales to be

replaced by nine PHNs. The Western PHN will cover 36 local government areas and two thirds of the state. Six different Medicare Locals are in that one area as are three local health districts. PHNs will work directly with general practitioners, other primary care providers, secondary care providers and hospitals. The Federal Government is expected to reveal more about the PHNs and how they will function later this year.

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# FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Work on Maari Ma's new Primary Health Care Service in Broken Hill is progressing well with a planned February completion date. The state and federally funded multi million dollar redevelopment project in Argent Street will provide more space for an increasing number of clients accessing services and additional primary health care programs. There is no disruption for clients with primary health care services continuing to be delivered at their current site until the new building is completed. While in Broken Hill during a recent trip, Assistant Minister for Health, Hon Senator Fiona Nash, took the opportunity to visit the construction site and was impressed with its size and the services that will be provided from there.

*Executive Assistant, Haylee Rogers and Manager Community Services and Programs, Justin Files gave Assistant Minister for Health, Hon Senator Fiona Nash a tour of the construction site.*



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## WINGS HOLIDAY PROGRAM

The September/October WINGS Drop in Centre school holiday program saw the largest number of children attend to date. A special Meet and Greet Day involving other service providers in Wilcannia attracted more than 70 children. The day included face painting, juggling ball making, arts and crafts as well as a soccer clinic with a special appearance from Football Federation South Australia Development Officer and ex-Adelaide United Player Cristiano dos Santos Rodrigues. WINGS promotes healthy and active lifestyles through focused approached program delivery. WINGS Youth Workers are assisted during the busy holiday programs by Save the Children workers.

*Wilcannia resident, Nieves Rivera, came to the Drop in Centre to conduct sewing classes with the children. During the first lesson the children made their own individual bags so they would have somewhere to put their unfinished work at the end of each day.*



# AWARD FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Maari Ma has been recognised in New South Wales for the work it has been doing with children. During 2014 National Child Protection Week, the “Play Your Part” awards were announced at Westmead Children’s Hospital, Sydney, by Minister for Family and Community Services, Gabrielle Upton. Maari Ma was one of two award winners in the state for its Early Years Project work helping to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal children in the far west. Ms. Upton said the ‘Play Your Part’ Awards, run by the National Association of Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) are an important way to acknowledge and applaud inspiring prevention initiatives. Maari Ma’s Early Years Project includes Healthy Start Playgroup, Little Kids and Books, an after school Cooking Group and the Early Years Discussion Group – a group made up of early childhood educators and carers across the region.

*Community Safety Research Project Officer, Claudett Dixon, accepted the award from Minister for Family and Community Services, The Hon. Gabrielle Upton at Westmead Children’s Hospital, Sydney.*



# HIPPY TUTORS START WORKING WITH FAMILIES



*Latesha Adams, pictured at Playgroup, is one of two HIPPY tutors Maari Ma has employed to work with up to 25 Broken Hill families to support their children to be ready for school with literacy, numeracy and writing skills. Studies show that literacy has been strongly linked to a person’s health outcomes and Maari Ma has been working to incorporate literacy into its early childhood programs for a number of years.*

Maari Ma’s preparation ahead of starting the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) has been extensive since being named the successful organisation to run the program in Broken Hill. Two HIPPY tutors have now started their work with local families to support their young children to be ready for school with literacy, numeracy and writing skills. Latesha Adams and Kerrie Williams used National HIPPY Week in September to introduce themselves to the families and took time at Maari Ma’s Playgroup to get to know the children. Regional data shows that Aboriginal children do not start kindergarten with the same level of literacy as their non-Aboriginal counterparts. HIPPY and Maari Ma’s other early literacy programs are working to improve these statistics - providing children with a good start at school is important to ensure positive outcomes for them later in life.

# B-U-NEAK—RAISING AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Maari Ma, Far West Local Health District, University Department of Rural Health and Centacare worked in partnership to give four communities the opportunity to showcase their talents during October Mental Health Month. The 'Deadly Factor' talent shows had the theme B-U-NEAK and were aimed at promoting mental health awareness. Celebrity, Luke Carroll was the special guest and MC at all of the events which were held at Dareton, Menindee, Wilcannia and Broken Hill. As well as introducing the performers, Luke incorporated jokes, provided encouragement and imparted mental health awareness messages in between the acts. A lot of resources were available at the shows as were Maari Ma staff to answer any questions on mental health issues.

*Right: Talented Australian television and film actor, Luke Carroll, spent time talking with community members, giving autographs and having his photo taken during the successful Deadly Factor talent shows promoting awareness of mental health.*



## CHILDREN'S WEEK



Children's Week was held during October and Maari Ma joined other local providers to raise awareness of the importance of the early years on a child's development by participating in a variety of activities. One of Maari Ma's activities was an excursion for Playgroup families to preschools to see the early learning options available in Broken Hill. Over the course of the day families were able to experience both the structured and non-structured components of preschool learning. They were also able to see the relative size of each preschool and the age range they covered.

*Left: Maari Ma Playgroup families enjoyed an excursion to Broken Hill preschools during Children's Week. Quality early childhood education and care, and early literacy are two of the social determinants of health.*



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