

CHILDREN'S WEEK AWARD



Members of the Early Years Discussion Group (EYDG) were recognised for the difference they make to the lives of children in the Far West region when they received a NSW Children's Week award at Government House in October. The EYDG won the Advocacy for Children award which was presented by NSW Governor, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd). The EYDG, which is facilitated by Maari Ma, was set up almost 10 years ago as a group of community-based children's services established to improve services for the benefit of all children across the region.

Pictured left at Government House in Sydney to accept the award are (left to right) Janette Jones, who works with Maari Ma and at Rainbow Preschool in Broken Hill, Maari Ma's Early Years Project Leader and EYDG Facilitator, Lesley Harvey and Pearl Ferguson, from Menindee Children's Services.



NSW Governor, David Hurley and Mrs Hurley are pictured with all of the award recipients. Governor Hurley commended the EYDG on their work and said the group was a wonderful example of organisations collaborating in the best interests of children.

Maari Ma has been successful in obtaining a new contract for another two cohorts of four and five year olds for the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) in Broken Hill from 2016 – 2018. Maari Ma started HIPPY last year initially recruiting two tutors—**Latesha Adams** and **Kerrie Williams** - who are currently working with 23 families in the five year program (they started last year as four year olds). There are 25 families in the four year program this year with new tutors **Barbara Grose** and **Lyndsey Ward**.

SECOND HIPPY CONTRACT AWARDED

YOUNG LEADER

Early Years Project Team Worker, **Callan Rogers**, has been selected into the Murdi Paaki Aboriginal Young Leaders Project and joins a number of Maari Ma employees who have had the opportunity to take part in the program in previous years. The Young Leaders Project provides leadership opportunities for young Aboriginal people across the 16 Murdi Paaki communities and has been very successful in helping young people to undertake further education, find employment (or if already employed, enhance their employment opportunities) and develop leadership skills. Another important aspect of the project is implementing succession planning in organisations so that there are young people who can step up into governance positions when others move out.



Murdi Paaki Chairman, Sam Jeffries (pictured left) and Maari Ma Board Director and Chair of the Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation, Des Jones are pictured with Callan at the Young Leaders conference in Cobar.



LEARNING ABOUT GOOD NUTRITION

Children at Menindee Central School had the chance to appreciate where their food comes from when they rolled up their sleeves and got planting. In a departure from their traditional Maari Ma cooking classes, the children had the opportunity to plant their own fruit trees. The activity taught them not only where their food comes from but also how to appreciate their natural resources. It was also a form of incidental exercise which increased their level of physical activity for the day. They started by working in teams to select the best position for the trees, taking into consideration the sunlight, flatness of the ground and whether the rain could water them. Then the gloves went on and they began emptying the potting mix into their pots and planting the trees. They finished off by watering in the plants and relaxing with some yoghurt and fruit in the playground.



MENTAL HEALTH MONTH



'Value Your Mind' - Pia Brady and Peter Crossing from Primary Care Specialist Services were among Maari Ma staff to help raise community awareness during Mental Health Month of the importance of improving mental, social and emotional wellbeing .

A number of activities were held for Mental Health Month in October aimed at increasing community awareness of mental illness and improving mental, social and emotional wellbeing for all. Maari Ma joined other service providers for events such as hosting free healthy meals and comedy performances by Sean Choolburra in Broken Hill and the region, and an awareness raising event at the Broken Hill Health Service. Maari Ma also provided community members with the opportunity to learn more about valuing their mind and in particular to learn about mindfulness at the Primary Health Care Service. A colouring in activity was available to help explain the mindfulness concept and as a source of relaxation. Some short animated videos on mindfulness, neuroplasticity and child development were also available for viewing, and staff had a table in the clinic waiting area with Mental Health Month promotional items to give away.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Maari Ma's new cohort of Primary Health Worker trainees has undertaken Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid training as part of their training requirements. They are now able to provide culturally appropriate assistance to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person who is developing a mental illness or who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The trainees learnt how to provide initial assistance until professional help is available.



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