



# Maari Ma Health Rounds

**ISSUE I**

**JUNE 2006**

## MAARI MA CELEBRATING TEN YEARS

Welcome to the first edition of Maari Ma Health Rounds - our new quarterly newsletter launched as we celebrate more than ten years since our establishment. The 'Rounds' will help keep you informed about the Corporation and what we're up to. It forms an important part of Maari Ma's Communications Strategy and adds to our website and my fortnightly email - 'You've Got Mail' (primarily for Maari Ma & Lower Sector staff). We hope you find our first edition informative and that you will enjoy doing the 'Rounds' with us in the coming months and years".

**Richard Weston**

## WILCANNIA HEALTH CHECK



More than 130 people aged over 15 participated in the first Adult Health Check to be held at Wilcannia. The Health Check, undertaken by Maari Ma staff ( pictured ) encourages early detection, diagnoses and intervention for common and treatable conditions. The checks were held over a fortnight and included dental check-ups, blood pressure checks, a blood test for glucose, lipid and cholesterol levels, hearing and vision tests, discussions on smoking and safe drinking, and social and emotional wellbeing.

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# About Maari Ma

Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation is an Aboriginal community controlled health organisation dedicated to improving the health of communities in the Far West region of New South Wales. Maari Ma was incorporated under the Aboriginal Councils of Association Act 1976 and was established in 1995 following extensive community consultation conducted by Sue Morey and Jack Best on behalf of the Murdi Paaki ATSIC Regional Council. Maari Ma built a strong partnership with the former Far West Area Health Service and continues to strengthen these ties with the newly formed greater Western Area Health Service. Maari Ma also enjoys strong alliances with Sydney University Department of Rural Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The Maari Ma Board of Directors comprises a democratically elected Aboriginal representative from each of the 7 larger communities in Maari Ma's catchment area. Directors are elected for three-year terms.

Maari Ma either directly employs or funds around 60 people across its region; 65% of these positions are held by Aboriginal people.

Maari Ma directly manages a budget in the vicinity of \$6m per annum, with the Lower Sector Management Team looking after the mainstream budget of around \$8.5m.



*Above: Maari Ma Board Chairman, Des Jones.*



**Chris Eastwood Director of Finance.** Chris was born in England and spent most of his youth in England & Scotland. After studying French & German at University he decided to become an accountant and qualified as a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland. Chris worked in Zambia, in Africa, for 2 years before joining Price Waterhouse. He stayed with the accounting firm for almost 20 years in Melbourne, Sydney and Papua New Guinea. He joined Maari Ma in 2003.



**Richard Weston Regional Director** Richard was born in Sydney but moved to Western Australia at a young age. He worked in both Perth and Port Headland in WA before venturing east to Broken Hill in 1996. He has worked in Indigenous employment and education programs and has a Bachelor's Degree in Business, with an Accounting major. Richard began working with Maari Ma in 1996 and has been with the Corporation ever since. His initial role was as a Project Officer. He progressed to become Aboriginal Health Coordinator and has been Regional Director for the past 5



**Dr Hugh Burke Public Health Physician.** Hugh has tertiary qualifications in medicine, health administration and public health. He has been working in the Far West for more than ten years and was the Director of Population Health for the Far West Area Health Service before joining Maari Ma. Hugh has been instrumental in establishing a range of visionary and innovative remote health programs across the Far West.

# Chronic Disease Strategy

“While prevention is better than cure, control is better than complication”

As the result of a strategic directive from the Maari Ma Board of Directors, The Maari Ma Chronic Disease Strategy was developed last year and is now the organisation’s key document and primary business. The strategy takes a whole of life-course approach as many of the conditions which lead to chronic disease start in childhood. It sees the diseases and their underlying factors as preventable, but also recognises that interventions are needed in those who have the diseases well before complications appear.

There are two programs - Healthy Start and Keeping Well. Healthy Start covers child and family health while Keeping Well covers adult health. The strategy addresses the prevention, early detection and best practice management of diabetes, hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, dyslipidaemia, chronic airways disease and renal

disease. This group of chronic diseases affects the entire population, as unhealthy lifestyles are an Australia-wide problem, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are particularly affected, and are more likely to have multiple chronic diseases.

Health care for people with chronic diseases is a mix of patient - and provider-initiated steps that need to be maintained over the patient's lifetime. The challenge is to create systems that support self care, link community health services with hospital services and link medical care with a public health approach. The strategy reflects the ongoing commitment by Maari Ma Aboriginal Health Corporation to work in partnership with the community and other agencies to encourage healthy living, to create health-promoting environments and to increase the capacity of communities to control their own health outcomes.

**Poor health status**



**Poor chronic disease profile**



**Maari Ma Health s Board directives**

Key Result Area 1: Improved health outcomes

Key Result Area 2: Community capacity building



<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy mothers and babies program</li> <li>• Immunisation</li> <li>• Oral health promotion</li> <li>• School based program for lifestyle risk factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking cessation and prevention programs</li> <li>• Physical activity, weight loss and nutrition programs</li> <li>• Brief interventions for lifestyle risk factors</li> </ul>
<b>Early detection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population list, recall system and standardised antenatal check and follow-up</li> <li>• Population list, recall system and standardised child health check and follow-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population list, recall system and standardised annual adult health check and follow-up</li> </ul>
<b>Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paediatrician clinics</li> <li>• Oral health clinics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disease register, recall system and standardised vascular health management protocol</li> <li>• Self management program</li> <li>• Non-government organisation sponsored community support groups</li> <li>• Complication screening services</li> <li>• Physician clinics</li> </ul>
	<b>Health service support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Supportive information systems (FERRET, Standardised medical records forms)</li> <li>• Staff orientation and training</li> <li>• Data collection, reporting and feedback (ABCD SDRF Community reports)</li> </ul>	



# Indigenous Governance Awards



Pictured at the Governance Awards ( from left to right ) are Board Directors Maureen O'Donnell, Faye Johnston and Gloria Murray.

The inaugural Indigenous Governance Awards were held in Melbourne in August last year. Maari Ma was a finalist in the awards and while it didn't win, the Corporation was well received and recognised for its efforts. Representing Maari Ma at the awards ceremony were Chairman, Des Jones, and Board Directors, Maureen O'Donnell from Broken Hill, Faye Johnston from Ivanhoe and Gloria Murray from Balranald. The Indigenous Governance Awards are a new event open to incorporated Indigenous organisations across Australia. They recognise best practise in Indigenous governance and help us share experiences and good ideas. The awards also serve to educate the wider Australian community by highlighting some of the good news in Indigenous Australia and the impressive achievements of our organisations. The Awards are run by Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton.

*Good governance means a smooth running Corporation and separates the governing role from the operational role of an organisation.*

## MAARI MA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson - Des Jones -Wentworth

Cheryl Blore - Menindee

Maureen O'Donnell - Broken Hill

Faye Johnston - Ivanhoe

Gloria Murray-Balranald.

### **Gloria King** A Life of Contribution and Caring

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Bakantji Elder Gloria King, who was a founding Director of the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation representing Wilcannia. Gloria, who had been ill for several months, passed away in November last year in Broken Hill surrounded by her family and friends. Gloria was also a member of the former Wilcannia Hospital Board and a Board member of the former Far West Area Health Service and was recently appointed to the Greater Western Area Health Advisory Council. Gloria had a long involvement with St Therese's School located near the old mission at Wilcannia-she loved children and the future they represented. Gloria was a strong advocate for improving access to health services for Aboriginal people and she was fierce in her desire to see Maari Ma Health develop strategies with mainstream services to stop Aboriginal people dying young. Gloria will be sadly missed and her passing marks a poignant milestone for the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation and for the region as a whole.

# Key Senior Staff



**Stephen DeBono General Manager Maari Ma Region**  
Steve has accounting qualifications and has, during his career, held senior managerial and financial management positions in the Public Sector. Steve has held the position of General Manager for more than 7 years.



**Margaret -Ann Cook Manager Primary Health.**  
Margaret -Ann has had extensive experience working in Remote Health and has held senior nursing positions both internationally and in various areas of Australia, including the Northern Territory. She has had a leading role in developing Maari Ma's primary health services.



**Nola Whyman Manager Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service.**  
Nola was recently appointed Manager of the Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service in Broken Hill. Nola was formerly Aboriginal Health Coordinator, Lower Sector and prior to her joining Maari Ma worked for the Sydney University Department of Rural Health.

## HAYTHORPE

### PROMOTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



Haythorpe Caretaker, Willy Philp, pictured at the Station.

The Indigenous Land Corporation purchased Haythorpe – a property south of Broken Hill - last year and Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation has taken a three year lease on the property to develop social programs which will be integrated into the over-all Chronic Disease Strategy - Social / Emotional Wellbeing. Achieving optimal conditions for health and well being requires a whole-of-life view of health and the social, emotional and cultural well being of people is an important aspect. Programs such as mentoring, leadership and cultural camps will be held at Haythorpe and a number of people will be running these together with the help of a coordinator.



# *Health in the Murdi Paaki*



A new publication which profiles the health status of people living in the Murdi Paaki region was launched at the **University Department of Rural Health**. “*Health in the Murdi Paaki*” is the work of Maari Ma Data Analyst Cath Kennedy and was released through the Broken Hill Centre for Remote Health Research. “*Health in the Murdi Paaki*” provides information about the population of the Murdi Paaki region, the characteristics of the population and lifestyle, and reports on illness, disease, disability and death. It is aimed at using that information to paint a picture of the health of the people and to determine what impact existing programs are having and what other efforts are required.

*Above:* Author of *Health in the Murdi Paaki*, Cath Kennedy ( right) at the launch of the publication pictured with Trish Strachan - GWAHS Director of Population Health, Planning and Performance.

*The Murdi Paaki region comprises the local government areas of Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Central Darling, Cobar, Coonamble, Walgett, Wentworth and the Unincorporated Far West and is within the Greater Western Area Health Service.*

## **Walking for Wellness - The Pedometer Challenge**

Maari Ma staff joined their colleagues from Greater Western Area Health Service Population Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service to take part in a pedometer challenge. The challenge, held over 12 weeks, was a great success with around 80 people taking part in more than 20 teams. Dietician, **Amy Lambert** organised the challenge, which was modelled on the Ten-Thousand Steps Program. Congratulations to the team of three ‘The Fabulous Floosies’ - Margie Lesjak, Jacquie Pogson and Helen Cameron - for clocking up 3,054,840 steps in the Pedometer Challenge. The winners in the team of two were ‘The Blondies’ - Kristy Pinnuck and Fiona Walsh -with 1,814,697 steps. There were some pleasing results with decreases in weight, waist circumference and blood pressure, and a number of people have even purchased the pedometers to continue their walking.



Dominica and Bud Walter getting their blood pressure taken by Frith Semmens during the Pedometer Challenge.

# WILCANNIA ART



Veronica Edwards stands proudly in front of one of the works by Wilcannia school children. The paintings are on display in the foyer of the Wilcannia Health Service.

Art works completed by primary school students from both the Wilcannia Central School and St Therese's Community School late last year are now on display at the Wilcannia Health Service. The project had objectives of interaction and teamwork by the kids. In addition, the works were completed by the children at the Wilcannia Health Service as a way of making them familiar with the Health Service surrounds and thereby reducing anxiety if the children and their siblings need to access the Health Service. Maari Ma funded the art work materials, the completed display, luncheon and the cost of framing the works. Jo Stace, the Acting Health Service Manager who was on secondment from the Broken Hill Health Service at the time, and Wilcannia Health Service Primary Health Worker Veronica Edwards led the project ably supported by the Primary Health Team. The works are now displayed in the patient waiting area of the Health Service. Maari Ma thanks all involved in the project with special mention to the teachers and aides from both the schools and the kids themselves for their beautiful work.

## Menindee Health Service Quit Program

The Menindee Health Service has been running a successful Quit Smoking Program since August 2005. Aboriginal Health Worker, Geraldine Rolton, and Registered Nurse, Barbara Oxford, received training in brief intervention for smoking cessation at Menindee when Tracey Greenberg from NSW Health visited with Jason Gowin and Justin Files from Maari Ma. 36 people have enrolled in the 12 week program at Menindee —



7 have successfully completed with another 5 successfully continuing their way through. Many of those who started the program have not continued for a variety of reasons but are smoking less and have expressed a desire to resume the program at a later date. The Quit Smoking Program consists of an initial interview of approximately 40 minutes and then brief follow up visits for the next 12 weeks. Products used in combination include QuitX Patches, Gum and Nicabate CQ Lozenges. These products are offered at a reduced cost to participants. Zyban is also used when necessary and is prescribed by a Medical Officer.



# Chronic Disease Strategy

“While prevention is better than cure, control is better than complication”

If you would like a copy of Maari Ma's Chronic Disease Strategy please contact the  
Regional Office on 08 8082 9888

## Health Services

### **Balranald**

Balranald Hospital  
PO Box 10  
BALRANALD 2715  
Tel: 03 5020 1606  
Fax: 03 5020 1499

### **Dareton**

Dareton Primary Care and  
Community Health Centre  
44 Tapio Avenue  
DARETON 2878  
Tel: 03 5021 7200  
Fax: 03 5027 4109

### **Ivanhoe**

Ivanhoe Health Service  
PO Box 1  
IVANHOE 2878  
Tel: 02 6995 1133  
Fax: 6995 1304

### **Menindee**

Menindee Health Service  
PO Box 25  
MENINDEE 2879  
Tel: 08 8091 4209  
Fax: 08 8091 4247

### **Pooncarie**

Pooncarie Outpatients Centre  
Darling Street  
POONCARIE 2648

### **Tibooburra**

Tibooburra District Hospital  
C/- Post Office  
TIBOOBURRA 2880  
Tel: 08 8091 3302  
Fax: 08 8091 3357

### **Wentworth**

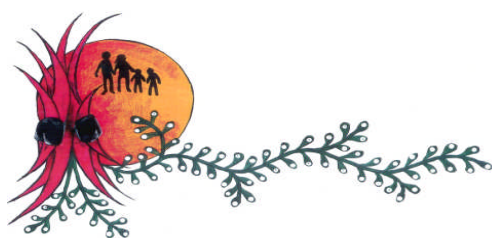
Wentworth District Hospital  
and Health Service  
PO Box 38  
WENTOWRTH 2648  
Tel: 03 5027 2345  
Fax: 03 5027 3099

### **White Cliffs**

White Cliffs Health Service  
Johnstone Street  
WHITE CLIFFS 2836  
Tel: 08 8091 6605  
Fax: 08 8091 6648

### **Wilcannia**

Wilcannia Health Service  
PO Box 123  
WILCANNIA 2836  
Tel: 08 8083 8777  
Fax: 08 8091 5895



**Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation Regional Office Shop 2 / 443 Argent  
Street**

PO Box 339 BROKEN HILL NSW 2880 Phone: 08 8082 9888 Fax: 08 8087 2202

[www.maarima.com.au](http://www.maarima.com.au)