



Clean Teeth, Wicked Smiles School Toothbrushing Program



The Healthy Start Oral Health Team, Tirrell Kennedy and Erin Commings with four of the children who took part in the Clean Teeth, Wicked Smiles toothbrushing program.

The Clean Teeth Wicked Smiles school toothbrushing program aims to improve children's oral health with regular toothbrushing by providing access to toothbrushes and fluoride toothpaste to help reduce dental decay and prevent gum problems.

The program was introduced to the communities of Ivanhoe, Menindee and Wilcannia in August 2006 and funding is provided by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW. The Health Service staff from each community supported by Maari Ma's Healthy Start Oral Health team worked with schools to implement the program. The local health service staff and dental team attended each class from kindergarten to year 6 and provided the children with oral health education and

toothbrushing instruction. The key messages were for children to brush every day using the circles, scrubs and wriggles motions, and to spit out excess toothpaste but not to rinse with water after brushing. This method gets the greatest benefit from the fluoride in the toothpaste as none of these communities currently have fluoride in the water.

Each child was provided with their own toothbrush, toothpaste and storage container. There was also a competition to see which child in each class could brush their teeth the most in term 3. The school toothbrushing program will continue in these communities in 2007.

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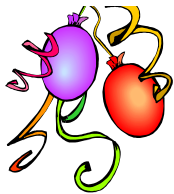
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Tenth Anniversary Ball

Past and present employees, and friends and partners of Maari Ma came together to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the organisation at the White House Convention Centre in Broken Hill. From modest beginnings Maari Ma has developed into a strong and vibrant organisation with

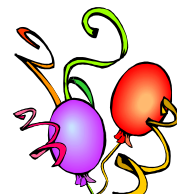
the capacity to embrace change and nurture growth. From an original workforce of just two there are now more than 50 people employed at Maari Ma. Nearly 300 people celebrated on the night which will be remembered by all.



Awards on the night went to: Belle of the Ball - Cara O Donnell; Beau of the Ball - Shaun Bottrell; Most Elegant lady - Noeleen Davis; Best Dressed Gentleman - Tony Kickett



William Smiley Johnston (former Regional Director) was one of the many people who returned to Broken Hill to help Maari Ma celebrate its 10th anniversary. Smiley is pictured with long serving employee, Erl Demant, who recently retired. Erl was presented with a framed photo of the sculptures on the night in recognition of his years of dedication to Maari Ma.



Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation Visits Maari Ma

A delegation from Tennant Creek visited the Far West this year to look at Maari Ma's health service delivery. General Manager of the Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation, Barb Shaw, Business Services Manager, Clarissa Burgen, Clinic Practice Manager, Brett Grant and Regional Remote Health Service Manager, Rob Trener, spent time in Broken Hill, Menindee and visited Haythorpe Station. Anyinginyi is in the

conceptual planning phase of a remodelling exercise and has been looking at alternative models of service delivery. Barb Shaw said she was very impressed with the strong sense of good will between each agency that has entered into partnership with Maari Ma. She also said while her organisation had done some work on chronic disease management they hadn't looked at it as a separate document and they were very interested in Maari Ma's Chronic Disease Strategy. Barb said she

heard about the work of Maari Ma through the Cooperative Research Centre in Darwin.



Rob Trener, Barb Shaw, Brett Grant and Clarissa Burgen went to Menindee Health Service and Haythorpe Station during their visit to the Far West. They're pictured at Haythorpe with Operations Manager, Tony Kersten.



Tony Kersten started to get a bit peckish at Haythorpe and decided to try some of the local bush tucker.

Positive Results for Joint Research Project

A research project being undertaken by Maari Ma s Primary Health Care Manager, Nola Wyman, and Director of Primary Health Care with the University Department of Rural Health in Broken Hill, Deb Jones, has had some outstanding initial results. The project, which has received ethics approval, is called Structuring an Undergraduate Primary Health Care Elective for Nurses in western NSW. Supporting culturally appropriate care . The first group to undertake the elective came from Southern Cross University at Lismore. Seven 3rd year undergraduate nurses completed a five week placement within the Maari Ma region visiting communities such as Wilcannia, Menindee, Dareton, Ivanhoe, Balranald and Broken Hill as well as spending time at the Regional Office and the Primary Health Care Service. One of the main project aims was the provision of locally delivered and structured education focusing on Indigenous aspects of service provision in rural and remote communities within the Maari Ma region. During the evaluation day the students said they found both the structured education component and their onsite clinical experience highly rewarding, they said they had learnt more about Indigenous culture and health determinants in the four days of structured learning than they had learnt in their three years at university, and they experienced a growth in their understanding of Primary Health Care, Indigenous health determinants, barriers to access and provision of health care in rural, remote and predominately Indigenous communities. Already there has been interest from at least four other universities for similar placements for undergraduate nurses.

I was fairly aware of issues [Indigenous health] before I came out but by seeing the people, talking to the people and being a part of their lives, what I have learnt about becomes real, they become real!



UDRH staff with PHC undergraduates. Front row (left to right): Sarah Barrett, Penny Finch, Christina Meyers, Tony Kickett ;Back row: Emma Bell, Deb Jones, Bev Tainish, Andrew Buggie, Zoe Harder, Paul Bennett .

DARETON HEALTH CHECK

Health workers from the Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation and Dareton Primary Health Care staff joined the Health Check team for the Dareton Health Check this year. There were also three doctors from the University of Sydney involved for three days. 180 people attended the Dareton Health Check, which was the fifth conducted in the region the others have been at Menindee, Ivanhoe, Wilcannia and Balranald. The Primary Health Care Service had its first Adult Health Check on 13th September with 10 people attending. Checks are being held there every month.



The Dareton Health Check was a success with 180 people attending.

School of the Air Healthy Cooking Workshop

Maari Ma s Healthy Start team was invited to run a workshop on healthy eating at a School of the Air mini school held at Silverton. Around sixty children from kindergarten to year 6 were rotated through the healthy eating workshop that included a theory lesson and some healthy cooking. Theory in the morning was well received. The kindergarten to year 2 groups learnt about good and bad fats, with only one little boy confused that good tasting did not mean good for you. The year 3 and 4 group discussed what it feels like to be healthy and what we can do to make us healthy. The year 5 and 6 group learnt about low fat eating and cooking, then put on their chefs hats and completed some recipe modification activities. The much anticipated practical part of the workshop followed lunch which saw the infants making kitchen chaos cooking healthy fruit pancakes while the older kids made very popular fruit smoothies. The mini school is an annual event. Maari Ma s performance has won us an invitation for next year!

ALL OF STAFF MEETING



An all of staff meeting was held in Broken Hill on September 22 which looked at achievements in the past 12 months, significant events in the past 10 years and the Management Agreement. Other topics included Maari Ma's Chronic Disease Strategy, what was happening around the region and the variety of programs in place.



Board Chairperson, Des Jones, spoke to staff about growing up in Brewarrina and the Northern Territory before moving to Wentworth, and the change he has seen over time.



Donna Kennedy from the YEAH Program outlined their new structure which is further helping young people to build confidence and self esteem, set goals and achieve them. She said the number of kids involved has grown and the feedback is very positive.



Wentworth HSM, Judy Lamb, (left) and Menindee HSM, Marie Kelly, shared the microphone to talk about their health services. Marie spoke about the new Menindee Health Service and the reorganisation of services. Judy outlined the differences between the Wentworth Health Service being an in-patient facility and the demographics of the community.

ADVANCED SMOKING CESSATION TRAINING



Geraldine Rolton (left) at work in Menindee.

Aboriginal Health Worker at Menindee, Geraldine Rolton, gained some valuable training in Sydney recently when she attended an advanced smoking cessation training program. Geraldine was the only health worker in the region to complete the three day course which was held at the Woolcock Institute at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The advanced course draws on the work of Renee Bittoun head of the Smoking Research Unit at the University of Sydney and a world leading researcher in the field of smoking cessation. Geraldine's attendance at the training was made possible by funding from GWAHS.

A lot of people blame themselves for not being able to give up smoking. Yet it's got nothing to do with weakness. Maybe motivation, but not weakness. There's an analogy I like to use of having an allergy to tomatoes. It really isn't your fault if you break out in a rash every time you eat tomatoes. Just don't eat tomatoes. It's the same with nicotine. It's not your fault if you're reactive to it. You've just got to learn not to use it. Renee Bittoun. ABC Online.



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