

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS STRENGTHENED THROUGH FRED HOLLOWS PARTNERSHIP



Youth Excellence Arts and Health (YEAH) is one of the many programs that will benefit from the Fred Hollows Partnership. Participants in YEAH are pictured above with Maari Ma staff Leanne Adams (back left) and Jamie Lee Kickett (back right) together with three guest artists - Mirrin Edgar, Henrietta Baird, and Josh Bond.

Maari Ma and the Fred Hollows Foundation have entered into a partnership which is aimed at strengthening the social and community programs. A Memorandum of Understanding was recently signed in Broken Hill between Maari Ma Regional Director, Richard Weston and The Fred Hollows Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Brian Doolan. Programs including WINGS Drop in Centre, YEAH, Dareton Youth Action, Wilcannia Community Safety Patrol, Young Leaders and Men's Business are still being managed by Maari Ma but will now be jointly governed by Maari Ma and The Fred Hollows Foundation. The partnership also means that the programs run in Wilcannia, including Bush Trips, will be brought under the umbrella of the Social and Community Program stream.

At the agreement signing Brian Doolan said Fred Hollows loved the time he spent in Western NSW—he loved the people and he loved the land.

*"Fred would be smiling knowing that his Foundation was standing with Maari Ma to deliver programs that make real improvements to people's lives".*

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## GOOD RESPONSE TO DRINK AUDITS, SMOKING CHECKS AND RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



Dr Katherine McEnroy and Community Development Worker Justin Files, at the Maari Ma stand in Broken Hill's Town Square to mark a combined Mental Health Week and Carers Week.

Maari Ma's Chronic Disease General Practitioner, Dr Katherine McEnroy, Community Development Worker, Justin Files and Program Leader Primary Mental Health, Sherree Tester, together with Haley King and Lisa Kickett took the opportunity to conduct drink check audits, smoking checks and raise awareness about mental health during a combined Mental Health and Carers Week in Broken Hill. A stand at the Town Square for a day attracted a lot of interest with the drink check providing information on screening and brief interventions and the smoke check highlighting the health risks involved with smoking, information and referrals to quit smoking programs. They also had 'smokerlyzers'

on hand to measure carbon monoxide levels in blood. In addition Maari Ma used the day to provide the community with information on the range of options available for people to access mental health services. These include not only mental health workers but also Aboriginal health workers and general practitioners. Dr McEnroy is one of two Chronic Disease GP's working at the Broken Hill Primary Health Care Service. The other is Dr Vic Carroll and together they provide mental health services as part of their work with chronic illness. This includes mental health early detection and prevention, assessment, treatment and referrals if necessary.

### Workplace policy to support a reduction in tobacco smoking among Aboriginal people

Tobacco smoking is the single most important risk factor for excess mortality in Indigenous Australians; responsible for one-fifth of Indigenous deaths in 2003. One in every two smokers dies from smoking. This makes smoking the leading preventable cause of death. Therefore, preventing the uptake of smoking and supporting people who smoke to quit, is a key component of our work to improve the health status of Aboriginal people in our region. It is in this context that Maari Ma has reviewed and strengthened its Smoke Free Workplace Policy which has been endorsed by the Board. Having a strong Smoke Free Workplace Policy contributes to lowering smoking rates overall in the community because evidence shows that:

- Health workers model healthy behaviour
- Workers who smoke, and who are employed in workplaces where smoking is banned or restricted are likely to consume fewer cigarettes per day and quit at an increased rate compared with smokers employed in workplaces with no or weaker policies
- Smoke free workplace policies in Australia contribute to an annual reduction of some 602 million cigarettes that might otherwise be consumed, and
- 22% of the decrease in cigarette consumption in the general population in Australia can be attributed to smoke free workplaces.

# TEN YEAR CELEBRATIONS FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICE

The Broken Hill Primary Health Care Service in Argent Street celebrated ten years since first opening its doors in August and held an Open Day to commemorate the occasion. The day was a very special one for Indigenous people as the opening ten years ago marked another step to make health services more accessible to Aboriginal people. For ten years the Service has been providing general practitioner, dental and allied health services and in the past few years it has also incorporated the preventative programs of the Chronic Disease Strategy – Healthy Start and Keeping Well. These include immunisations, growth and development checks for children and Adult Health Checks, the Smoking Management program and Physical Activity

program, and alcohol clinics. The range of specialist services provided at the PHCS include endocrinology, ophthalmology, early childhood, community midwifery, women's health, dietetics and alcohol and other drug services. The PHCS obtained accreditation last year through the Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited program. Accreditation lets clients know that a general practice has met standards set by the medical profession. These standards are designed to ensure high quality care is provided in a safe and well organised way.



The Broken Hill Primary Health Care Service flying the Aboriginal flag on the tenth year celebration Open Day.



Transport Officer, Guy 'Smiley' Crawford, cuts the birthday cake. Smiley has been working at the Service since it first opened its doors.

## Maari Ma Wins Oral Health Award

Maari Ma has been successful in winning an award with the NSW Dental and Oral Health Therapists Association. We were awarded the Excellence in Oral Health for the Koori Community 2008. The certificate presentation together with a cheque for \$100 was made at a recent Therapists conference in Sydney. Well done to the Oral Health team. Last year the Clean Teeth, Wicked Smiles School Oral Health Program was a winner in the NSW Aboriginal Health Awards 2007.



# Maari Ma's Workplace Nutrition Policy

Maari Ma Health will institute a formal Workplace Nutrition Policy on January 1 2009.

The policy, which has received approval from the Board, aims to support the implementation of the Chronic Disease Strategy by raising awareness of the role of nutrition in the development and management of chronic disease and encourages staff to act as role models for healthy eating in our communities.

The policy applies only to food which is purchased with Maari Ma funds, not food that staff bring to work or buy during work hours from their own money or food purchased by the social club.

Food items are classified into a traffic light colour coding system, much like the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy; green foods (choose most), amber foods (choose carefully) and red foods (do not provide).

Coding is based on the food's nutritional value, saturated fat, sodium, sugar and fibre content which are the main components in food linked to chronic diseases.



Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation realises the importance of modelling healthy behaviour to support its efforts in improving health outcomes in the communities it services.

Maari Ma Health acknowledges that nutrition, along with other lifestyle factors, is a key determinant of health and as an organisation will only provide food that is conducive to good health and fits into the guidelines outlined in its policy.

The organisation also encourages all staff to personally model healthy eating and encourage good nutrition in clients and communities that Maari Ma Health services, as well as fellow staff members and visitors.



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