

RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY



Khani enjoys her time spent at Maari Ma Play Group

Maari Ma Play Group was established last year in partnership with the TAFE Western, Broken Hill College and is going from strength to strength. Two play sessions are held each Friday during the school terms for parents and children to help them build relationships outside a clinical setting. During school holidays Friday fun days are planned and will be coordinated by staff from Maari Ma's Yeah and Healthy Start teams. Maari Ma's Early Years Project Leader, Narelle Pascoe, focuses on engaging

families to play together and for parents to spend time with their children while also teaching parenting and other skills. Parents get to choose and help prepare a lunch together with Maari Ma Dietician, Mark Lee. Other staff from Maari Ma's programs also attend and engage in play experiences with children and families providing opportunities for supporting families to raise healthy kids – for example Dental Assistant, Shelby Cooper, sits down with the children to play and talks about teeth brushing and incorporating it into the play session routine. Narelle said play is a child's way of learning and growing, and quality early childhood education and care influences a range of outcomes in later life. "Sometimes we may neglect to make time for the personal interaction that promotes the best environment

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MAARI MA HEALTH
ABORIGINAL
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NATIONAL AWARD WINNER



Maari Ma Director of Operations, Nola Whyman, accepted the award from Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon at the Healthy for Life and New Directions Mothers and Babies Services Health Awards.

Maari Ma was one of six Australian organisations or individuals to receive an award at the inaugural *Healthy for Life and New Directions Mothers and Babies Services Health Awards* presented in Brisbane. It won the Organisational Contribution to Closing the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Outcomes, for the Healthy Start program. Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, said the winners highlight the innovation and leadership being demonstrated by organisations and individuals in addressing the Government's targets to close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Congratulations Maari Ma.

MAARI MA PLAY GROUP

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for child development and often the most important thing for adults to do is play and have fun with their kids. We also know play provides opportunities to promote skills in all areas of children's development, especially in settings that are supported by confident and informed adults. While the children are participating in play-based early childhood activities, the parents are becoming more confident in their parenting role" she said. *Young Cecil pictured below enjoying peek a boo at a Play Group session.*



A PICTURE OF OUR CHILDREN

Copies of *Health, Development and Wellbeing in Far Western NSW, A Picture of our Children*, have been distributed to a wide audience since the document was launched late last year by Senator, the Hon Mark Arbib. Hundreds of copies have gone out and the feedback has been very positive. The document, compiled by the Far West Aboriginal Child Development and Well-being Group, contains local information and data on children in the region against those indicators the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have determined to be 'key indicators' of child health, development and wellbeing. While it celebrates many of the areas where Aboriginal children have similar statistics compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, it also highlights the work still to be done. Copies are available from Maari Ma's web site or hard copies can be obtained from the Regional Office.

COMMUNITY SAFETY RESEARCH PROJECT



Project Team Leader Jason Gowin (centre) is pictured with Support Officers Monica Kerwin and Eddie Harris who play an integral part in recruiting and supporting community members' involvement.

155 men and women in Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee and the Broken Hill Correctional Centre have now helped the Community Safety Research Project with information about different types of violence occurring in communities. They've responded to stories, or scenarios, which have allowed them to talk about what the people in the stories might be thinking, feeling and doing. Team Leader, Jason Gowin, said it's a way of helping people talk openly on issues of violence without talking about their own experiences. "All of those interviewed demonstrated a commitment to see positive change in their communities" he said. The next phase in the CSRP is a qualitative survey and the project team will be aiming to quantify what causes violence, how people are affected and what strategies could be implemented.

MAKING INROADS TO SMOKING CESSATION

Education aimed at encouraging clients to cease smoking has improved markedly in the past three years. An evaluation of Maari Ma's Smoker's Program found smoking education improved from 53% in 2008 to 80% this year. This is a tremendous result and Maari Ma is committed to continuing its efforts to get clients to stop smoking or not take it up in the first place. We know that smoking is the risk factor responsible for the greatest burden of disease

(loss of health and premature mortality) in Australia and tobacco is a known, or probable cause, of at least twenty five diseases, including lung and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, emphysema and other chronic lung diseases. Smoking cessation and smoking prevention are one of Maari Ma's evidence based interventions to control chronic disease across a person's lifetime and a key factor in closing the gap.

Smoker's Program evaluation results from the smoking cessation audits 2008-2010

	Maari Ma region					
	2008		2009		2010	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Smoking status						
Total audited	210		210		210	
'Not stated' smoking	38	18%	52	25%	62	30%
Education						
Total smokers	95	45%	91	43%	81	39%
Education provided	50	53%	61	67%	65	80%
Education provided by PHCW	11	79%	8	73%	8	89%
Education provided by RN	16	50%	38	81%	32	78%
Education provided by GP	0	0%	11	58%	23	92%
Smoker's Program						
Recommendations to join the Program	31	33%	39	43%	42	52%

RENOVATIONS FOR EXPANDED SERVICE DELIVERY

Maari Ma's growth of service delivery and increased number of clinicians have resulted in significant upgrades to the Primary Health Care Service in Broken Hill as well as additional rooms for the Regional Office. Renovations to the PHCS were completed last year and there are now five consultation rooms, increased from two, and the former Board room has been transformed into a staff work station with five computers and three telephones available for any staff member to use. There are three triage rooms which include a treatment room and new carpet, linoleum and fresh paint through-out. A transportable building is to be placed at the rear of the PHCS for additional space. The former Pizza Runners building next to the Regional Office has been renovated and will provide space for a meeting room and video conferencing facilities, client consulting rooms and a kitchen.



Child and Family Nurse, Liz Perrie, in the renovated Primary Health Care Service.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORKER TRAINEES



Maari Ma's Primary Health Care Worker trainees have passed the midway point in their studies and have now completed ten of eighteen modules. They are doing their Certificate IV Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Primary Health (Practice) at the Western Institute of TAFE, Broken Hill. The traineeship is a combination of study and on the job training over two years and while their TAFE course finishes in December they won't complete the traineeship until August 2011. Maari Ma staff are attending study blocks to address the students on particular topics such as ear and eye health, and sexual health and reproduction. The students say the more involved they become with the course the more they are enjoying it. It's the first step in a pathway to registered nurse training or other specialised qualifications in child & family health, diabetes, primary mental health, alcohol & other drugs or nutrition.



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