



# MAARI MA HEALTH ROUNDS

## WILCANNIA KIDS COOKBOOK



*Ethan and Patrice are two of the children from Wilcannia Central School who have helped make the cookbook a success. They are pictured making white sauce for shepherd's pie.*

A joint Maari Ma dental /dietetics cookbook titled *Wilcannia Kids Cookbook Bush Tucker Dreaming* has been completed in 12 months and has been an overwhelming success. The aim of the cookbook is to improve the nutritional status of Aboriginal children in Wilcannia and reduce their level of dental caries. The project actively involved children from Wilcannia Central School aged between five and 15 years preparing healthy meals low in sugar and refined carbohydrates. As well as prepare the food, they cooked

the meals and the recipes have gone into the cookbook. The children also had education sessions about nutrition and oral health, focusing mainly on how different foods affect teeth. The cookbook and resources include simple dietary messages detailing the link between oral health and diet. Key health messages have also been placed in classrooms and the school canteen. So far, data has shown an improvement in nutrition and oral health knowledge among the children involved.

### THIS ISSUE

Wilcannia Kids Bush Tucker Dreaming.	1
Senior Health Worker finalist at awards.	2
Community Support Service launched.	2
New IT service.	2
Linking Maari Ma families to early childhood programs.	3
All of Staff meeting.	3
PHCS Re-accreditation	4
Visiting specialists to PHCS.	4
Trainees finish course.	4

MAARI MA HEALTH  
ABORIGINAL  
CORPORATION REGION OF  
SERVICE



# NSW ABORIGINAL HEALTH AWARDS



*Primary Health Care Worker, Colin O'Donnell, was recognised at this year's New South Wales Aboriginal Health Awards.*

Senior Aboriginal Health Worker at the Primary Health Care Service, Colin O'Donnell, was a finalist at this year's New South Wales Aboriginal Health Awards. Colin was among four finalists to be recognised among nominees from around the state for his exceptional contribution to Aboriginal health and his local community. He has played a key role in the early development of chronic disease programs and the strength of Maari Ma's service delivery now to clients with a chronic disease is in part due to his dedication and passion for his work, and his unwavering commitment to see improvements in the health of his clients.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCHED

Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation has become the first Community Support Service (CSS) for Broken Hill and the surrounding region. The Regional Office in Argent Street is providing a range of assistance to Aboriginal people that is additional to its core business of health such as information about mainstream services, safe referrals and advice, and internet access. The Office, which has been remodelled and expanded, provides a readily accessible, culturally sensitive and welcoming environment for the local Indigenous community. Free Internet access is available during office hours and staff are able to help clients find information, teach them how to use search engines and generally show clients how to navigate around the internet. Office staff can also help clients with general clerical work such as completing forms, assisting a client to make an appointment, or with any services they need to use. Staff will also liaise with other agencies such as Centrelink to facilitate referral pathways.



*Maari Ma Board Chair, Maureen O'Donnell, is interviewed by Damien Fisher from Broken Hill Radio Station 2BH during an outside broadcast for the official launch of the Community Support Service.*

## NEW IT SYSTEM FOR MAARI MA

Maari Ma this year moved across to a stand alone IT system and staff at the Regional Office as well as the Primary Health Care Service have been accessing it. The new IT system took six months of planning and preparation by a committee which addressed hardware and software requirements, and costs of the new network. The installation was conducted by local firm

Edgnett and the new network, which has Windows 2007, Office 2010 and Outlook as the mail program will be progressively rolled out to other health services in the Maari Ma region next year. The benefits of Maari Ma having its own network system are numerous and include an interruption free service, availability of remote access and Maari Ma's own email address.

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## BELONGING, BEING AND BECOMING

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*The Transition Program at Rainbow Pre-school gives children and parents a chance to find out first hand what happens in preschools such as painting, playing games and listening to stories.*

The Aboriginal Child Development and Wellbeing Strategic Framework document collectively developed last year is continuing to produce concrete outcomes. Rainbow Pre-school in Broken Hill is actively looking at ways to extend and develop strategies that support the rights of children in accessing quality early childhood programs and is linking in Maari Ma families and children who go to the Playgroup sessions. One strategy is a Preschool Transition Program whereby sessions are held for parents and young children to get them thinking about pre-school or childcare next year. The other is the Mums and Bubs Group which provides the time and space for parents to play with their babies. The flexibility of Rainbow staff in sharing space and resources to create an inviting space for Aboriginal families is inspiring and reflects the elements of the Early Years Learning Framework in working towards creating programs that foster Belonging, Being and Becoming.

## ALL OF STAFF MEETING

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More than 60 Maari Ma staff and students attended an end of year meeting to hear about developments during the year and future directions. 15 programs were reviewed by the staff involved and they spoke about successes, challenges, what they had learnt and what's planned for next year. Their work is integrated with research and they were shown data that demonstrates progress in closing the gap. Importantly staff were told the delivery of services or programs would not be possible without their commitment, dedication and professionalism. What a great team.



*The All of Staff meeting began with an impromptu visit by former Parramatta Eels rugby league players David Liddiard, Ray Price and Brett Kenny.*

## RE-ACCREDITATION FOR THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICE

Staff have been very busy at the Primary Health Care Service in Broken Hill preparing for their second accreditation. Accreditation is the longest established and most widely known process for the external evaluation of health care services. The process is implemented so that the delivery of safe, high quality health care is ensured. It also recognises the achievements of health care teams to meet the requirements of established standards. The PHCS is also applying for Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Accreditation. QIC Accreditation certifies that the organisation has met the relevant standards and is participating in the QIC Program



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*AGPAL stands for Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited. AGPAL is an independent, not-for-profit body that aims to improve the quality of health care provided to all Australians. AGPAL accredits Australian general practices.*

## SPECIALIST VISITS

As part of Maari Ma's vascular service two specialists are now coming to the Primary Health Care Service every three months. They are Dr Patrick Groenestein who is a cardiologist and senior research fellow from the George Institute for Global Health and Dr Paul Snelling who is a renal physician and Director of Dialysis for Statewide

Renal Services. As well as see clients they provide staff with valuable education and updates. Dr Snelling's alternates his three monthly visits with renal physician, Dr Celine Foote. The specialists have also visited Menindee and Wilcannia this year and plan to include Ivanhoe next year.

## 100 PER-CENT COMPLETION RATE



*The students were required to do art work as part of their Mental Health Module—ten of the works are pictured above.*



**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 8082 9889 / 08 8082 9890

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

Maari Ma's Primary Health Care Worker trainees have now completed the TAFE component of their course with all eleven trainees finishing. The traineeship is a combination of study and on the job training over two years. TAFE teacher, Tracy Goodwin, said the group is the first in NSW to have a 100 % completion rate of the course – Certificate IV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health (Practice). Tracy said the success rate can be attributed to not only the hard work of the students but also the dedication and support of their individual work places. It's also the first time the TAFE course has been delivered in Broken Hill with teachers travelling from Dubbo TAFE to deliver the week long blocks and weekly video conferences.