



Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation Community Newsletter



PANDEMIC Recognition



Maari Ma recently received news that two of our staff and more generally the Primary Health Care staff were named "GP Practice Heroes of the Pandemic" by Australian medical information platform, Australian Doctor.

Executive Manager Primary Health Care, **Linda Lynott**, and Manager General Practice, **Daniel Jackman** (pictured above) and staff were selected by Australian Doctor from hundreds of nominations for their work during the COVID 19 pandemic and raising the vaccination levels. The nomination came from one of our locum GPs, **Dr Alice Wu** who worked with us for some time a while ago. While it did come as a surprise, and both Linda and Daniel have been modest regarding the recognition, it is very welcome when appreciation comes your way for work well done, and in this case from an unexpected corner.

Congratulations Linda and Daniel, and all staff who have been working very hard during this outbreak and working to get the vaccination rates up. Read the nomination on the next page – and Maari Ma thanks Dr Wu for taking the time during what would no doubt have been a very busy time to write and submit it.



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Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service

"Improving Aboriginal health and closing the gap"
Broken Hill, NSW



www.maarima.com.au



admin@maarima.com.au



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Australian Doctor.

Australia's leading independent medical publication

Explain why you are nominating your pandemic hero.

Being a GP locum, in rural, regional and remote areas throughout Australia and across New South Wales, seldom have I found such a well organised practice as Maari Ma AMS in Broken Hill, where I am currently stationed. This Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) operates in Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee, Ivanhoe and Balranald ministering to the needs of the Far West indigenous communities.

Covid-19 has added significantly to an already heavy workload for this organisation. Broken Hill, for example currently has 69 cases and the small town of Wilcannia has 145 cases. Everyone in the organisation, from the board of directors down to the cleaners, is highly focused on doing their part to support the wellbeing of these communities. Even allied health here – the dietician, speech pathologist, physiotherapist and OT - have all turned their attention to helping with the Covid situation. To my mind they are all heroes.

There are two people however, that I would like to single out for special mention.

Linda Lynott who comes from a nursing background, is the Executive Manager, Primary Care, organising teams and coordinating Maari Ma's outreach vaccination and respiratory swab clinics. All staff follow strict PPE procedures and no-one has been infected. They face huge problems with vaccination resistance in the communities, a legacy of the long history of distrust among Aboriginal people and many government departments.

Linda's teams constantly talk to community members from a medical and cultural perspective to convince them of the efficacy of vaccination. It is hard work but the indigenous figures in Broken Hill speak for themselves: in August at the start of the latest outbreak, 9.6% were fully vaccinated but currently this is now 36%, a three and a half times improvement; first dose recipients went from 4.7% to 20.9%, a 4-fold increase. On 13th September Linda was able to report that across the whole ACCHO, 53% of all Maari Ma patients have received their first dose.

Daniel Jackman is the Practice Manager who goes beyond his normal duties and work hours to take an outreach team to make personal house calls. They vaccinate those who have overcome resistance, but also visit the already infected, to monitor oxygen levels, provide sanitation equipment and medication (especially where there are comorbidities) as well as sustenance and a little company. Many enjoy the pizzas they get to lift their spirits. To do this, he and his team are putting themselves at great personal risk. Such efforts show not just his professionalism, and that of the team, but also his commitment and compassion to the whole community.

Maari Ma runs a first-rate service with people such as Linda and Daniel, who go largely unrecognised, doing their work quietly in a true spirit of selflessness and concern. As a result, I feel compelled to recommend this organisation, its teams and these individuals as practice heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic in Far West NSW.

Dr Alice Wu

Helping Out Dareton

We can all agree that one of the central themes during this pandemic has been the generosity of spirit and willingness of people to lend a helping hand to those in need.

The Balranald community – the story on the next page - is a good example of this where all the community is banding together and pitching in to help where they can. Our communities have been the recipients of amazing generosity from people all over the country and the donations have been distributed by volunteers with a ready smile and a comforting word. Maari Ma have recently extended the generosity we've been shown to the community at Dareton where there is many family connections and an outbreak in COVID cases back in mid October.



At the end of October Maari Ma forwarded on donations to **Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation** where they'll be distributed to those as needed. As you can see from the pictures above, we still have a significant amount in storage – it's now a combination of what was in excess in Wilcannia and at Maari Ma in Broken Hill. **Harvey Transport** has taken a variety of items to CHAC for distribution from baby formula, baby food and nappies to hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and masks.

FACE TO FACE SPECIALISTS START TO RETURN

Maari Ma will start to see a return of face to face practice for our specialist services which is great news. From Monday 25th October we will see the return of Adult Psychiatrist, **Dr Jonathon Carne** for four days. Dr Carne's last face to face visit was in June. Manager Social and Emotional Wellbeing Services, **Helene Fox**, said Dr Carne is fully booked next week and he's very excited to be returning in person rather than having to conduct consultations via zoom. Dr Carne is from the eastern seaboard in NSW and allowed to travel while Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, **Dr Colleen Barker** is based in South Australia and will continue with remote service delivery with her next clinic planned November 12th via zoom. Specialist Paediatrician, **Dr Robyn Shaw** will also be here in person next week.

Balranald

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Balranald community has been very grateful for the generosity from Coles which, via the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, has donated pallets of hampers to go to Maari Ma Aboriginal clients and other vulnerable people in the Balranald community.

Together with the Balranald local Aboriginal Lands Council CEO, St Vincent De Paul manager, Balranald MPS primary health care nurses and Maari Ma Health Balranald Nurse Manager, **Emma Moore**, a list of people were identified for the hampers. Emma is involved with the local Emergency Management Committee Welfare Subgroup for Balranald and Wentworth and so the hamper coordination for the Balranald community is now heavily run by Emma and Balranald Shire Council.

Last week 71 hampers were delivered to the local community with most of the deliveries undertaken by Practice Administration Assistant, **Bianca Charles** and Aboriginal Health Worker in training **Kelvin Murray**. Emma said there were also two volunteers from the Balranald SES - **Karen Norfolk** and **Paul Hadlow** assisting with deliveries.

It's great to see so many local agencies banding together in Balranald to make it all possible for the community, and thank you to our staff for helping in such a big way. Emma said all the recipients were very happy to receive their packages.



BROKEN HILL VACCINATION DRIVE



It seems the vaccination drive with the assistance of AUSMAT has been very worthwhile.

It's been hard to gauge how many of our community have been wanting to have the vaccination but for whatever reason have not come forward or have been cautious.

With the door to door drive, Maari Ma has been able to not only deliver first doses, and to some people who have been hard to access, we've been able to ascertain those community members who have opted not to get vaccinated, which means we don't need to keep chasing them up. We've also collected some good data in terms of clients who have relocated out of Broken Hill and those who have moved house.

It's been a mammoth effort all week with AUSMAT and the days have been long. Maari Ma's **Daniel Jackman** has done a great job of leading the process – he and **Tegan Hinchey-Gerard** with 10–12 staff were out there every day going to people's houses.

Thank you to all that helped and thanks also to **Dr Hugh Burke** for his coordination. Thank you to the AUSMAT team – there were 8 from AUSMAT going to the various locations around Broken Hill. Each person was provided with an information pack and everyone who had a vaccination will be contacted for the second jab. Maari Ma will be providing the second dose both in the clinic and in the community.

SUPPORT THROUGH THE RURAL DOCTORS NETWORK



Dr Michael Thomas has come from Port Macquarie to help in Broken Hill for a short time and has hit the ground running analysing COVID 19 swabs in the clinic.

This has freed up our doctors and health workers to return to the PHCS. Dr Thomas said he was enjoying being in Broken Hill and enjoying the great team at Maari Ma. We are certainly very appreciative and appreciative of the Rural Doctors Network which has organised the placement.

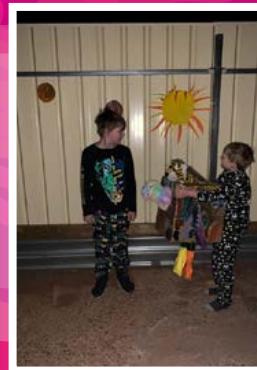
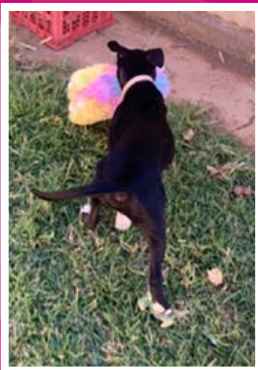
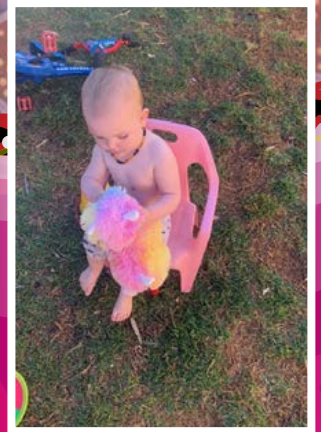
Dr Thomas has worked as both a general practitioner and as an emergency physician in the Hunter New England region, and was familiar with the RDN through previous work placements in rural NSW. We are very fortunate to have his expertise and experience. Dr Thomas, is pictured above outside the COVID 19 Clinic.

Maari Ma would also like to welcome RN, **Beth Deiter**, a health worker recruited through the RDN who has joined us in Broken Hill to provide us with additional support.

What an Adventure!

Congratulations to mum, **Kaitlyn** and her children **Gracie, Elias, Audry** and **Harley** who were the winners in the Maari Ma Allied Health "take your toy on an adventure" competition.

Their toy Laami sounded like he had a big adventure and the competition really hit the spot with all entrants - providing opportunities for children and families to get creative and use their imaginations during the COVID stay at home orders, and providing them with an opportunity for children to develop an array of skills that they'd usually be developing with peers outside of the home. Well done to the team for organising this and well done to all entrants. Below is the adventure story that Kaitlyn provided with the photos.



"As soon as I told my kids that we had to take our teddy on an adventure Harley said can we build a rocket ship and then Eli said yeah it can go to outer space and so our creative journey began with a week full of creativity and fun together.

Laami's journey began with some grooming, then observing, some cuddles, a run with the dog and a high speed chase (haha) then more cuddles and observation and guarding paint (the dog's next victim).

Laami has done the rounds in our house and has had a great time, and tonight the boys took him in the rocket and went to all the planets"



Welcome!

BALRANALD'S NEW CARE LINK WORKER



Maari Ma would like to extend a warm welcome to **Jenny Brooks** who has started with Marrabinya as a Care Link Worker at Balranald. Jenny will be looking after the Marrambidya cluster which includes the Balranald, Dareton, Wentworth, Kyalite, Coomealla and Buronga areas. Jenny is a Wamba Wamba woman and has been working at the Department of Resources in Queensland.

Applications are now open for the 2022 Regional Youth Taskforce



Are you aged between 12– 24 , live in regional NSW with ideas and thoughts on issues that affect youth?

Speak up and be heard for the benefit of our regional towns.

To find out more or apply, visit:
nsw.gov.au/RegionalYouthTaskforce.



BETTER BAAKA PROGRAM

Learn more about the initiatives being considered to improve the Darling-Baaka and Murrumbidgee River Systems. Have your questions answered on how we can deliver a Better Baaka and a Better Bidgee.

The NSW Government recently launched these programs which are investigating a range of measures and initiatives, in partnership with the community, to deliver better environmental, cultural and connectivity outcomes across these two major river systems.

Water Infrastructure NSW will be hosting the first in a series of information and feedback sessions about the proposed programs. We will give an overview of the proposed initiatives that are currently being investigated by the project team and seek your initial feedback on what's being proposed.

Community feedback and input will play a crucial role in shaping which initiatives can be progressed to deliver a Better Baaka and a Better Bidgee and these sessions are just the start of our conversations with you.

There will be ample opportunities for you to find out more and work in partnership with us as we investigate and progress these programs. We look forward to commencing face-to-face engagement opportunities with you once COVID restrictions have eased and it is safe for us all to meet.

To learn more please visit:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/better-baaka-program>

We look forward to meeting with you
The Better Baaka / Better Bidgee Project Team
E: winsw.engagement@dpie.nsw.gov.au
P: 1300 081 047



kiila
laana



Professor Renee Bittoun has held active roles with Tobacco awareness around the world including public speaking, teaching and helped develop the 80's t.v commercial where a sponge is wrung-out and green nicotine collects in a glass.

Renee offers education and advice to Maari Ma health workers and Kiilalaana's muuku program which is designed to help smokers manage their tobacco intake. You can take the muuku pledge at anytime and commence paving a path to a smoke-free future.

Professor Renee Bittoun

Taking Smoking Seriously



History

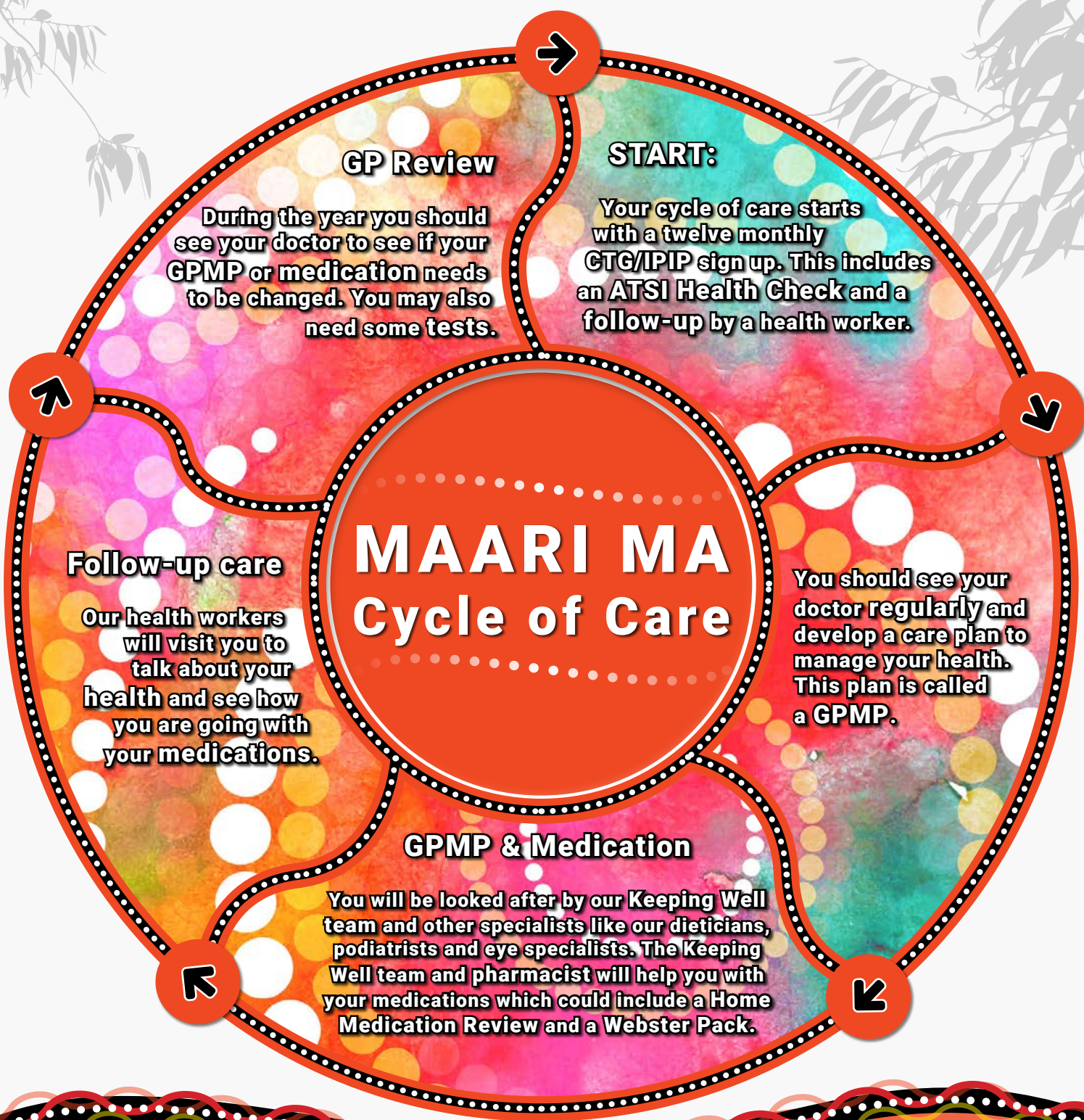
- Working in smoking cessation for more than 40 years
- Started the first clinic for Smokers in Australia in 1979
- Worked on the QUIT campaigns in the 1980s
- Teach the first Courses for Nicotine Addiction and Smoking Cessation
 - Came to Broken Hill initially more than 25 years ago to address smoking in the Greater Western Area Health Service. Teaching and educating health workers
 - Came to work regularly with Maari Ma as a consultant about 10 years ago
 - Role is to support and educate staff, and consult with staff in difficult to treat smokers.

Widening health inequalities between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australia

- Overweight
 - Lack of exercise
 - Poor diet
 - **Smoking responsible for ½ of all early deaths**
- Increase Risk of COVID 19

Worse in remote communities





Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service

Improving Aboriginal Health & Closing the Gap...

About MMPHCS

Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service aims to provide culturally appropriate health services to Aboriginal people living in Broken Hill and surrounding communities.

We are governed by an all Aboriginal Board of Directors, who are deeply committed to providing an holistic approach to Aboriginal health that includes physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions.

Our health workers, doctors and nurses are committed to providing you with the highest quality care. If you ever feel that this has not been achieved, please contact the manager, Kendy Rogers, on 08 8082 9777 to discuss the matter.

Maari Ma : Winner of 2017 Far West Business Excellence Awards for our successful service to the Aboriginal communities of the Far West.

Regular services

Doctors
Nurses
Health workers
Child health nurses
Midwives
Dietician
Primary mental health workers
Alcohol and other drug staff
Psychologist
Kids dentist
Adult dentist
Women's health
Pharmacist
Social Worker
Allied Health

Occasional services

Heart specialist
Kidney specialist
Diabetes specialist
Child health specialist
Eye specialist
Alcohol specialist
Smoking specialist
Podiatry
Optometrist
Psychiatrist
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Pain Specialist



Tegan Hinchey-Gerard
Executive Manager
Aboriginal Health
and Community
Wellbeing



Nola Whyman
Executive
Manager
Operations



Kendy Rogers
Service Manager:
PHCS

**439-443 Argent Street,
Broken Hill, NSW 2880**
Phone: 08 8082 9777 Fax: 08 8082 9778
Web: www.maarima.com.au