Thursday the 16th of March marks Close the Gap Day. Close the Gap is a campaign for Indigenous health equality. The campaign’s goal is to close the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. By being part of the campaign we can make sure that by 2030 any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child born in this country has the same opportunity as other Australian children to live a long, healthy and happy life.

This year Maari Ma’s Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) team will be running a social media campaign on Thursday the 16th of March from 10am to 12pm at the Primary Health Care Service. The TIS team is focusing on supporting mums in our community to be smoke free. Come and see us for some healthy fruit, free resources and have a photo with our new Insta frame! Maari Ma’s other teams will also be on board to give you information and free resources.

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Easter Closure

Our Regional Office and Primary Health Care Service will be closed from Friday the 14th of April until Monday the 17th of April inclusive. Our services will re-open on Tuesday the 18th of April at 9am.

Maari Ma Health would like to wish you and your family a very happy and safe Easter. Please take care if travelling during this time. We hope to see you and your family after the break.
Maari Ma recently celebrated Healthy Weight Week. A number of activities were held for staff and the community across the region.

The week started off with our Dietitian, Jess cooking up a storm in the Broken Hill community kitchen. Monday’s morning tea consisted of a selection of fruit, yoghurt, a healthy avocado dip with vegetable sticks and pita crisps, salad, frittata and roasted vegetables. It was a great success, with more than 40 community members coming in to the community kitchen to enjoy the healthy food.

We gave away healthy snack baskets on Tuesday in the waiting area at Maari Ma. This was a huge success with all 40 baskets being snapped up before midday. A healthy snack card was also provided to give families other healthy snack ideas suitable for kid’s lunchboxes. Wednesday was fruit and vegetable day where a basket full of a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit were given out. People loved the idea of the vegetable quiche recipe provided with the baskets. All of these baskets were snapped up quickly too.

The Healthy Weight Week theme was carried out with the other Dietetic programs run by Jess in Broken Hill which included Bugdgie pre-school, Active Kids, After School Cooking Group and the Playgroup program. What a healthy weight meant to people was discussed and it was great to hear answers such as eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, and being involved in exercise as the key answers!

Menindee

Menindee also went with the basket theme and 30 fruit and vegetable baskets were given out by Jess in one morning! Healthy snack bags were also provided to the pre-schoolers at Menindee Preschool and Grade 2/3s at Menindee Central to complement their healthy cooking activities.

Wilcannia

Healthy weight week was celebrated a week earlier in Wilcannia. On Wednesday, Elsie assembled baskets filled with fresh fruit and vegetables which were given out to community members. These were very popular and were all gone by lunchtime! On Thursday, the baskets were instead filled with healthy snack food options which were also very popular.

Healthy Weight Week was also celebrated at St Therese’s School. The students and teachers got together to help Elsie make super fried rice. The fried rice was packed with fresh, colourful vegies, as well as eggs and chicken. The kids worked well together and enjoyed serving and eating their healthy lunch.
Maari Ma Health became a White Ribbon accredited workplace in 2015. To end men’s violence against women we must stand up, speak out and act. Silence and inaction will let this violence continue. Here is a common myth and what you can do to help stop men’s violence against women.

**MYTH:**  
*Violence doesn’t impact on children. They don’t remember it and are too young to understand what is going on.*

**REALITY:**  
*Children can be physically and emotionally harmed by violence at any age. It impacts on children’s self-esteem, confidence, education and their future relationships. Children may learn violent behaviours and continue them as an adult. Or they may think violence is normal and continue to experience it as adults. With the right help and support, children can recover.*

**What you can say:**  
*Seeing violence or being a victim of it can do serious damage to a child. It can have a lasting negative impact on them.*

- Information from White Ribbon Australia

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Maari Ma hosts a number of White Ribbon events throughout the year to promote awareness around domestic violence. You can support us by attending our events and spreading the word.

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**NAIDOC Week 2017**

NAIDOC stands for National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920’s which aimed to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians.

NAIDOC Week is traditionally held in the first full week of July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.

This year NAIDOC week will be held from the 25th to the 29th of September in Broken Hill. This year’s theme is “Our Languages Matter”. The theme aims to promote the importance and the essential role that Indigenous languages play in cultural identity, linking people to their land and water.

Around 250 distinct Indigenous language groups covered the continent at first European contact in the late 1700’s. Today only around 120 of those languages are still spoken and many are at risk of being lost as Elders pass on.

National NAIDOC Committee Co-Chair Anne Martin said, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait languages are not just a means of communication, they express knowledge about everything: law, geography, history, family and human relationships, philosophy, religion, anatomy, childcare, health, caring for country, astronomy, biology and food.”

**Come and join us later this year for our NAIDOC celebrations!**
Well done Bianca!

Bianca Johnstone recently represented South Australia Country Basketball at the 2017 Southern Cross Challenge. The Southern Cross Challenge was held at the State Basketball Centre in Melbourne from the 13th to the 16th of January.

Bianca’s team, the SA Country Magpies under 15’s, played against teams from SA Country and Metro, VIC Country and Metro, WA Country and Metro, and Canberra.

Bianca’s team won 1 out of the 7 games played and she was the Rebounder for the team. Overall she was happy with the effort she put in.

Bianca has represented SA Country Basketball for the last few years and was part of the under 13’s team in Adelaide in 2015, the under 14’s team in Albury 2016 and now the under 15’s team in Melbourne this year. Her next major representative journey will be at the end of this year when she tries out for the SA Country Basketball under 16’s team, which will be playing in Albury next year.

Congratulations Bianca! We are all very proud of your efforts and we wish you all the best for your future in Basketball!

2017 Far West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Open Art Prize

The 2017 Far West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Open Art Prize open night was held recently at the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists were invited to submit their entries for the prize by the end of January. Prizes were awarded in five categories—2D, 3D, People’s Choice, Encouragement Award and Young Artist Category (up to 18 years).

The aim of the prize is to provide an opportunity to showcase and celebrate artworks and creativity in the Far West community by both young and mature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Maari Ma sponsors the Art Prize and our Chair, Maureen O’Donnell, did the Welcome to Country while Manager Community Services and Programs, Justin Files, spoke about how pleased we are to support the talents of local Indigenous artists and how we have supported the Prize from the beginning when it was first suggested by the then Gallery Indigenous Trainee, Tina Weston.

Well done to everyone who entered the prize and congratulations to the winners!

Richard Quayle’s winning 2D piece

Jess Crawford’s winning 3D piece

- Photos courtesy of Luke Dart, Broken Hill City Council
Maari Ma would like to welcome our 2 new GP Registrars for 2017. Dr Alex Beaudoin started with us last month and will be going out to Wilcannia for clinics on Mondays and Tuesdays. Dr Shapla Mahmud also started with us last month.

Last month we also welcomed back Daniel Jackman. Daniel last worked with us in 2012 before heading to Coonamble where he was Practice Manager at the Aboriginal Medical Service there. Daniel will be working in 2 roles, rotating with Heather Curyer one week a fortnight in the position of Manager at the Wilcannia Primary Health Care Service, and the other week in Broken Hill supporting David Doyle with our chronic disease and community programs.

Last month we farewelled Kate Balman who was a Project Officer with the Community Safety Research Project (CSR). Kate has gone on maternity leave and sadly her position ended with us. We would like to thank Kate for her work with our CSR team and we wish her all the best for the safe arrival of her baby.

Aboriginal Women’s Yarning Circle

Are you a 40+ Aboriginal woman?

Then you’re invited to join in our FREE Yarning Circle

**WHEN:** Wednesday 10 May at 11am

**WHERE:** Meeting Room 2 at Broken Hill Base Hospital

Informal gathering to yarn about the importance of breast screening. You can have a FREE breast screen on the day if you want to.

**Free refreshments and goodie bags provided.**

**PLEASE RSVP TO:**

Christine on 63693609 and Kaylene on 08 80829888
Adult Dental Clinics at Maari Ma

We recently made an agreement with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Far West Local Health District that has allowed us to increase the number of dental clinics we have here at Maari Ma. The RFDS Dental Enhancement Program started on the 6th of February and will provide greater access and opportunity for our community. The RFDS will provide a dentist and dental assistant and we will provide a casual dental assistant when required. If you are experiencing any pain, please see one of our doctors and they will refer you to the dentist for a check up and treatment.

Maari Ma will still be running dental clinics for kids and our Oral Health Therapist, Naim Yazdari and Dental Assistant, Penny Billings will see kids under the age of 18 years.

Dental Tips from Maari Ma’s Dental Team

✓ It is important to brush your teeth twice a day for 2 minutes.
✓ Always use a soft toothbrush with a pea size amount of toothpaste.
✓ Once you have brushed your teeth spit out the excess. Do NOT rinse with water as this will allow the fluoride to be absorbed into the teeth.
✓ Always eat a healthy balanced diet avoiding sugary foods and drinks.
✓ Use an age appropriate fluoridated toothpaste.
✓ Floss at least 3 to 4 times weekly, daily is better.

Maari Ma runs a weekly dental clinic for children up to the age of 18. If your child is experiencing any pain or you are concerned about their teeth, please do not hesitate to contact the Primary Health Care Service on 8082 9777 and make an appointment with a doctor who may refer your child to our Dental team.
Preventing and Managing Chronic Disease

GP Review
During the year you should see your doctor to see if your GPMP or medication needs to be changed. You may also need some tests.

START: Your cycle of care starts with a twelve monthly CTG/IPIP sign up. This includes an ATSI Health Check and followup by a health worker.

Followup care
Our health workers will visit you to talk about your health and see how you are going with your medications.

GPMP & Medication
You will be looked after by our Keeping Well team and other specialists like our dieticians, podiatrists and eye specialists. The Keeping Well team and pharmacist will help you with your medications which could include a Home Medication Review and a Webster Pack.

You should see your doctor regularly and develop a care plan to manage your health. This plan is called a GPMP.

Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service
“Improving Aboriginal health and 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 Far West Business Excellence Awards for our successful service to the Aboriginal communities of the Far West.

Maari Ma Primary Health Newsletter